

## United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak

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“OUR THIRD CENTURY IN SERVICE OF THE LORD”

Honorable Reverend Sandra B. Mantz, Pastor

February 2024 Vol. 46, No. 2

Mailed on January 30, 2024 - Next Deadline 2/15/24

Dear UMCSO Family,

February 14, is Ash Wednesday; the beginning of Lent. It is 46 days before Easter. It's a day when worshipers around the world have the opportunity to receive lightly rubbed ashes in the sign of the cross onto their foreheads or hands. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship. Historically, ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins. It is traditional to save the palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday service to burn to produce ashes for this service. This symbolism echoes the Near Eastern tradition of throwing ash over one's head to signify repentance before God. It is also a reminder of death and the necessity of changed lives. What is repentance? In the Hebrew bible, transgression and sin are the inevitable consequences of straying from God, and by confessing our sins we will gain forgiveness and pardon. In the New Testament, repentance is central to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It means a turn or change of heart. We are encouraged to turn back toward God.



The first time that I experienced Ash Wednesday I was a student Pastor at Fairfield Grace United Methodist Church in Fairfield in 1993. The imposing of ashes was new to many in the Methodist Church; I was really blessed. As a part of the service, we nailed our sins to the cross and then were given a nail to symbolize Christ sacrifice for us all. United Methodists have had resources for worship that include the imposition of ashes since 1979, but this practice became part of our official worship resources in 1992 when General Conference adopted *The United Methodist Book of Worship*.

As we approach the season of Lent, I invite you to open your hearts to God in a deeper way. The preparatory season of Lent offers us 46 days to reflect, study, examine our lives, and discipline ourselves before we enjoy the celebration of Easter. How can we be faithful to the purpose of Lent? Our busy lives seem to allow little time for contemplation and reflection. However, at this time of year it is so important that we find time to stop and be quiet so that, in the stillness, we can connect more deeply with God's presence. It's difficult to find that quiet place when we keep such busy schedules that prayer only happens at traffic lights or between meetings, or when we squeeze in study and

reflection over a sandwich at lunch break. Thinking about our Lenten discipline does not produce the benefit of keeping the discipline.

Careful time management is the key. Stay on top of life's tasks at home and at work, so that everyday stresses don't spill over into your time with God. Plan time away for yourself and be faithful to your plans. Use the time to deeply consider Christ's presence in your life and how you may refocus and recommit your life to him. This year, make the time for thoughtful, deliberate planning and preparation during the season of Lent. Then, when you come together with the church to celebrate the joyous resurrection of our Lord, you'll enjoy deeper fulfillment and a greater sense of the wonder and blessings of the Christian life as you renew your faith commitment, share your joys and your sorrows, and your hopes and your dreams with God. God is faithful and wants to welcome you home into his arms. During this season of Lent, open your hearts to the spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, praying, serving and studying the Word of God, and simply being available and focused on God. Let us trust that God will draw near and help us through our desert places with the desire to turn towards Him.

This year we have many other opportunities to grow in the Lord during our Lenten season. Please refer to your upcoming weekly bulletins for service times and dates, events and opportunities.

May God bless you!!

<sup>12</sup> *But there's also this, it's not too late—*

*GOD's personal Message!—*

*"Come back to me and really mean it!*

*Come fasting and weeping, sorry for your sins!"*

<sup>13-14</sup> *Change your life, not just your clothes.*

*Come back to GOD, your God.*

*And here's why: God is kind and merciful.*

*He takes a deep breath, puts up with a lot,*

*This most patient God, extravagant in love,*

*always ready to cancel catastrophe.*

*Who knows? Maybe he'll do it now,*

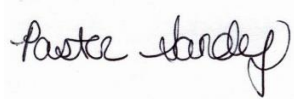
*maybe he'll turn around and show pity.*

*Maybe, when all's said and done,*

*there'll be blessings full and robust for your GOD!( Joel 2:12-17 The Message )*

Have a blessed and Holy Lent. May God bless you richly,

Blessings and Love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Andy". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

## UPCOMING EVENTS February 2024



**SUNDAYS, 10:30 AM**  
WORSHIP WILL CONTINUE  
IN-PERSON & LIVE  
STREAMED

### **Valentine's Day Cards:**

Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, after  
Worship Service, GP Room. All  
are Invited!

### **Souper Bowl Sunday:**

Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> – after  
Worship Service

### **Ash Wednesday Services:**

Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> - Chapel Service  
12:00 pm and Evening Service  
7:00 pm.

### **Lenten Bonfire:**

Saturday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. Starts at 5  
pm with a Pot Trust Dinner  
followed by the Bonfire

### **Maundy Thurs Service:**

Mar 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

### **Good Friday Service:**

Mar. 29<sup>th</sup> - The Sanctuary will  
be open for prayer and  
meditation from 12:00-3:00 pm  
and there will be an evening  
Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm.



**Trustees Meeting,** Monday,  
February 5<sup>th</sup> – 7pm, via Zoom

### **Teacher's Meeting:**

Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> following  
worship

## **KNOW SOMEONE WHO COULD USE A CARD?**



If you know someone who is  
sick or having surgery,  
please let us know. Our  
dedicated members,  
Annette Reynolds & Lynne  
Schrot send cards on behalf  
of our church family. So,  
please let us know and we  
will send a card to cheer  
them up or encourage them.

*Maxine Haigh*



## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Beth Gilleo           | 3  |
| Beverly Martinez      | 4  |
| Robert Gutowski       | 5  |
| Bjorg Davis           | 7  |
| Karen King            | 7  |
| Anne Bradley          | 9  |
| Veronica Rosario      | 9  |
| Stella Johnson-Ganney | 10 |
| John Reed             | 10 |
| Patty Robcke          | 10 |
| Benjamin Robcke       | 11 |
| Stephanie Spina       | 12 |
| Linda Stella          | 15 |
| Nancy Mannino         | 16 |
| Glenda A. Rivera-Geis | 20 |
| Mayfred McClelland    | 23 |
| Barbara Conklin       | 26 |
| Suzanne Libfeld       | 26 |



## **FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Jo Ann & Garrett Stokes  | 20 |
| Debbie & Richard Haigh   | 25 |
| Daniel & Jennifer Pagano | 25 |



### **ALTAR FLOWERS 2024**

Thank you for your gift in providing Altar Flowers for the glory of God! Please contact Michele Squibb [squibbm14@gmail.com](mailto:squibbm14@gmail.com) if you would like to sign up for flowers.

**Easter comes early this year, March 31<sup>st</sup>; please look for your Easter Lilies order form below!**

### **UPDATES TO UMC SO CHURCH DIRECTORY**



If you have any updated information or new emergency contacts, please get in touch with Maxine Haigh or the office for updating.



Also special thanks to all our volunteers who so freely and willingly give of their time and talent in the name of the Lord!

### **Choir**

Al & Alice Fennell  
Bev Goodman  
Twila Hunter  
Beverly Martinez  
Marshall Moseley  
Hank Schrot  
Fran Davies  
Jerome Marcelly  
Stanley Mochulsky

### **Altar Flowers**

Grace Reynolds  
Maxine Haigh  
Marshall Moseley  
Craig Davis

### **Liturgists**

Russ Reynolds  
Kathy Casey  
Marilyn Bucher  
Nick Aryee  
Sarah Moden

### **No. West. Co-op Parish**

Peter Hoernes  
Dianne Benincasa



### **Communications & Chimes**

Debbie Vesuvio  
Marilyn Bucher  
Cliff Cullum

### **Audio Visual**

Cliff Cullum  
Pheby Aryee  
Dylan Matthews  
Joey Spina

### **Greeters & Ushers**

Debbie Vesuvio  
Annette Reynolds  
Kathy Schiavi  
Doreen Matthews  
Barbara Conklin  
Linda Hoernes  
Maxine Haigh

### **Children's Moment**

Pastor Sandy

### **Hospitality**

Alice Fennell

### **SPR**

Annette Reynolds

### **Social Activities**

Kathy Schiavi

## SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

*“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.” ~ Mark 9:37*

Our Sunday School is off to an excellent start for 2024. Although weather forced us to postpone our New Year's Brunch, we were able to reschedule. On January 28, we enjoyed a delicious pancake breakfast after worship. Special thanks to Tony Capozza, “Flapjack” Casey, and all of the wonderful volunteers who helped in the kitchen! (See pictures below)



In Sunday School, our children have been learning more about Jesus through our Godly Play curriculum. They enjoy hearing and discussing the stories, and they especially enjoy the creative play that follows. Even our teachers like to join the fun!

After learning about Jesus' birth during Advent, we are now learning about his ministry, focusing on the parables. Can you guess the parable that one of our students was representing with Play-Doh?



In February, it has become a tradition for our children to make special Valentines for residents of local nursing homes. This year, we want to open up this ministry to everyone in our church family. We invite our entire congregation to stay after church on **Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup> to make Valentines** and enjoy a meal together.

Finally, please mark your calendars for even more events to come. On **Sunday, February 11**, our students will be collecting donations for the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Lent begins on February 14, and on **Saturday, February 17 at 5:00 pm**, we will hold our traditional **Lenten Bonfire**. We will share a light meal beforehand, so if you can, please bring a soup or salad to share.

Yours in Christ,  
The Sunday School Teachers

# Pancake Brunch 2024



Many thanks to Jack and Kathy, and the entire Casey Clan, including P.J., for another well attended, well loved, amazing Pancake Brunch to start off our Sunday School year! A huge thank you also to Tony, the Aryee family, as well as all the other kitchen helpers and all the contributors, from set-up to clean-up.





**VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS 2024**  
**Sunday, February 4th**

We invite the congregation to stay for coffee hour and a light soup lunch and join our youth in making our Valentine's Day Cards for local nursing homes residents. If you could help make some cards, or donate some supplies, please contact Kathy Casey at [luminany@aol.com](mailto:luminany@aol.com).



**SOUPE BOWL OF CARING SUNDAY**  
**Sunday, February 11th**

Our annual soup pot collection for our Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday is on **Sunday, February 11th**. There will be a soup pot to collect money in the back of the sanctuary for those who are hungry and hurting. For those who attend virtually checks can be mailed to the church, please put in the memo line it is for Souper Bowl.



**Lenten Bonfire**  
**Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> (5:00 pm)**

Join us on **Feb 17<sup>th</sup>** as we gather for our annual Lenten Bonfire. We will gather to burn our written sins in the bonfire as we remember that Christ removes our sins with his sacrifice on the cross. We will begin with a Pot Trust dinner at **5:00 pm**. We will post a sign-up list in the GP Room.

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## Easter Sunday ~ March 31, 2024

On Easter Sunday we will again dress our Sanctuary to honor the Lord. If you have family members, loved ones or friends you'd like to honor or memorialize, please order below and return this form with accompanying payment to Michele Squibb or the Church office. The cost of each plant is **\$15**. Please make checks payable to UMCSO and note "Flowers" in the memo section. **Orders must be received by March 22, 2024**



Please **circle** your choices below and **note quantity** beside each:

**Lilies #**\_\_\_\_ **Tulips #**\_\_\_\_ **Daffodils #**\_\_\_\_ **Hiacinths #**\_\_\_\_

Please print Name and Phone # of Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) to be

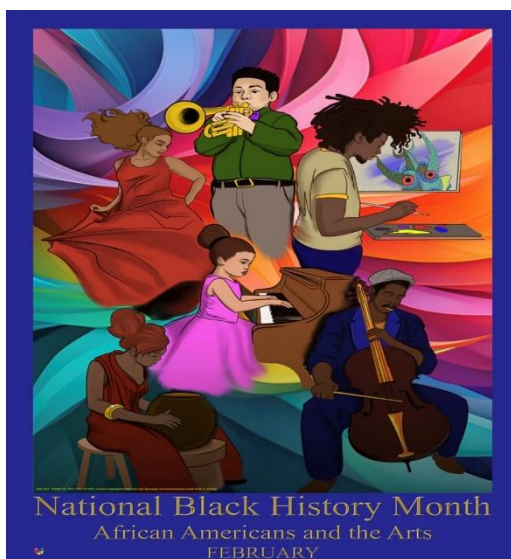
Memorialized: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) to be

honored: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions please contact Michele Squibb at 914-393-5682 or the Church office at 914-245-4682

## African American History Month 2024



In Recognition of African American History Month, I submit this brief article about the Harlem Renaissance. This article is by no means exhaustive of this time in Harlem when the world recognized the amazing gift of African American music art, literature, and dance. Imagine that you lived in New York City in the 1920's in Harlem on 125<sup>th</sup> street. You would be at the hub of an explosion of art, music, and literature created by African Americans. You would have been the first to read Poetry written by James Weldon Johnson, Paul Dunbar, Claude McKay and, my favorite, Langston Hughes, in the Messenger and other progressive newspapers all over the

country.

It was Langston Hughes who wrote:

### **The Negro Speaks of Rivers**

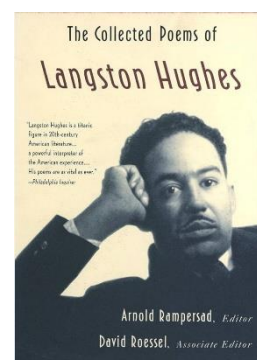
I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.  
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln  
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:  
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

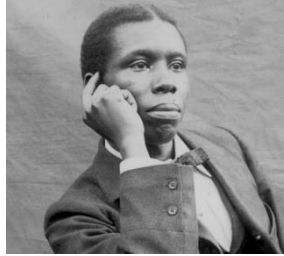


If not Hughes, then Dunbar:

### Compensation

Because I had loved so deeply,  
Because I had loved so long,  
God in His great compassion  
Gave the gift of song.

Because I have loved so vainly,  
And sung with such faltering breath,  
The Master in infinite mercy  
Offers the boon of Death.



To conclude, a word about music during the Harlem Renaissance. The Jazz age coincided with the Harlem Renaissance. The Jazz age blossomed in Harlem. Everyone who was anyone tried to get into the Cotton club in Harlem to hear Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Earl Hine, Count Basie, or Jelly Roll Morton.



Armstrong was, by the 1930's crowned King of the Jazz. Yet, most of these musicians mentioned above were known as composers who made improvisation the key feature of jazz music. Key instruments in jazz music are piano, saxophone, trombone. All musicians referred to above made substantial contributions to the growth of jazz, blues and their late coming little sister, Rock and Roll.

If you have a free afternoon, take a tour of Harlem, and see the places and listen to the stories about the people mentioned in this very brief article about the Harlem Renaissance.



~ By Colette Carpenter



This is a season of many needs and deep concerns for our Church family. Several of our members have been deeply touched and blessed by receiving a prayer shawl. If you feel so led, please lay your knitted, crocheted, or quilted items on a pew or the alter for blessing and we will pass that blessing on to others. Likewise, if you know someone that needs a prayer shawl, please let Pastor Sandy or Debbie, in the church office, know.

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### U.M. ARMY CAMP

## NORTHEAST USA MISSION WEEKS

**CAMP DATES:**

**MIXED AGE:**  
**TRUCKSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA**  
**JULY 7-13, 2024**

**MIXED AGE:**  
**HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**JULY 14-20, 2024**

**MIXED AGE:**  
**WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**JULY 21-27, 2024**

**COST:**


**\$325.00/PERSON**  
**DEPOSIT: \$75.00**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR:**

**GINA GRUBBS**  
**GINAGRUBBS@UMARMY.ORG**




## **LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE READINGS**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b><u>Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup></u></b><br/><b>(5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany)</b></p> <p>Isaiah 40:21-31<br/>Psalm 147:1-11, 20c<br/>1 Corinthians 9:16-23<br/>Mark 1:29-39</p> | <p><b><u>Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup></u></b><br/><b>(Transfiguration Sunday)</b></p> <p>2 Kings 2:1-12<br/>Psalm 50:1-6<br/>2 Corinthians 4:3-6<br/>Mark 9:2-9</p>   | <p><b><u>Wed., February 14<sup>th</sup></u></b><br/><b>(Ash Wednesday)</b></p> <p>Joel 2:1-2, 12-17<br/>Psalm 51:1-17<br/>2 Cor 5:20b - 6:10<br/>Matt 6:1-6, 16-21</p> |
| <p><b><u>Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup></u></b><br/><b>(First Sunday in Lent)</b></p> <p>Gen 9:8-17<br/>Psalm 25:1-10<br/>1 Peter 3:18-22<br/>Mark 1:9-15</p>                                  | <p><b><u>Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup></u></b><br/><b>(Second Sunday in Lent)</b></p> <p>Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16<br/>Psalm 22:23-31<br/>Romans 4:13-25<br/>Mark 8:31-38</p> |   |



## February 2024

| Sunday  | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday   | Saturday  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|  <p><b>Every Sunday is Food Sunday!</b></p>  |  |  |  | <sup>1</sup> <u>Prayer Group</u><br><u>In-Person</u><br>11:00 am<br><br><u>Thurs Eve.</u><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:30  | <sup>2</sup> <u>Small Group 2</u><br>10:00 am  | <sup>3</sup> <u>Men's Group</u><br>8:00 am<br><br><u>Small Group Leaders</u><br>9:30 am   |
| 4 (5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday After the Epiphany) (Green)<br><b>HOLY COMMUNION SUNDAY</b><br><br>10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u><br><u>On-line Live Worship:</u> <a href="http://www.umcso.com">www.umcso.com</a><br><br><u>Making Valentine's Day Cards, after Worship Service, GP Room</u> | <sup>5</sup> <u>Trustees Meeting</u><br>7:00 pm<br><br><u>Women's Small Group</u><br>7:00 pm | <sup>6</sup> <u>Bible Study</u><br>10:00 am<br><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:00 pm     | <sup>7</sup> <u>Small Group 1</u><br>1:00 pm   | <sup>8</sup> <u>Prayer Group</u><br><u>In-Person</u><br>11:00 am<br><br><u>Thurs Eve.</u><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:30  | <sup>9</sup> <u>Small Group 2</u><br>10:00 am  | <sup>10</sup> <u>Men's Group</u><br>8:00 am   |
| 11 (Transfiguration Sunday) (White)<br><br>10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u><br><u>On-line Live Worship:</u> <a href="http://www.umcso.com">www.umcso.com</a><br><br><u>Souper Bowl of Caring</u>  | <sup>12</sup> <u>Women's Small Group</u><br>7:00 pm  | <sup>13</sup><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>10:00 am<br><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:00 pm | <sup>14</sup> <u>Small Group 1</u><br>1:00 p m<br><br><u>Ash Wednesday Service</u><br>Chapel Service 12:00<br>Eve. Service 7:00 pm | <sup>15</sup> <u>Prayer Group</u><br><u>In-Person</u><br>11:00 am<br><br><u>Thurs Eve.</u><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:30 | <sup>16</sup> <u>Small Group 2</u><br>10:00 am | <sup>17</sup> <u>Men's Group</u><br>8:00 am<br><br><u>Small Group Leaders</u><br>9:30 am<br><br><u>Bonfire/Pot Trust</u><br><u>5:00</u> |
| 18 (First Sunday in lent) (Purple)<br><br>10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u><br><u>On-line Live Worship:</u> <a href="http://www.umcso.com">www.umcso.com</a>   | <sup>19</sup> <u>Women's Small Group</u><br>7:00 pm  | <sup>20</sup><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>10:00 am<br><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:00 pm | <sup>21</sup> <u>Small Group 1</u><br>1:00 pm  | <sup>22</sup> <u>Prayer Group</u><br><u>In-Person</u><br>11:00 am<br><br><u>Thurs Eve.</u><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:30 | <sup>23</sup> <u>Small Group 2</u><br>10:00 am | <sup>24</sup> <u>Men's Group</u><br>8:00 am   |
| 25 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent) (Purple)<br><br>10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u><br><u>On-line Live Worship:</u> <a href="http://www.umcso.com">www.umcso.com</a><br><u>Teacher's Meeting after Worship</u>   | <sup>26</sup> <u>Women's Small Group</u><br>7:00 pm  | <sup>27</sup> <u>Bible Study</u><br>10:00 am<br><br><u>Bible Study</u><br>7:00 pm    | <sup>28</sup> <u>Small Group 1</u><br>1:00 p m   | <sup>29</sup>  |  |   |