

and his face was downcast. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain,
“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you
do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not
do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to
have you, but you must rule over it.”

Sermon What To Do With An Apology?
Rev. Nici Masters

Hymn “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” UMH 452

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

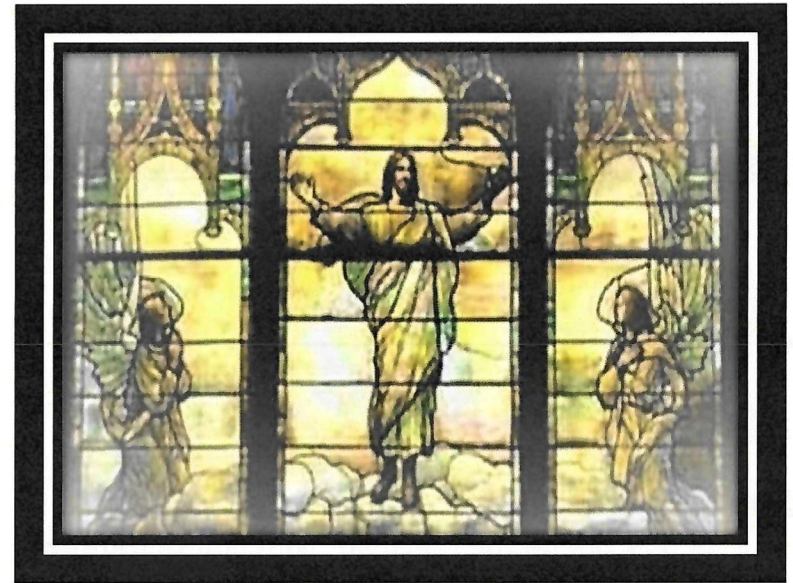
Offering/Doxology “We Are the Music”
arr. Strommen Resounding Joy

Offertory Prayer

Passing the Peace

Hymn “Hymn of Promise” UMH 707

***Benediction**



GATEWAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MARCH 8, 2026

301 Diamond Street, Fairmont WV 26554

Rev. Nici Masters, Pastor
Music Coordinator – Bev Slagle
Bell Choir Director – Val Huffman
March Head Usher – Rob Moore

Acolytes
Esme and Ollie Allen
Haeden and Kenslie Futton
Nora Rae Huffman

The Celebration of Worship

Let us worship the Spirit in silence – Be still and know that I am God

Order of Worship

Announcements

Prelude

***Call to Worship:**

L: Come, let us worship the Lord, not with empty routines, but with hearts full of faith.

All: By faith, Abel offered a better sacrifice; by faith, we come to the Creator.

L: Without faith, it is impossible to please God, for we must believe that He is, and that He rewards those who seek Him.

All: We do not look to things that are seen, but to the promise of things not seen.

L: Let us bring our lives to Him as a living sacrifice, honoring Him with our first and best.

All: Lord guide our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Opening Prayer:

Holy and merciful God, we come before You today with humble hearts, acknowledging that You are the Sovereign Creator and Lord of all. We thank You for the examples of faith that have gone before us – those who trusted You, even when they could not see the outcome.

Children's Chat

Donna Yearsley

Opening Hymn

“Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross”

UMH 302

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 11:3-10

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed by God's command so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. 4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death. “He could not be found because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear, built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise.

Sermon Scripture

Genesis 4:2-7

2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering – fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry

Gateway Contact Information

Church Office Phone – 304-363-7847

Pastor's Phone – 219-242-4678

Pastor's email – nicimasters@yahoo.com

Church E-mail – gatewayumc@gmail.com

Website – gatewayumc-wv.org

YouTube Link – <https://youtube.com@gatewayumc.wv>

Loose Change/Food Pantry Collection

Loose change (coins only) – Honey Bag

Items for January – coffee-tea-cocoa

Items for February – canned meat

PRAYER REQUESTS

Bob Dicken, Faye Dodd, Rusty Freeland, Mary Beth Furbee, Carol Hall, Ezra Hall, Lisa Kerns
Jeff Kerns, Linda Lomicka, Charlotte Merriman, Sally Morrison, Dan Ross, Madalee Wilson

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 9 - Mary Priscilla meeting – Lounge – 4pm
March 11 – Lenten Luncheon
March 15 – Prayer Team meeting – 11am
March 18 – Lenten Luncheon
March 25 – Lenten Luncheon
March 28 – GUMM Breakfast
March 29 – Palm Sunday Covered Dish Luncheon following Worship
April 2 – Maundy Thursday service
April 3 – Good Friday service
April 5 – Sunrise service and Breakfast

MARCH ATTENDANCE

March 1 -62
March 8 -
March 15 -
March 22 –
March 29 –

REMINDER

During the Lenten Luncheon series, remember to park in the parking lot, not on Diamond Street so that persons with limited mobility can use this area. Thanks!!

LENTEN COIN FOLDERS

Don't forget to pick up a Lenten Coin folder from the table in the Welcome Room and insert your daily quarter as you pray. This donation will be applied to the New Canopy we are all enjoying and other projects the trustees are doing throughout "Our Church". Thank you in advance for your contributions.



United Methodist Foundation
of West Virginia, Inc.

MARCH INSIGHTS



Welcome to the March issue of *Foundation Insights*. In this issue, we continue our stewardship articles about the Legacy of Endowments by focusing on charitable gift annuities. If you are interested in our previous stewardship themes, both 2024 ([*A Year in Stewardship*](#)) and 2025 ([*Abundance vs Scarcity*](#)) are available for download as e-books. We've included a few dates to add to your calendar: Join us for dinner at DaVinci's in Williamstown on April 16, celebrate Foundation Sunday on May 3, and play golf for a good cause at the Bishop's Chalice Challenge on June 29 at Sleepy Hollow Golf Club in Hurricane.

LEAVING A LEGACY: CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

In last month's *Foundation Insights*, we explored how bequests can carry your faith and values into the future. This month, we turn to another powerful legacy tool—one that allows you to support ministry while also strengthening your own financial security during your lifetime: the charitable gift annuity.

For many United Methodists, this approach beautifully reflects our Wesleyan commitment to personal and social holiness—caring wisely for ourselves and our families while also advancing the mission of the Church.

A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is a simple agreement between you and the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia. In exchange for an irrevocable gift of cash or appreciated securities, The Foundation agrees to pay you (and/or a loved one) a fixed income for life.

The payment rate is based primarily on the age(s) of the income recipient(s) at the time the gift is established. Generally, the older the recipient, the higher the payment rate. Once established, those payments never change—they are steady, predictable, and backed by the assets of The Foundation.

After the lifetime(s) of the income recipient(s), the remaining funds are directed to the ministry or endowment you have chosen.

A charitable gift annuity allows you to accomplish two goals at once:

- 1. Provide income for life.**

Many donors appreciate the financial stability of fixed lifetime payments, particularly in seasons of retirement.

- 2. Support ministry beyond your lifetime.**

When the annuity concludes, the remainder creates or strengthens an endowment or ministry fund—continuing your witness for generations.

For example, you might establish a gift annuity that provides you with income today and ultimately funds a scholarship endowment at your church, supports clergy leadership, or strengthens conference-wide ministries. Your generosity becomes both present provision and future promise.

John Wesley famously urged Methodists to “Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can.” A charitable gift annuity reflects this balanced wisdom. It honors prudent planning while making a bold commitment to God’s ongoing work.

It is an act of trust: trusting that God’s work will continue, trusting that your church will keep proclaiming good news, trusting that generosity is never wasted in God’s economy.

Here are the key advantages of a Charitable Gift Annuity

- Fixed, dependable payments for life, most of which are tax-free
- Attractive rates, especially for older donors
- Possible charitable income tax deduction for those who itemize
- Potential capital gains tax advantages when funded with appreciated securities
- Simplicity compared to some other planned giving options
- A lasting legacy

Many donors choose to direct the remainder of their gift annuity to an endowment held at The Foundation. Endowments provide steady annual distributions while preserving the principal, ensuring that your gift continues to serve Christ's church long after your lifetime. In this way, a charitable gift annuity becomes more than a financial instrument—it becomes a testimony. It says, *“God has been faithful to me, and I trust God to remain faithful to the Church.”*

For many faithful United Methodists, CGAs offer a meaningful blend of stewardship, security, and legacy. We would be honored to explore whether a CGA aligns with your goals and your calling. Together, we can design a plan that reflects your faith, cares for your needs, and strengthens ministry across West Virginia for generations to come. Contact us to explore a free, no-obligation proposal.



The Foundation is hosting a dinner at DaVinci's Restaurant in Williamstown, West Virginia on Thursday, April 16th at 6pm. This free event is an opportunity to join in fellowship while learning more about the mission and ministry of The Foundation. You can register for the event [here](#) or by contacting The Foundation office at 304-342-2113.

Feel free to share this invitation with others!

FOUNDATION SUNDAY

Foundation Sunday will be held on May 3rd, 2026. This special Sunday in the WVUMC calendar celebrates the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia. The mission of The Foundation is to create a culture of generosity that transforms the world by raising, managing, and distributing funds that serve the needs of all people and communities. We invite you to join the celebration!

To aid in your church's celebration of Foundation Sunday, The Foundation offers free digital and physical resources. We will be mailing letters to pastors, Chairpersons of Finance Committees, and Foundation Representatives with more information about these resources and how to order and download them. Be sure to keep an eye on our [event page](#) to learn more.

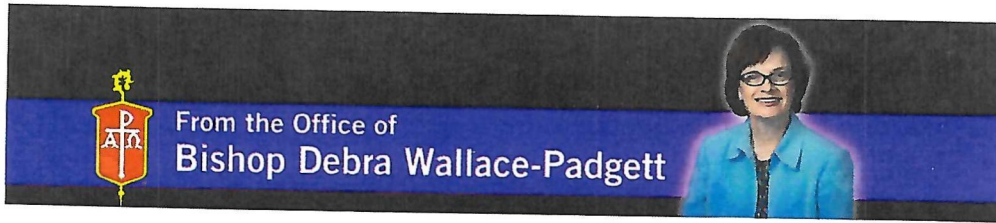
BISHOP'S CHALICE CHALLENGE

After a one-year hiatus, the Bishop's Chalice Challenge will return on June 29th, 2026. The tournament will once again take place at Sleepy Hollow Golf Club in Hurricane, West Virginia. In the coming months, we will release more information regarding golf registration, event details, and sponsorship opportunities.

This golf scramble raises funds for the Endowment for Religious and Spiritual Life at West Virginia Wesleyan College. This endowment was created by Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball and Rev. Dr. Barry Steiner Ball to provide financial support to ensure that students at WVWC receive the opportunity to participate in United Methodist spiritual and religious practices.

We hope you will mark your calendars and join us!

United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, Inc.
P.O. Box 3811 | Charleston, WV | 25338-3811
304-342-2113 | info@umfwv.org | umfwv.org



Dear Friends in Christ,

As we move into the early months of 2026, I want to begin by expressing my deep gratitude for you and the heart for service you bring to the important leadership roles in your local church. Throughout this year, we hope to communicate with you in a variety of ways to equip you with information you may find helpful in guiding your church as we work together to transform Appalachia through God's love.

In 2025, the West Virginia Conference received approximately **\$6,023,111 in apportionments**, representing **64% of the total apportioned amount expected**. Many West Virginia congregations gave 100% of their apportionments, often through sacrifice and careful stewardship. Others were unable to do so due to financial challenges after membership losses and decline. Whichever category you find yourself in, thank you for your faithfulness to our shared ministry. This expression of faith in action is not simply about sustaining a budget, it is about sustaining a covenant. It is about living as a connected people called to shared mission.

At the same time, we experienced something deeply encouraging across our Conference. From 2021 to 2024, our average worship attendance increased from **13,749 to 15,524** an increase of 1,775 people, or **13% growth overall**. That is not a small shift. Growth in average worship attendance represents lives touched, new disciples formed, and renewed energy in our congregations.

God is at work among us!

Apportionments are how we support and strengthen that work together.

Through your giving, we:

- Develop and credential new spiritual leaders;
- Support clergy formation;
- Sustain camping, campus, and youth ministries;
- Equip congregations for renewal and innovation;
- Provide connectional support for missions around the world;
- Maintain partnerships with affiliated ministries serving communities across our state;
- Strengthen our connectional infrastructure so churches are never alone in ministry;
and so much more.

Our vision remains clear:

Transforming Appalachia through God's love—growing disciples, healing communities, and casting a future of hope rooted in Christ.

Fair-share giving fuels that vision.

Yet the gap between what was apportioned and what was received -- 36% - - continues to limit how boldly we can invest in new ministry. When apportionments are not fully funded, we are required to delay initiatives, reduce support in key areas, and make difficult decisions about staffing and programming.

As we journey through 2026 under the theme Rooted in Love, I invite every congregation to prayerfully consider its commitment to full participation in our connection. Thank you to the many churches who gave 100% in 2025, to those who moved closer to that goal, and every church who contributed. I encourage each of us in 2026 to either commit to 100% or take a step in that direction by increasing the amount you give in comparison to your 2025 contribution. May 2026 be a year when we strive together as an Annual Conference for fully funding our ministry goals.

This is not about obligation. It is about love. Love for Christ's Church, love for one another, and love for the communities we are called to serve.

The same God who has brought renewal in worship attendance and ministry vitality is inviting us deeper into shared responsibility and shared hope. Together, rooted in Christ's love, we can continue transforming Appalachia.

With gratitude and confidence in God's renewing work, it is a joy to serve as your Bishop.

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett

Resident Bishop

Holston & West Virginia Conferences of The United Methodist Church

West Virginia Conference PO Box 2313, Charleston, WV 25328 Phone: (304) 344-8331 Fax: (304) 344-2871



EASTER LILY

If you would like to purchase an Easter Lily to be placed in the church during the Easter season in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone, please complete the form below with checks made payable to Gateway United Methodist Church. ***The deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 15, 2026.*** You can drop your order in the collection plate, give it to Marj, or mail it to the church (if mailing, must be post marked no later than March 14, 2026). All orders are pre-paid.

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Given by _____

	Number of One Stem Lilies at \$30.00 Each	Number of Two Stem Lilies at \$60.00 Each	Total
One Stem – 6 inch pot			
Two Stem – 8 inch pot			
		Total Paid	