

The United Methodist Church of Antioch

THE MESSENGER

“The mission of the United Methodist Church of Antioch is to grow in faith, worship God following the teachings of Jesus Christ, and be instruments of God’s love, through the Holy Spirit, as we reach out to our community and the world.”

March, 2026
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FROM PASTOR KATIE’S KEYBOARD...

Maybe you’ve been thinking a lot lately about forgiveness and who is worthy of it. Maybe you’ve been thinking a lot lately about grace and who is worthy of it. Maybe you’ve been thinking a lot lately about justice and who is worthy of it. Our world is struggling with these three concepts a lot. The world doesn’t necessarily use those words, but it is fighting with itself about who is worthy for each and what that means. We struggle with who decides who’s worthy of grace, who is worthy of forgiveness, and who is worthy of justice.

So we will be wrestling with these ideas during our season of **Lent**. Is it possible for us to forgive Judas? What about God? Can God forgive Judas? How would we react if someone close to us experienced something terrible? Would we be inclined to demand justice or would we be inclined to forgive – or at least do the inner work to be able to forgive.

Maybe to start, we look at these words and their definitions. The following comes from dictionary.com

“Forgive: (1) to grant pardon for or remission of (an offense, debt, etc.); absolve. (2) to give up all claim on account of; remit (a debt, obligation, etc.).

(3) to grant pardon to (a person). (4) to cease to feel resentment against. (5) to forgive one’s enemies. (6) to cancel an indebtedness or liability of.

“Grace: (4) a manifestation of favor, especially by a superior. (5) mercy; clemency; pardon. (6) favor shown in granting a delay or temporary immunity. (8) Theology. the freely given, unmerited favor and love of God.

the influence or spirit of God operating in humans to regenerate or strengthen them. a virtue or excellence of divine origin. the Christian graces. Also called state of grace. the condition of being in God’s favor or one of the elect.



GRACE

“Justice: (4) conformity to this principle, as manifested in conduct; just conduct, dealing, or treatment. (5) just treatment of all members of society with regard to a specified public issue, including equitable distribution of resources and participation in decision-making (usually used in combination). (6) the administering of deserved punishment or reward.”



We live in a world where keyboard warriors dismiss people with any difference, vilify those who disagree, and unfriend those who seem beyond redemption. When do we decide it is time to cut ties and move on, and when do we decide to make ourselves vulnerable to those who stand in a different place, praying for growth on both sides? None of this is easy. Join us to wrestle with these ideas as we encounter Judas throughout the season of Lent. He has been found guilty, but what should his punishment be? It will be the congregation’s job to decide. There will be a vote at the end of the last skit. You’ll want to join us for each week to help inform your vote.

- March 1 Romans 2:1-4 & Matthew 26:3-16
The People Vs. Judas Iscariot, Act II
Holy Communion
- March 8 Galatians 5:16-20 &
Mark 14:53-54, 6-72
The People Vs. Judas Iscariot, Act III
- March 15 Hebrews 12:14-17 &
Matthew 27:1-10
The People Vs. Judas Iscariot, Act IV
- March 22 Romans 7:14-15, 21-25 &
Luke 23:26-34a
The People Vs. Judas Iscariot, Act V
Vote
- March 29 Luke 19:28-40
A Visit from Sarah

A sneak peak for April: We will worship on Maundy Thursday, April 2 at 6:30pm, Good Friday, April 3 at 6:30pm, and then Easter Morning, April 5, 8:00am & 10:30am

GOOD DAY/BAD DAY

This *Lenten Season* the *2026 Winter Olympics* are in full session as I'm writing this. I've written in the past how much they are my favorite sports event to follow. This year in an interview I heard, a USA gold medal winner comment about "good" days vs "bad" days. Good and bad are, arguably, the most recognized *relative* terms in the human language. The Olympian suggested that her worst days (in practice or competition) would definitely be someone else's best days. We all know people that most likely have more bad days than good. It might be from a medical condition, an emotional upheaval, or stress and anxiety of some origin.

A GOOD
*day to
HAVE A
GOOD DAY

On our worst days, we must never forget that there are many who, in a heartbeat, would switch with us. Because of this, our faith demands that we accept the order of hierarchy as given in the Greatest Commandment from Matthew 22, i.e., God, then others. Next time we're having a "bad" day, reach out to someone having a worse one. It will make a bad day better for both. Through the Holy Spirit which Christ has given us, we are empowered and commanded to do so.

Bad days
BUILD
better days

Michael DeBenedetto

AIR CONDITIONING PROJECT

As of February 20th, we have received pledges totaling **\$15,900** towards the air conditioning units replacement project. This puts us about halfway towards our goal. We will strive to have the units replaced before the hot summer months. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Fred Bobzien

MISSIONS

March Mission Focus: PADS of Lake County

PADS lunch preparation will be on Wednesday, March 25th at 6:30pm in the church kitchen. We'll make 40 lunches and deliver them the next morning. We will also deliver any shelf-stable items in microwaveable ready bowls that we have collected, such as *Easy Mac, Chef Boyardee, Dinty Moore, Cup of Soup, Ramen Cups.*



UMCOR

March 15th is *UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Sunday*. Let's come together to support global ministries that bring hope and to those in need.

MORE ON MISSIONS

Your gift covers UMCOR's costs of doing business and ensures 100% of other donations go directly to relief efforts. Let's make a difference together! To learn more, <https://umcor.org>.



United Voices for Children

There will be a *Special Collection for United Voices for Children* on March 29th. (5th Sunday Appeal) It is a coalition of NIC congregations, agencies, groups and individuals that speaks and acts on behalf of children, youth and families in need. Funds are divided among the institutions in the UVC coalition: *Kids Above All, Rosecrance Health Network* and *MYSI*. Learn more at <https://unitedvoicesforchildren.org>.



A Safe Place – Empower Run/Walk 5K on May 2nd

Throughout April you may sign up for the 5K to take place on May 2nd at 9:00am. Come out and join our team. <https://asafeplaceforhelp.org>. A couple people are already signed up!

Veteran's Closet

At the time of this writing, we are still collecting for the *Veteran's Closet*. Thank you for supporting this project. Delivery is planned for early March, and we'll update with pictures in next month's *Messenger*.

Feed My Starving Children

This is scheduled for February 28th. We had a large group go in February.

Open Arms

January update: Thank you!! Thank you!! Our church collected 573 pounds of food, personal products and socks for *Open Arms Missions*. You're all amazing!



Next Mission Meeting

will be on *March 9th*, at 10:00am in Wesley Hall.

IN THE GARDEN

The Winter Dormitory Wakes Up

If you've walked past our *Pollinator Pocket* over the last few months, you've seen a landscape of brittle stalks, fallen leaves, and what might look like a patch of neglected weeds. While it's tempting to want a tidy garden by mid-winter, those brown stems have been busy. This plot is a *University of Illinois certified habitat*, and that certification requires us to treat the space as a year-round residence rather than a seasonal display.

Most of our local pollinators don't just visit for a quick meal in the summer; they live their entire lives within these few square feet. Throughout the freeze, 70% of our native bees have been nesting in the soil, while others have been tucked inside the very hollow stems that some might be tempted to trim away. To clear the ground too early is to remove the "insulation" and the nurseries these insects need to survive the final Illinois frosts.

As the ground thaws, the pocket is beginning to shift from a winter dormitory back into a workspace. We leave the debris in place a bit longer than a traditional flower bed because that "mess" is currently full of life waiting for a consistent string of 50-degree days to emerge. This isn't a sign of a chore left undone; it's a deliberate choice to protect the next generation of bees and butterflies that our local environment relies on.

By mid-spring, the new growth will hide the old stalks and the cycle starts again. I hope you'll join me in looking forward to seeing the payoff of our winter patience as the first queens emerge and the garden begins to buzz. Keeping it a little rough around the edges is exactly what allows this registered habitat to function as nature intended.



MUSIC



CHRISTIAN WELLNESS MINISTRY

Dementia Friendly Training

CWM will be hosting a two hour training program on how to interact with those who have dementia. A member of *Right At Home*, a home healthcare company, will provide the training. "The goal is to create an environment where people who have dementia or have loved ones with dementia can experience less stigma and enjoy a better quality of life." At some time in our lives, we are likely to know someone who has a form of dementia. Let's be better prepared to help them and ourselves!

A short questionnaire will be available in Wesley Hall on February 29th thru March 15th to help us plan for the best day of the week and time of day to accommodate the most attendees. This program is open to all; members of our community will also be invited to attend. The program is free! Please let us know if you would be interested in attending. The exact date/ time of the training will be posted in the bulletin, newsletter, Wesley Hall and UMCA Facebook page.



Golden Gems

The Christian Wellness Ministry (CWM) is pleased to announce the dates for the 2026 *Golden Gems* luncheons. If you are at least 80 years of age, you will receive an invitation about one month prior to the scheduled luncheon. We would appreciate an rsvp shortly after receipt of the invitation to help us plan. Please add these dates to your calendar:

- GG#1 on April 23rd
- GG#2 on June 18th
- GG#3 on September 10th
- GG#4 on December 3rd



CHRISTIAN WELLNESS, continued

More Help...Call 211

If you need help finding food, healthcare, shelter, or other services, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help 24/7. Speak to a live person in English or Spanish when you call. The 211 team will also interpret more than 150 languages. The service is free and confidential. This service is the former **United Way**; currently Lake County is covered. Eventually this service will cover all counties across the US!

Food Pantries for People and Pets

If you know of someone who needs assistance finding food, all of the food pantries in Lake County have been printed and are available in Wesley Hall. Sources for pet food are also available.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call Carol at 630/399-0089 or leave a message with Hannah in the church office.

Carol Frazier, RN

PASTOR KATIE PARTICIPATION

Pastor Katie participated in the **Pastoral Academy for Missional Excellence** over the last two years. This was a project from the **Conference Office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment**. The group met monthly and discussed best practices in local churches around topics such as keeping our missional focus front and center, conflict navigation, leading change, navigating size changes in congregations, signs of healthy congregations, integrating new people, and the life-cycle of local churches, just to name a few. This picture was taken at their last session together. **Rev. Doug Anderson**, in the purple sweater at the front, was the facilitator for the learning process.

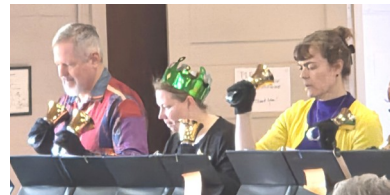


OPPORTUNITY

Attention Seniors 60 and over

Please check out the senior meals at **Maravella's**, sponsored by **Catholic Charities** and call in your reservations! The flyers are on the information table near here we sign the prayer cards.

MARDI GRAS!



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Our Fall/Winter schedule will begin on September 7. We offer two services, one at 8:00 am and another at 10:30 am. We also go live on **YouTube**. The link for the recorded service can be found on our website at umcantioch.org. Please join us in person or online for worship!

[Jesus said] “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

John 14: 26

The Holy Spirit embodies the life force of the universe, the power of God, the animating energy present in all things and captured by none. Therefore we pray:

May the gifts of the Holy Spirit bring fire to the earth so that the presence of God may be seen in a new light, in new places, in new ways. May our own hearts burst into flame so that no obstacle, no matter how great, ever obstructs the message of God within each of us. May we come to trust the Word of God in our heart, to speak it with courage, to follow it faithfully and to fan it to flame in others. May the Jesus who filled [all kinds of people] with his Holy Spirit fill the world and the church with new respect for [all people’s value], power, and presence.

Give us, Great God, a sense of the Breath of Spirit within us as we pray for our church, our community, our Christian Education department, and ... (*State the goal in your own life at this time for which you are praying.*) —**Sister Joan Chittister**