



# TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

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## HOLY WEEK

Passion week is my favorite week in the church calendar. There is so much to take in and feel as we follow Jesus through the week.

First there was the jubilant triumphal entry into Jerusalem as Jesus was hailed King. Then quietness and warmth in the upper room as Jesus talked to the disciples. There were the questions, the panic, the betrayal of Our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane. The fear, pain and agony of watching Jesus as He was abused, questioned, and whipped followed by His death on the cross. Despair filled our souls as we saw Him in the darkened tomb. And where was our Jesus, our Savior? He had risen, risen indeed! At first disbelief, then exquisite joy.

When thinking of all the emotions experienced

it is hard to take it all in, hard to comprehend each thing. Jesus experienced so much while on the cross. He carried the weight, heavy weight of my sin, your sin, past sin, future sin on his head when he stretched his arms on the hard wood of the cross. The thought of that breaks our heart while it heals it. I hope I never forget that act of love and grace. It was done for me.

Our goal this year is to share some of these feelings with you during our Holy Week celebration together. We challenge you to spend as many nights experiencing Jesus as you do in outside activities during this special week of services. Each night we'll gather at 6:00 P.M. at a church near you.

Our week begins on Sunday, March 28, at Dutton

UMC with a Palm Sunday celebration. On Monday, March 29, we'll gather at Section UMC to hear a sermon on "Tipping the Tables". Tuesday, March 30, we'll experience the Service of the Cross and Nails at Geraldine UMC. Wednesday, March 31, Robertson Chapel is hosting a Passover Seder reminding us of the one Jesus attended in Jerusalem. (Seating is limited—please reserve your place at the table for the service.) Join us at Henagar UMC on Thursday, April 1, for Maundy Thursday service. Finally, we'll meet at Trinity (Burnt Church) UMC for Shadows of the Cross service on Good Friday, April 2. Come experience Jesus with us! For more information or directions contact us at the Ministry Center.

BY KATIE ALLISON

## MEMBER CHURCHES

Chaney's Chapel  
Dutton  
Flat Rock  
Ider  
King's Chapel  
Lusk Chapel  
Robertson Chapel  
Section

## LENTEN LUNCHEONS



Let's observe Lent together! Upper Sand Mountain Parish invites you and your family to join us each Wednesday for lunch and a devotion at the Minis-

try Center during Lent. Parish churches will host, gathering for soup, salad and sandwiches and time to think about our Christian faith during a devotion. Lunch begins at 12:00 followed by devotion at 12:30 P.M. Mark your calendar and bring a friend!

**February 17** - Chaney's Chapel UMC

**February 24** - Dutton UMC

**March 3** - Flat Rock UMC and Ider UMC

**March 10** - Robertson Chapel UMC

**March 17** - Section UMC

**March 24** - Lusk Chapel UMC

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## BONNIE'S BOX

Lent is a season of contemplation and preparation. We apply this to our spiritual practices, but we also see it in the world around us. The earth is beginning to warm up from the snowy days of winter, letting the sun shine through more every day. As the soil temperature rises, seeds begin seeking the warmth and reaching out toward the sun and the sky. Toward the middle of this season, as some of us struggle with the daily rituals we have taken on or put off, green ap-

pears above the stark brown of the soil. The seeds have sprung and can now receive the full radiance of the sun! As we wait in anticipation of Easter, the earth truly comes alive around us, preparing to nurture us with the fruits of the soil. The blackest night of Good Friday is followed, slowly, by the rising sun on Easter morning, awakening us to a new life.

If you are not a gardener, I challenge you to go

out in the fields around you and watch the awakening. Look for signs of beginning abundance: flowers slowly opening to release their fragrances upon the senses; green berries and vegetables forming on the vines of the earth. Farmers' markets will be opening and it is your chance to taste the first fruits of spring!

North Sand Mountain Farmers' Market opens April 7th 3-6 P.M. in Men-

tone and April 10th 8-11 A.M. in Sylvania. Visit us at [www.mountainmarket.org](http://www.mountainmarket.org)

*Taste and see that the Lord is good.  
Psalm 34:8a*



## MISSIONARY BUZZ BY LN

It amazes us how quickly the time has passed. It seems like only yesterday we arrived here at Upper Sand Mountain Parish to begin our ministry service. We have met many wonderful "mountain folk".

Advent Season was especially blessed. We participated in several events and every time we sang "Go Tell it on the Mountain" we got God-bumps since this is the first time we have ever been on an actual mountain as we

sang this song. Having grown up in the flatlands of Ohio this song has taken on new meaning for us this season of our lives. We often catch ourselves humming the tune long into the day and evening after an event has ended.

We have begun our second round of visiting the parish churches. God has blessed us with 8 church families as well as our home church family in Delphos, Ohio. His abundance never ceases to amaze us. The people are

very special at each of the churches & since we don't want to show favorites we have adopted all 8 of them as our church family. An especially fun thing is Wednesday family game nights. We attend Dutton UMC for this event and share in a meal, laughter, game playing & a scripture lesson. We have taught them how to play "golf" with cards. Other evenings we are busy with filling back-packs for weekend food for the children, visiting the library, parish meet-

ings & relaxing at home.

Here it is mid January already and another year is well on the way. Buzz has been keeping busy with building wheel chair ramps, covering windows with plastic and assisting in the warehouse operations. He is waiting to begin the floor of the house for a survivor of the 2009 Good Friday tornado. And the ministry center is very busy with emergency assistance. The Visual Gospel of Matthew Bible Study & Conversations began January 21st

& will continue for 5 Thursdays through the end of February. Once again I have had the opportunity to pray with people. It never ceases to amaze me when the Holy Spirit speaks to my heart to pray with someone immediately as we are talking. I feel awed & humbled to be able to be a light of Christ's hope to them in these times of trouble & need.

His servants,

Buzz and Ellen Ditto

## INTRODUCING CHRIS CONE

Chris comes to the parish as the pastor of Section UMC. A native of Altoona, Chris is glad to be back where "green things grow," after having served in various capacities in several Birmingham churches and attending seminary in Memphis.

Joining Chris in his new appointment are his two adorable little girls, Abbie Grace (7) and Clancy (6). They think that Section must

be the best place to live on earth (there's a park right next door, Daddy!!!!). The girls are enjoying making new friends and meeting 'Girl' the lab who lives next door.

Besides his family, Chris brings with him a heart for ministry to youth and children, and hopes that his experiences with programs at Sumatanga and in other local churches will supplement the good ministry that is already being done on Sand Mountain.

## MISSION NEEDS

Thank you for your support of our mission through your prayers, gifts and service. Some ways you can continue to support us are:

- **Support** us through prayers. The effectual fervent **prayer** of a righteous man availeth much. James 5:16
- **Collect** used plastic sacks for us to use in our Better Way Shoppes and food pantry.
- **Contribute** gallons or

half gallons of paint. USMP uses paint for many projects during the year.

- **Donate** an automobile. USMP is particularly looking for a good work truck to use in the community.
- **Provide** monetary support for one or more of our projects. Money does matter! Did you know we are able to buy food items like peanut butter for 14¢ a pound? We can buy a case for what 1 jar costs the average person.

## GARDENS OF PLENTY

There's an old Chinese proverb that goes "Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime." Here at Upper Sand Mountain Parish we strive to teach folks to become self sufficient. Our Gardens of Plenty program is one of the ways we do this every year. It all begins with a few

seeds. These seeds, along with some fertilizer, are given to folks so they can grow their own food and help them provide for their own families. Many families are even able to donate fresh produce back to the Parish to give to others. It's a circle that keeps growing as folks receive seeds of hope, seeds of better health, seeds for tomorrow.

This year, Seed Day will be held on February 15th. Kids get involved by coming to help sort, bag and label bulk seeds into individual bags as we prepare and package 20 varieties of seeds to give away.

Seeds and fertilizer will be given out on Saturday, March 13th at Dutton UMC, Flat Rock UMC, Henagar UMC, Robertson Chapel UMC, Trinity UMC and Sec-

tion UMC. Folks will be directed to the church nearest them to pick up their seeds.

Imagine sinking your teeth into a red tomato fresh from the garden or slicing crunchy green cucumbers into pickles. Now imagine the pride of knowing that you had grown those fresh vegetables yourself. All because someone reached out, with a hand up instead of a hand out.

## JOIN US IN MISSION!



Join us this year in mission by bringing a mission service team! Mission service teams experience a variety of projects while serving others



and spreading the love of Christ. We welcome people of all ages; from children to senior adults there's something for everyone to do! This year we are focusing on reaching out to help make homes handicap accessible. This has become an increasing need in the area due to the aging population:

referrals come on a year-round basis from doctors and home health agencies trying to improve the quality of life for their patients.

Some of the other projects you can help with this year are painting homes for low income and elderly families or helping with other home repairs, helping in children's VBS/day camps, working in our garden to help plant and harvest fresh produce, and making relish, jams and salsa in the cannery. To find out more, contact Tayna at the Ministry center. Phone: 256-

638-2126, or email [usmp@farmerstel.com](mailto:usmp@farmerstel.com). We look forward to seeing you here in mission with us!



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What were you doing in 1996? I was in my senior year of college preparing for the future. Having majored in Social Science with a concentration in Political Science, I was very interested in what was going on in Washington DC. At that time, the process was underway to reform welfare.

As a part of my Senior Studies project I read and reviewed the bill that was passed. I don't remember the exact number of pages but it was a lot. It went on and on. Generally my review was that there were good points and bad points to the legislation, as is the case with most laws passed by Congress.

While I read it, a part of it never caught my attention until about four years later when I was working

as a counselor at a substance abuse treatment facility. It was at that time I came into contact first hand with changes created in 1996. "Gina" who had successfully completed treatment came into the office to talk about a problem she was having. She was doing everything that she could to be the mother her three children deserved. She was working full-time; going to PTO meetings; taking her youngest son to cub scouts; but she was struggling to make ends meet. One of my first thoughts was about food stamps. As I brought that up she explained that because she was convicted of a drug felony (possession) she was not eligible to receive food stamps.

I was struck by this com-

ment and thought there had to be more to it. Maybe she didn't understand. The truth is that I didn't understand. How could someone who had completed their sentence still be punished in such a way as to create a systemic issue of hunger in a family? Murderers and child molesters can complete their sentence for the crime and access food stamps, but not this mother of three? This couldn't be right, or could it? It is certainly not right, but for many it is the way that it is.

Today 33 states have opted out of the federal legislation that bars those with drug felony convictions from accessing food stamps. Alabama is not yet one of them, but there is legislation introduced in January 2010 in the form of HB 214 and SB 295

that would bring Alabama to a place where people like "Gina" can once again access food stamps.

There is also currently legislative bill (HR-329) in the United States Congress that would repeal the 1996 changes across the board meaning that all of the 17 states not having opted out already would be brought in to once again serve those who seem to falling through the cracks of the current system.

Learn more about this and other issues that keep us from living out social justice. Be active, seek change, ask questions, and find answers to help those who don't understand. Who knows, you may find that you are the one who doesn't understand the situation despite your best effort to be informed.

THE UPPER SAND  
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**LIVING THE GOSPEL,  
MAKING POSSIBLE THE IMPOSSIBLE!**

FROM THE DIRECTOR, TAYNA RAINS

**“Good News” for the Poor  
Matthew 25:35-36  
The Just Community Response**

I was hungry and you helped me get a job so I could feed myself.

I was thirsty and you helped me keep my water supply free of contaminants so I could safely drink.

I was a stranger and you brought me into community with others so I would never be a stranger again.

I was naked and you helped raise the minimum wage so I could buy clothes for myself and my family.

I was sick and you helped provide mandatory insurance so I could afford to be healed.

I was in prison and through reform you helped provide job skill training so I won't have to steal in order to survive.

This was shared at the October meeting of the United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network ([appalachia-umc.org](http://appalachia-umc.org)) by new Director, Bob Wilkins. In hearing this I immediately felt touched and at the same time convicted that we must strive to do more of this.

Upper Sand Mountain Parish has long offered programs that serve as a hand up rather than a hand out. It is now that we must step up our efforts to be willing to go where the people are. It requires us to be more active and always looking for new and better ways to carry out this type of ministry out.

Edith Hamilton said, “Faith is not belief. Belief is passive. Faith is active.” We must work to ensure that we demonstrate our faith by reaching out to the least. There must be a point at which we determine that we can wait passively no longer, and spring into action to spread God’s love.

People can work if there are jobs available. People would visit a doctor if they are ill and could afford to do so. People will join us for our church services if we ask (and mean it). These are just some of the challenges we face in living out this “Good News.” I think they are exactly the risks we are called to take to make disciples for Jesus.