



ALPHA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

211 North Scandia St., PO Box 607
Alpha, IL 61413
309-629-5161 | www.alphaumc.org

April 2025

Volume 2025 Issue 4

A loving, redeeming God who remains near

3/24/2025

It has been my joy and privilege to travel with groups from both the Illinois Great Rivers Conference and the Michigan Conference in the last six months. I have just returned from a trip to Greece and Rome with IGRC ordinands and others from the conference. I am deeply grateful to the Rev. Jacqui King for her work in organizing the trip and grateful for each person who chose to join us on this journey following the travels of Paul and seeing some of the seminal sites in the history of Western civilization.

Seeing some of the magnificent historic sites, grand temples and arches and coliseums I pondered, "what did Paul have to offer in his preaching?" When one thinks of Rome, Peter also needs to be included. What was it about the preaching of Peter and Paul that attracted persons to follow this Jesus, a Jesus crucified at the hands of the Roman Empire, but who they proclaimed as risen?



There may have been some attraction in monotheism. Throughout Greece and Rome temples were built to various gods. Perhaps the simplicity of worshipping one God appealed to some, though there were certainly monotheistic trends in other religions of the time, including in Egypt.

More important, though, was the character and nature of this single God proclaimed by Paul and Peter. This God was genuinely caring. This God was concerned for the well-being of all persons. In traveling to Greece and Rome and Egypt, I could not avoid the impression that the religious systems of all three were hierarchically structured and those higher up in the social system were also closer to the gods. The God of Jesus Christ did not distinguish between rich and poor, ruler and ruled in caring and concern. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). In the Egyptian, Greek and Roman religions, the emperors were given titles such as son of God and savior. In Christian faith, all can be considered children of God, and our savior is a Jew from a backwater province crucified by the empire.

The notion of a caring and concerned God is rooted in the faith of the Hebrews and is now extended in Jesus to all persons. And this caring and concerned God is always near in the resurrected Christ. People responded to this message.

And while the message of the Christian faith is about an accessible God, there is also a sense that some places can be places of special encounter with this God of Jesus Christ. Some have labeled such places "thin spaces," places where the presence of God in the risen Christ seems remarkably powerful. (Cont. page 2)

One cannot travel in Greece and Rome without being taken by the remarkable church structures which have for years been thin places for many: St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, monasteries built on the Greek mountains in Meteora. Icons, in their unique artistry, provide a powerful reminder of the presence of God.

The message of a caring, concerned and accessible God often threatened the empire. To worship the usual gods supported the imperial structures and systems. To worship the God of Jesus Christ might lead people to question those systems and structures. The relationship between Christian faith and the philosophical and religious ideas of the Greeks and Romans remains interesting. Some early Christians such as Justin Martyr (100-165) taught that as all truth comes from God, the truth that may be found in Greek and Roman philosophy should be welcomed by Christians. Unfortunately, his Christian faith still ended up getting him killed. He was beheaded for refusing to renounce his faith, likely and ironically during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a philosophically inclined emperor.

When the empire fell, there was a time when the Christians showed little concern for its grand structures. Marble from the Roman coliseum was taken and used for building homes. Later, Popes and other authorities began to appreciate the importance of these ancient structures. Archaeologists have uncovered wonderful places that tell us about our history and help it come alive. To walk the ancient streets of Corinth where Paul walked is an amazing experience I have now had twice these past six months.

I will be processing this trip, and my previous trip, for some time to come. I come away with a desire to dig deeply into the rich wells of our Christian tradition. I would encourage you to do so as well. People have been following Jesus for nearly 2000 years and we have much to learn from them. They have worshipped in caves and catacombs and church buildings ranging from the simple to the grand and ornate. We have wondered how the wisdom of others might relate to the wisdom of our faith, and I admit that as a philosophy major I was moved by being in the Athens of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

In plumbing the depths of our history, we will also need to acknowledge where we have gotten things wrong in following Jesus. The church has sometimes uncritically embraced hierarchies of value inconsistent with our faith. The church has often found itself enamored with the power of Caesars. In our history we have justified slavery and racism. Ironically in a largely Christian United States in the 1920s Congress passed an immigration act that set strict quotas on the number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Our founders often referred to the thought of the Greeks and Romans but in 1924 we decided we did not want to allow many Greeks or Italians into the country.

The heart of our faith, though, is always an appreciation of each person as a unique creation of God, created in the image of God, a God who cares, who seeks the well-being of God's creation, its redemption and salvation.

This God came near in Jesus and remains near in the risen Christ. On Easter morning when we sing out "Christ the Lord is risen today," it is not a statement about the past, but about the present. Today! The message of a loving and redeeming God who remains ever near, the message carried by Paul and Peter and many others through the centuries remains our message to share. Celebrate this. Plumb the depths of our rich history. Share the story.

Bishop David Bard



Church Council

Council Chair: Lindi Kernan

Treasurer: Parris Silvis

Financial Secretary: Linda Lanning

Trustees: Ian Yoder

S/PPRC: David Althaus

Nurture/Outreach: Angie Althaus

Gina Medley

Christian Education: TBD

Men in Mission: Dean Kernan

Lay Leader: Lindi Kernan

Member at Large: Sadie Carlson

Recording Secretary: Desirae Silvis

Next Council Meeting:

Tuesday, April 8

6:00PM



Church Office Hours

9AM - 1PM— Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

309-629-5161

alphaumc@gmail.com

Website: www.alphaumc.org

Pastor Karna's Contact Info:

Cell: 309-337-2700

email: pastorkarna56@yahoo.com

Let's Celebrate!

April Birthdays

09: Kelby Lanning

12: Karen Pfeiffer

14: Lindsy Brooks

14: Shannon Cremeens

25: Dean Kernan

April Anniversaries

02: Bob & Jan Bateman

03: Gary & Judy Barton

26: Dave & Linda Lambin



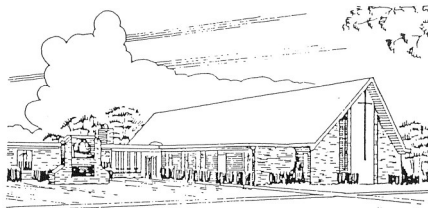
Addresses for Edie Peden & Marilyn Barton

Edie and Marilyn are both living at Seminary Manor in Galesburg. If you would like to send a card, their address is as follows:

2345 N Seminary St.
Galesburg, IL 61401

Edie is in room 406.
Marilyn in in room 201.

Join Us !



Sunday Schedule

8:45AM - Coffee Hour

9:30AM - Worship

Prayer Group

9:30AM Wednesdays



April Worship Volunteers

April 6

Liturgist: Roger Swanson

Children's Moment: Pastor Karna

Ushers: Lindsi & Brylee Brooks

Multimedia: Bryton Brooks

April 13 - Palm Sunday

Liturgist: Lindi Kernan

Children's Moment: Dale Lanning

Ushers: Kurt Jordan & Dave Lambin

Multimedia: Dean Kernan

April 20 - Easter Sunday

Liturgist: Dale Lanning

Children's Moment: Pastor Karna

Ushers: Erica Thorstenson & Devin Reed

Multimedia: Sadie Carlson

April 27

Liturgist: David Althaus

Children's Moment: Angie Althaus

Ushers: Desirae & Jack Silvis

Multimedia: Parris Silvis

Thank You Volunteers!

We are always
looking for more
Sunday morning
volunteers.

Please contact
the church office
if you can help
out.

Holy Week Schedule

- April 13 - Palm Sunday - Regular Sunday Schedule
- April 17 - Maundy Thursday Soup Supper & Service at Faith UMC - 6:00PM
- April 18 - Good Friday Service with Alpha Baptist at Alpha UMC - 6:00PM
- April 20 - Easter Sunday Service - Regular Sunday Schedule

He Is Risen!



Bishop Visiting the West District

Come Meet Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai!

Sunday, April 6, 2025

Worship:

Macomb Wesley UMC-1212 W Calhoun St, Macomb IL 61455

Worship Prep and Greeting- 10:30-11:00am

11:00am-: Worship at Macomb Wesley UMC

Fellowship: 12pm-12:30pm

Bishop's Sermon:

"To Know Christ" (Philippians 3:4b-14)

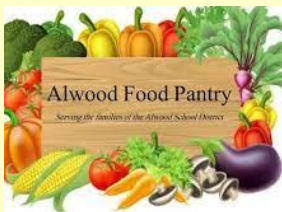


Town Hall Meeting

Monmouth First UMC- 3:00pm - 4:30pm

221 E Broadway, Monmouth IL 61462-1868

Come and discuss questions about the present and the future of our district at the Town Hall Meeting. It's an opportunity to meet Bishop Kennetha and ask any questions you may have or just take time to get to know her.



The Food Pantry provides Easter dinner boxes each Easter. Alpha UMC has been asked to donate white cake mix and boxes of strawberry Jello mix, so clients can make a Jello cake. We need to collect 55 of each item. Donations may be left in the basket in the fellowship hall. Easter candy donations are also welcome!

Bridal Shower/Open House
For
Mariah Chapdelaine
Bride to be of Cody Lanning



Sunday, April 6
2:00 - 4:00 PM

Alpha United Methodist Church

Mariah & Cody are registered at
Target, Crate & Barrel &
[Theknot.com/us/cody-lanning-and-mariah-chapdelaine-may-2025/registry](https://www.theknot.com/us/cody-lanning-and-mariah-chapdelaine-may-2025/registry)

Please RSVP to Lindi Kernan
via text or call 309-337-9012 or
Email: lmkernan60@gmail.com

By April 1



EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

Due to Linda Lanning

On or before April 6

*{Can put in offering plate or
mail to the church}*



Please mark which flower you would like:

_____	Easter lily	[\$16]
_____	Hyacinth	[\$16]
_____	Tulip	[\$16]

How you would like it printed in the bulletin:

_____ *Given in memory of:*

or

_____ *Given to the Glory of God in honor of:*

_____ *Given by:*





April 2025



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 6:30PM Girl Scouts	2 9:30AM Prayer Group	3 12:00PM Backpack Bags	4	5 6:00PM Emmaus
6 2-4PM Chapdelaine/ Lanning Wedding Shower	7	8 6:00PM Council Meeting	9 9:30AM Prayer Group	10	11	12
13 Palm Sunday	14	15 6:30PM Girl Scouts	16 9:30AM Prayer Group 12:00PM Backpack Bags	17 6:00PM Maundy Thursday Soup & Service @ Faith UMC	18 6:00PM Good Friday Service @ Alpha UMC	19
20 	21	22	23 9:30AM Prayer Group	24	25	26
27	28	29 6:30PM Girl Scouts	30 9:30AM Prayer Group			

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Sunday Schedule:
8:45AM Coffee Hour
9:30AM Worship[®]

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