



## CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS DINNER

Saturday, March 11th, 4 – 7 pm

At Pleasant Green UMC – 3005 Pleasant Green Road

\$12 per person / \$5 children under 12 yrs

Dinner includes: Chicken & Dumplings, Green Beans, Cole Slaw, Beets, Rolls, Dessert & Drinks

Sign-up [HERE](#) to volunteer for various tasks needed for dinner on March 11<sup>th</sup>

from Pastor Laura

While “Sabbath” may feel like a far-fetched reality for some people, it is not a foreign concept. We remember in the creation story of God resting on the seventh day. It was so important to God, “Sabbath” made it to the list of God’s “Top Ten Do’s and Don’ts,” otherwise known as the Ten Commandments: remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Yes, Sabbath is not only a commandment, but a precious gift from God for us, God’s people. Sabbatical, on the other hand, might be a little less familiar to some of us. The essence of Sabbatical is also rooted in the Hebrew word sabbat, meaning “to cease” and/or “to rest.” Sabbath is the first practice. The second practice comes out of Leviticus 25:3-4: allowing the land to lie fallow [to cease] every seventh year. The third is that of a Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:8-13).

In the spring of 2022, I started to explore the possibilities of taking a Sabbatical. I knew Sabbaticals were popular in the academic world and among my Presbyterian colleagues were very diligent practitioners of Sabbatical, but it is a much lesser known practice among Methodists, to our own misfortune. Part of my explorations were prompted out of timing: 2022 was my 10-year ministry anniversary. I knew that in the summer of 2023, I would be hitting my 7th year at PGUMC (remember Leviticus 25?) Other personal and vocational reasons contributed to my seeking a sabbatical of which I will not expound on here.

After conversations with the Administrative Council and my District Superintendent, I started making plans and applying to be part of a National Clergy Renewal Program, only to learn in the fall that I was accepted. Pleasant Green is one of 168 congregations across the United States selected to participate in this competitive grant program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., and administered by Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Established by the Endowment in 2000, the program’s grants allow Christian congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities. Ministers whose congregations are awarded the grants use their time away from the demands of daily ministry to engage in reflection and renewal. The approach respects the “Sabbath time” concept, offering ministers a carefully considered respite that may include travel, study, rest, prayer and immersive arts and cultural experiences.

Continued on page 2

## SUNDAYS

### Worship Service

10:30 am

In Person / [LIVE STREAM](#)

### Easter Sunday, April 9th

6:30 am Sunrise Service

followed by breakfast

10:30 Worship

### Children’s Church

During Worship, Old Sanctuary

### Clyde Walker Sunday School

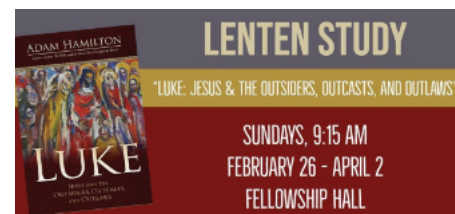
9:15 am

The Parlor or [ZOOM](#)

### Hearts & Hands Sunday School

9:30 am

Seekers room #217



## SMALL GROUP STUDY

*The Good and Beautiful God*

Wednesdays, 10:30 am at Church

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

2023 Unified Budget	350,139.70
YTD Total Income to Operating Fund	33,146.12
TTD Operating Expenses	52,521.98
YTD Operating Fund Balance	-19,375.86
2022 Operating Fund Balance Forward	14,533.53
2023 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance	4,842.33
Current Building Mortgage Balance	128,608.06



Continued from Pastor Laura

“Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Through these grants, we seek to honor pastors for their extraordinary service and enable them to engage in a brief period of rest and renewal. We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well.”

Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, noted that the National Clergy Renewal Program integrates key attributes of healthy congregations, including a mutual respect for the renewal needs of both ministers and the congregations they serve. “The program provides an opportunity for congregations to express appreciation for their ministers’ service and leadership,” Saler said. “At a time when leaders are often praised for their pace of innovation and productivity, the National Clergy Renewal Program pays homage to the timeless wisdom embedded in the practice of reflection and renewal.”

“To everything there is a season.” We hear this refrain from scripture time and again. And in the fall of 2023 (August-October), I will enter into a Sabbatical season to rest, replenish, and restore my being. My hope for a sabbatical emerges from a value I have come to embrace deeply: that rest and renewal is a gift from God. The purpose of the sabbatical is simply to help me be my healthiest self – spiritually, physically, emotionally, vocationally – so that I can lead God’s church with integrity and live the values that I preach week after week.

One of the greatest things I have learned through Sabbath-keeping is that we fail to love God, love ourselves, and love each other well when we believe in the false dichotomy of work and rest, action and contemplation, engagement and reflection. Sabbatical is an invitation to attend to the rest, the contemplation, and the reflection that oftentimes takes a back seat in ministry. My heart is filled with gratitude for this opportunity and it would not be possible without the ongoing love and support of Pleasant Green UMC.

With Love,  
Laura

# LENT 2023



## THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

### seeking: Will you give me a drink?

John 4:5-42 | Exodus 17:1-7

In the heat of midday, Jesus seeks out a Samaritan woman drawing water from a well. His command to her is also a question and an invitation into a new way of life: “Will you give me a drink?” This question creates a dialogue between them in which Jesus sees the woman fully; she leaves the well transformed. In the wilderness, the Israelites essentially ask: “Will you give us a drink, God? Will you take care of us, even now?” This week, we might imagine ourselves at the well or in the wilderness. Are we willing to care for our neighbors, seeking to not just quench thirst, but to find living waters that sustain us all?

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

### seeking: Who sinned?

John 9:1-7 | John 9:8-41

When Jesus and the disciples encounter a blind man along the way, the disciples immediately ask, “Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2). They ask a really bad question, filled with assumptions and harmful theology. Unfortunately, the crowd continues to interrogate the man and dissect the miracle of his healing. This week, let us pay attention to the questions we ask. What assumptions do we carry? What is our intent? When seeking clarity or understanding, what are better questions we can ask?

## THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

### seeking: Can these bones live?

John 11:1-45 | Ezekiel 37:1-14

In Ezekiel’s vision, God asks the prophet, “Can these bones live?” Do we believe new life can come after death? Can we find hope when things are bleak? Can we really trust in God’s resurrection? While we look to God to carry us through the valley, God looks to us to embody hope for others. As we prepare to enter Holy Week, we remember how Jesus began his final journey toward resurrection: by returning to Judea after the death of his dear friend, Lazarus. As we walk through the valley of dry bones that leads us to Calvary Hill, let us seek out the hope that will stir in us and sustain us.

## PALM / PASSION SUNDAY

### seeking: Where are you headed?

Matthew 21:1-11

Imagine you are in Jerusalem when Jesus enters on a donkey. Within the chaos and commotion of that scene, where are you and which way will you go? Will you follow Jesus all the way to the cross? Jesus’ willing surrender to his arrest should always catch us off-guard. As dismayed as the disciples, we ask, “Jesus, are you really headed this way, straight to your death?” Many of our weekly questions throughout the season so far have helped us prepare spiritually for Holy Week. Now we examine if our beliefs have changed our behaviors. Has your path changed? In the midst of opposing forces, which way will you go?

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

### seeking: Will you wash my feet?

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

In his final night with his friends and followers, Jesus shows the fullness of his love by removing his robe, kneeling, and washing the disciples’ feet. As he makes his way around the room, Jesus comes to Simon Peter who protests, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Like Peter, we may also question if God loves us and will care for us, even at the brink of death. In these final hours of accompanying Jesus to his grave, can we seek a posture of trust? Can we allow ourselves to be embraced and loved—by our neighbor and by God?

## GOOD FRIDAY

### seeking: Why have you forsaken me?

Matthew 27:27-50

Of all the questions in our series, this one remains the most unanswerable. Jesus’ final lament gives voice to all those who have been forsaken—those who suffer injustice, those who are abandoned, those who are unjustly convicted. Instead of trying to answer this question with logic or theology, we are invited to live it, to sit with it. Sitting with this unsettling question unearths and unveils many more questions: What do we do in the face of unimaginable suffering? Can we sit in the silence of death and trust that God is there? Will we be in solidarity with those who suffer and grieve?

## EASTER SUNDAY

### seeking: Who are you looking for?

John 20:1-18

Jesus, mysteriously appearing to Mary as the gardener, asks her: “Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?” In the haze of grief, Mary can only see what is right before her—or in this case, what is not before her. It is only when Jesus calls her by name that the veil is lifted and she beholds the resurrected Christ. On this Easter morning, who—or what—are you looking for? Why have you come to the tomb? What kind of Jesus are you looking for? What veils need to be lifted so we can recognize God’s resurrection wherever it occurs?

# EASTER at Pleasant Green

## Easter Sunday, April 9th

6:30 am Sunrise Service  
followed by breakfast

10:30 am Worship

## CHILDREN’S MUSIC

Building on the success of our Christmas Play, the kids will be performing a few songs as we celebrate Easter at PGUMC. Performances will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> Palm Sunday and April 9<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday.

Practice will take place during children's church each Sunday. Join us and feel free to invite others/bring a friend! If you do not plan to attend church either performance day, please let us know. Your kids are still welcome to join practice!

## EASTER EGGSTRAVANGAZA

Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 3-5 pm at PGUMC

We will have an Easter egg hunt for children of all ages, crafts, and Easter themed games.

Donations are needed for the Extravaganza! Please take an egg from the Narthex with suggested items and return the item and egg by Sunday, March 26th.

## DURHAM BULLS BASEBALL

Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 1:05 pm

Join us for fun, food & fellowship! \$17 per ticket.

Reserve your tickets [HERE!](#)  
Payment for tickets can be left in the church office.



## DON'T LOOK BACK: UNITED METHODIST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



Presented by the Center for Leadership Excellence with Will Willimon

March 9, 2023, 7-8 pm

How can we, as United Methodists, utilize our present denomination's challenges as a catalyst for joining Christ in mission? Dedicate an hour to reflect on how we can empower forward momentum in our churches.

Willimon will focus on the laity's role in building a hope-filled United Methodist future. This webinar will remind us who we are called to be and encourage church leaders to rebuild a church focused on missional engagement and a renewed focus on discipleship.



*Sunday Confirmation for our Youth*

## YOUTH

Kaleidoscope is April 21-23 at Camp Don Lee for Middle School Students. Email Emily for more information.

<https://nccumc.org/youth/event/kaleidoscope/>

## SALVADORAN MISSION PROJECT



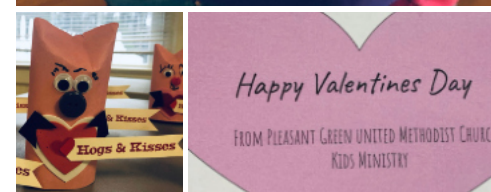
### 2022 Mission Trip

With the summer approaching, (I know it's only a warm spell in February!) our attention begins to drift toward VBS, Summer Camp and Travel. This year, as we have in years past, Pleasant Green plans to return and share with our friends at Salvadoran Mission Projects in Ahuachapan, El Salvador. We have our dates set. They are July 18-25.

El Salvador is a place of dichotomy. They are a proud, strong and hard working people. But there are deep divides between the wealthy and the poor. The areas where we focus our ministry are with some of the poorest of the poor, many of whom "survive" on \$2 a day. Over the years, we have helped to build homes, churches and schools. We have fed countless families and taught hundreds of children of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our partnership runs deep through our connection with these loving folk. And we've also benefitted from their witness to us as we share the laughter, sweat and love that transcends language and cultures.

Would you like to be a part of this powerful and life changing outreach? We will be holding an interest meeting after church on April 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Clyde Walker Classroom. If you have specific questions before our gathering, please contact Brian Wingo at 919-949-4388. We look forward to seeing you!

### Ash Wednesday Service & Pancake Dinner



*Kathryn Dempsey shares her mission trip to Guatemala with Afterschoolers.*



*Thanks to Sandy Quinn for providing lunch for Afterschoolers on our teacher workday!*





Rolling Dough for Chicken & Dumplings



CPR class Feb 25<sup>th</sup>



Wednesday Bible Study



UMM take Jim Crawford to lunch at Bullocks in appreciation for him serving as president for 15 years.

## MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

### Advocacy for Mental Health

If you are a person with lived experience with a mental illness, the family or friend of someone with a lived experience; or, you are just passionate about the needs and rights of people with mental illnesses, your lawmakers want to hear from you! There are two events which will help make your voice heard:

**March 9th** – (9:00 am to 12: Noon) - Join NAMI North Carolina in downtown Raleigh at the North Carolina State Legislature building for Advocacy Day 2023! After a boost from coffee and refreshments, NAMI NC staff will assist you in finding your way to the right lawmakers for a spirited discussion with the potential to result in policy changes to benefit mental health in NC. This event is free of charge, but registration is required. *Register here:*

<http://weblink.donorperfect.com/2023AdvocacyDay>

### Protecting treatment preferences for people with mental illnesses.

While some people have just one episode of a mental illness, such as acute anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder or psychosis, other people may have chronic conditions or repeat episodes, requiring repeat hospitalizations. The best way to protect the treatment preferences of someone prone to repeat hospitalizations is through a Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD). It is a legal document that tells treatment providers your preferences for treatment in a mental health crisis. You can give consent for or decline specific future psychiatric treatment, AND/OR authorize a trusted person to make treatment decisions in a crisis, based on your written preferences (also called health care power of attorney or health care agent). If you are in a psychiatric crisis and in a state of mind where you cannot speak for yourself or communicate treatment decisions, the crisis treatment provider can activate your PAD. Want to learn more? Virtual classes are held the 4th Tuesday of every month from 12:00 to 1:30 pm.

<https://naminc.org/support-and-education/presentations/psychiatric-advance-directives/>

### For more information about mental health:

Call NAMI North Carolina Helpline: 800-451-9682, or Text 919-999-6527, Email: [helpline@naminc.org](mailto:helpline@naminc.org)

*In a crisis?* Call 988, National Suicide & Crisis Hotline

**He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?**

Micah 6:8 (New Revised Standard Version)

## WHAT IS GOD SEEKING?

During this Lenten Season, our church will be studying what are you seeking? What is God seeking? as clearly described in our February newsletter. While the answers to those questions may be different for each person and will be revealed to us throughout Lent (at least Pastor Laura will give us food for thought and reflection!), the National Council of Churches, in their February newsletter, may have at least a partial answer. Their focus is, “This Lenten Season, Let’s Commit to Do, Love, and Walk,” based on the Micah 6:8 verse above. Focal topics include poverty, reparations, democracy, community advocacy, and more. You may want to follow these topics on their social media accounts and share your story using the hashtags #DoLoveWalk & #Micah6v8.

In the meantime, as we reflect on what God wants from us throughout Lent, let us use prayer as our connection to God. Through prayer, he will reveal the answers to you.

*For wisdom in choosing the paths of peace, **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For solidarity with the suffering of the dispossessed, **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For generosity in sharing fairly the world’s resources, **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For respect in conversation with people of other faiths, and none, **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For honesty in knowing and confessing the sin in our own hearts, **Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For grace to change and be changed as you forgive us, **Lord, hear our prayer. Amen***

*Join the Prayer Ministry on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in person at the church or by free conference call. Raise your voice with others, or pray silently, to ask God for peace, healing and love while giving thanks for his abundant blessings. The next Prayer Ministry meeting is on Wednesday, March 15th at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact Gail at [pruettg4mh@gmail.com](mailto:pruettg4mh@gmail.com) or text at 919-696-7283.*



Blessing the pillowcases from the Common Thread Ministry

*Dear Common Thread Ministry & Members,*

*Thank you for all you do to spread God’s love and word to those who are not well and are in need of healing and comfort. I will never forget my father receiving his thoughtful pillowcase while at Hock Family Pavilion. Nor will I ever forget my sister Angela receiving hers as well. I requested to keep it with me as a treasure to cherish. The “butterfly” fabric was Angela– so sweet, happy, and free. This donation is given in honor of Tommy Bullock and Angela Bullock-Bennett.*

*Love, Laura Finley*





# Pleasant Green

*United Methodist Church*

3005 Pleasant Green Road  
Durham, NC 27705

PleasantGreenUMC.org  
pgumc@ncrrbiz.com  
919.383.5764

## Pastor

Rev. Laura Thompson  
lthompson@nccumc.org

## Director of Family Ministries

Emily Robbian  
emily.robbian@duke.edu

## Duke Intern

Trevor Warren  
trevor.warren@duke.edu

## WAYS TO GIVE

We know and believe that part of being a follower of Christ is being generous with our money. We also recognize that the world is changing, the church is changing, and giving trends are changing with new generations. Thank you for your generosity!

Online [www.PleasantGreenUMC.org](http://www.PleasantGreenUMC.org)

Smartphone Text "PleasantGreen" To: 77977

Envelope Mail or slip under office door

**Pleasant Green United Methodist Church**  
**2023 SUMMER CAMP**  
3005 Pleasant Green Road  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-383-5764

Online Registration: <https://bit.ly/PGsummercamp>  
Email: [pleasantgreenafterschool@gmail.com](mailto:pleasantgreenafterschool@gmail.com)  
Church Website: [www.pleasantgreenumc.org](http://www.pleasantgreenumc.org)

**Inviting rising 1st - 6th graders**  
**to 4 weeks of Summer Fun!**

**Arts & Crafts**  
**FIELD TRIPS**  
**June 20-July 22**  
**7:30 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.**  
~Closed Week of July 4th~

**SUMMER CAMP**  
**LEARN & GAMES**

## Week 1: June 19-23

### Vacation Bible School



**9:00am-12:30pm**  
**Lunch on Friday!**

If only attending VBS, register  
at <https://bit.ly/PGVBS23>

## Week 2: June 26-30



Traveling Day Camp at Pleasant Green  
with the staff of Camp Chestnut Ridge  
*Lunch provided all week!*

## Week 3: JULY 10-14

*Pleasant Green's  
Got Talent*  
**PGGT**  
*Music, Theatre, Arts & Crafts*

Camp Talent Show 7/13/23 @ 5:00pm

## Week 4: JULY 17-21

*Let's Get*  
**Cooking**

- © Kitchen safety
- © Cooking skills
- © Following recipes
- © Restaurant trips

