

THE ROAD BACK TO EASTER

Pastor Sam Hayes

Changing Lives by Sharing Christ, Making Disciples, Serving and Giving Hope

Sermon Notes: 4.23.23 "The Road Back to Easter"

One of the greatest *communion* stories in the Bible is our Gospel reading for this week - Luke 24: 13-35. *Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

A communion story? Yes! Cleopas and his traveling companion offer the hospitality of their table to a stranger, reminding us that everybody is welcome at the communion table. This is a great *communion* story because the presence of the Lord is recognized at the breaking of the bread. Jesus (who at that time was still a "stranger"), serves as the host, breaking the bread and offering the cup. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, Jesus is always the Host. Before this was a communion story, though, it was a *travel* story. It helps us remember that we are all on a journey. What are we carrying on our journey? A load of guilt, fear, regret, or disappointment? Are we sad, like Cleopas and his friend? Who will accompany us on our journey? Jesus will! But will we recognize Him? And where are we headed?

This Sunday, we will be reminded that our journey is a journey back to Easter. We are often sad and filled with "what ifs," and the joy of Easter sometimes seems far away. May God help us see that through fellowship, service, the sacraments, and our witness, we can find the joy of Easter again!

See You Sunday! Pastor Sam

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Worship Opportunities

Thursday Worship: 5:30 pm, Sanctuary

Sunday Morning:

This Sunday: 9 am Celebration & 10:55 am Traditions*

*In Person (Sanctuary) and Online
www.fumcgadsden.org/media or
 on Facebook Live: @FUMCGadsden

ACOLYTES

April 23:

April 30: Sara Kate Thornburg & Maddie Tow

Tech Team Schedule

(Please arrive 45 minutes before the service.)

April 23

Celebration: Eric Wright, Bill Haller, Carmen McKiven,

Tradition: Tammy Hayes, Davis Varner

April 30

One Worship Service:

Mark Casey, Parker Casey, Sheila Freeman

**We Want to See You @
Wonderful Wednesday Fellowship Meal**

April 26: Chicken Fingers

**\$7 per person, \$3 under 11
Family Max: \$20**

Text: 256-490-5018 to make a reservation!

**Out of Town on the
Weekend?**

Come to Thursday Worship!

5:30 to 6:00 pm each week

In the Sanctuary

Wednesday Mornings

Bible Study with Pastor Sam

Room 208, In Person Bible Study, A Study of the Book of Romans
Facebook Live @ 6 pm or on demand-via the FUMC APP or website

Small Groups @ Wonderful Wednesday, 6 pm

♦ "I Love Lucy" w/Harriet Murray

Men at the Well Thursday Mornings 7:00 am

You are invited to join the weekly Bible study with the Men at the Well small group. They are currently meeting at the Choice Restaurant.

Something Happens Here by Stephen P. West will be the topic for Lent.

Contact Todd Rains, Mark Condra, Mark Casey, or any of the Men at the Well for more information.

There's a Place for you in Sunday School!

- Living Waters Sunday School Class, **Room 112**, In person and online. Contact a member of the class for the link to join online!
- Martin Fellowship Class, International Bible Studies, **Room 116**
- Multi-Age Sunday School, with Eric Wright and Harriet Murray, **Room 208**
- Pathfinders and Seekers Classes are currently meeting with the Multi-Age Sunday School Class, **Room 208**



Sign Up to Receive Emails from the Church

Sign up to receive emails from the church including the Weekly News, Devotionals, Ministry and Mission Notes, and Sermon Notes.

Go to: <http://www.fumcgadsden.org/sign-up-to-receive-emails>



Have you downloaded the Church APP?

Search: First UMC-Gadsden

Need Help? Contact Sheila Freeman @ 256-490-5018

ELC News

Please support our Roses Sale benefitting the Sara Rabun Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund. We have several families that have benefitted from this program. We honored our dads this past week with donuts and dinosaurs. Sunday, April 23rd from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm, the ELC Board will host a pre-retirement event honoring Jill Moran. We invite the congregation along with the ELC faculty and families to attend. Tuesday, April 25th, the Dog House will be here for our last lunchbox revolt of the year.

—Helene Haller



Youth Ministry News

Wonderful Wednesdays are back!
Dinner at 5:15, please make a reservation!
Sunday School is back for Youth! Room 210
10 am on Sunday mornings.

A Kayaking Trip coming soon!
May 17th Bowling at 6:00 pm

Wonderful Wednesday Fellowship Dinner— April 26— Chicken Fingers
\$7 per person, \$3 for 11 & under, Family Max \$20
Text 256-490-5018 for a reservation.

Children's Ministry

GFUMC Kids Spring Calendar



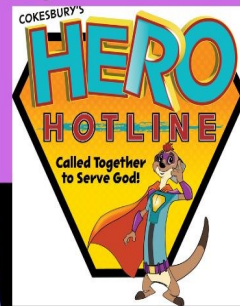
scan
HERE

GFUMC Vacation Bible School
June 5-June 8

FAMILY!

FELLOWSHIP!

FUN!



Wonderful Wednesdays
Wednesday's
@ 6:00

www.fumcgadsden.org/children

Church
Picnic
May 10

Children's Church
Sunday's
@ 9:00 and 11:00
Proverbs 22:6

April Mission Focus

Donations for the Charlsie House (formerly The Love Center)

In October of 2022, the Love Center was rebranded The Charlsie House and a new mission established to serve women only by providing financial support, shelter, food and other items until they can be an independent member of the community. Much has been done to freshen up and clean up the shelter with painting inside and out and the purchase of new furniture. Thank you to all who have donated and helped The Charlsie House to get this far!

There are many items that need to be replenished on a continual basis and First UMC Gadsden's mission team will be collecting items during the month of April. It is through community support for The Charlsie House that will help us to reach our mission of serving women who are in financial crisis!

Red Buckets for donations are located @ the entrances of the church. Items needed:

Hygiene Products: shampoo, conditioner, soap (bar& body wash) hair brushes, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes	Windex
Feminine Products-tampons, pads	White Twin Sheet Sets
Razors	White Twin Blankets
Liquid Detergent	Underwear of all Sizes-Female and Male
Clorox	Sports Bras
Hand Soap	Diapers
Sink Dishwashing Liquid	Food: milk, meat, eggs, bread, cereal, canned food, condiments
White towels & wash cloths	Over the Counter Medications:
White Dish towels	Ibuprofen, Naproxen, Tylenol, Aleve,
Clorox Cleaners	Band Aids, Tums, nausea medicine,
Floor Cleaners-Fabuloso/Pinesol	Melatonin, teeth glue-Fixodent

Clothes Closet News

We need clothes! It's time to clean out closets and bring your spring and summer clothes to the church. If you are unable to get them to the church, call the church office and leave a message. The "Men at the Well" will set up a time to pick them up for you.



Thank you for remembering your Clothes Closet.

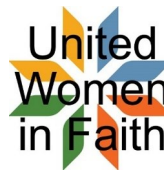
Clothes Closet Team

United Women in Faith

UWF Sunday is Sunday, April 30. There will be one worship service at 10 am. Women will be leading the worship service. All women in the church are invited to be a part of the service that Sunday. Following the service at 10 am, a light brunch will be served! We look forward to seeing everyone in worship and for fellowship following the worship service.

Contact Joan Bigelow to find out how you can help with the food for the brunch.

—Barbara Bennett, President



GFUMC



"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Ladle of Love

Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm, at the Portico entrance.

There are five teams that serve at the Ladle of Love. Teams 1, 2, 3 & 4 serve one Friday per month, and team 5 serves on fifth Fridays. Subs are also needed to serve occasionally. If you are interested in finding out more or serving on a team, contact the church office.

Clothes Closet

Workdays

1st & 3rd Tuesdays

Open to Public

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

May open dates are

5/3 and 5/17

9:00 am to 11:00 am

516 Broad Street Gadsden

Find out more about mission and service opportunities @ www.fumcgadsden.org/serve

Clients Served

	Mar
Ladle of Love	467
Clothes Closet	213

Thanks to our volunteers!

Phone: 256-543-8200

Email: fumc@fumcgadsden.org

#gfumcreconnect2023

Please join us as
we celebrate
Mrs. Jill Moran
and her upcoming retirement from
The Early Learning Center.

2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Sunday, April 23, 2023

Portico Foyer
First United Methodist
Church of Gadsden



SARA RABUN JOHNSON
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Mother's Day Roses Sale

With your donation of \$20 or more, a rose will be placed on the altar on Mother's Day, in honor or in memory of your loved one. All donations provide direct support for ELC families whose children would not otherwise be able to afford the program.

MAKE YOUR DONATION PAYABLE TO GFUMC AND MARK IT
"SRJ SCHOLARSHIP FUND". ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SUNDAY, MAY 7.

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS TO THE FUND MAY BE GIVEN THROUGHOUT THE
YEAR.

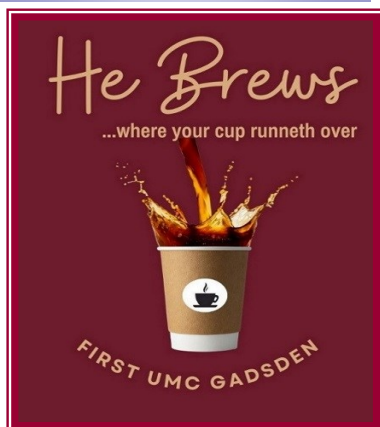


Wednesday, May 10
5 pm to 7 pm

**FIRST UMC
CHURCH
PICNIC**

Kiwanis Pavilion
Noccalula Falls Park
Everyone Welcome!

You'll Have a "Super" Time!



**Please join us for HeBrews Coffee Café
between the Sunday morning worship
services, from 10 am to 11 am.
We can't wait to see you there!!!**



In Psalm 135, we read these powerful words:

Hallelujah! Praise the name of God, praise the works of God. All you priests on duty in God's temple, serving in the sacred halls of our God, shout "Hallelujah!" because God's so good, sing anthems to his beautiful name... (Ps. 135:1-3 MSG)

Shout, "Hallelujah!" Why? Because God is so good. The works of God are awesome. God is so good that we sing anthems to God's beautiful name.

This is what I think about when I think of Gadsden First United Methodist Church. I think about singing praise to God for God's awesome works that are done through this church. I think about singing anthems to God's beautiful name. Easter draws a

hallelujah from my heart like no other time of the year!

Each year GFUMC has received an "Alleluia Offering" at Easter time because of hearts overflowing with praise and thanksgiving. An Alleluia Offering is over and above our regular giving and is always used for something special. For instance, a couple of years ago, our Alleluia Offering was used to create our new Children's Worship Space in memory of Joanne Hightower. Last year, we used 60% of the offering for our worship music, and 40% for Inviting Ministries and to enhance our online outreach. The goal was to grow our church family, and to make the worship experience something to remember.

This year, we plan to use 50% of our Alleluia Offering for our worship music again, and the other 50% for enhanced security and capital improvements. I don't need to explain about the music - you all know how awesome our music is, and we want it to remain that way. But let me say a word about security and capital improvements. We need to update our security cameras, and to be able to hire security for special events. We want our members and guests to feel safe and secure when they come to an event at GFUMC! Capital improvements would include things like replacing and updating the thermostats for our twenty-four HVAC Units, as well as starting the process of replacing our lighting with more efficient LED bulbs. (All of this will provide savings in the long run!)

Last year, we had the biggest Alleluia Offering our church has seen in a long time! Thank you so much! With your generosity, we hope that gifts to our Alleluia Offering will exceed \$35,000 again this year. You can help us reach that goal by giving at least 10% (or more) of your weekly income as a special offering. Pray about it, and then present your offering any Sunday during the month of April. We will announce the total each week, and then celebrate the grand total for our 2023 Alleluia Offering on Mothers' Day.

Shout, "Hallelujah!" because God is so good.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Sam

Pastor Sam
Senior Pastor

Pastor Andy

Pastor Andy
Associate Pastor

Jay

Jay Hedgspeth
Generosity Team Chair

Calendar for April 23-April 30, 2023

April 23 Sunday

9:00 am Celebration, Sanctuary

10:55 am Traditions, Sanctuary

April 24 Monday

9:00 am 1:00 pm ELC Spring Semester

9:00 am 10:00am Exercise Group, Gym

5:00 pm Trustees Meeting

April 25 Tuesday

9:00 am 1:00 pm ELC Spring Semester

5:00 pm 6:00 pm Yoga, Gym

5:00 pm Finance Team

6:00 pm Board of Stewards

April 26 Wednesday

9:00 am-1:00 pm ELC Spring Semester

11:00 am Wednesday Morning Bible Study, Room 208

5:15 pm Wednesday Night meal

6:00 pm Children and Youth Activities & Bible Study

6:00 pm Choir practice

April 27 Thursday

9:00 am-1:00 pm ELC Spring Semester

9:00 am-10:00 am Exercise Group, Gym

5:30 pm Thursday worship, Sanctuary

April 28 Friday 11:00 am-12:00 pm Ladle of Love

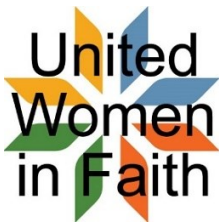
Important Meeting Dates

Monday, April 24, 5 pm, Trustees Team

Tuesday, April 25, 5 pm, Finance Team

Tuesday, April 25, 6 pm, Board of Stewards, Charge Conference

A light supper will be served at Board of Stewards.



Sunday, April 30 is UWF Sunday.

There will be one worship service on April 30
at 10 am, followed by a light brunch after the
service. Everyone is invited!

Save the Dates for May

**May 7, Celebration and Traditions, Second Grade Bibles
& Senior High Graduation Recognition & Brunch**

**May 10, 5-7 pm, Church Picnic
Kiwanis Pavilion, Noccalula Falls**

Immediate Prayer Concerns

Dawn Rains	Nancy Smith
Janie Gray	Donnie Gray
Bibb Holland'	Jane Herb

Continued Prayer Concerns

Rodney Thompson
Chris Gunnells
(Gail McNair's nephew)



Birthdays

Apr 23 Martha White, Len Rainwater
Apr 24 Walter Waid, Daniel Sherrouse,
John Rollins McCord
Apr 25 Tyler Trotter
Apr 26 Ellen Bridges, Kelsey Freeman
Apr 27 Josh Holloway
Apr 28 Adair Arthur
Apr 29 Pat Walker, Becky Thompson,
Benny McNair
Apr 30 Crystal Cornett,
Dr. Charlie Newman



Week of April 16, 2023

In Person Total *134 Online 229
Worship Total 363
One Combined Service *130/229
Thursday Worship *4
No Sunday School
Bible Study Groups *13 Children *30
Youth *18 Nursery *4
Total Small Groups *65 *In Person

General Offering Budget \$12,777.00
General Offering Received \$3,333.00
YTD General Offering Budget \$204,432.00
YTD General Offering Rec'd \$187,356.00

Update Your Contact Information

***Please help us update the
membership records in the
church office with your
current mailing address,
phone number, email
address and birthdays for
all family members.***

***Updates may be sent to
susan@fumcgadsden.org or
call Susan in the church
office @ 256-543-8200.***