

The Messenger

“DO GOOD,
DO NO HARM, &
STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD”



March Message

As we continue to journey in the holy season of Lent, I want to express our heartfelt appreciation for our incredible ministry team we have at FUMCA. March is Staff Appreciation Month, and it is a perfect time to celebrate the unwavering dedication, passion, and love that our staff pours into every corner of our ministry. To all who serve tirelessly behind the scenes and in the spotlight: Happy Staff Appreciation Month! You are deeply valued and cherished.

This month, I invite each of you to join in a special season of prayer as we continue our Lenten Series, The Prayers That Changed Everything. Let us come together in spirit and purpose, opening our hearts to transformation and renewal through the power of prayer.

Mark your calendars for a joyous Palm Sunday celebration on March 29th—our 5th Sunday one-church-wide gathering at 10 AM. We will unite in a combined worship service with our FUMP kids, followed by a delightful potluck and an Easter Egg Hunt. It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate as a family of faith and to share in the joy of community.

On behalf of our dear friend and regular attender, Ms. Kelly Pepper, I am thrilled to introduce the new Be Kind concert series, launching Thursday, March 26th, at 6 PM in the FUMCA courtyard. Kelly's vision for ministry is beautifully simple: "When neighbors take time to meet other neighbors, kindness becomes contagious and that strengthens our whole community." This vision invites ALL voices to be heard, nurtures belonging, and fosters healing in our community. Together with Allyson Marlowe and others, Kelly has secured the first artist to be featured, Bradley Wilson, for this exciting series.



Bradley Wilson, Headliner for "Be Nice" Concert series

Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, and snacks, and come join us in spreading kindness in this welcoming space

I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who attended our vision rollout at the February Leadership Team meeting. We are witnessing an extraordinary time at FUMCA—a time for God's work to shine brightly in new ways. Our vision is clear: to participate as a network of nonprofit partners addressing food insecurity with friends like our

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Jeff Veal
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Vivian Martin
Custodian

Sunday Services
8:30 Grace Life
11:00 Traditional

Church Office
(318) 443-5696
Mon-Thur 9:00-3:00
Friday- 9:00-12:00

POP UP

ART PARTY

SUNDAY • 3/8/26

4-6PM • 50/50 ROOM

FREE



PLEASE REGISTER BY 3/6/26

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

PALM SUNDAY

SUNDAY,
MARCH
29TH

BLENDED WORSHIP

10AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

THURSDAY,
APRIL
2ND

GRACE LIFE WORSHIP

6:30PM

GOOD FRIDAY

FRIDAY,
APRIL
3RD

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

6:30PM

EASTER • 3/5

GRACE LIFE WORSHIP

8:30AM

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

11:00AM

March Mission Collection

We are collecting easter eggs that are filled with candy- **NO CHOCOLATE/MELTABLES!** Please drop them off in the labeled bins in the welcome area and narthex!



5th Sunday Celebration

March 29th



Combined worship at

10am

Potluck to follow

Bring a dish according to your last

name:

M-R Protein

S-Z Side

A-F Dessert

G-L Salad



Weekly Events

Monday

10:30am Staff Meeting
6pm Movement Lab In Fellowship Lounge

Wednesday

5pm Gathering Meal
6pm Small Groups

Tuesday

9:45am Centering Prayer in Chapel
10:30am Art Class in Art Studio
3pm Farmers Market in the parking lot across the street

Thursday

5:30pm Pickleball in Johnson Center

Friday

1pm Mahjong 50/50 room

STAFF APPRECIATION MONTH STAFF APPRECIATION MONTH
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Farmer's Market and LSUA Ag Center; to amplify every voice through expanded arts and music ministries partnering with AMoA, River Oaks, and our local musicians and vocalists where we can; to establish healing, affordable spaces for all ages, especially for our most vulnerable; and to strengthen family ministries that provide essential education and support. This vision builds on nearly two centuries of faithful ministry in our community.

The future of FUMCA is radiant with promise! It is a future where new leaders, ministries, and volunteers will rise to serve and uplift all in our community through God's boundless love. Thank you for being part of this journey. With love, hope, and faith, let us move forward together, united in Christ's transformative grace

-With the Creator's Love,
Rev. Kennon Pickett



Music Ministry

If you've known me for a little while, you know worship is more than my job; my desire is to worship everywhere and in everything I do. My experience of Sundays at FUMCA is my favorite of all the churches which I've directed worship. I wake up at 4:30am naturally, because I am excited. I get to church 30-45 minutes before the Grace Life band because I cannot wait. I love everything about Sundays: when the congregation joins the singing and the sound blooms, the genuine care as we pass the peace, the lyrics that change us, the prayers we didn't even know we needed to hear... but most of all, I love the way God always shows up no matter how I think

I did. As a recovering perfectionist, it's easy for me to focus on what didn't go according to my plan. Here is what God does for me. He stays around. I sit in my office for about 30 minutes after worship and He replaces my pure adrenaline with pure peace. He stays with me, hears all the silent frustrations in my brain, and lets me know when I'm ready to leave. God took me in as a musician and made me a worshipper. He has finally become my life, my strength, and my all.

One of my earliest musical memories is singing "Here I am, Lord" at about 8 years old and meaning every word of it. The verses to the hymn are God's part of the prayer. He says, "I have heard my people cry. I have wept for love of them. They turn away." This wording spoke to me deeply, even then, because God is not angry with us for turning away from Him; He is heartbroken. Just as we have all broken His heart several times, when we return to God, He delights in us. As God calls us to go deeper with Him, He takes introspection to a whole new level. He helps us to understand and recover from our past by filling us with wisdom. He helps us to redefine our present circumstances as we find a new kind of security in Him. Finally, He lays down a pathway to a new, abundant future with Him, but we still have to walk it out.

The refrain to the hymn, is both our response to God and our mission in faith. "Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart." As each of us resonates with this call differently, the beautiful tapestry of God's kingdom finds its way into our lives and into Alexandria. You are a crucial part of it. It IS you that God is calling.
-Elizabeth Nix,
Director of Worship & Music Ministries

Pastoral Letter

March is Staff Appreciation Month! But is one month really enough time to show appreciation for a group of people who do so much all year long? I don't think so. We better get right on it!

Speaking of them as a group—our staff possesses amazing leadership skills, each excelling in their own area of ministry. Together, they make a remarkable team, supporting one another and constantly seeking ways to improve their effectiveness. I greatly appreciate the difference they make every single day through their interactions with church members and pastors alike. We are truly blessed by their dedication and generosity in using their gifts. You will not find a more caring group; they embody the love of Christ daily, welcoming everyone as individuals of immeasurable worth.

Our senior pastor, Rev. Kennon and I both deeply value this team and the vital role they play in our church.

Carly Bratcher, our Program Director, continues to bless us all—from the literal “Blessing of the Children” every Sunday morning at the 11:00 worship service to the thoughtful changes she has led in our Children & Youth ministries. I especially appreciate hearing about youth events like the Halloween/All Saints Day gathering. Carly has taken longstanding traditions and enhanced them, such as the recent training retreat for the Godly Play program used in

children's Sunday School Bible lessons. Thank you, Carly!

Catherine Lytle, our FUMP Director, somehow makes a demanding job look effortless. She possesses many qualities that make her exceptional, but at the top is her unwavering heart of love—for children, parents, workers, and the entire staff and pastoral team. We all benefit from her organizational skills, problem-solving abilities, devotion to God and family, and her inspiring witness among us. Thank you, Catherine!

Elizabeth Nix, Director of Worship and Music Ministries, fills an important role with excellence and grace. Since the choir was diminished by the Covid epidemic, she has worked diligently to rebuild it. It has been a joy to watch her welcome anyone willing to participate, always emphasizing that worship is at the heart of what they do. Collaborating closely with Rev. Kennon, she plans worship services that beautifully draw us into reverence. Under her leadership, the choir has become a close-knit community within the church. I could listen to Elizabeth play piano and sing all day! Thank you, Elizabeth!

Bianca Dixon, our Financial Secretary, is organized and methodical, systematically tackling her to-do list. She handles paying bills, writing checks, and maintaining meticulous financial records. Bianca and Wendi recently represented us

exceptionally well during their first annual Conference audit in January—my hat's off to them! She also recently transitioned our accounting systems to a modern church management accounting software. Her office buzzes with activity as she collaborates with others. Her attention to detail and sweet demeanor is invaluable. Thank you, Bianca!

Wendi Bray, our Administrative Secretary, is the face of the church office at the front desk and is always hard at work. She played a key role in implementing a new communication program called Planning Center—a huge undertaking that she managed alongside her regular duties and phone calls. Wendi has been so helpful to me personally. She's a wealth of information on technical matters and can answer—or find answers to—a multitude of questions that come in daily. Growing up as a PK (pastor's kid) gives her unique insight into how the church functions. Thank you, Wendi!

Gar Pickering, our Director of Creative Engagement, is the newest member of our staff, yet he has quickly become indispensable. It seems all his past work and life experiences have prepared him perfectly for his role here. We see him at both worship services, ensuring everything looks stunning, but much of his work happens behind the scenes. Gar is making the church more welcoming as he promotes top-quality materials about events and ministries in our community. He is about to launch FUMCA's brand new website and has

implemented ProPresenter in our worship experiences. Thank you, Gar!

Jeff Veal, Building Manager, facilitates countless activities through his diligent care of our facilities. He arrives early every morning and works tirelessly, quietly and efficiently. Jeff always surprises me with how quickly he responds to requests for help, no matter the task. He works closely with Vivian to keep our large campus clean, organized, and set up for events. I've never heard him say a negative word about anyone or complain about the demands of his job. Thank you, Jeff!

Vivian Martin, our custodian, works alongside Jeff to maintain the building. Vivian is our early Sunday morning custodian, preparing coffee and making the Gathering Space welcoming. He works energetically with a ready smile, always willing to assist in setting up for the next event. Thank you, Vivian! See what I mean? Words can hardly express it, and a single month is far too short—this team deserves all our thanks, gratitude, and appreciation!

Gratefully,

Rev. Jean Sanders

Associate Pastor and Artist in Residence

