



Mossy Creek United Methodist Church

March 24, 2023

MOSSY CREEK MESSENGER

Food for thought from J

It is not uncommon for some to view the administrative activities of the church as a distraction from our mission of proclaiming the gospel and helping others. For sure, unhealthy focus on money or facilities can occur if we allow it. But I believe attending responsibly to the business of our church is not only an important usage of our spiritual gifts (that include the gift of administration – see 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Romans 12:8), but also, it gives us a regular opportunity to “count our blessings,” as the old hymn encourages. To this end, and after our recent Church Council meeting, I feel called to lift up and thank God for the more “administrative and numerical” blessings our church enjoys - beginning with our lay leadership. We should all give thanks for our dedicated lay leaders who give selflessly of their time and talents to ensure church resources are managed prudently and in accordance with God’s will. I am humbled to work with such a devoted group of Christians who are truly committed to supporting the role our church plays within the body of Christ.

Similarly, we should all be thankful for the vitality our church exhibits in the key areas of finance, member engagement, and missional focus. Thanks to your financial stewardship, Mossy Creek finished 2022 with surpluses in our general operating fund and our building fund. These surpluses will allow us to pursue new ministries in 2023 and to complete the final tasks associated with opening our new building and integrating it into the mission of the church. And speaking of our new building, this is another of those special “administrative” blessings with which God has entrusted us. It is exciting to look forward to the ways this facility will contribute to our future outreach and fellowship opportunities.

Membership growth and worship attendance are two more areas where our blessings can be measured numerically. In 2022, church membership (after deaths and transfers out) increased by 8, thanks to 6 new members by confirmation and 11 by transfer of membership. This was our first year of net membership growth since 2019 and the largest growth since 2009. Our worship attendance trends are also encouraging. Average in-person worship attendance was 86 for 2022, compared with 70 in 2021, and average attendance so far in 2023 has continued to rise to 95 compared with an average of 55 for the same period in 2022. Online viewing trends are also up in 2023, to a weekly average of 114 views versus 53 for the same period in 2022. The recent upgrades to our streaming capabilities and our mossycreekumc.org website should further enhance our ability to reach even more people through these important technologies. Membership engagement in other church activities has also remained strong. Our new Sunday school and mid-week Bible study classes provide important Christian education opportunities to 15+ people per week, collectively, and our United Methodist Women’s and Men’s groups are thriving as important sources of Christian education and fellowship.

Finally, our commitment to missions and outreach has remained strong. Our support, in 2022, of such important ministries as Family Promise and Wayne’s World continued to demonstrate our commitment to meeting a variety of needs in our community. Furthermore, last year’s successful VBS, Fall festival, and Children’s Christmas play show our willingness to engage meaningfully with those children who are the future of our church.

Now obviously, we still have challenges to face and more to accomplish. But what a wonderful thing it is to consider the future Mossy Creek in the light of such blessings as those mentioned above. May we all continue to give thanks to God for these blessings and pray without ceasing for God’s divine guidance and providence in the life of Mossy Creek UMC.

WORSHIP NEWS

I Want to be Great!

In today's world we are encouraged to aim high and to believe we can achieve anything, even greatness, if we just work hard enough. But what is the true measure of greatness in the eyes of God, and how do we achieve it? In this week's passage from Matthew, we will consider both of these questions. I hope to see you Sunday.

Never Miss a Sunday

If you can't worship in person, you can watch our worship services on the Mossy Creek UMC Facebook page. Simply click on the link below to worship live or watch later at your convenience. **Be sure to introduce your Facebook friends to our church and the gospel message by sharing our online worship with them.**

<https://www.facebook.com/mossycreekumc>

CHURCH BUSINESS

Check out our Updated Website

Our Mossycreekumc.org website is being upgraded, complete with a fresh, new look and important updated information about our church. We hope you will take a minute to look over the website and then utilize it as an important resource for keeping up with church activities and events or referring friends and neighbors who might want to know more about our church. You can click on the link below to view:

<http://www.mossycreekumc.org>

DISCIPLESHIP/FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 34

Day 1	-	Isaiah 7-10, Psalm 22, Matt 26
Day 2	-	Isaiah 11-13, Psalm 118, Matt 27
Day 3	-	Isaiah 14-16, Matt 28
Day 4	-	Isaiah 17-19, Psalm 62, 1 Corinthians 1
Day 5	-	Isaiah 20-22, 1 Corinthians 2

Gifts

Supporting the church with our tithes and offerings is necessary for the life of the church and as an important spiritual practice for growing as a disciple and exercising our faith in God's providence. Fortunately, there are several ways for you to give at Mossy Creek. In addition to weekly offering during worship, contributions can be placed in the box outside the office marked "Sally," they can be mailed to the church at PO Box 557, Cleveland, GA 30528, and they may be made electronically by clicking the "**donate here**" button of the church web site. Thank you for your continuing financial support of our church.

Easter Egg and Cookout

Don't forget to plan on staying after worship this week for our Easter egg hunt and cookout. If you would like to volunteer to help in some way or provide filled plastic eggs for the hunt, please contact Carly Adam at carlysadam@gmail.com.

Christian Education Opportunities

Sunday School – 9:00 AM every Sunday

We have classes for children of all ages that focus on providing age appropriate and foundational lessons about the Bible, its main characters, and the fundamental life lessons they hold for us today.

Our Choir Room class is currently reading C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. We would love to have you join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 A.M in the choir room.

The Fellowship Hall class offers an opportunity for group prayer, fellowship, and spiritual devotion using such resources as the Upper Room. The class welcomes anyone wishing to engage in these important spiritual practices.

The Young at Heart class meets in the room adjacent to the church office and follows the traditional Cokesbury Sunday School curriculum.

Bible Studies and Small Groups

The Tuesday Bible study group is continuing an in-depth study of John's gospel. We meet every Tuesday at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Next week we will be discussing chapter 19. It's never too late to get involved in serious Bible study, and we hope you will consider joining us in studying God's word from John's gospel.

Our United Methodist Women are currently studying Shannon Bream's book, *The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak*. Their next meeting will be on Monday night, April 10th at 6:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall.

The United Methodist Men meet for breakfast on the second Sunday of each month to share food, fellowship, and a time of spiritual devotion.

Our Ladies Fellowship Group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Children are our Future...

...but we need volunteers to work with our children on Sunday mornings and throughout the year, as we seek to grow disciples for the future of the church and God's kingdom. If you have a gift for working with and teaching children, don't wait to be asked to use your talent for God's kingdom. Call the office or talk to J to volunteer.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Financial Report

General Fund – Through February 2023

- 2023 YTD Receipts	\$39,631.00
- 2023 YTD Expenses	\$39,919.00
- Net income/(loss)	(\$ 288.00)

Building Fund – Through February 2023

- 2023 YTD Receipts	\$ 27,339.00
- YTD Balance	\$ 46,118.00

Recent Attendance

	<u>In-person</u>	<u>Facebook views</u>
Mar. 19, 2023	89	44
Mar. 12, 2023	74	130
Mar. 5, 2023	92	46
Feb. 26, 2023	109	254

March Birthdays

3/2 - Sally Crowe
3/3 - Doug Head
3/6 - Mike Rogers
3/7 - Lora Everette
3/8 - Randall Campbell
3/9 - Lily Kostulakos
3/10 - Ella Blair
3/11 - Jon Kostulakos
3/13 - Laurene Sosebee
3/14 - Hazel Fain
3/15 - Connie Campbell
3/20 - Mike Dorsey, David Hollingsworth
3/21 - Grant Keene
3/29 - Allen Head

March Anniversaries

3/27 - Brad and Vicky Hunt

NEW PRAYER NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- Madison Biggers
- Alvanell Reeves
- Family of Betty Highsmith
- Family of Mary Lois Cantrell
- Family Helen Sims Clark
- Family of Bob Honiball

BUILDING UPDATE

New Building Available for Limited Use

While we await the last steps in completing our new building and receiving our final Certificate of Occupancy, the building is now available for limited use by our members. If you would like to reserve the building for an event or activity, please contact the church office to inquire about availability.