

THE GARDEN

“...some of the seed fell on good soil” Mark 4:8

June - July 2024 Newsletter

Inside This Issue:

Pastor's Article

Announcements

Pastor's Summer Book
Group

Church Picnic

General Conference
Highlights

Children & Youth Ministry
Announcements

Pastor Barbara's Office

Hours: Available
Mondays, Wednesdays,
and Thursdays by
appointment.

Green Pond United
Methodist Church

www.greenpondumc.com

Celebrate the Little Things by Pastor Barbara

Recently, when I came home after a few days away, I was amazed that the Kousa dogwood tree in our backyard was suddenly in full bloom. How had I failed to notice this tree at all before I left? Its delicate four petal white flowers, tinged with pink around the edges, covered every inch of every branch with abundance. Taking a moment to take in its towering beauty, I remembered when we planted this tree as a sapling when our girls were little—another stark reminder of the passage of time.



As we start the summer with the sermon series “Celebrate,” I have been wondering how well I am doing at delighting in the “little things”? For many, summer will bring big celebrations of graduations and other milestones, family gatherings and vacations. But there are little celebrations of summer as well—flowers and fresh vegetables, children squealing as they run through a sprinkler, the sound of an ice cream truck as it rounds the corner in your neighborhood. When Jesus wanted us to think deeply about what the Kingdom of Heaven was like, he invited us to really look—and really notice—the little things. We read in Matthew 13:33:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

Matthew 13:33 (NLT)

Sometimes a tiny shift in our lives—an act of forgiveness or love, an attempt at making amends for a wrong—can transform a situation, like the tiny yeast transforms the bread. Likewise, Jesus encouraged us to consider the power in tiny faith, saying:

“If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and thrown into the sea,’ and it would obey you!”

Luke 17:6 (NLT)

I do not know why I feel like I have to wait for a big milestone or big project to be completed or a time when everything is just right before I can truly celebrate. An interesting conversation takes place between the Old Testament prophet Zechariah and an angel that I found to be a fascinating reminder. We read:

(continued inside)

Announcements

GPUMC FINANCE SUMMARY APRIL 30, 2024

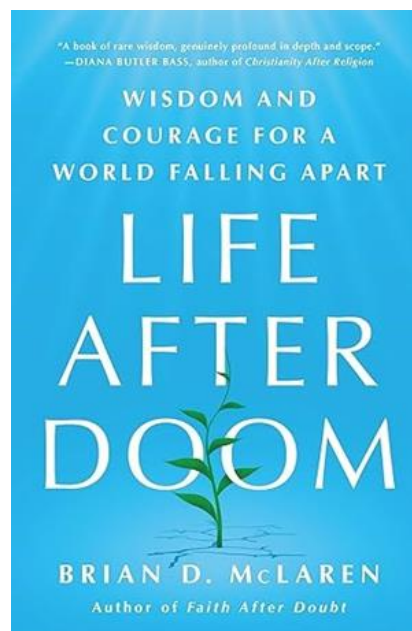
	APR. 2024
INCOME	18,001.26
HOUSING	
REIMBURSE	1,833.33
EXPENSES	(21,022.64)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(1,188.05)
	YTD 2024
INCOME	73,849.77
HOUSING	
REIMBURSE	7,333.32
EXPENSES	(85,015.97)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(3,832.88)

“Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has sent me. Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.”
Zechariah 4:9, 10 (NLT)

You see, the temple would take a very long time to build, but here God rejoices in its small beginning—the foundation being laid. What a great reminder that “small beginnings” are good and should not be overlooked. God rejoices in our small beginnings, those moments when the dream God has put in our hearts begins to take form. As we head into summer, I invite you to consider the small beginnings God may be calling you to, and the small beginnings that God is calling us to as a church community. Let’s not overlook the gifts from God, which bring delight. This summer, let’s notice the “little things” and celebrate!

Pastor’s Summer Book Group—Pastor Barbara

Wednesday evenings **August 7th and 14th at 7 PM**, we will meet at church to discuss the newly released book, “Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart” by spiritual writer and activist Brian McLaren. The book is an exploration of how to live with resilience, wisdom and love in our turbulent times. McLaren has been writing at the intersection of religious faith and contemporary culture for many years. If you are interested, please order the book and read it ahead of time, and email Pastor Barbara to let her know you would like to attend. Pastorbarbara@greenpondumc.com. Please invite interested friends. The book can be ordered at Amazon, Cokesbury, and Barnes & Noble.



Church Picnic—Pam Boddy

On Sunday, July 28, the church will have its annual picnic! Once again, we will be entertained by the Easton Municipal Band. (Did you know that the Easton Municipal Band is one of the oldest, continuously performing municipal band in the United States?) There will be food and games as always. Save the date and invite a friend!



Picture from Easton Municipal Bank website (<https://www.eastonband.com/currentpictures>)

General Conference Highlights—Pastor Barbara

This year's General Conference of the United Methodist Church (world-wide conference held every four years) was the Conference postponed since 2020. Here are a few outcomes you should know.

- Regionalization Passes by 78%
 - This means that while we will remain united by our shared doctrine and theology, this legislation will allow each area of the world to do ministry in its own context. Regionalization will need to be approved by our local Annual Conferences in 2025.
- Full Communion with Episcopal and Moravian Churches Approved
 - This will allow for the sharing of clergy and recognition of sacramental rights. *(Awaiting Episcopal Church Vote.)
- First Black Female President of the Council of Bishops
 - Bishop Tracy S. Malone, resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference, is the first black woman in the history of the worldwide denomination to be elected president of the Council of Bishops!
- Deacons Granted Sacramental Authority
 - Deacons can now offer Holy Communion and conduct baptisms where they have been appointed to serve whether that is a church, outreach ministry, or mission.
- Social Principles Revised
 - General Conference delegates supported a revision of the Social Principles that deletes the phrase “the practice of homosexuality...is incompatible with Christian teaching.”
- First Native American Bishop to Preside at General Conference
 - Bishop David Wilson, resident bishop of the Great Plains Conference, was elected the first Native American Bishop in a historic election in 2022 and thus became the first bishop to preside at a General Conference in our history!
- 40 Year Ban on Gay Clergy Lifted
 - With a 93% approval rate, General Conference votes to remove the ban on ordination of clergy who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.” In addition, delegates voted that superintendents are not to penalize clergy or churches for holding—or refraining from holding—same sex weddings.

Children & Youth Ministry Announcements

Upcoming

Safe Sanctuary Training

June 2 at 11:30am

VBS

July 15 -18 9:30am

Grow in God's Love!

Safe Sanctuary Training

Following our church service on June 2, we will offer Safe Sanctuary Training. This meeting is appropriate for anyone in the church interested in working with our youth. Leadership, children ministry volunteers, and parents are highly encouraged to attend!

Kid Worship & Teen Worship

Kid and Teen Worship will end for summer break on June 9.

As always, our Nursery and Pray-ground is open for younger toddlers and preschoolers.

Connect in God's Love!

Summer Camp at Pocono Plateau

Pocono Plateau has released their 2024 summer camps brochure. If you are interested in sending your child to camp this summer, please check out their website: <https://www.poconoplateau.org/summer-camp/#2023summercamp>. If you need financial assistance, please see Megan Schaeffer or Jen Biddle.

Vacation Bible School

Our adventure camp themed VBS will take place from 9:30am to 11:30am on July 15 to July 18, 2024. VBS is open to kids and youth from age 4 to 15. We will have a special group just for middle schoolers! Each day we will have snacks, crafts, science activities, games, songs, and Bible Stories! Invite a friend! Please register now: <https://greenpondumc.breezechms.com/form/dcb3e2>.

Special Request for VBS

We are looking for camping equipment and gear (such as smaller tents, chairs, cooking tools, etc.) to use as decoration for VBS in July. If you have anything we could borrow please see Megan Schaeffer or drop off in the church office.

We will be decorating for VBS after church on Sunday, July 14. If you would like to stay to help please save the date!