



Gouverneur First United Methodist Church
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 (Return Service Requested)

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Meet Jesus ~ Follow Jesus ~ Serve Jesus
 Love Boldly ~ Serve Joyfully ~ Lead Courageously

First UMC of Gouverneur Keeping Connected

Monthly Newsletter March & April of 2026



MONTHLY MESSAGE

A Lenten reminder by Alyssa Lalka

Lent



We are currently in the season of Lent

What hindrance to God are you giving up?

What can you add to your life to bring you closer to God?

Announcements:

- ~ Ongoing Book Study, hosted by Dr. Don Schuessler every Monday from 7-8:30pm at One More Chapter Book Store. Currently studying "Promises Made in the Dark"
- ~ North Gouv. UMC's Soup & Bake Sale Sat. March 14th from 10am-1pm at First UMC in the fellowship hall
- ~ Trustee Meeting Mar. 19th at 6pm
- ~ Palm Sunday Mar. 29th. Cantata at 4pm in the Sanctuary
- ~ Maundy Thursday Service Apr. 2nd at 7pm in Brown Chapel
- ~ Good Friday Service Apr. 3rd at 7pm in Brown Chapel.
- ~ Easter Sunrise Service Apr. 5th at 7am at North Gouv. UMC
- ~ Easter Worship Apr. 5th at 11th at 11am at First UMC

Last 2 Months' Happenings:

- ~ Ash Wednesday Ashes for Early Birds as well as Imposition of Ashes evening service
- ~ Journeying through the season of Lent

This month's Special Envelopes:

You have received 2 pre-labeled envelopes for specific ministry donations:

March- Easter Offering April- Shared Ministries (shared costs for the denomination)

The Easter Offering will bless both the Gouverneur Neighborhood Center and the UMCOR Refugee Fund.

Please give as your heart calls you to!

March Scriptures: "I Will Meet You" Sermon Series

March 1st : John 4:4-26

March 8th : John 13:1-19

March 15th : Matthew 4:1-11

March 22nd : John 20:19-23

March 29th : Mark 8:31-38 & Mark 15:21-41

Bible Study Update:

Bible Study held every Wednesday morning 10am. ALL are welcome to attend! Covering the book of Acts.

Contact us!

Phone: (315)287-2440 **Email:** firstumcgouverneur@gmail.com **Website:** www.gouverneurumc.org

Foodness for The Soul

Baker's Recipe:

Dr. Schuessler's Whole Wheat Bread

1 cup Whole Wheat Flour (or another ½ - 1 cup for heavier bread)
5 cups All-Purpose White Flour (approximately)
1/3 cup Crisco
1 Egg
1 cup Water
1 cup Milk
2 Tablespoons Brown Sugar
2 teaspoons Salt
2 packets (or 2 tablespoons) Active Dry Yeast

Well... to be honest... it should be called Sue's Whole Wheat Bread because Glenda's sister Sue taught me how to make it... in 1979! We were visiting their Aunt Fanny and Uncle Herman Wynja (fine Dutch folks!) in Whitinsville, MA, in the first summer after we were married. I mentioned how much I liked homemade bread to which Sue immediately responded, "Then I'll show you how to make it!" So... here's what she said:

Enjoy!

~ submitted by: Dr. Don Schuessler

Into a large mixing bowl, add the Crisco (after having melted it in a microwave, leaving it warm but not boiling), the warm water (again, warm but not boiling), the milk (once again, gently warmed in microwave), the egg, the brown sugar, the salt, the yeast. Mix all of this, maybe with a table knife. Next, add the whole wheat flour. Mix in thoroughly. Next, gradually add the all-purpose white flour. When it gets too hard to mix with the knife, begin to knead it all together with your hand(s). Keep kneading until no longer sticky. If too sticky, add more all-purpose white flour. If too dry, add a small amount of water. You'll be left with what is called *the bulk*. Now, it's time to leave the bulk in a warm place to rise. I like to put it in front of our fireplace. It can also be placed in your oven. For this approach, heat your oven at 175 degrees (F) for 1 minute (yes, just 1 minute!) and then turn it off. Cover the bowl with a towel or cling wrap and leave it either in front of the fireplace or in the warmed oven to rise until about double. This usually takes about an hour. Now it's time for one of the most fun parts of bread baking... punching down the risen bulk! Whether you're 3 years old, 103, or anything in between, watching the bulk deflate as you plunge your fist into the top of the risen dough is the cat's pajamas. Once you've deflated the bulk, it's time to form your loaves. This recipe makes 2 large bread loaves... or about 8 small ones. If you're making two large loaves, simply split the dough in half. If making smaller loaves, pull off something approx ½ the volume of the inside of the pan. Lightly spray each pan with Pam. Clean and then dust a couple square feet of your kitchen counter with a small amount of flour. Now flatten the portion of dough into a rectangle about ½ - ¾ inches thick. Then, gradually and tightly roll up the dough from one end to the other... using your fingers to keep the roll nice and tight. Next, place each rolled up dough into its pan with the seam down (to prevent the roll from opening up while baking.) Now, it's time for another rising just like that above, but this time it's only necessary to cover the pans/dough with a towel. After about an hour, each should be significantly risen, filling the baking pan and perhaps quite a bit above it. Now you're ready to bake! Preheat the oven to 400 degrees (F). Then place the pans on the oven racks and bake for 20 minutes. Remove and immediately take the loaves out of their pans and place each on a cooling rack. After about 10 minutes, your bread is ready to slice and eat! Remember to store any you don't eat in a sealed plastic bag, and that it's best to either eat your bread over the next few days or put it in the refrigerator or freezer if you won't be eating it promptly. (You'll notice there are no preservatives in the recipe!) This bread is especially yummy toasted with jelly or butter, but good however you choose.

Blessing Box Suggestions:

Cereal, oatmeal, pasta, shelf stable milk, bread, peanut butter, canned meats, pre-made meals such as leftovers



Healthy Habit:

BODY: March is National Nutrition Month!

Goals: Making half of your plate with fruits and vegetables, staying hydrated, and incorporating daily and intentional movement.

HOME: -Focus on spring cleaning to reduce dust, changing HVAC air filters for better air quality.
-Begin decluttering one room at a time to reduce stress.

UMC Happenings (You Should Probably Know)

~ **Easter Cantata!** This year's Easter Cantata will be *Here Is Love. Here is Love* utilizes both traditional and contemporary melodies to tell the wonderful story of Jesus and His love for us. Choir rehearsals began in January and continues through March. The performance is on Palm Sunday March 29th at 4pm in the Sanctuary.



Joys & Concerns of January/February:



- ♥ Happy birthday to everyone in January and February!
- ♥ Gouv. Volunteer Fire Dept!
- ♥ Volunteers working towards a new children's ministry!
- ♥ Safely home from travels!
- ♥ Beowulf (dog) healed well!
- ♥ Pat's dad's procedure went well!
- ♥ Sunshine through the cold!
- ♥ Being together!
- ♥ Online Worship being available!
- ♥ Seeing Dolores Daniels in church!
- ♥ Grateful to Amber O. & RipIt helping lead me back to my relationship with God!
- ♥ Joyous vacation for the Schuesslers!
- ♥ USA Men's & Women's Hockey wins Gold!
- ♥ Mike Hamilton playing music!

- ∞ Naaman's brother, Allen, passing
- ∞ Jaime in a car accident, but is ok
- ∞ Coworker's son in a snowmobile accident
- ∞ Kim's husband's quick re-deployment
- ∞ Nort Taylor's passing
- ∞ Randy Durham's passing
- ∞ Peace for our country rather than division
- ∞ Sick households
- ∞ Relationship of a dear friend
- ∞ Those with COVID
- ∞ Frank Daniels' parole hearing
- ∞ Chris Daniels
- ∞ Fur baby Athena crossed the Rainbow Bridge
- ∞ Boonville
- ∞ Joshua & Ronan's medical appts
- ∞ Little Benson's medical care

Shout Outs for January/February:

Scripture Reader for Jan: Peter P Jr.

Scripture Reader for Feb: Jeff P Jr. Greeters: Annetje G & Libby S

Don S: Guest Preacher Mike H: Special Musical Guest

Alyssa L: Office Help JoAnne J: Office help

Kennedy M: Finance Help Janet M: Finance & Office Help

Bonnie S: Weekly Deposit fill-in

Judy B: Friday Hot Lunch/Blessing Box

Easter Message

by Pastor Ben Lalka

Easter greetings beloved of God,

Throughout this Lenten season our congregation has been walking a journey together called “I Will Meet You...”. Week by week we explored the places where Christ promises to encounter us along the road of faith. We met Jesus on the road with confused disciples, at the well with a searching heart from a Samaritan women, at the table where grace kneels to wash weary dirty feet, and in the wilderness where faith is tested and strengthened. We gathered in the upper room where fear gave way to peace, and we stood at the cross where love was poured out for the world. Each place reminded us of a simple truth: faith grows where we meet Jesus together.

John Wesley understood this deeply. Early Methodists gathered in small groups called class meetings, not because they had perfect faith, but because they believed Christ continued to meet people in honest community. There they shared their struggles, encouraged one another, and asked a simple question: “How is it with your soul?” These gatherings became places where faith was strengthened because Christ was present among them. However, the journey of Lent does not end at the cross.

On Easter morning we arrive at the garden. John’s Gospel tells us that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark (John 20:1–18). She came carrying grief, confusion, and the heavy finality of death. When she found the tomb empty, her sorrow only deepened. Even when Jesus stood before her, she did not recognize him at first. The risen Christ was closer than she realized, yet hidden by tears. Then everything changed with a single word, “Mary.”

When Jesus called her by name, recognition dawned. Grief gave way to joy. Despair turned into proclamation. The first witness to the resurrection was not someone who had everything figured out, it was someone who simply encountered the living Christ in the garden. That is the good news of Easter. The risen Jesus still meets people in unexpected places. He meets us in the middle of our questions, our fears, and even our grief. And when he calls our name, resurrection begins to take root in our lives. Mary did not remain in the garden. Jesus sent her to share the news: “I have seen the Lord.” The journey that began in sorrow became a mission of hope.

In many ways, that is the journey we have taken this Lent. At every step along the way, Christ has been waiting for us. And as Easter dawns, we are reminded that the story is not finished. The risen Christ continues to meet us; in worship, in Scripture, in prayer, and in the small gatherings where believers encourage one another in faith. After Easter, we will be offering opportunities to join class meetings, small groups where we can continue this journey together. These gatherings are simple but powerful spaces to share life, pray for one another, and encourage each other as we grow in faith. Just as the early Methodists discovered, Christ often meets us most clearly when we walk the journey of discipleship side by side.

Easter also calls us to live out resurrection hope in tangible ways. This year our special Easter Offering will support two important ministries. Fifty percent of the offering will go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Refugee Fund, which provides life-saving support to people who have been displaced from their homes around the world. The other fifty percent will support the Gouverneur Neighborhood Center, whose work blesses many people in our own community through compassion, care, and practical help. Resurrection faith always moves outward toward love, generosity, and service.

Perhaps the invitation of Easter is simply this: to keep showing up in the places where Jesus promises to meet us. Because the same Lord who called Mary by name in the garden still calls each of us today. Christ is risen. And he is still meeting us along the way. Christ is risen indeed!

Easter Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Benjamin Lalka



HOLY WEEK

John 12:12-19

Mark 11:15-19

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son.

John 3:16

Luke 22:14-23

John 13:26-30

Luke 22:39-46

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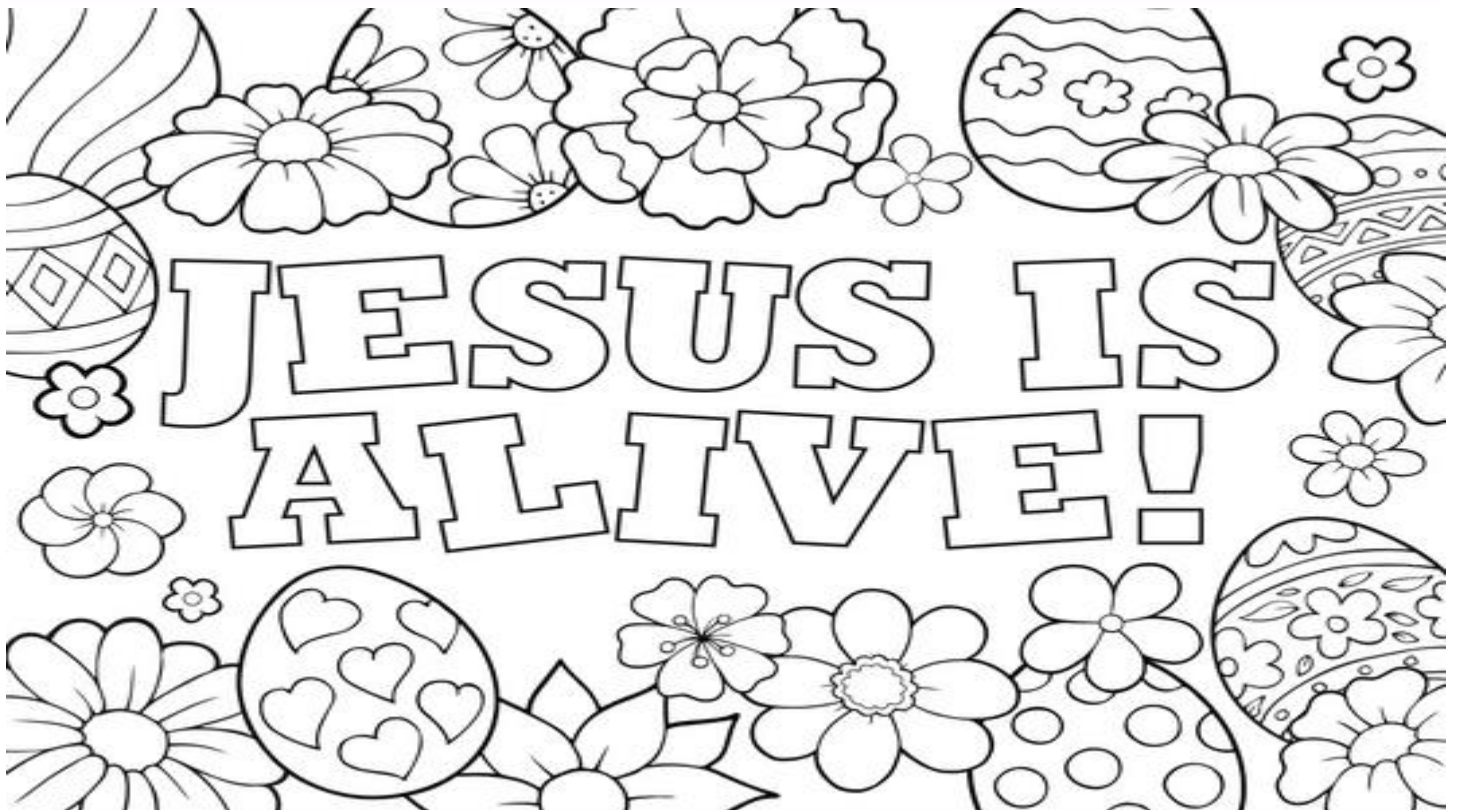
John 19:1-37

John 19:39-40

John 20:1-18

HE IS RISEN

HAPPY EASTER



2026 events at Aldersgate



MAY 9
JUNE 13
SEPT 26
OCT 31

SITE WORK DAYS

9am - 3pm
Work is available for all skill and ability levels, with lunch provided.

MAY
1 - 2

MEN'S RETREAT

Work with a home chef to learn about creating dinners at home. Devotionals lead by Rev. Nick Bufano.

MAY
15 - 16

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join us at Aldersgate for a night of chocolate making, community, and diving into faith journeys together.

JUNE
6

OPEN HOUSE

1 - 4pm
Bring the whole family for a beautiful afternoon in the Adirondacks.

JULY
17 - 19

FAMILY LIFE WEEKEND

Introduce your family to a Christian camping experience.

SEPT
5

ADIRONDOGS

Bring your pup to camp! This day long program will provide an opportunity to play and relax alongside other pet-friendly families.

SEPT
18 - 19

MEN'S RETREAT

Head to camp ahead of the holidays begins to find respite in nature and fellowship with peers.

OCT
2 - 4

ROOTED WELLNESS RETREAT

Discover unique crafts and gifts made by local artisans.

OCT
17 - 18

YARN RETREAT

Join Marianne Augenstein & Hannah Mudge for a weekend of quilting and knitting.

NOV
6 - 7

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join us to learn a specialized technical baking skill. Spiritual formation lead by Rev. Dr. Pam Harris

DEC
12

FESTIVAL OF TREES

1 - 4pm
Kick off the Christmas season at Aldersgate! Details to follow.

Learn More & Register here!



SUMMER CAMP 2026



ALDRSGATE

JULY 5 - 10

**SUMMER KICKSTART!
HANGOUT TREK**

JULY 12 - 17

**'LIL GATORS MINI
ALDRSGATORS**

JULY 19 - 24

**SPORTS & GAMES
WET AND WILD**

JULY 26 - 31

**ALDRSGATE ADVENTURE JR
ANIMAL EXPEDITION**

AUG 2 - 7

**ALDRSGATE ADVENTURE
ANIMAL EXPEDITION JR**

**JUNE 29
AUG 7**

ONE DAY ADVENTURE



**LEARN MORE AND
REGISTER TODAY!**



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