

APRIL 2025

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The monthly newsletter of Brown St. & Congress St. UMCs

## PREPARATION

By Pastor Ryan

### IN THIS ISSUE

What's Happening at  
Brown St. & Congress St.  
Holy Week

For weeks now, in both my Brown St. UMC office as well as my Congress St. UMC office, the music of my day has been the banging, slamming, and beeping of construction. At Brown St., crews have been working for months to build apartments for the seniors who will be our newest neighbors very soon. At Congress St., many hands have been taking our parlor down to bare concrete to build it back up into a space that welcomes everyone who steps through our doors.

The work of building something seems to go so fast. It feels like just yesterday there was a parking lot across the street from Brown St., and as of this past Tuesday, siding was going onto the three story building and crews were working inside. When I left the Congress Street office today, I saw new flooring where recently there was bare concrete.

What seemed to take a while - and to be much more noisy - was the preparation. It felt like it took months for crews in dump trucks (with tailgates that slam loudly when their load is dropped) and bulldozers to prepare the lot downtown for a new building. The crew at Congress St. spent days preparing the surface of our parlor floor, making it just right, to be able to put down the new flooring. I actually commented to one of the workers that it seemed that the preparation was most of the battle. He confirmed.

I couldn't help but think about the garden my wife, girls, and I planted in our backyard last year - the garden we will have to soon start to prepare for planting with a tiller and rakes and shovels. It takes a lot of effort to prepare a space for something new to be built, or to grow, or to take shape. Some things have to be hauled away; chunks of plastic that have been buried under the soil of our back yard will be picked out of the earth and tossed, lumps of adhesive from old flooring have to be scraped smooth. It takes time, energy, patience, and faith in something good to spend that kind of time in the preparation stages.

And as frustrating as some of the sounds of construction can be, I've been grateful for it all in this season, especially for it to fall during Lent. What better reminder could there be of God's love for you and me? God is like a skilled worker who always sees us with the full picture of the finished project in mind, and patiently works with us to prepare our hearts for something good to be built, to grow, to come into focus.

To be clear, some of what feels like demolition in our life is just the awful circumstances of a broken world, not God causing them for our growth. But sometimes, especially when it comes to me having to learn to lay down my version of how things are supposed to go to accept how things are, I think God's work of preparation is underway. As I've journeyed in this season of Lent, following along with our "Give Up Something Bad for Lent" study, I've been aware of my own ability to participate with God in the ongoing preparation and refining of my own heart, and I am grateful.

Beyond my own heart and the construction in or around our buildings, I can see the work of preparation being done in our congregations as well. We are in a season of discerning who we want to be and where we want to go, how we can work together in our mission to make disciples, what work is ours to do, and how to invite others into this life with us. We are digging foundations, preparing floors, tilling soil. Part of this preparation requires us to work on our own hearts.

So, where do you think God could be preparing our community for what's next? What preparation work do you need to undertake with God in your own life and heart?

May you remember that you are not alone in this work, but that God and our community are working alongside you, patiently and lovingly. May your - and our collective - preparation lay a strong foundation for something new and beautiful to be built.

# What's Happening in Our Community

## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

### MAUNDY THURSDAY

**4/17/25 @ 6:00pm, Congress Street UMC**

Bring a side or dessert to share and join us in the Fellowship Hall for an evening of music, celebration, and serving one another.

### GOOD FRIDAY

**4/18/25 @ 6:00pm, Brown Street UMC**

Join us for a service of contemplation and reflection.

### EASTER SUNDAY

**4/20/25**

9:00am, Brown Street | 10:30am, Congress Street

## EASTER OFFERING: GREENHILL AMANI SCHOOL LIBRARIES

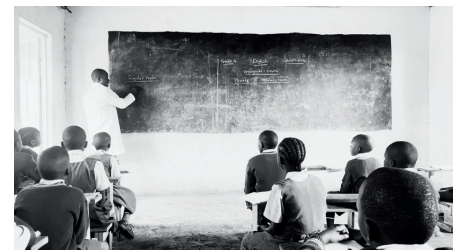
In July of 2024, I had the privilege of traveling to Kenya with my mom and our incoming District Superintendent Saneta Maiko to spend time at the school his brother, Jared, founded in their home village of Ekerenyo. The

Greenhill Amani School educates over 150 students from preschool through Grade 6, employs 8 teachers, and has dreams to continue to expand. Both the American and Kenyan school boards are working to help them realize this dream and become self-sufficient, but there are still needs to be met in the meantime.

Right now, the children are learning with chalkboards and notebooks; they have no textbooks, no fun reading books, no laboratories or art/music supplies, etc. I was particularly shocked by the lack of books. So after discussions with Saneta, Jared, and my mom, we decided to undertake raising funds to provide classroom libraries. For a lockable shelf that teachers can monitor and a plethora of books, the cost is estimated to be around \$2500/classroom, totaling \$20,000 for the 8 classrooms they currently have. Another one of our teammates and friends is working on raising funds for textbooks. Thanks to the generosity of friends, family, and the Northwest District, we have a strong start.

Along with other churches, we are being invited to participate in this important mission work by giving to the Greenhill Amani School Libraries as a special Easter offering. On April 20 & 27, we will be collecting money at both Brown & Congress Streets to support this project. If you would like to donate, please mark your contribution "Amani Library" and put it in the offering plate or drop it by either office. All funds will directly support the purchase of shelves and books, hopefully from businesses in Ekerenyo. If you have questions, I am happy to answer them! Thank you in advance for your support of our global neighbors and education. Myself and the students and teachers at Greenhill Amani are grateful for you!

- Maia Gibson



# What's Happening in Our Community



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 - Kerry Hardesty (BS)  
1 - Jane Rhoda (CS)  
2 - Cliverda Gladden (CS)  
6 - Kylee Cobbs (BS)  
7 - Don Sanders (BS)  
22 - Nicolette Elliott (BS)  
23 - Becca Fielding (BS)  
24 - Penny Glotzbach (CS)  
24 - Juniper Nelson (CS)  
25 - Nancy Eberle (BS)  
28 - Dolores Flynn (CS)  
28 - Donna Longest (CS)  
28 - Leo Reed (CS)

## APRIL OFFICE HOURS

The hours listed below are the hours Maia is in the office. Pastor Ryan is in and out. If you need to meet with him, please reach out to him or Maia to schedule a time!

### **Brown Street:**

Tuesdays: 10am - 4:30pm

### **Congress Street:**

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 10am - 4:30pm

Fridays: Flexible

Pastor Ryan's days off are Friday & Saturday.

Maia's days off are Monday & Saturday.

## What's Happening at



## THANK YOU

The Fielding family thanks everyone at Brown Street for your support during Norma's surgery and recovery. The meals, cards and prayers have been greatly appreciated. - Norma, Bill, & Becca

## MONTHLY MISSION: FAMILY DINNER

Family Dinner is our Tuesday night worship service! Each week, we prepare a meal that we eat with our neighbors as we learn more about Jesus and connect around the table. To donate to Family Dinner, mark your envelope "mission" and place it in the collection plate on Sunday morning or write "mission" in the memo line at [brownstumc.org/give](http://brownstumc.org/give).

### **Tuesdays**

**Doors @ 5:00pm**

**Dinner @ 5:30pm**

We could always use your help! Kitchen prep begins around 3:00pm and Table Hosts huddle at 4:45pm each week. Come help prepare/serve food, be Jesus to our neighbors around the table, and wash dishes! All are welcome!

## What's Happening at



**CONGRESS ST.**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## CIRCLE OF JOY

**Next Meeting: Monday, 4/14/25 @ 6:30pm, Room 201**

**Hostesses:** Adrienne Davis & Cliverda Gladden

All women are welcome to join us!

## OPEN TABLE MEAL & EGG HUNT!

**Sunday, 4/13/25, 11:45am**

We are kicking off Holy Week with a community meal and egg hunt! Join us for a free meal and activities for kids of all ages! We will also be delivering meals to some of our neighbors.

**Menu:** Chicken & noodles, green beans, slaw, rolls, and Easter cookies.

**Activities:** Egg hunt, crafts, cookie decorating

Want to help with the egg hunt? Reach out to Liz Peters at [epeters3689@gmail.com](mailto:epeters3689@gmail.com).

Want to help with the meal? Reach out to Chad Johnson at [chadj@purdue.edu](mailto:chadj@purdue.edu).

## EASTER LILIES

**\$10 each | Orders due 4/15/25**

If you would like to order a lily, complete the yellow order form at the back of the sanctuary and mark your payment "lilies." Both can be placed in the offering plate or turned into the office!

## BALANCE & FALL PREVENTION CLASS

**Tuesday, 4/8 @ 1pm | Monday, 4/14 @ 1pm**

This free class, led by a physical therapist, walks you through different exercises to help improve your balance. All are welcome and encouraged to do what they are able to do. Questions? Contact Lynn Nelson at [nelson@cosumc.org](mailto:nelson@cosumc.org).

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

Gardening season is upon us!

**About our gardens:** Our vegetable garden is one of the GrowLocal Lafayette Community Sharing Gardens. Our plants and seeds are provided through GrowLocal. This garden is for anyone and is part of our neighborhood outreach ministries.

**Ways to help:** Help is needed with planting, watering, and weeding. We will be receiving our cool weather crop plants on Saturday, April 12 at 11:00am. If you are willing to come help plant, we would appreciate it! The planting should take no more than one hour. Watering is done about 3x's/wk depending on the amount of rain we receive and may take up to an hour. If you have questions or want to volunteer, please contact Lynn Nelson by email at: [nelson@cosumc.org](mailto:nelson@cosumc.org) or by phone/text at: 765-491-7856.

### **BROWN STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Charis Vander Plaats  
Director of Worship

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

### **CONTACT BROWN STREET**

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### **CONGRESS STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Jake Ohlemiller  
Pastor of Worship Arts

Rick Puckett  
Pastor of Visitation

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

Shane & Teri Lynch  
Custodians

## **WORSHIP WITH US**

**Sundays at 9am - Brown Street**

[www.facebook.com/BrownStreetUnitedMethodistChurch](http://www.facebook.com/BrownStreetUnitedMethodistChurch)

**Sundays at 10:30am - Congress Street**

[www.facebook.com/evolvingfollowers](http://www.facebook.com/evolvingfollowers)

**If you are able and interested in receiving this newsletter via email,  
reach out to Maia at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org).**

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