

MARCH 2025

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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



## GIVE UP SOMETHING BAD FOR LENT

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It's hard to believe we are here, just days away from Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, undertaking the journey to the cross yet again. Lent, this season of repentance, self-examination, and reflection is one of the harder periods of the Christian year. There's a sense of foreboding as we get closer and closer to Good Friday, a heaviness that can seem to confine joy into pockets. We are asked to take a good, hard look at ourselves in the mirror, confess, repent, repair. To challenge ourselves to give something up or add something in.

This year will be no different. As part of our Lenten practice, we are studying *Give Up Something Bad for Lent* by James W. Moore with our friends at Grace UMC. Through his book, Moore challenges us to give up everything from condemning judgments to pettiness to a bad habit to running away, all things we probably should let go of.

But why give up anything? It's so much easier and safer to run away from difficult circumstances or people. Sometimes it can be fun to judge, to pick someone else apart, or to be petty. It makes us feel better. Or that bad habit of mindless scrolling or smoking or multi-tasking - it's not that bad. I don't have to give it up. I've got it under control.

Sure. Okay. Maybe you do. But how much space is that attitude or habit taking up in your life? How often are you turning to it, embracing it, letting it be what fills you or guides you? Where is God in those moments? Are you turning to God as often as you turn to these other things? Or are they taking up a space that could be filled by God instead?

The truth is, we all have bad attitudes and habits. We are cruel, entitled, selfish. We think we know everything we need to know. We think things should always be how we want them to be - and that everyone else should fall in line accordingly. We think we are better than others - especially "those people." We think we've got it all under control.

But as Ash Wednesday will remind us, we don't. We came from dust and to dust we will return. We are mortal, fallible, and in desperate need of God. We cannot live these lives of ours alone.

We don't have to. But to live a life with God means creating the space for God to whisper and move within us. Creating space often means letting something go.

Though it may be hard to face the darkest parts of ourselves - the parts that judge, hold grudges, turn our backs and run, get sucked into negativity, lash out at others, poorly steward our bodies and/or creation - we have to in order to heal them, to let them go, to free up space. But we don't ever have to do it alone. We always have God, and we always have one another.

This season, we invite you to join us in a practice of self-examination, of giving up something bad and creating the space for something good and life-giving to flow in. We'll explore this together on Sunday mornings and Thursday afternoons, and on our own through the continuation of our practice of Spiritual Disciplines. (If giving something up is too much right now, what new practice from *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* could you add in for the next 46 days? Committing to a daily practice is another way to create more space for God in your life.)

This will be hard, challenging, difficult. But remember: the story, our story, does not end here. There is so much love and joy, even in darkness, and more waiting beyond it. What do you want to let go of this season so you can wrap your arms around something good when Easter comes?

# What's Happening in Our Community

## LENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

### ASH WEDNESDAY

**3/5/25 @ 6:00pm, Congress Street UMC**

Join us for a service of ashes, where we repent and remember how much we need God. The service will feature scripture, hymns, prayer, and a time for meditation.

All are welcome.

### LENTEN LUNCH STUDY

**Thursdays 3/6-4/17 @ 12pm**

**Grace UMC (615 N 22nd Street)**

Bring a brown bag lunch and join Brown Street, Congress Street, and Grace UMCs as we read and discuss *Give Up Something Bad for Lent* by James W. Moore. All are welcome!

### SHARE YOUR STORY IN THE NEWSLETTER

If you feel compelled to share your story - or a meditation or devotion on scripture - we'd love to give you a place to do it! Reach out to Maia either at

info@brownstreetumc.org or  
info@cosumc.org or talk to her after  
worship on a Sunday.

She can interview you and write something up, edit your own words, or something else.

Whatever would be helpful to you!

### UMCOR SUNDAY

**3/30/2025**

Each year, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, special offerings around the world are collected to help support the United Methodist Committee on Relief's administrative costs. This ensures that 100% of donations given to UMCOR programs go toward providing relief in disaster areas. If you would like to support UMCOR on this Sunday, you can mark your donation 'UMCOR Sunday' and place it in the offering plate or visit <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZMHG/campaign/C-14Z6H>.

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

7 - Sam Washburn (CS)

8 - AJ Hardesty (BS)

11 - Walter Bridgewater (BS)

11 - Adrienne Davis (CS)

11 - Shane Lynch (CS)

13 - Ellen McClannen (BS)

18 - Bob Dexter (CS)

18 - Amy Mohelman (CS)

20 - Betty Henderson (CS)

21 - Marilyn Tucker (CS)

26 - Ellen Barker (CS)

27 - Nick Simms (BS)

29 - Barb Crowell (CS)

29 - Teri Lynch (CS)

29 - Marian Mohelman (CS)

### MARCH 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 in Our Community

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Thank you to Pastor Ryan, Chad & Jan Johnson, Lynn Nelson, Tracy Fristoe, Sandy Oswalt, Cliverda Gladden, and our youth for providing lunch for us over the last several weeks, and to everyone who has participated in our Spiritual Disciplines class! We have one session left! Join us this Sunday, 3/2, as we discuss and practice prayer. All are welcome!

### Lunch on 3/2

If you're planning on joining us for our final Spiritual Disciplines class/group session on Sunday, please bring a side dish or dessert to share! We will provide some mains, utensils/plates, and drinks.



Thank you to Liz Peters for the photos of our youth cooking on 2/23!

## What's Happening at



## MONTHLY MISSION: GARDENS

Part of the GrowLocal Urban Garden Network, our raised beds provide much needed produce to our community for free. To donate to our Gardens 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). Our gardening season is starting soon; keep an eye out for ways to help!

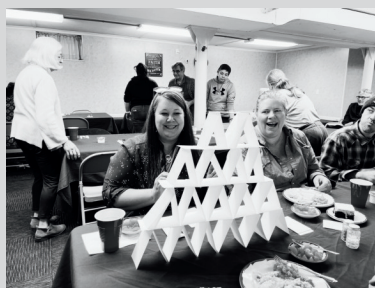
## FAMILY DINNER

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

### UWF ASH WEDNESDAY PROGRAM

**3/5/2025, 9:30am, Room 201**

Social Worker Taylor Fristoe will be speaking about child protection, fostering, and other services in our community. Everyone is welcome to attend.

### CIRCLE OF JOY

**Next Meeting: Monday, 3/10/25 @ 6:30pm, Room 201**

**Hostesses:** Brenda King & Penny Glotzbach

Maia will be sharing about her trip to Kenya in 2024! All women of the church are welcome to join us.

### BALANCE & FALL PREVENTION CLASS

**Mondays @ 1:00pm through 4/14**

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).

### PARLOR UPDATE

Renovations on our parlor began on 2/26/25! Work will continue over the next few months. More information about the timeline and ways you can help us steward this space will be shared in the comings weeks and we will continue to keep you updated on the progress.

A few important reminders as our renovations begin:

**Please follow any instructions on the signs posted by our contractor, TriTech.** For your safety as well as that of our contractors and technicians, **we encourage you to refrain from entering the parlor, especially during the week.** Feel free to cut through the sanctuary or the office level hallway if you need to get to the other side of the building!

**The ramp door will still be available for use on Sunday mornings.** We cannot guarantee accessibility the rest of the week, so please refrain from using that door Monday - Saturday if possible.

**Other areas of the building may be worked on or impacted during this renovation.** We will keep you posted if there are other spaces that need to be temporarily avoided!

**We've set up a temporary Parlor in Room 201,** next to the nursery. We hope that you will continue to help yourself to coffee, tea, and candy, and gather together on Sunday mornings!

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Trustees Chair Shane Lynch at 765-490-8950 or Ad Council Chair Chad Johnson at 765-490-2533.**

Thank you for your continued, patience, support, and excitement about this much needed refresh to our space. We are looking forward to being able to welcome, gather together, and be good stewards in and of this space for many years to come!



### **BROWN STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Charis Vander Plaats  
Director of Worship

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

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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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