

The Hallelujah

Here's the good news!

April 2021



*Mark your
calendar*

March 28-April 4
Holy Week

Visit foleyumc.org/holyweek21

April 4
KidsQuest

9:30 a.m. on campus
by reservation

Saturday, May 8
Community
Mother's Lunch

11:00 a.m. until it's gone
Drive thru boxed lunches

THE EXILE IS ENDING; JOIN THE REBUILDING!

For seventy years, in the Old Testament, the Jewish people were kept as prisoners in the land of Babylon. Exiled from their homeland, they pined for the day they might be allowed to return and return to a life of faithful pursuit and worship of God. Finally, in the opening lines of the book of Ezra, we read that God spoke to King Cyrus and told him to let the prisoners go home so that they could rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

Cyrus stood before the people and cast a grand vision of returning home. He invited them to see the possibilities of the people worshiping and gathering on holy ground. As their excitement grew, he challenged them to join in the work to restore things to God's desires. He challenged the faithful to let the workers "be assisted by the people of this place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God" (Ezra 1:4).

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



REBUILDING (cont. from page 1)

Foley United Methodist Church is preparing to return from an exile of sorts, too. For over a year during the Covid pandemic, we've been worshipping outside of the sanctuary. Due to poor air circulation and the inability to create good distance between worshipers, we relocated to online worship, the beach, the park, and the Spirit Center. For many of us who have experienced powerful worship in the hallowed ground of the sanctuary, it has felt like exile. But the time to return home is drawing near.

During the pandemic, the Church Council took the astute step to renovate the sanctuary. The chance to replace the air conditioning, improve lighting and sound, and refresh the paint and pews for a 21st century traditional worship space while no one was using the room was incredibly wise. The Council developed a plan to secure lead gifts for about 2/3 of the project, and then use our generous reserve funds that have grown since our Arise Initiative as a self-construction loan to fund the rest. The plan was to repay the "borrowed" amount from our reserves over the course of the 2021 budget or in the new two-year ministry initiative that will begin in late 2021.

The good news is our current giving and reserves have enabled us to handle all the expenses of the hurricane repairs, make great advancements on the sanctuary remodel, and fully resource all our ministry objectives. The bad news is the hurricane repairs were an unexpected expense, and we had hoped that through our insurance and/or FEMA aid we might receive funding that would offset the costs of the repairs we had to make. Unfortunately, neither of those options are going to happen. The reserves we were forced to use to pay for hurricane damage was intended to be the loan we made to ourselves to complete the sanctuary remodel.

But this isn't a sad story! We are so blessed that we were in the great shape we were in to handle all of this. We haven't borrowed a single dollar, will rebuild our reserves, and we will

(cont. on page 3)



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REBUILDING (cont. from page 2)

continue to fully resource the day-in and day-out Ministry Plan of our church. However, if we want to expedite the completion of the sanctuary (and our return from exile), we no longer have the reserve funds to loan ourselves to complete the project. Now, we have an opportunity to join like the people in Ezra and offer our gifts to the Lord in preparation for the chance to come home to the house of the Lord.

We imagine that the timeline for construction and the changing Covid guidelines could make it possible for us to begin using the sanctuary again around the first of May. To finish the first phase of work (all the renovation inside of the sanctuary) by then, we need about \$50,000 by the end of April.

Beginning in April, we are going to reopen the ability for people to make an offering to the Lord for the sanctuary remodel. We have already had people tell us that they would like to contribute to this because they would like for us to be able to open this beautiful, remodeled sanctuary to our church and community as the COVID protocols diminish and we are able to gather for in-person worship more normally. Some in our church have said that they don't need the stimulus money they just received, and they want to give that to the sanctuary remodel. Some are considering gifts even more significant than that because they want to see this project completed. Many people were not ready at the end of 2020 to make a special offering, but as we are beginning to emerge from the pandemic, they are ready to make a gift to the Lord to prepare the house of the Lord. Everyone can play their part like the Israelites returning from exile.

As soon as the money comes in, we'll move to finish the work and move back into the sanctuary as soon as possible. If the money doesn't come in, that isn't a problem. We are in such a healthy place that it will be no problem for us to wait, continue to have traditional worship in the Spirit Center, and finish the sanctuary remodel when it is financially prudent for us to do so. Our non-negotiables as church leadership are that we won't borrow money or reduce the budget of a current ministry area in order to finish the sanctuary remodel. That would be a step backward from the great financial shape we have established, and we aren't willing to do that.

At the end of Ezra 1, the outpouring of offerings was astounding. The people of God were hungry and eager to return to the place where they could meet with God. May God pour out a double portion of his Spirit on the generosity of his people that we, too, will be astounded at our offerings to God!

Nolan

To give online to the general fund or to the sanctuary fund, visit foleyumc.org/give.



REAL LIFE NEEDS: SALLY RECOVERY

Updates by Charlotte Plumb

Last month we introduced you to Team Acts and Just the Crumbs, two teams that travel the country helping people recover from disasters. Team Acts brought in 34 people from around the country to help rebuild our community. Both teams were housed in our Spirit Center, in campers in our parking lot, and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. They all ate and worshipped in our Spirit Center. It was wonderful to see so much going on again on our church campus. They were able to repair 6 homes while they were here. One of my favorite tasks that week was organizing a baptism for a homeowner and her two teenage children who found Jesus while working side by side with Team Acts rebuilding their home. One unforgettable moment: A single mother and her son who had been walking for 2 hours stepped into our church and asked for water and food. We gave them lots of water and a meal. One of the team members was from Peru and she was able to talk to Maria who is from Honduras in Spanish. Maria and her son came to eat and worship every night with the teams. On the last night Maria professed her faith in Christ. She now calls Foley UMC her church.

Team Acts wasn't able to help all of those in need. Unfortunately, we still have people who are trying to recover from Hurricane Sally in our community. Recently, we visited with a few more of our church members and church neighbors who still need repairs on their homes. We do have good news! More teams will be coming soon to continue to help in our community.

In March, we were also able to help Jessica, a single mom, who was moving from Family Promise to an apartment. We provided her with a bed, dresser, food, a basket of cleaning supplies from Team Acts, and a prayer box made by our KidsQuest kids. Jessica is expecting a baby very soon.

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REAL LIFE NEEDS: SALLY RECOVERY

(cont. from page 4)



With the help of Lyle and Debbie Wiist, we were able to provide a couch to Carmen and her teenage daughters. If you remember, Carmen came to us in early February asking for our help. Our church congregation provided a massive amount of food, kitchen items, and bedding for the family who moved to our area to get away from an abusive situation. All of their belongings that they kept in a storage building were destroyed by Hurricane Sally.

A huge thank you goes to Bob Schroeder who is always there to help. This month, he worked along-side a homeowner repairing windows and building a porch. He also established relationships with the work teams and with families in need, took care of all the RV issues that arose, and put the Spirit Center back together after the teams left.

If you would like to get Sally recovery work and volunteer opportunities, text Sally to 251-333-0515. If you know people outside of Baldwin County who may wish to help us on our recovery journey, invite them to visit our website at foleyumc.org/helpbaldwin.



Our Real Life Needs Missional Community is planning to begin hosting Family Promise again this year. We are looking for an updated list of those who have prepared dinners and have slept over in the past and are interested in helping in the future. If you have not done that, but are interested in helping, we would love to hear from you too! We need a minimum of 14 to 16 folks willing to spend the night as hosts to put on the list. Additionally, we are looking for 7 families or groups (Sunday School Classes, Circle groups, Life Groups etc.) who would be willing to prepare and serve dinner. If you have helped or are willing to help, please email Ann Johnson at fosandnsea@gmail.com.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



04/02 Lore Ballow
04/02 Tony Peterman
04/02 Charlene Anderson
04/02 Diana Hants
04/03 Ryan Parker
04/03 Bill Cleverdon
04/05 Jeremy Borchardt
04/05 David Christopher
04/05 Nolan Donald
04/05 Christopher Kelley
04/06 Julie Mullins
04/07 Anna Branscomb



04/11 Bev Wygle
04/12 Julia Harrison
04/12 Leigh Deas
04/13 Sam Jackson
04/14 Sonya Cole
04/14 Bradley Wiist
04/15 Martha Curtis
04/16 David Burch
04/18 Donna Higginbotham
04/18 Vicky Marshall
04/18 Dalton Schoen

04/18 Beckey Hunter
04/19 Bill Curtis
04/20 Brenda Holthoff
04/23 Ezra Donald
04/23 Susan Hess
04/23 Vicki Roberson
04/24 Tina Jackson
04/24 Kathy Dalton
04/29 Janie Gardner
04/29 Martha Ann Larson
04/29 Kathleen Parker

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Condolences for the friends and families of:

Amanda Grant
August Schoen
Jenny Sculley
Arthur Holk
John Cobb (JaNay Dawson's brother)

Please continue to pray for our friends:

Debbie Johnson
Barbara Beam
Emery Martini
Jack Brasher
James and Judy Jackson
Liz Kinsey
Sterling Hill
T.J. Brooks
Tony Perry
Lynn Ainsworth
Brenda Holthoff's sons,
Ed Holtoff and John Homann

BLESSING BOX IS BACK!

We are reopening our Blessing Box. Our Blessing Box is a small weather-resistant box in our parking lot where we can leave non-perishable items for those in need. Community members can come by at any time and take what they need out of the box day or night. We are asking that you help us create a supply of canned food (with pop top lids), non-perishable items, personal hygiene items, etc. Items need to fit inside the box (standard cans work well). Please put items in the box in the dishwasher room in the kitchen in the Spirit Center so that we can replenish the Blessing Box as needed. You may also drop off items in the bins behind the Spirit Center after hours. Please label "Blessing Box".

WELCOME KATE NORRIS AS CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

If you've watched our online contemporary service in the last few weeks, then you've already seen Kate Norris stepping into the role of contemporary worship leader. Kate, who has been a part of the Foley UMC family for twelve years, started out as a passionate volunteer in our contemporary worship service, but over the last few months, she has emerged as a gifted and called leader for this service. Beginning on Palm Sunday (as the contemporary service reopens to in-person worship), Kate will assume the part-time staff position of contemporary worship leader. Kate is a wonderful fit for this role and will bring so much to the service and to engaging the community with worship at Foley UMC. Say a prayer for Kate and for her leadership in worship, and the next time you see her, welcome her to this new adventure!



Molly, Nathan, Kate, and Sloan Norris

A word from Kate--

There's within my heart a melody!

Hello friends! Do you ever get a song stuck in your head? Call me crazy, but I have a song in my head almost all the time! Over the last few years, I made a switch to listening to nothing but Christian radio. If you ask me about the newest Taylor Swift song, chances are I haven't heard it and I probably won't hear it. But listening to Christian radio has been great for me! Want to know why? Because it is encouraging, it is motivating, and it makes me think of Jesus! The song stuck in my head today is "What a Beautiful Name It Is" by Hillsong Worship. One verse in particular that I keep repeating over and over again is: "You didn't want heaven without us, so Jesus, You brought heaven down. My sin was great, Your love was greater. What could separate us now?" What a wonderful reminder this Easter season: My sin is great, His love is greater!! Nothing can separate us!!

I encourage you to turn on the radio and get a song about Jesus stuck in your head, friends. I wish you a wonderful Easter and hope to see you soon!

Kate

MEN'S MINISTRY

Challenge by Shane Ratcliff, Foley UMC Member

The men's group is continuing through Pat Morley's book *Man In The Mirror* however, several months ago the men's group read and discussed each chapter of Rick Warren's book entitled *What On Earth Am I Here For*. This book opened my eyes to quite a few things that I had not given any thought to. While only Jesus has an inside track of knowing exactly what is meant, Rick takes the position of asking "what if God means...." In looking back through the book, the margins are filled with my notes and thoughts provoked during the reading. This book enhanced my daily walk with Jesus by teaching me to slow down, dig into what the scriptures are telling me, and make a genuine effort to use the gifts and live the life God has granted me. Rick first got my attention by prompting the thought of *"Did God create us just to be a believer, only to die, go to Heaven without serving Him, or barely doing so?"* Have we given thought to what it means to just give the bare minimum during our time on earth? Rick also asked the question *"What if our time on Earth is a 'trial run' for our Heavenly time?"* Does how we serve Him show our love for our Savior? Do we serve with a joyful heart? Reluctance to serve could be a darker force suppressing the Holy Spirit's work within us and we often give in. Rick also challenged us with Jesus' parable of the master and the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). How does this parable apply to us individually? I personally, had never thought of the parable applied to my gifts and not just being a good steward with my money. I learned there's always more to a parable than our first impression and each reading on a parable or hearing a sermon about it will provide a deeper and better understanding. Christ told the disciples that "In His Father's house are many rooms" John 14:2. What are we going to be doing in those rooms?

Will we each hear *"Well done good and faithful servant? You have done well with the talents I have given you. I will give you more"*. I am also reminded of the parable of workers hired at various times of the day for the exact same wage. (Matthew 20:1-16) At the end of the day, some worked many more hours than others for the exact same wage. As expected, they grumbled. How does this apply to our relationship with our service to God and others? Some come to know Jesus on their deathbed at the final hour and never serve Him while others serve many years in various ways and deny themselves worldly pleasures. But the blessings we experience from serving Him are missed by many due to serving their own self will. We spend the first few years of our lives learning to read. Then we spend the rest of our lives reading to learn. I am encouraged to make the most of this gift of sight to read what God has provided for us and live our lives as Jesus would live our lives if Jesus was living our lives. I challenge you to start by reading James 4:8 in various versions which will lead you to ponder the message of *"If we spend more time with God, He will spend more time with us"*. Every morning ask the Holy Spirit to guide your plans for the day.

All men of all ages, members or not of FUMC, are welcome to join in the video and discussion each Monday night at 7:00. Contact Shane Ratcliff at 251-975-8337 or shaneratcliff@gmail.com for a zoom link.

"iron sharpens iron..."

**proverbs
27:17**

DISCIPLESHIP TOOLS

How can we trust God in the dark? Life can have its ups and downs. It is easy to assume God is present and at work in the good times, but what about when things aren't like you think they should be? What about when you struggle, when you are sick, or when those around you are suffering? Tish Warren is an Anglican priest who wrote a book on finding God when it seems hard to know where he is. Her insight and wisdom are like a wise friend who counsels and coaches you as you reflect on where God is in your life, and what it looks like to trust in the dark.

This month as you seek to grow as a follower of Jesus, check out Warren's *Prayer in the Night*. Grab a friend and read it together. Open yourself to how God wants to grow you into a deeper life of faith.



Is reading the Bible confusing and overwhelming?
Learn how to read the Bible with The Bible Project.
Visit bibleproject.com.

CHURCH COUNCIL HARD AT WORK

With the beginning of 2021, a new Church Council has taken office and is hard at work overseeing and guiding the church. Each of these leaders has been selected and approved by the charge conference to take their turn as a faithful, prayerful, and discerning leader on behalf of the whole church. Each person is tasked with working in their role to discern God's will for the church and moving us forward. Some of the major areas that they are addressing right now are repairs to our facilities in the wake of Hurricane Sally, overseeing the sanctuary renovation project, and managing the overall finances of the church in relation to hurricane expenses, sanctuary costs, and Covid impact. Please pray for and thank these men and women for their selfless service.

The 2021 Church Council is Ann Johnson (Chairperson), Ginger Hale (Lay Leader), Randy Harden, Chris McCormick, Tom Siemers, Jerry Schoen, Cory Yaeger, Diane Bunch, Gail Edmonson, John Simonson, and Nolan Donald. (Alice McCormick faithfully serves as the Council secretary.) The Council is meeting by Zoom during the pandemic. If you are interested in attending a meeting, contact the church office to get necessary links.



A special thank you to all of the friends of KidsQuest who worked hard and had fun preparing for the Easter Egg Hunt on March 27!



In April, KidsQuest will be meeting at 9:30 on our campus as we look at the connection between peace and God's character as shown through God's big story. Ultimately God made peace with us through His Son, Jesus.

SUNDAYS GETTING A LITTLE CLOSER TO NORMAL

As we keep pressing through the Covid pandemic, the Covid Response Team continues to try and reopen our facilities and activities in ways that are safe and continue to exercise caution and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Beginning March 28, the 9:30 contemporary worship service will be open for limited in-person attendance. Due to the size of the room, there will be a limit to the number of people allowed in the room, and reservations will be required. You can visit foleyumc.org/worship to register for attending the 9:30 service in person. The service will continue to be livestreamed on all our digital platforms.

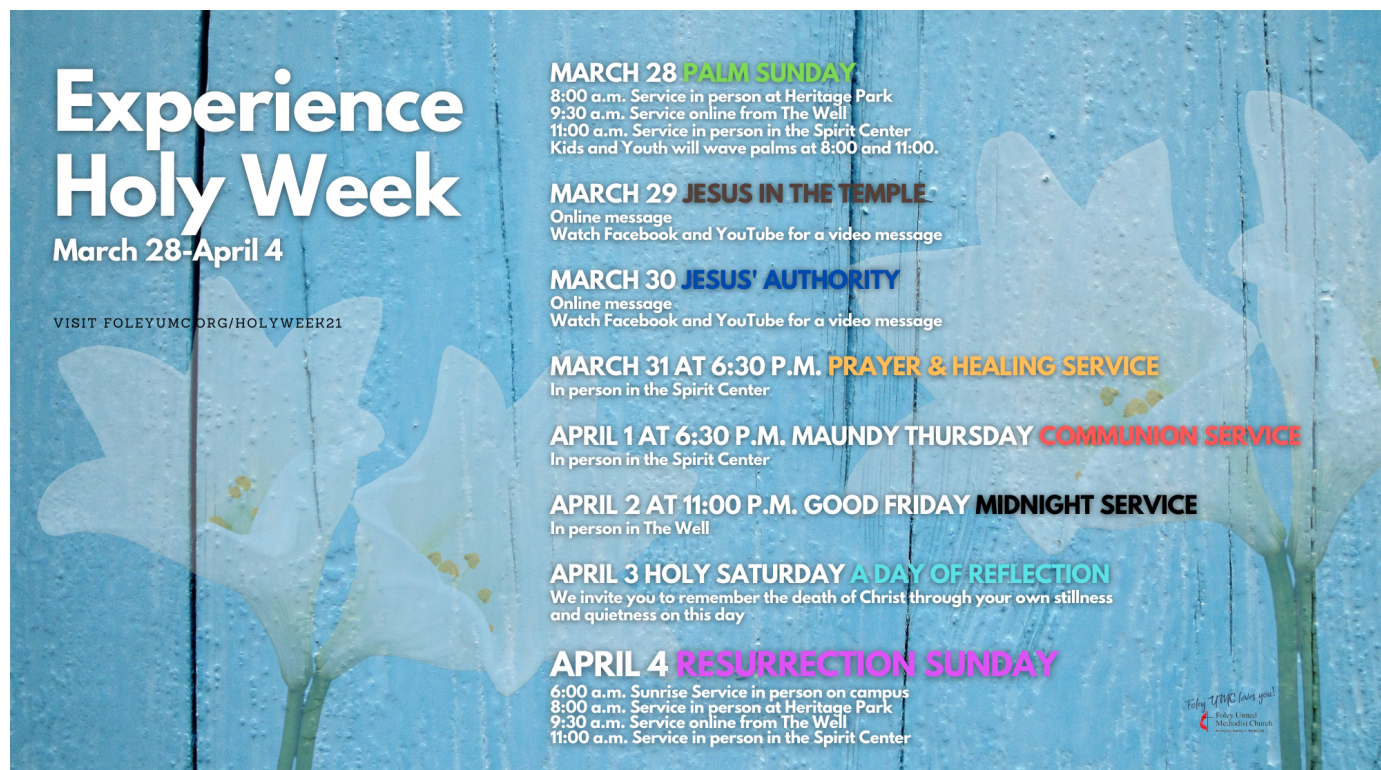
Beginning Easter Sunday, April 4, KidsQuest children's ministry will reopen for in person ministry on Sunday mornings. KidsQuest will currently offer ministry during the 9:30 hour only. Children can be registered for the Sundays they will attend in conjunction with adults registering for the 9:30 worship service.

EXPERIENCE HOLY WEDNESDAY: A PRAYER AND HEALING SERVICE

Join us for a night of worship and intentional prayer on Wednesday, March 31 at 6:30. We plan to pray for the miraculous, for healing, and for those that have been impacted by Covid-19. We will be praying for you and our upcoming Holy Week. It is our hearts desire to minister to Foley UMC through the power of prayer. There will be anointing with oil and the laying on of hands. We ask that you come with a receptive heart ready to meet with God! Come Holy Spirit!

EXPERIENCE GOOD FRIDAY

This Good Friday, you have a chance to experience a unique Good Friday service. On Friday, April 2 at 11 p.m., we will host a worship experience where you can feel and recognize the impact of the death of Jesus and the darkness and hopelessness of the world without him. With advance reservation (spaces are limited and reservations can be made at foleyumc.org), you can attend the service in person on Good Friday night in the Well, or it will also be livestreamed through our digital platforms. The service is designed to lead into a day of somber reflection and Sabbath on Holy Saturday as we prepare to worship and celebrate with joy on Resurrection Sunday. As we walk the path of Holy Week, join us for a soul stirring and powerful moment as we reflect on and recognize the power of the gift of Christ on our behalf.



Experience Holy Week
March 28-April 4

VISIT FOLEYUMC.ORG/HOLYWEER21

MARCH 28 PALM SUNDAY
8:00 a.m. Service in person at Heritage Park
9:30 a.m. Service online from The Well
11:00 a.m. Service in person in the Spirit Center
Kids and Youth will wave palms at 8:00 and 11:00.

MARCH 29 JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
Online message
Watch Facebook and YouTube for a video message

MARCH 30 JESUS' AUTHORITY
Online message
Watch Facebook and YouTube for a video message

MARCH 31 AT 6:30 P.M. PRAYER & HEALING SERVICE
In person in the Spirit Center

APRIL 1 AT 6:30 P.M. MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION SERVICE
In person in the Spirit Center

APRIL 2 AT 11:00 P.M. GOOD FRIDAY MIDNIGHT SERVICE
In person in The Well

APRIL 3 HOLY SATURDAY A DAY OF REFLECTION
We invite you to remember the death of Christ through your own stillness and quietness on this day

APRIL 4 RESURRECTION SUNDAY
6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service in person on campus
8:00 a.m. Service in person at Heritage Park
9:30 a.m. Service online from The Well
11:00 a.m. Service in person in the Spirit Center

Foley UMC loves you!
Foley United Methodist Church
www.foleyumc.org



Foley United Methodist Church

Reaching Up. Reaching In. Reaching Out.

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Visit foleyumc.org/live to
watch recent worship
services

Visit foleyumc.org/holyweek21 for details on Holy Week. You can
print a flyer to share at foleyumc.org/resources.

What does Easter mean?
**Experience
Holy Week**
March 28-April 4

VISIT [FOLEYUMC.ORG/HOLYWEEK21](https://foleyumc.org/holyweek21)

