

## MARCH 2026 HARBINGER

"We all experience loss. It's part of being human, part of the experience. It's what also gives us richness and wisdom." –Kevin Klink

Recently, for one of my classes at MTSO (Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio) I was asked to listen to and read up on a very creative man named Kevin Klink. Kevin Klink is a hilarious performer, writer and author of many plays, including *21A* and *Lloyd's Prayer* and five books including *The Dog Says How* and *Holiday Inn*. What most people love about him is his storytelling ability, some say he is a combination of a comedian homegrown from Minnesota with the imagination Dante and wordplay of Shakespeare. And in his stories, they reveal both life's humor and its troubles. For example, he was born with one disabled arm and then a midlife crisis motorcycle accident paralyzed the other. He makes jokes about that.

But without getting too deep into his life story I wanted to reflect on something he had said, something that I believe will help guide our church and community. "We all experience loss. It's part of being human, part of the experience. It's what also gives us richness and wisdom." Now when he talks about loss and how it's part of the experience of being human, I can't help but think of the fall in Genesis. How with the introduction of sin and death, both were huge losses. Human beings went from walking with God, having a special union with the Almighty, able to interact with him on the daily, to one day...nothing. Now a days if you want to walk with God, people are having to seek him out, calling out to him, begging for his guidance and love.

Recently I have been forced to reflect and essentially live through my losses. Sometimes we are able to gain a loss or weakness; but because of family, church, jobs and home; we are able to use these things to soften the blow due to the stability they create. But what do you do when your whole foundation, in which you pull strength from become sinking sand before you? How do you operate in loss when it feels overwhelming like actual quicksand; engulfing all that you hold dear, overwhelming you with the crippling fear of loss and having to face the unknown?

Now for the sake of privacy, I will not share all that I am dealing with, but I will say it's being forced to create new; or rebuild what is left, is hard and a bit depressing. However, God always offers opportunities to help with the remodel when things crumble. In fact, sometimes it's God himself that orders the demolition of "sound" stability, for the purpose of rebuilding something much grander, something more suited to last. So even though a person is left in the rubble and when you look around and see only what you have lost; God offers us the richness of brokenness to see how much we need him. It's joy that is found amongst the rubble not happiness. Through this joy that we are able to endure the un-comfortability of sadness and loss; but also, we are able to be inspired to build bigger, without expired expectation and restriction of our past.

This year as we head into the lent season and eventually into Easter, let us be honest to not only ourselves but to God on how much we truly need him. Then seek him out with all we have! Lent is the opportunity to prepare our hearts (clean them) so we may fully experience to loving sacrifice of the cross on Easter. May the Lord allow you the strength to operate in your loss, in order for you to gain the humility to need his guidance.

Blessings, Pastor Stephen Flores II



*March Birthdays*

*March 12th - Helen Marsh  
Karen Ervin*

*March 15th - Julia Krause*

*March 16th - Dan Bailey*

*March 17th - Jeff Harmeyer*

*March 22nd - Denise Bailey*

*March 31st - Dastan Erlewein*

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*Thank You!*

*I apologize for this thank you note being so late as 2026 has proven to be very busy from the start! I just wanted to say thank you, Grand Avenue Church, for the generous Christmas gift and wish everyone a safe and happy new year! Thank you, Karen Davis*

# The Power of Prayer

*Please pray for:*

*Pastor Stephen Flores and family, Curt Shedd*

*Donna Rowe, Connie Robb, Connie Pitcher, Ron Dorrell*

*Chris Dorrell, Joe and Ada Reeve, Lori Leach, Helen Marsh*

*Janet Harmeyer, Kathy Terrell, Tamí Gray-Myers*

*Bill Copper, John Hylton, Bill, Karen and Michael Davis,*

*Our Country and our troops*

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

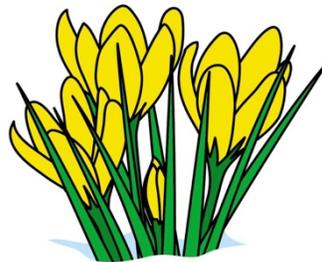
*March 8 - Daylight Saving Time begins - reset your clocks, please*

*March 11 - Ad Council Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - Chapel*

*April 2 - Maundy Thursday Service - 1st UMC - 6:30 p.m.*

## JUST A LITTLE HUMOR

1. For her birthday, I bought my girlfriend beads for an abacus. It's the little things that count.
2. Why did the skeletons break up on Valentine's Day? Their hearts weren't in it.
3. My Valentine's Day so far has been going like a fairy tale. Grimm.
4. I know it sounds mean, but when I'm mad at my wife and want to lash out, I open a bottle of some condiment when there's already one open.
5. It was as my wife began reading the third entry from her list of resolutions that the grim reality struck. They were resolutions for me!
6. Our two-year-old was sitting quietly in church one Sunday when she became mesmerized by a balding man seated in front. Her curiosity got the better of her, and she shouted for all to hear, "Why is that man's head coming out of his hair?"
7. Many a sound sermon has sent people sound asleep.
8. There are only two reasons why we do things - the good reason and the real reason.
9. God so loved the world that he did not send a committee.
10. Text above piano in a church hall: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."



## GAUMC Admin Council Minutes February 19, 2026

The administrative council of Grand Ave UMC met in the chapel of the church at 6 pm with the following members present: Roger Mapes, Peggy Mapes, Linda Fennell, Brian Robb, Cindy Perez

Roger opened the meeting with a short devotion about the empty egg and a prayer.

Minutes of the January meeting had been mailed to the members for review. With there being no additions or corrections, they were filed as submitted.

### Reports:

Financial reports were given by Brian Robb Treasurer and Peggy Mapes Finance Chair. The reports were filed and are available at the church office. Cindy asked about the financial burden of taking on a full-time pastor again. The salary isn't the issue, it is the pension and health insurance that have become unsustainable for GAUMC to pay for a full-time pastor, unfortunately. When Stephen moves to be with his family in New Albany, we will be appointed another part time pastor.

Linda reported for the trustees. The Mission Mart sign is falling off the front of the building and needs to be replaced. The parsonage has been checked and is ok.

Worship chair, Cindy, reported that we are videotaping the services. She is not yet happy with the final product but has added extra light at the pulpit and continues to work to make it better. If there is someone else in the congregation who would take on this aspect of our services, she would be glad to train them.

Missions reported donations and basketball parking money have sustained their funds.

Discipleship, a very important aspect of our church, has been missing a leader since Connie Pitcher reigned in the fall. If you or anyone you know would like to take this position, please let us know.

The pastor sent a report that we will be joining First UMC on April 2, 2026 for a Maundy Thursday brisket dinner. They will need a head count the week prior. Rev. Flores continues his studies for ordination in the UMC.

Roger offered a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be Wednesday March 11, 2026, at 6pm.

