



# OAK GROVE

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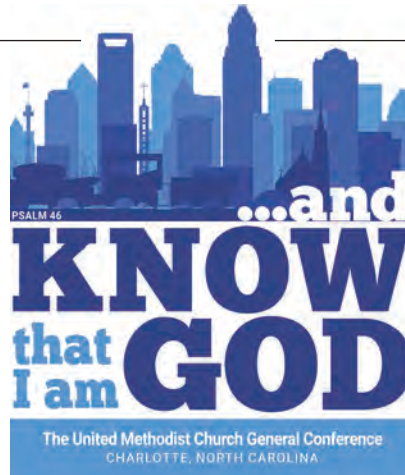
## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

March 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Lent

General Conference is a meeting of delegates elected to represent United Methodist congregations, both from the US and from around the world. It is the one meeting at which our rule book, known as the Book of Discipline, can be edited or changed through discussion and legislative action. Typically, the General Conference meets every four years (on the same cycle as the US Presidential elections), but we had an off-cycle special session in 2019 for the purpose of trying to avoid a division over issues of human sexuality. This attempt at preserving unity failed, even though various options were discussed deeply and seriously during the three years between General Conference 2016 and 2019. Because of this failure, delegates elected in 2019 to attend the 2020 General Conference were anxious to reconvene so that we could try yet again to overcome this impasse. Unfortunately, because General Conference is an international meeting with delegates coming from as far away as the Philippines, both the 2020 General Conference, and a proposed make-up date in 2022 were cancelled because of the global COVID pandemic. This means that the delegates who will attend the General Conference in April of this year are those who were elected to attend the 2020 General Conference, and much has changed in the intervening years. First and foremost, our brothers and sisters who decided they could not wait an additional four years to resolve the issues before us, initiated their separation from the United Methodist denomination using legislation that was passed in 2019. This legislation had an expiration date of December 31st, 2023 and by that date about 20% of our American churches had chosen to disaffiliate.

In spite of our diminished numbers, however, the United Methodist Church will convene the 2024 General Conference to consolidate our ministries and reorganize for the years ahead. Three major issues will be before us. 1. Regionalization: a process that will make the African, Philippine, European, and US Conferences equal in their ability to interpret the Discipline independently of each other in order to meet the needs of each unique missional context. Regionalization would also relieve the international



**General  
Conference  
2024**  
**April 23 – May 3**

delegates of the burden of having to journey to America every four years to spend 10 days discussing issues that don't relate to their areas at all. Each region could meet individually for issues specific to their region only. 2. Revision of the Social Principles. The social Principles are a part of our Book of Discipline which describes our official views on a variety of subjects including economics, the environment, the nature of the family, science, and political structures. Over the years it has gotten increasingly long, complex, and outdated. A new version was requested in 2012 and that work is just now being presented. 3. Removal of divisive language about LGBTQIA persons. No new language concerning gay people is being proposed, however, removal of the old language that has been so hurtful to so many will hopefully be removed. Many other

issues will also be discussed, but Oak Grove will have several sources of inside information about what is going on. I will be a delegate, as will Rachel Fullerton (who was recently elected to head the laity side of our delegation!). Also present will be Bishop Goodpaster, Allison Berg (who serves as the North Georgia Conference Treasurer), and Elizabeth Loughran who will be attending with her seminary classmates enrolled in a polity course. We will make an effort to keep you updated concerning what is taking place, so stay tuned! Please be in prayer for us all—for safe travel for our international brothers and sisters, for holy conferencing undertaken with grace and wisdom, and for patience and stamina for the stress of such a consequential undertaking.

Yours as always,

Dr. Beth LaRocca-Pitts, Senior Pastor



## Connect with Oak Grove

Thank you for participating in worship today. We're glad you're here.

Open your camera app and scan the QR code to visit [ogumc.org/connect](http://ogumc.org/connect) to

- register your attendance
- ask to speak to a pastor
- sign up for congregational emails
- request to join the church
- or give online.

## 8:30 AND 11 A.M. ORDER OF WORSHIP

March 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Gathering Music Two Settings of *Ah, Holy Jesus* A Lovelace

Welcome and Announcements Dr. Amy Morgan

Camp Glisson Moment Russell Davis

Introit Passion Chorale J Brahms  
Elizabeth Leslie, trumpet

\*Call to Worship Dr. Beth LaRocca-Pitts

Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart.

**Tear your hearts and not your clothing.**

Return to the Lord your God,

**for God is gracious and merciful.**

\*Hymn **My Hope Is Built** UMH 368

*(At the 11:00 a.m. service, children in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grade are invited to leave for Children's Church during the last stanza of this Hymn. Children will return to the service on the final hymn. If you are new to Oak Grove, please come with your child to the gathering area at the front and someone will assist you in getting your child checked in.)*

\*Affirmation of Faith from 1 Timothy (UMH 889) Dr. LaRocca-Pitts

There is one God and there is one mediator, Christ Jesus, who came as a ransom for all, to whom we testify.

**The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.**

**Great indeed is the mystery of the gospel. Amen.**

A Morning Prayer and The Lord's Prayer Dr. Morgan

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Anthem (11:00) Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence G Holst

Chancel Choir

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded for with blessing in his hand, Christ our Lord to earth descendeth our full homage to demand. King of Kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth He stood, Lord of Lords, in human vesture in the Body and the Blood. He will give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food. Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way as the light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away. At his feet the six-winged seraph; Cherubim with sleepless eye, veil their faces to the Presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry. Amen.*

New Testament Lesson

Ephesians 2:1-10

Dr. LaRocca-Pitts

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*Hymn

**Abide With Me**

**UMH 700**

Offertory Prayer

Dr. Morgan

**Our God, there is nothing we can give you to equal the sacrifice of your only Son our Lord. Therefore receive whatever we may give out of our poverty of spirit, to the glory and honor of His name. Amen.**

Offertory Anthem

*Padua* from Two Pieces  
Brass Ensemble

JH Schein, ed. R King

\*Doxology

Hamburg

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*Gospel Testament Lesson

John 3:14-21

Dr. Joseph McBrayer

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

**Now is the Time  
...to Face Our Mortality**

Dr. McBrayer

\*Hymn

**Amazing Grace**  
(stanzas 1-5)

**UMH 378**

*(Those who wish to join the church are invited to come forward.)*

\*Benediction

Dr. McBrayer

\*Postlude

The Fruit of Love  
Brass Ensemble

A Holborne, ed. J Lichtmann

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*The flowers are given in memory of Hayes Guzman by his family.*

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### MUSIC NOTES BY JOHN COWDEN

This morning we harken back to the beginning of Lent when we marked our mortality with ashes. Yet, even though our death is inevitable, it is not something we should fear. Listen for the ways the hymns and anthems this morning specifically reference mortality...and also encourage us to look beyond it.

With apologies to those among you who want to sing every stanza of every hymn, I chose to sing only the first 5 stanzas of "Amazing Grace" because it encapsulates the message of the morning so well: "Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace."

\*Congregation stand as able. **UMH: United Methodist Hymnal / TFWS: The Faith We Sing Children's Worship bags** available at the front of the sanctuary to the right.  
**Nursery care** available for children ages 3 and under in all worship services.

## Worship Times and Locations

8:30 and 11:00 a.m.: Traditional (Sanctuary)  
10:45: Modern (Fellowship Hall)

**ONLINE:** 10:45 a.m. – Modern Worship

**ONLINE:** 11:00 a.m. – Traditional Worship.

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/ogumc.org](https://www.facebook.com/ogumc.org)

**YouTube:** [youtube.com/ogumc](https://www.youtube.com/ogumc)

## Our Pastors

Dr. Beth LaRocca-Pitts – *Senior Pastor* ext. 211

Dr. Amy Morgan – *Pastor of Service and Nurture* ext. 210

Dr. Joseph McBrayer – *Pastor of Connection and Digital Ministry* ext. 212

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster – *Bishop in Residence*

## Our Program Staff

Dale Smith – *Executive Director* ext. 225

Rachel Fullerton – *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor* ext. 220

Pam Reynolds – *Director of Finance* ext. 224

Atticus Hicks – *Director of Modern Worship* ext. 208

Elizabeth Loughran – *Director of Children's Ministry* ext. 218

CJ Lord – *Director of Youth Ministries* ext. 202

John Cowden – *Director of Traditional Music Ministry* ext. 226

Kara Johnson – *Director of Senior Adult Ministries* ext. 236

Leanne Herrmann – *Organist*

## Our Church Information

**Church Office** 404-636-7558  
Office Hours 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. M–F  
Emergency Contact After Hours ext. 9  
Address 1722 Oak Grove Road, Decatur, GA 30033  
Website [www.ogumc.org](http://www.ogumc.org)

## Our Schools

Oak Grove Christian School 404-636-5476  
YCS (Young Children's School) 404-636-7951

## Submitting Articles to the Oak Grove News:

Please be reminded that Thursday 12 pm is the deadline for information that you would like to add to the Oak Grove News. This will enable your article to appear in the following week's bulletin.

**VISIT the Oak Grove website: [ogumc.org](http://ogumc.org) and pull down "FORMS".**

**Fill out your information.** Articles will run TWO times and may be edited for space. Indicate the two editions you prefer when the article is submitted. Thank you!



## Connect With Us

**Check the Oak Grove website for up-to-the-minute news on all events: [www.ogumc.org/news](http://www.ogumc.org/news)**

### Make Sure You Stay in Constant Contact

Information on our ministries, news, and upcoming events is shared through our ConstantContact weekly congregational email. If your email address changes during the year, please contact Diane O'Steen, Membership/Database Admin., ([dosteen@ogumc.org](mailto:dosteen@ogumc.org) or 404-636-7558 ext.221)

