



Meridian United Methodist
**Church of the
 Warm Heart**

FOOTPRINTS

March 2026

LOVING ALL. CHANGING HEARTS. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:30 a.m.

11:15 a.m.

Both services are broadcast online.

Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

2:00 p.m.

SERMON SERIES

March 2026

03.01.2026

But I've Got a Good Excuse!

Luke 14:16-23



03.08.2026

If You Build It, They Will Scatter

Genesis 11:1-9



03.15.2026

Persistence Pays

Jm 1:19-20; Eph 4:31-32; Jn 2:12-16



03.22.2026

The Myth of the Angry Christian

Luke 19:28-40



03.29.2026

What a Difference a Week Can Make

Mark 16:1-7; John 20:24-29

HIGHLIGHTED HAPPENINGS

Spring Forward

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before church next week! Daylight Savings Time will begin on March 8th. Don't worry; if you forget, you can check out the Contemporary service, or tag along with someone for lunch!



Puzzle Day



Family Ministries is sponsoring a Church Puzzle Day on Saturday, March 21. Folks of all ages are invited to gather in the FLC to work on puzzles from 2 - 4 p.m. Family Ministries will provide hot drinks and you can bring a snack to share.

Scholarships Available

The Church of the Warm Heart Education Scholarship is now being offered through Meridian UMC to all students entering or returning to college for the Fall of 2026. Applications will be emailed to those who are interested. The application for this scholarship is available by contacting Claudia Moberly at clmoberly@gmail.com.



All applications and required attachments must be completed and turned in to the church office or electronically to Claudia Moberly by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, April 29.

Ladies Morning Out

March 25th, 10:00 a.m.



You are invited to join us for a relaxed walk and coffee catch-up on March 25th at 10:00 a.m. We'll start by grabbing coffee at Primitive Grounds, the new place that's opened up across the street from the FLC. Check out their menu online; they have smoothies, too! Then we'll hit the town for some light exercise and conversation. Please RSVP with Lisa Miller.

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STAFF

- Senior Pastor** (ext. 104)
Rev. Mike Benischek pastormike@meridianumc.com
- Minister of Congregational Care** (ext. 105)
Lisa Miller care@meridianumc.com
- Minister of Worship Arts** 208-608-2520
Debbie Jones worshiparts@meridianumc.com
- Family Minister (Children and Youth)** 734-316-9517
Nicole Walker family@meridianumc.com
- Office Manager** (ext. 102)
Angela Perry office@meridianumc.com
- Receptionist** (ext. 101)
Lucinda Dyer receptionist@meridianumc.com
- Bookkeeper**
Maria Akers bookkeeper@meridianumc.com
- Communications Coordinator** (ext. 103)
Video Production
Jacob Walker cc@meridianumc.com
production@meridianumc.com
- Nursery Coordinator**
Jessie Layton nursery@meridianumc.com
- Organist**
Kristine Ciulla organist@meridianumc.com
- Facility Personnel**
Dave Scarpellini maintenance@meridianumc.com (M - Th)
Don Woods dandvwoods@gmail.com (F - Sun)

February

NEW MEMBERS:

Alice Clovis
Kelley Smith

DEATHS:

Please pray for the families of...
Carl Harden

BAPTISMS:

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- Administrative Council Chair** Nancy Rountree
- Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair** Margaret Pridmore
- Trustees Chair** Ron Pridmore
- Systems Administrator** Integrity Computer Consultants
- Finance Chair** Lori Jones
- Treasurer** Lori Jones
- Financial Secretary** Diane Brister
- Futures Team Chair** Lori Jones
- United Methodist Men President** Ed Emmel
- United Women in Faith President** Dixie Jacky
- Lay Chaplain Coordinator** Faye Gabriel
- Lay Chaplains** Joyce Bailey, Emma Jean Bedsole, Don Brister, Lynda Cavanagh Sherry Clark, Cassie Collins, Faye Gabriel, Ben Madsen, Lisa Miller, Mary Rich, Cyndi Trimmel
- Health and Wellness Co-Coordinators**
Lisa Miller, Sue Mattison

APRIL BLOOD DRIVE



Our next blood drive will be held on Monday, April 6, from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the FLC. A single blood donation can save up to 3 lives! And every two seconds in the U.S. someone needs blood. To do your part and schedule a donation, contact Lisa Miller at...

care@meridianumc.com

CHURCH INFORMATION

MERIDIAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

240 E. Idaho Ave. Meridian, ID 83642
235 E. Pine Ave. Meridian, ID 83642 - Mailing Address
 Phone: **208.888.2245** Fax: **208.888.5741**
 Email: office@meridianumc.com
 Website: www.meridianumc.com
 Facebook: **Meridian United Methodist Church**

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Prayer & Praise Requests - prayer@meridianumc.com

PASTOR MIKE'S MUSINGS

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.
Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.
~ Matthew 10:16, KJV*

Dear Warm Heart Friends and Family,

This is just a PSA to keep you all safe and in-the-know.

Nothing is out of bounds for scammers, and now they're targeting churches and the people in them. One way they do this is by using church directories. These directories, meant to help members stay connected, can unfortunately become a gold mine for scammers looking to take advantage of kind, trusting people. Last week, the church office received a "prayer request" from "Pastor Mike" asking for a copy of the church directory. They didn't get it. But every now and then, our church folk are asked for money or gift cards over text, email, or phone by those posing as church staff.

This message can look real. It might even come from what seems like your pastor's phone number or email. But it's not. It's a scam. Once you buy those gift cards and send the codes, the scammer takes the money, and it's almost impossible to get it back.

These scams work because they're personal. The scammer may know your name, your pastor's name and even other people in your church. Last year, I received a phone call from myself—and the person on the other end introduced themselves as Pastor Mike... Lord have mercy...

Here are some warning signs:

- A sudden request for gift cards, especially by text or email
- Messages that say it's urgent but don't give many details
- Strange grammar, typos or vague instructions
- Requests that ask you to keep it a secret
- A message that feels "off" or unusual for the person sending it

If something doesn't feel right, trust your gut. Always double-check. If you get a strange message, call the person directly; don't just reply to the message. Be skeptical of gift card requests. No real pastor or church leader should ask for gift cards by text or email. We'll do the honorable thing and ask you to your face!

Keep your information private. Don't share your phone number or address publicly unless you're sure it's safe. (You might notice that we do not keep a church directory in the lobby or by the phones.)

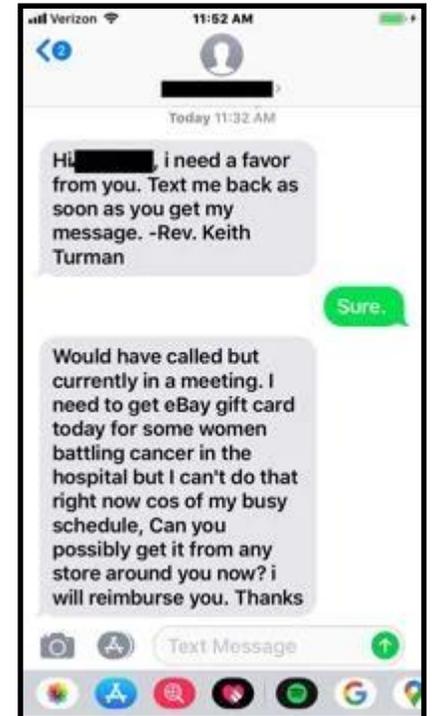
Please know that we want to keep everyone's personal information private, and we work to do just that. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Last year, ABC reported that almost \$5 billion was reported lost by elderly victims, and an estimated \$81 billion in losses were not reported. Please be careful; be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

See you in church on Sunday!

Pastor Mike

P.S. I know we're not even through Lent yet, but I just want to make a quick plug for an upcoming class. After Easter, Betty Seavey will be leading a six-week study of the book "Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess" by Tom Berlin. Look for more details coming soon!



MINISTRIES & NEWS

FAMILY MINISTRIES

March is here, and it's an exciting time! Family Ministries is holding one last winter fun event, and then embracing spring break—all while Miss Nicole plans VBS and the youth fundraiser for their summer mission trip!

CHILDREN

This is an unusually full month for the Warm Heart Kids! Our "Third" Grade Bible Study is wrapping up while our Sunday Musical Rehearsals are taking off, plus we're trying out new Snow Tubing and Church Puzzle Day events! There are lots of opportunities to get involved as much as your schedule allows.

"Third" Grade Bible Study

Sundays, March 1 and 8, 11:00—11:45 a.m.

Bible Builders & Angels Alive

Wednesdays, March 4, 11, and 25, 6:00—7:30 p.m.

Snow Tubing at Eagle Island

Saturday, March 7, 12:30 p.m.
Just \$10 per person!

Sunday Musical Practices

Sundays, March 8 and 22, 12:15—1:00 p.m.

Parents Night Out

Friday, March 13, 6:00—8:30 p.m.

Church Puzzle Day

Saturday, March 21, 2:00—4:00 p.m.

PLUS, SAVE THE DATE!

Easter Egg-stravaganza

Saturday, April 5, 9:30 a.m.



Bible Builders kids celebrating Valentines Day with a special craft!

YOUTH

The Warm Heart Youth are snow tubing and hunting Easter Eggs in the same month this year, thanks to the lunar calendar (dictating the timing of Easter) and the magic of engineered snow! In between, we have regular youth group nights, spring break, a Backpack Program volunteer date, and the Family Ministries' "Church Puzzle Day." All youth group events are for kids in grades 6-12.

"Regular" Youth Group

Sundays, March 1 and 15, 6:00—8:00 p.m.
Youth Room

Snow Tubing at Eagle Island

Saturday, March 7, 10:30 a.m.
Just \$10 per person!

Church Puzzle Day

Saturday, March 21, 2:00—4:00 p.m.

Backpack Program

Tuesday, March 24, 3:30 p.m.
Meridian Food Bank

Youth Egg Hunt Spectacular

Sunday, March 29, 6:00—8:00 p.m.
FLC



Youth Retreat Crew 2026

With joy,

Nicole Walker

family@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Go green!

March is National Nutrition Month, and I think Lent is the perfect time to refresh our plates, rethink our routines, and focus on fueling our bodies with intention. So here are some ways you can improve your diet and your health:

Eat the rainbow! Adding more color to your plate naturally increases your vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant intake:

- Red – Tomatoes, strawberries (*heart health*)
- Orange – carrots, sweet potatoes (*immune support*)
- Green – spinach, broccoli (*bone health*)
- Blue/purple – blueberries, eggplant (*brain health*)
- White – garlic, onions (*immune support*)

Challenge yourself to include at least 3 different colors at each meal!

A simple formula for balanced meals:

- 1/2 plate fruits and vegetables
- 1/4 lean protein
- 1/4 whole grains (add healthy fats)

Swap out with healthier alternatives. Small swaps make a big impact over time:

- White bread for whole grain
- Soda for water
- Chips for raw veggies
- Baking? Swap some of the oil/butter with applesauce

Stay hydrated! Your body need water to run well, so:

- Keep a reusable water bottle nearby
- Add lemon, berries, or cucumbers for flavor
- Drink a glass of water before or during each meal

Move more to feel better! Aim for:

- 30 minutes of walking (can be short activity breaks throughout the day)
- Stretching or yoga
- Strength exercises twice a week

Shop smart! A healthy diet starts with your grocery list:

- Plan meals before shopping
- Shop the perimeter of the store
- Read nutrition labels
- Avoid shopping while hungry

I challenge you to pick one new healthy habit to focus on each week; let's get cookin' and movin'! For more information visit www.eatright.org or fda.gov/food.

Blessings & good health,

Lisa Miller
care@meridianumc.com

WORSHIP ARTS

The Warm Heart Media Team is looking for a few extra folks to help with slides for Sunday mornings and for the Worship Team rehearsals on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. If you can press a space bar on the computer, you are qualified! To help, contact me for more details and to get plugged in.



Hearing assistance is available!

Our new assistive hearing system is up and running. If you are having trouble laughing at Pastor Mike's jokes because you miss the punchline, we can help. Just let Jacob Walker know, and he'll get you a receiver and headphones.

You can also bring a pair of your own favorite (wired) headphones, or we can transmit directly to telecoil-compatible hearing aids.

If you aren't laughing because the punchline wasn't funny, you're out of luck.

Calling all children (4 yrs—5th grade)!

Our Warm Heart Kids will be presenting "Faith News" to the congregation on Sunday, April 26, at the 11:15 a.m. service. Have kids or grandchildren who would like to join in? See me for more details, rehearsal music, and parts!



The Celebration Choir will be offering "It is Finished" by Mary McDonald for the Good Friday service on April 3. If you are looking for a short-term singing commitment, this is for YOU! All singers are welcome to join us! Rehearsals are March 5, March 12, March 19, and March 26 at 7 p.m. Our final dress rehearsal is April 2 at 5:30 p.m. See Debbie Jones or our music librarian, Judy Lolley, for music and a rehearsal track!



We're looking for some substitute ringers to help our Koinonia Handbell Choir for rehearsals and some performances. If you have rung before and don't mind filling in from time to time, please see Debbie Jones for more details. We'd love to have you make music with us!

Blessings,

Debbie Jones
worshiparts@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

FINANCIAL NEWS

The momentum continues! With a great closing in December to finish 2025 with a surplus of more than \$33,000, we began 2026 by posting a surplus of \$6,537 in January. A great start is not always the norm; last year we were in a negative position of almost \$22,000 after one month. You might think that I will be giving a "pep talk" to start the year with a bang, but you don't want that or even need that. We all know that for our programs and ministries to be successful, we need funds. We have great staff, a solid cadre of volunteers, and a spirit that is contagious. The best way for each of us to do our part is to ensure that the funds are there when needed.

For General Operations:	Jan 2026	2026 YTD
Given	\$72,567	\$72,567
Need	\$65,030	\$65,030
Outcome	\$6,537	\$5,537

A few years ago, our church adopted a mission statement to guide us in our actions toward each other and our neighbors: **LOVING ALL, CHANGING HEARTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES.** One of the ways we as a church have been carrying out this mandate—in addition to providing funds needed to keep our church solvent—is by giving to charities and programs that are supported by our church but not funded by our church. In 2025, we received \$764,445 for church purposes and an additional \$146,449 given to such worthwhile causes (wow!). Please read on as I highlight some of them:

The largest amount was the \$57,493 given to our scholarship fund to assist our members in furthering their education. A memorial dedicated to this cause came in this year, which meant a larger than normal figure.

In a surprise to me, our church was the third largest donor to the Meridian Food Bank last year. In 2025, we donated \$16,967, plus a large number of pounds of food. Additionally, many of our members donate their time at the Food Bank and some serve on the Board of Directors. What a wonderful community connection!

Our annual Youth Mission Trip is one of our most successful projects. Our youth spend a week away from Meridian assisting communities with things like construction, painting, landscaping, and other labor. This is a life-giving and life-changing opportunity for our youth. In 2025, our members donated \$10,820 towards their trip to South Dakota.

About ten years ago, members of our church agreed to assist the people of Haiti who were facing a natural disaster in the form of a devastating earthquake, governmental corruption, violence and abject poverty. A decision was made to drill water wells as the best way to help. We are still assisting! In 2025, we donated \$33,000 to this project.

The Good Sam Fund is administered by Pastor Mike and Lisa Miller and helps our struggling members with things like gasoline and emergency utilities payments. Last year, \$975 was donated to this fund. To offer some sunshine to our members who cannot attend regular services or live in assisted living facilities, we deliver care baskets at least four times each year; \$520 was donated for this program.

Turkey boxes at Thanksgiving and Adopt-a-Family at Christmas help to lift spirits during the holiday season. Last year, we gave \$9,076 for these causes. Additionally, we donated \$6,873 to the Veterans Foot Locker program, which provides some needed toiletries, clothing, and other items to the residents of the Veterans Home in Boise.

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a program that assists those who have been affected by disasters like floods, fires, extreme cold, earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, hurricanes, and more. Our church donated \$9,210 last year.

Two more programs that received donations are Mirror Image, which provides cosmetics and personal hygiene products to teenagers who need them (\$555), and the CROP Walk, which targets world hunger (\$960).

I don't know about you, but I am IMPRESSED with these numbers. And they don't even count the \$4,602 spent at the annual bazaar, donations to the NU2U Thrift Store, or the hours of time folks spent volunteering. Added together, the grand total of giving by our church members in 2025 was \$915,496.

I am often asked about the ways we can give to the church. You can give cash, write a check, set up automatic payments, or you can donate stock. Last year, \$118,351 was given through stock sales. Lori Jones, our Finance Chair will gladly assist if you have questions regarding a stock sale.

As I write this, I feel really good about our finances. I did not have to ask for money. There is no pressing emergency that needs to be handled. The weather is improving. And baseball season is almost upon us. As always, I ask you to continue to wrap our church, community, nation, and world in prayer.

- Don Brister, Stewardship Chairman

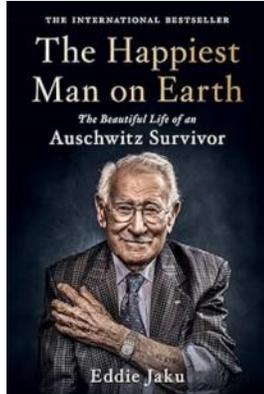
MINISTRIES & NEWS

THE BOOK NOOK

Claudia Moberly

The title of this month's Book Nook book sounds like an oxymoron: *The Happiest Man on Earth: the Beautiful Life of An Auschwitz Survivor*, by Eddie Jaku.

Eddie was Jewish, born in Germany, and came of age during the rise of Nazi Germany. On November 9, 1938, remembered as Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass), Eddie had come home from college for a visit. He was arrested, beaten, and sent with his family to Buchenwald Concentration Camp. For the next seven years of his life, Eddie faced unimaginable horrors in Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and finally on a forced death march during the Third Reich's final days. The Nazis took away everything that mattered to him, but could not break his spirit. Somehow he found the will to survive. Following the war, he promised himself he would live a life of gratitude. He would smile every day, be thankful for surviving, and honor the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazi regime.



At age 100, Eddie tells his story, shares the power of gratitude, and exemplifies a life lived in kindness and tolerance. His insights on the importance of family, friendship, love, and living an ethical life are timeless. He shows us how he endured unimaginable suffering and still claimed the title of "happiest man on Earth."

This book was the February selection for the UWF Book Club and is available on the book cart in the Family Life Center. This uplifting outlook is a joy to read.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Mark your calendars for our annual Trivia Night on Saturday, April 11, at 6 p.m.! This fun event pits teams of six against each other and the Trivia Master (Don Brister) in a fun game of 50 questions. The prizes are small, but the experience is enormous.

This event is a fundraiser for the youth mission team, so there's always a bake sale in conjunction with the event—you can fuel your brain with sugar while supporting the kids! What's not to love?

Tickets are just \$10/person. You can form your own team of six or come as a free agent and be assigned to a team when you walk in the door. Register through the church office, and please let them know if you already have a team or if you're flying solo.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Dixie Jacky

Our theme for 2026 is from Isaiah 58:10-12: "...we are reminded as people of God, we are known as 'well-watered gardens.'" Let's try to fulfill that urging of the prophet Isaiah, by taking a field trip!

On Thursday, April 2, we will meet at in the FLC at 9:45 a.m., then carpool to the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights. We have a docent-led tour scheduled at 10:30 a.m. Following that, we will return to the church and walk, or drive if needed, to a restaurant in downtown Meridian for a no-host lunch.

Please call the church office to let them know you are planning to attend. Please also let Lucinda or Angela know if you can be a driver. Or, let them know if you plan to meet us there.



This month, let's remember the following mission projects that our Pledge to Mission monies support:

- Ministry with Women, Children & Youth in Zimbabwe's women's baking program.
- Augmenting Food Production and Income in Times of Siege: Women's Gardens, Israel/Palestine
- Global Health Action, Atlanta Georgia

Pledge to Mission donations are always appreciated. You can write your check to Meridian United Women in Faith, mark it: "Pledge to Mission," and give it to Janeale McClees, our treasurer.



Four members of our unit are registered to attend the UWFaith National Women's Assembly in Cincinnati this May. Please keep them in prayer as they prepare and travel to this national conference: Dixie Jacky, Claudia Moberly, Janeale McClees, and Lisa Miller.



Thank you to all who donated books for the Story Link project (books are for incarcerated parents to read a book onto tape for their children.) We really appreciate all the donations!



Mirror Image

Don't forget our on-going local mission project of hygiene supplies for Mirror Image. Please bring your items to Lisa's office or

a check is always welcome (please make out to Meridian United Methodist Church with "Mirror Image" in the memo line).



Meridian United Methodist Church
235 E. Pine Avenue
Meridian, ID 83642

March Events to Celebrate!

Please watch the E-Blast and Facebook for additional church events.

March 7 – Snow Tubing for Youth and Children

March 13 – Parents Night Out

March 21 – Church Puzzle Day

March 25 – Ladies Morning Out

March 29 – Palm Sunday

April

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE:

**Wednesday,
March 25th**

Submissions may be
emailed to Jacob Walker at
cc@meridianumc.com
or brought by the
church office.

Thank you!