



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

FOOTPRINTS

April 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

April 2026

04.05.2026

Don't Doubt

Luke 14:16-23



04.12.2026

Guest Preacher: Rev David Thompson



04.19.2026

Consider Some Lillies

Matthew 6:25-33



04.26.2026

First Service: Just a Little Lower

Psalm 8

Second Service: Children's Musical

HOLY WEEK

In the Christian Calendar, "Holy Week"—which commemorates the seven days leading up to Easter—is always a busy time. Palm Sunday is already behind us, but here are a few more opportunities for us to celebrate together:



Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday marks the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. Join us in the FLC on April 2nd at 6:30 p.m. to celebrate the Lord's Supper and then share a potluck meal together

Good Friday

One of the most somber days of the liturgical year, Good Friday is our chance to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins. On Friday, April 3rd, at 7:00 p.m., our Celebration Choir will present the cantata "It is Finished." This service will also be broadcast online for those who cannot attend in-person.



Egg Hunt

Okay, this is not an official part of Holy Week, but it's still a beloved tradition! See page 6 for details about our children's Egg-stravaganza!

Easter Sunday

Finally, be sure to join us on Easter Sunday (April 5th) at either service as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord!



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March

NEW MEMBERS:

DEATHS:

Please pray for the families of...

BAPTISMS:

WARM HEART SCHOLARSHIPS



Our Church of the Warm Heart Education Scholarship is now being offered through Meridian UMC to all students entering or returning to college in the fall. 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, 2025.

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)
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- Receptionist** (ext. 101)
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- 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)

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

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

Dear Warm Heart Friends and Family,

One day God was looking down at earth and saw all of the rascally behavior that was going on. So he called one of his angels and sent the angel to earth for a time.

When he returned, he told God, 'Yes, it is bad on Earth; 95% are misbehaving and only 5% are good.'

God was not pleased. So he decided to email the 5% who were good, because he wanted to encourage them, give them a little something to help them keep going

Do you know what the email said?

Yeah, I didn't get one either...

Every Maundy Thursday, I end up asking myself the same question: why did Jesus choose Judas to be one of his disciples? Couldn't Christ, with all of his divine knowledge, have chosen a better person? After all, Judas was a weasel, who robbed from the ministry funds, disparaged other people, and whose name "Iscariot" – the dagger – aptly fits someone who will stab you in the back.

Jesus must have known what kind of unsavory character Judas was, and yet Jesus still picked him to be one of the Twelve. We know about how Jesus called the fishermen Peter and Andrew, James and John; we've heard about Matthew being called as he was gathering taxes for the Romans; we can read about Philip bringing Nathanael to Jesus in the Gospel of John; but what we don't know is how Jesus called Judas personally, and what, where, when, and why were the circumstances.

It's a mystery, and maybe because Judas turned out to be such a despicable traitor, the authors felt his calling story wasn't worth mentioning in their Gospels. But whatever happened, Jesus still called Judas to be part of one of the most important small religious groups ever to be established in the history of the world.

I don't think that Jesus chose Judas because he needed someone to betray him in order to be crucified. There had to be some sort of zeal, faith, and sincerity that Christ initially saw in Judas. He allowed him to be part of his ministry team for three years, so whatever Judas did before the last week of Christ's life, it must have been valuable to Jesus.

So what is happening here? Why does the Holy Son of God, anointed to become Savior of the world, healer of the nations, and King of all creation bother with such a louse as Judas? I think the answer can be summed up in one important word: GRACE. If Jesus could show such grace to an unworthy, unloving, disloyal traitor like Judas, then Christ can also show such grace to sinners like you and me.

Let's be honest folks, the only reason that we feel sorry for Judas is because he represents every one of us. We all have betrayed Jesus in our lives. We all have done shameful things; we all are greedy and selfish, unfaithful and disloyal. In fact, if we were all to read these stories in the Gospel and replace the name "Judas" with our own, we know that we are quite capable of doing the same despicable things. Hello, my name is Michael Benischek and I belong to a group called 'Traitors Anonymous.'

Lord Jesus, we all are guilty of betraying you at times. Sometimes we are embarrassed to say that we are Christians. Sometimes we fail to speak out when we see things that are immoral or wrong. Sometimes we neglect to pray, read our Bible, or even worship you each day. Forgive our treacherous hearts and allow us the healing power of your grace. In your holy name, we humbly pray. Amen.

We pray that Grace is still around. And may we offer it to each other as well. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved...

See you in worship this Sunday!

Pastor Mike

MINISTRIES & NEWS

FAMILY MINISTRIES

April, spring, and new life are all here! Early spring seeds have gone into the ground (or pots), and at the Walker household we have a daily alarm set as a reminder to water the them. It may well be a few weeks yet until we see the shoots appearing above the soil, but we remain attentive, caring, and hopeful as we do what we can to encourage growth. Surely there is a parallel here between the seeds of biological plants and the seeds of faith! How are you attending to, caring for, and holding hope for the faith of our children and youth?

CHILDREN

Musical practices—and musical practices at Bible Builders—dominate the WHK April calendar, but first we get to celebrate Easter with our Egg-stravaganza, and we still have a Parent's Night Out in there, too!

Bible Builders & Angels Alive / Musical Practice

Wednesdays, all month, 6:00—7:30 p.m.

Easter Egg-stravaganza

Saturday, April 4, 9:30 a.m.

Snacks, crafts, guessing games, the Easter story, and an epic indoor egg hunt! Bring your friends!

Parents Night Out

Friday, April 10, 6:00—8:30 p.m.

Sunday Musical Practices

Sundays, April 12 and 19, 12:15—1:00 p.m.

Faith News Musical Performance!!!

Sunday, April 26

performers report to the Upper Room at 10:45 a.m.; guests are invited to the 11:15 a.m. service

YOUTH

Spring is a BUSY time for teens, as school projects come due, spring sports and spring shows dot the calendars with their practices, and EOC exams begin to loom. Youth group aims to provide a place to laugh, relieve stress, and regroup during this season, without adding too much to the overwhelming calendar.

“Regular” Youth Group

Sunday, April 12, 6:00—8:00 p.m.

Youth Room

Youth Group Picnic & Park Night

Sunday, April 19, 6:00—8:00 p.m.

Nicole's house

Backpack Program

Tuesday, April 21, 3:30 p.m.

Meridian Food Bank

Children's Musical and Lunch

Sunday, April 26, 11:15 a.m.

Come support the future youth by attending their musical! Then we'll head over to DQ for lunch and ice cream.



Snapshots from a Faith News musical rehearsal



Enjoying “carrots” at the Youth Egg Hunt

With joy,

Nicole Walker
family@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28*

April is a beautiful reminder of renewal—not just in nature, but in our hearts and minds as well. As flowers bloom and the earth comes alive, it's also time to reflect on two important themes: **managing stress and caring for the world God has given us.**

Finding Peace in Stressful Times

Life can feel overwhelming at times. Responsibilities, worries, and daily pressures can leave us feeling drained. But God gently reminds us that we are not meant to carry these burdens alone.

Here are a few simple ways to manage stress this month:

- **Pause and Pray** – Take a few quiet moments each day to talk with God.
- **Breathe Deeply** – Slow, intentional breathing can calm both body and mind.
- **Stay Connected** – Reach out to friends, family, and your Warm Heart community.
- **Rest Without Guilt** – Even Jesus took time to rest. You can too!

Remember, caring for your mental and emotional health is not selfish; it is necessary.

Caring for Creation

This world around us is a gift, and we are called to care for it with love and respect. Earth Day (April 22) is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our role as stewards of God's creation. Here's some simple ways you can celebrate Earth Day:

- **Spend Time Outside** – Take a walk and appreciate nature (God's creation).
- **Reduce & Reuse** – Be mindful of waste and water usage.
- **Plant something** – New flowers, herbs, or trees can bring joy and renewal.

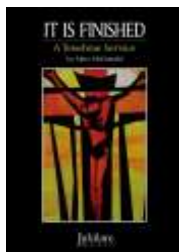
Just as the earth is renewed in spring, God offers renewal for our hearts. When we slow down, care for ourselves, and appreciate his creation, we grow closer to him.

Blessings & good health,

Lisa Miller
care@meridianumc.com

P.S. On behalf of the Miller/Linder family, I want to express our deepest gratitude for the love, support, and kindness you showed us after the loss of Janet. Thank you for walking alongside us in our grief and for surrounding us with love. We are truly grateful.

WORSHIP ARTS



The Celebration Choir will be offering "It is Finished" by Mary McDonald for the Good Friday service on April 3. The service begins at 7 p.m. This cantata will include actors who will help portray the final days of Jesus's life as well as accompaniment by the String Theory Quartet (a group of BSU students) who will offer additional music as well.

Easter Sunday is also Communion Sunday this year, and it's gonna be a busy one! Worship at the traditional service will include the Celebration Choir and music provided by the Syringa String Quartet. We will conclude the service with the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus." If you know it and would like to sing with us, we'll have extra sheet music available (words on the screen, too). The contemporary service will be filled with a mix of traditional and contemporary Easter music and feature your Warm Heart Worship Team.

"Faith News" is a musical set as a news broadcast from heaven. The angels send their roving reporters to earth to interview some of the Old Testament folks who have amazing stories of faith. Faith News will be presented by our Warm Heart Kids at the April 26 Contemporary service (11:15 a.m.). You don't want to miss this!! These kiddos have been working hard on their lines and music, attending Wednesday evening Angels Alive Choir and some Sunday afternoon rehearsals. Let's pack the service to support our kiddos!



Grace Notes Ministry is a new outreach for anyone interested in sharing music with the residents at the Meridian Grace Memory Care facility. We're hoping to visit them once a month for 30 minutes. Do you play the piano? Sing? Can you count and identify colors? We're taking the colored bells in for them to play with us as well and could use a few extra hands. Pray about this ministry and contact Debbie Jones if you would be willing to help!

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.

Blessings,

Debbie Jones
worshiparts@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

FINANCIAL NEWS

When you receive your April Footprints, we will have completed the first quarter of 2026. Time flies when you are having fun! I truly am having fun as I scan the financials prepared by our Church bookkeeper, Maria Akers. As I am writing this, we still have one Sunday left in March, and we have already exceeded our February giving. I don't know about the March expenses, but unless some unexpected costs happen before next Tuesday, we will have had three straight months with gifts exceeding expenses. So the first quarter was a great success. I'm walking on air and hoping we can keep this trend as a normal occurrence!

For General Operations:	Feb 2026	2026 YTD
Given	\$65,321	\$137,891
Need	\$62,596	\$128,626
Outcome	\$2,726	\$9,265

Since I don't have to ask for money this month, I will give you some thoughts about nontraditional gifts:

We receive **memorial gifts** from the estates of church members on occasion, and this past month we had a surprise gift from a family of a lady who used to attend another Methodist church in the valley. That church is no longer affiliated with the United Methodists, so the family began researching other local churches that met their criteria. This research led them to us, and we thank them for the donation. I bring this up to remind you that as you prepare your wills or plan how to divide your estate, please consider your church.

More and more of you are directing your **Required Minimum Distribution** to the church. It is an easy way to assist the church in our stewardship efforts.

And, if you are lucky enough to receive a **tax refund** this year, why not donate part of it to the church? Just a thought.

Please continue to pray about our church finances and our church staff and volunteers. There is a tremendous amount of strife and angst around the world. Please pray for peaceful outcomes for all concerned. Pray for our leaders, elected officials, first responders, our military, and those who may be experiencing personal issues at this time. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our finances, please contact me, Stewardship Chairperson Don Brister, or Lori Jones, our Finance Committee Chair. May God continue to bless the Church of the Warm Heart.



TRIVIA NIGHT

Our beloved annual Trivia Night and bake sale is on Saturday, April 11, at 6:00 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!

Whether you're a trivia master intent on winning or you just like a fun evening of laughter and fellowship, this event is for you! Don asks questions, your table comes up with collective answers, and Diane scores the answer sheets while Don reveals the answers to cheers and moans. It's funny, ridiculous, and it supports the youth mission team! There's everything 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.

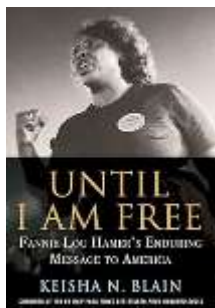


MINISTRIES & NEWS

THE BOOK NOOK

Claudia Moberly

Fannie Lou Hamer, born in 1917, was the daughter of sharecroppers and granddaughter of enslaved people. Her education was limited, as children needed to work alongside adults in the fields to help provide food for their families. At age 12, she dropped out of school altogether to work full time. By age 13 she was picking 200-300 pounds of cotton a day, even with a permanent limp, the result of polio. Yet her love of reading and learning was established, and she continued her informal education through Bible studies at church. Through Bible study, she developed a strong sense of service, and knew that helping others was God's calling for each of us.



In 1962, at age 44, she attended a meeting at her church in Sunflower County, Mississippi, and learned for the first time that she had the right to vote. It was a meeting that changed her life and the history of the civil rights movement in the United States. From that day on, despite her limited financial resources, Hamer became a tireless advocate for improving the lives of others.

Her favorite hymn, "This Little Light of Mine," was based on her love of the story in the fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel about the city set on a hill. As she said, "Jesus said, 'A city that's set on a hill cannot be hid,' and I don't mind my light shining. I don't hide that I'm fight for freedom because Christ died to set us free."

Keisha N. Blain has written a biography of this tireless, passionate woman, *Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America*. Her message forty years ago is still relevant today: that a democracy can only succeed when it supports all of its citizens and all of its citizens have a voice in establishing policies that live up to America's promise "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

College Care Boxes

It's hard to believe, but the end of the school year is coming up fast, which means final exams are fast approaching, too. Let's show our college students some love by sending them some study treats! Bring small packaged treats like crackers, nuts, or flavored drink packets—or study tools like 3x5 cards and resh pens—to the church office by April 19, and we'll package them up and ship them off to deliver a Warm Heart blessing to this special population!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Dixie Jacky

Did you know this organization, now called United Women in Faith, was formed on March 23, 1869 (157 years ago)? Eight women joined together to form the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, with the goal of creating educational opportunities and providing health care to women in India. Just this past month, we celebrated that founding with our Day of Giving, an event that raises money for our Legacy Endowment Fund, a permanently invested endowment which is currently just \$9 million short of its \$60 million goal!



Our unit's Pledge to Mission, joined with thousands of other units across the world, has done amazing things. While reading a Response Magazine article from Sally Vonner, CEO of United Women in Faith, I learned this: "...our giving makes an impact not only through our spiritual growth, leadership development, transformative education, and service and advocacy resources, but also through greater than 173,000 women, children and youth served by our National Institutions through grants. In Zimbabwe, 1,432 people benefited from microloans for poultry and making home cleaning products. You participated in more than 1,800 legislative actions for climate justice; 3,000 emails supporting federal bills to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline; and granting over \$500,000 in scholarships." These are just part of one year's activities!

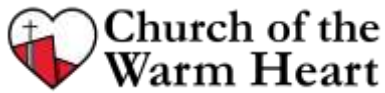
One of the National Mission Institutions (NMI) is in San Francisco, CA, called Mary Elizabeth Inn. I've had the privilege to visit this NMI, which has been served by United Women in Faith for 111 years. It was founded by Lizzy Glide—some of you may have heard of Glide Memorial UMC, and Mary Elizabeth Inn is right next door. For all these years, Mary Elizabeth Inn has been a secure location for women escaping violence, and the only one in San Francisco that accommodates women who are physically disabled. You can only imagine the thousands of women at just this one National Mission Institution whose lives have been transformed by our Pledge to Mission.



Please come and join us for our Spring Luncheon on May 9, 2026, when guest speaker Rochelle Killett will share from the book, *Highway of Tears*, about other ways United Women in Faith can support our Native American sisters.



We greatly appreciate your continued support of one of our local mission projects, Mirror Image. This program provides hygiene items for area youth. Please bring your items to Lisa's office in the FLC or you can give cash to: Meridian UMC, Mirror Image in the memo line.



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

April Events to Celebrate!

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

April 2 – Maundy Thursday Potluck, FLC @ 6:30 p.m.

April 3 – Good Friday Cantata, 7 p.m.

April 4 – Children’s Eggstravaganza, FLC @ 9:30 a.m.

April 5 – Happy Easter!

April 6 – Blood Drive, FLC from 12 - 5 p.m.

April 11 – Trivia Night, FLC @ 6 p.m.

April 26 – Children’s Musical @ 11:15 a.m. service

May

NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE:

**Friday,
April 24th**

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

Thank you!