



OUTREACH



Volume 38 Issue 3

First United Methodist Church

March 19, 2026

Easter from the Back Row

Every Easter we hear the same familiar phrases. “The stone was rolled away.” “He is risen.” “Death has been defeated.”

These truths are the very heart of our faith. The resurrection of Jesus is recorded in all four Gospels and is literally the foundation on which Christianity was built and stands. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that without the resurrection “our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

While the old adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” is way too harsh, the reality is, sometimes the truths we hear most often are the ones we stop seeing clearly. IN other words, the story we know best can sometimes become the story we think about the least.

If you’re still with me, and you will allow me to be a little “off the wall” with you today, I submit, that after a while, even for the most devout of us, Easter can be one of those things that starts to feel predictable, year after year. Sunrise service. Lilies. Choir music. The same story we have heard since childhood, etc., etc.

So, just for a moment, let’s step back and look at Easter from a slightly different perspective. Imagine watching the resurrection not from the front row – but from the back row. Now, I don’t mean the back row of the sanctuary, where all good Methodists like to sit. Rather, I am talking about seeing the resurrection all over again, but this time, from the **Back Row of History**. Because when the resurrection happened, no one actually realized what had just occurred.

Over my life in ministry and the church, I have been involved in numerous Easter Productions. And we always tell the story in very similar grand and glorious ways. We have pyro technique fire shooting out of the tomb, smoke rolling down the hill into the church audience, bright spotlights streaming from behind Jesus. And as he reaches his arms towards heaven, clothed in the purest shimmering samite, the trumpets sound, the orchestra cues, and the choir breaks out into a glorious rendition of Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus. And that is definitely Front Row kind of stuff.

But that’s not what actually happened, that’s just how we like to tell the story now.

In fact, Easter morning began in the most quiet, unassuming way possible. A few women walking through the dawn with spices for a burial. They certainly were not expecting any kind of miracle. They were just expecting a corpse.

When they arrived, the stone was rolled away with someone sitting on it. A little surprising perhaps, but not something one would call earth shattering by any means.

Think about that for just a moment. The greatest turning point in human history and the only witnesses are a handful of weeping women and a couple angels, who may have been a little confused themselves.

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, it was just another day. Roman soldiers still changed shifts. Merchants still opened their shops. Families still prepared breakfast.

The world had not even the slightest clue that **death itself had just been overturned**.

Continued on page 4

Outreach articles are due the **third** Sunday of each month. Please email your OUTREACH item to wendy@haysfumc.com before **Sunday, April 19, 2026**. Items may also be placed in the office, labeled **for the Outreach** by **April 19**. The next Outreach should be received on April 23.

Thanks

FUMC,
Thank you so much for the donation to cover the second location for Laundry Love! We are so grateful for all the support you have given already this year! You rock!
Macey Pfeifer
First Call for Help

Thanks to Sharon Irvin, Sheryl Cox, Jacinda Johnson, Edison Leuschner, Randy Clinkscales, Wendy Beougher & Jarilyn Staab who served at Feed Hays during the month of February. There is a sign up sheet across from the office if you are interested in helping.

Thanks to Lorraine Howerton for doing the WOW laundry each week. Your help is appreciated!

Thank you to Trey Brown for painting the church office as part of his Eagle Scout project. His hard work is giving the office a much needed facelift. Thanks to Matt Dumler for taking time from his vacation to hook up the phones & computers. We appreciate you both.

INTRODUCING OUR STAFF

PROGRAM STAFF
 Pastor: Pastor Susan Murithi
 Associate Pastor:: Pastor Troy Miller
 Special Music Coordinator: Meredith Cory
 Organist: Hannah Barrett
 Charlotte Rathke
 Pianist: Sharon Graham
 Handbell Choir Dir. Hannah Barrett
 Marijo Rooney
 Director of Discipleship: Matt Dumler
 Children's Ministry Coordinator: Jenna Brubaker
 Outreach Editor: Wendy Beougher
SUPPORT STAFF:
 Administrative Secretary: Beverly Bearley
 Administrative Assistant: Wendy Beougher
 Financial Secretary: Marsha Swanson
 Childcare Director: Mellissa Pyle
 Building Supervisor: Alan Nelson

Sympathy

Our sincere sympathy is extended to the family & friends of

Louise Younger who died February 23. Louise had been a member for 76 years.

We all get heavier as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads.
Vlade Divac

The brain forgets much, but the lower back remembers everything.
Robert Brault

The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.
George Jessel

There are welcome bags at each entrance for Hays Visitors. There are cards & pens to give to out of town guests. If you see someone new sitting by you and they don't have a bag, please get one for them. Take one to a neighbor or friend you would like to invite to church. Also call & check on people who sit next to you and may have missed Sundays. If you see someone sitting alone, sit next to them.



April 2 at 7:00 p.m.
Maundy Thursday Service

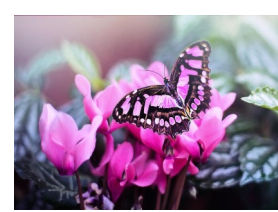
 April 3 at 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday Service

 April 5
Easter Services
9:30 Children's Egg Hunt

Circle News

Rebekah Circle met Wednesday, March 11 in the church parlor. Peggy Stull led devotions on spirituality and led the business meeting. Sherrie Smith and Carol Purdy were hostesses and served wedding cake & punch. Members signed up for the Spring Brunch and the upcoming potluck. Sherrie Smith gave the program on White House weddings.

Naomi Circle met on Wednesday, March 11 at the church with Julie Giess serving as hostess. Joys, concerns, devotions and prayer were offered. Members answered roll call by naming a favorite Irish expression. Minutes and the treasurer's report from the February meeting were shared. Plans were made for the upcoming Spring Brunch. Caitlin Glassman presented the program "Carrying the Light". Next meeting is April 8 at 9:15.



The United Women of Faith invite all women to the **Spring**

Brunch on March 21, at 9:15 in Fellowship Hall. Catherine Trieschmann Miller will present the program, "Faith in the Unseen: Artist's Work". Martha Miller and Alex Underwood will present the entertainment.

The Mission Committee is collecting manual con openers for the food banks. They are also collecting soap, shampoo and conditioner from hotel stays for the Hearth (a place where those without a warm place can spend the night). Please continue to support the Hays High food pantry.

FUMC Financial Snapshot

	February 28, 2025	Year to Date
Checking Account*	\$65,387.37	
Operating Gifts	\$54,218.48	\$117,071.64
Operating Expenses	\$56,702.94	\$107,399.24
Parsonage Mortgage Balance	\$72,971.49	
Organ Fund	\$8,329.99	

*Also known as Unrestricted Operating Account that funds our operating budget.

The sustaining gift for the Altar Foundation 2026 is \$153.



Parents, it's time to start thinking about summer camp! Registration for the 3 United Methodist camps in Kansas are OPEN! Camp Chippewa, Camp Lake Side and Camp Horizon are all excellent choices to attend. Visit their websites to pick a camp that fits your child's interests best. They have options all summer long for kids ages 1st grade up through High School. Our church will be offering camp scholarships for anyone who is wanting to attend! Please contact Jenna at jenna@haysfumc.com for more information on our scholarships.



There will be an Easter Egg hunt for children at 9:30 on Easter Sunday. There will also be crafts in the parlor for the children to do as well.

Heavenly Father, during this Lenten season, give me a new and expanded vision for my life. Help me to live full of faith. Teach me to find hope in the face of adversity. Amen.

**Menus**

Serving time is 5:00-6:00

Five dollars per person

All menus are subject to change

To go meals are available-call 625-3408

March 25

Hot dogs with chili or hamburgers
Chips
Salad bar
Dessert

April 1

BBQ meatballs
Macaroni & cheese
Peas
Salad
Rolls & dessert

April 8

Chicken & noodles
Mashed potatoes
Broccoli
Salad
Dessert

April 15

Sub sandwiches
Baked beans
Potato or macaroni salad
Chips
Dessert

April 22

Pulled pork sandwiches
Tater tots
Carrots & peas
Salad
Dessert

April 29

Cook's choice casserole
French bread
Salad
Dessert

Continued from page 1

There is something wonderfully strange about the way God chose to reveal the resurrection. Like his birth, the first witnesses were not kings, priests, or scholars. They were women who had come to finish preparing a body for burial. In the first century, their testimony was not even considered legally reliable in courts. Yet, they became the first proclaimers of the resurrection.

If someone were inventing a story to convince the world, this would certainly not be the way to do it. But the resurrection story is filled with those kinds of surprises. The risen Christ first appears to a grieving woman, Mary Magdalene, who mistakes Him for a gardener. Later He walks alongside two discouraged travelers on the road to Emmaus and they don't recognize Him for miles. Even the disciples struggle to believe it.

Easter did not begin with certainty. It began with confusion.

Here's another way to think about Easter. What if I told you, the resurrection is not the end of Jesus' story, but the beginning?

According to the Apostle Paul, Jesus is "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." That phrase "first fruits" comes from the language of harvest. The first fruits were the first portion of the crop, the sign that the full harvest was coming. It was a promise for the future. A future of a bountiful harvest.

In other words, the resurrection of Jesus is like the first crack of dawn breaking into the darkness of our world. The sun has not fully risen yet, but the light has already begun. Easter is the moment when God's future, a future of light and life, broke into our present world, a world of darkness and death.

Yes, I know, death still exists. Yes, I know, pain still exists. Yes, I know, the world is still full of darkness and despair at every turn. Part of the reason why, is because, in reality, the world is still waiting. The difference is, it no longer has to wait without hope. Because, in the midst of that reality, the final outcome has been revealed.

Here's a thought that may feel a little "off the wall," but I encourage you to sit with it for just a moment. The stone in front of the tomb was not rolled away so Jesus could get out. In John's Gospel, the risen Christ appears inside locked rooms. So, a sealed stone would not have stopped Him. The stone was rolled away so the disciples could see in. The empty tomb was not a doorway for Jesus. It was evidence for the world. God was saying, "Go ahead. Look. See for yourself."

Christian faith was never based on a hidden miracle. It is based on a public claim that a real tomb in a real place was suddenly empty.

One of the most surprising parts of the resurrection story is how it ends. Jesus does not simply appear, prove He is alive, and disappear again. Instead, He spends weeks with His followers, teaching them, eating with them, restoring them.

He meets Peter the Apostle beside a charcoal fire and gives him a new beginning. He opens the scriptures to the travelers on the road. He breathes peace over the disciples hiding behind locked doors.

The resurrection is not just a victory over death. It is the dawn of a new age. The breaking in of a new light. And it is an invitation to a new life. But that "new life" is not just a one-time thing that we do, and then we're done. Certainly, the resurrection of Jesus opens the door to new life, but walking through that door is an ongoing journey of renewal, transformation, and daily discipleship that never ends.

Perhaps the most "off the wall" thing about Easter is how ordinary it looked at first. Watching from the back row, there were no crowds, no parades and no headlines. Just an empty tomb, a confused group of followers, and a quiet, world-changing truth spreading from person to person: **He is alive!**

As we take the back row view this Easter, don't let the familiar become easily dismissed or overlooked. If the resurrection reminds of nothing else, it reminds us that God often does His greatest work in ways the world barely notices at first. But once the story starts spreading, it changes everything. And two thousand years later, we are still living in the light of that first Easter morning. Pastor Troy



Prayer Team Invitation

The Capital Campaign Prayer Team is encouraging all members of our congregation to join us in a 12-hr Prayer Vigil on Thursday, April 16, 2026 from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

All are welcome to come and go at their convenience to the Chapel. There will be volunteers available to guide participants and to assist with questions.

The purpose of this Prayer Vigil is to:

Pray for our church as we embark on the capital campaign

Pray for the leaders of our church for discernment and direction

Pray that God's will be done

Pray for those who are ill, and to pray for those who mourn

Pray for and help those in need: the hungry, the homeless, and the hurting.

Capital Campaign Events

to RSVP for an event, call the church office, 625-3408

Please plan to attend one of these events to learn more about the Capital Campaign and have the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed plans.

Sunday, March 22, 2-3:30 p.m.	Kick off event for 60-cake & ice cream-child care provided Community Event Center at 2510 Canterbury
Wednesday, March 25, 6-7 p.m.	WOW with walkaround, Fellowship Hall
Sunday, March 29, 9:30-10:30 a.m.	Combined Adult Sunday School classes & walkaround, Miler's classroom
Monday, April 6, 7-8:15 p.m.	Carrot Cake at the Clinkscapes at 309 W. 22nd
Wednesday, April 8, 11:15-1:00	Combined Women of Faith potluck in Fellowship Hall
Sunday, April 12, 9:30-10:10 a.m.	In church walkaround, meet in the parlor
Monday, April 13, 7-8:15 p.m.	Rhubarb & mixed berry cobbler with Marcia & Ken for Arbor Valley Estates, 1202 W. 26th
Friday, April 17, 7-8:15 p.m.	Traditional Kenyan dessert with Pastor Susan, Parlor
Sunday, April 19, 11-12	In church walkaround, meet in parlor
Monday, April 20, 7-8:15 p.m.	Rhubarb & mixed berry cobbler with Marcia & Ken, 1202 W. 26th
Tuesday, April 21, 7-8:15 p.m.	Dessert with the Clinkscapes at 309 W. 22nd

March OUTREACH

*First United Methodist Church
305 West 7th
Hays, Kansas 67601*

(785) 625-3408
haysumc@hotmail.com
www.kaysradio.com
www.HaysFUMC.com

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HAYS, KS.
PERMIT NO. 97

Return Service Requested



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 21	UWF Spring Brunch, 9:15
Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday service, 7:00
Friday, April 3	Good Friday service, 7:00
Sunday, April 5	Easter Sunday
Monday, April 6	Church office closed
Thursday, April 16	Prayer vigil from 7:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.