

# THE GARDEN

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“...some of the seed fell on good soil” Mark 4:8

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## Signs of Hope by Pastor Barbara

As I sit down to write this article, the long dreary afternoon turned very dark, and a cold rain moved in suddenly, beating against the window. The moment seemed to me like a reflection of the drumbeat of news I had been reading—wars rage, divisions deepen, injustices persist. Sometimes, it’s hard not to wonder, “Where is God in the midst of all this?”

In search of a bit of good news, I found some video that caught my attention. The NASA astronauts had made a safe landing in a SpaceX Dragon in the water off the coast of Tallahassee, Florida on March 18. The trip was a source of worry, after what was an extended stay at the International Space Station because of technical challenges.

The safe splashdown in the ocean was beautiful to behold, but then as I watched, something truly magical happened. Dolphins came to play around the spacecraft to welcome the astronauts home! Just as each of the crew boarded the recovery ship, one, then two, then three dolphins danced around them, and soon a whole pod joined in.



A friend with Native American heritage explained to me recently that dolphins are often understood to be a sign of divine protection as well as a symbol of transformation and renewal. In a word, dolphins are a sign of hope.

In the gospels, hope is not wishful thinking. And for followers of Jesus, hope is the story of God’s great renewal project, which continues to ground us in the certainty of what God has already done and what He has still promised to do.

This season of Lent, we have followed Jesus through many dark moments on the way to the cross. Paul writes to the church at Corinth, and tells them if Christ has not been raised, our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). But Christ has been raised! The resurrection of Jesus is not just an isolated miracle—it is the beginning of God’s new creation. It is the signpost that tells us the darkness is already being overcome, and that the long, cold winter of sin and death is giving way to spring.

Our task as believers is to live now in light of that coming reality. Every act of kindness, every march for justice, every moment spent in worship is a declaration that the darkness is already receding, and the dawn of God’s kingdom is near. The cold storm will not last forever, the light has already begun to shine. The risen Christ leads us forward. For we are Easter people, reflecting the light and embodying hope until the day when this world is fully and finally made new. Invite a friend on April 20, and let’s celebrate that Easter hope together!

### April – May 2025 Newsletter

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**Pastor Barbara’s Office  
Hours:** Available  
Mondays, Wednesdays,  
and Thursdays by  
appointment.

Green Pond United  
Methodist Church

[www.greenpondumc.com](http://www.greenpondumc.com)

## Announcements

### GPUMC FINANCE SUMMARY FEBRUARY 28, 2025

	FEB. 2025
COLLECTION	12,735.13
OTHER	
INCOME	2,153.00
HOUSING	
REIMBURSE	3,666.66
EXPENSES	(29,213.81)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(10,659.02)
	YTD 2025
COLLECTION	26,854.13
OTHER	
INCOME	3,923.00
HOUSING	
REIMBURSE	3,666.66
EXPENSES	(47,738.89)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(13,295.10)

## **We are Moving!—Jen Biddle**

We are excited to let the congregation know that we will be moving the Teen Room to the library and media rooms. Over the years, the room that we are currently in has been a bit of everything. At one point it was the pre-school room and elementary school-age room. And it shows! Most of the features of the room are outdated and focused on younger children.

Our new room will have more of a teen vibe with couches, games, and of course a new coat of paint. The youth have been an integral part of the planning. They came up with the idea to have a chalk board wall where they can write, draw, and create. They are excited to help create the room. Although the teens will be using this new space on Sunday mornings, our vision is for it to a place where we all feel comfortable hanging out and having discussions. So, all are welcome to utilize this updated space.

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## **Green Pond Labyrinth Garden Update—John Gerbino**

The original labyrinth garden was a Girl Scout project completed almost 20 years ago. Projects by the Boy Scouts modified the labyrinth over the years. It was a beautiful inspiration for those who visited.

Over the years, mother nature has taken its toll on this peaceful space. There have been numerous attempts to revitalize the garden. Recently, a master gardener offered to take up the challenge to restore the garden. Unfortunately, all attempts have been unsuccessful. The success of a beautiful garden is planting the proper plants, watering as needed, and regular maintenance. And of course, prohibiting the deer from making it their lunch. This has been and continues to be the challenge we face.

To sustain a successful garden requires much time and work. On Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 9am, volunteers from Lehigh University's action team, coordinated by Celia, will join our volunteers to work together in the labyrinth.

Plans need to be finalized on the direction we will pursue for the future of the labyrinth. Options include planting a pollinator garden or perhaps a less aggressive approach would be a wild flower garden. However, either of these will require continuous maintenance.

Therefore, we may need to modify the plan and only plant grass in this space. Before we finalize a decision, the Trustees want to reach out and give our members a chance to save the garden. To do this, we will need a group of 6 to 8 monthly volunteers to sign up and help.

Please see me if you have the interest and time to do so. We would love to have you on the team. For those who can, please join us April 26<sup>th</sup>. It may be our last chance to save the labyrinth!

Thank you. ~John Gerbino (610-810-6212, Trustee Chair)

## EAC Updates—Alex Konya

### Attention Graduating High School Seniors & Post High School Students

If you are a graduating high school senior and an active member of the church, you may apply for the Jack H. LaFever Memorial Achievement Award. Jack was a life-long member of First UMC who died in a car accident in 1986, at the age of 23. Selection is based on church and community service, scholastic achievement and extra-curricular activities. You do not have to be considering post high school education to be eligible for the Award.

Church members planning to enroll or continue in college, vocational or technical school, or those who are currently enrolled, and need help with the cost of furthering their education, should apply for an interest-free loan from the church's Educational Assistance Fund. Loans are based on the availability of funds and must be repaid in full.

Applicants for this Award & loans must be active church members. Applications may be picked up in the church office or from Alex Konya ([alexander.s.konya@lmco.com](mailto:alexander.s.konya@lmco.com)) and must be returned to the church office no later than **Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025**.

### Looking for New Committee Members

The **Educational Assistance Committee** is looking for new members. The Committee started in the 1970's at First UMC when the members of the Wesley Class decided to help students from the church with their higher education expenses. Over the years, the Committee has helped over 45 church members by lending close to \$100,000 in interest-free loans. Loans can be used for college, vocational or technical school classes.

The Committee also administers the Jack H. LaFever Memorial Achievement Award, a scholarship given to a deserving member of Green Pond UMC who is graduating from high school. The Award has grown from \$100 at its inception to \$1,000 annually. The Committee has awarded 30 Memorial scholarships, totaling \$25,950. The LaFever Fund has also been used to help the church's youth with donations of game and sports equipment, money towards youth retreats and VBS.

The Committee currently consists of Alex Konya (Chairman), Jill Moulthrop, Diana Gerbino, and Barbie Lewis. We would like some new members to join us. We usually meet once a year, in May, to discuss our finances and discuss/vote upon loan and Award applications. If you are interested in serving Green Pond UMC and helping its youth, please contact Alex Konya at 610-799-9091 (home), 610-354-2234 (work) or [thekonyas@aol.com](mailto:thekonyas@aol.com) to discuss.

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### Honoring Linda Klump—Raylene Frankenfield

Linda Klump has been our Sexton for thirty years. She has been working at Green Pond United Methodist Church since January 2, 1995.

She retired in October 2024 from Northampton Post Acute, a nursing home, where she was a housekeeper.

Linda's son, Alan, and daughter, Amy, have blessed her with four grandchildren: Tyler, Samantha, John, and Amanda. She also has five great-grandchildren: four great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter. Plus, number six is due in July.

Linda said she enjoys working here. She says her family is her whole life.



## Children & Youth Ministry Announcements

### Upcoming

Easter Egg Hunt  
April 19<sup>th</sup> at 11am

Earth Day Clean Up  
April 26<sup>th</sup> at 10am

### Grow in God's Love!

#### **Kid Worship & Teen Worship**

Kid and Teen Worship will continue throughout April and May. All ages will begin in the sanctuary with their families at 10am. Around 10:15am, the kids and teens will be dismissed from the service to attend Kid & Teen Worship for age-appropriate activities and discussion. Kid Worship is ideal for students in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Teen Worship is designed for students in grades 6 through 12.

As always, our Nursery and Pray-ground is open for younger toddlers and preschoolers.

### Connect in God's Love!

#### **Earth Day Clean Up**

Join alumni and friends of Lehigh University to help transform the labyrinth garden into a future wildflower garden on Saturday, April 26 at 10:00 a.m. If you are interested in joining us please register using Lehigh in Action or by using the QR code below. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions please reach out to Celia Williams at [childrenministry@greenpondumc.com](mailto:childrenministry@greenpondumc.com).



#### **Easter Egg Hunt**

Join us for our annual egg hunt and crafts on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 11am. If you are interested in joining us, please register by using the QR code below. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jen Biddle at [jenbiddle@greenpondumc.com](mailto:jenbiddle@greenpondumc.com).



#### **Summer Camp at Pocono Plateau**

Pocono Plateau has released their 2025 summer camps brochure. If you are interested in sending your child to camp this summer, please check out their website: <https://www.poconoplateau.org/summer-camp/#2025summercamp>. If you need financial assistance, please see Jen Biddle.