

GFMC

# KIT

KEEPING IN TOUCH



SUMMER 2010



## What Good Is Struggle?

By Karlene Johnson

**W**hen I was young, struggle always sent me into a tailspin. My father said struggle was not something that “got in the way of my real life—it was my real life!” The measure of my character was not in how I acted when my life was going well, but in how I conducted myself when life wasn’t going well! Over time I have faced more significant struggles, which have led me to a deeper awareness of God’s love for me. One such struggle was in my late twenties and early thirties as I dealt with the death of a dream that I had built up in my mind of my future—that I would meet a wonderful Christian man and we would build a loving home for our small brood of children. I prayed for this with growing desperation. My normally happy disposition became deep unhappiness at a soul level.



Top to Bottom: Karlene and daughter, Kylie; Karlene with daughters, Kylie and Evie.

I finally realized I was trying to “control” God’s plan for my life and I had to trust Him for my future. I began a process of changing my prayers, communicating my willingness to submit to His will. I began to feel peace about my singleness, although my heart’s desire to be a parent was like an ache. Following my submission to God for an unknown Plan B, He began to work. A letter arrived from a car insurance company offering me \$10,000 to sign a release from a car accident. I thought the letter was a hoax. After my mother confirmed that it was genuine, I had one of the most vivid spiritual experiences of my life. Every fiber of my being tingled with an instantaneous “knowing” that God intended me to use this money to adopt a girl from China. I had

no idea of whether I was even eligible to adopt a baby; I knew nothing of the process. But one year and three months later, I was a new mother, and when Kylie fell asleep on my chest, I started to cry from the awe I felt at the grace of a God who loved me and who saw the desires of my heart.

In 2001 I became an Education professor at Greenville College. In my classes I talk about struggle and the potential it has to transform our minds, to change our lives and to deepen our faith. As an illustration, I use a parable called “Struggle and Soar” (source unknown).

*A man once found the cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. The man sat and watched for hours as a butterfly struggled to force its body through the small opening in the cocoon. Then it just seemed to stop, as if it could struggle no more.*

*So, the man decided to help the butterfly. With a small pair of scissors, he snipped off the remainder of the cocoon. The butterfly easily emerged. The body, however, was very swollen and the wings were small and shriveled. The man continued to watch the butterfly, expecting that at any moment the wings would expand and support the body. He waited and he waited—but neither ever happened. The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling. It was never able to fly. The very struggle required for the butterfly to fight its way through the tiny opening in the cocoon was nature’s way of allowing a beautiful butterfly to develop, emerge, and fly. The man’s actions prevented the butterfly’s fluids from being forced from the body and into its wings. This butterfly missed the opportunity to work and struggle to achieve its freedom from the cocoon. It never became what it was designed to be...*

My personal experience continues to teach me that struggles are what make us strong. If we were to go through life without any obstacles and with no struggles, we too would be crippled and could never fly! ☐

Dr. Karlene Johnson is the mother of two beautiful girls adopted from China, Kylie (age 12) and Evie (age 5). Karlene teaches in the School of Education at Greenville College. The family also includes her mother, Dr. Nancy Johnson. Their move to Greenville two years ago brought additional blessings: the lack of a commute, a wonderful church, and a friendly community.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

EXCITING STORIES OF TRUTH, FREEDOM AND TRANSFORMATION FOCUSING ON PEOPLE AND MINISTRY AT GREENVILLE FREE METHODIST CHURCH

## A Buffet Church?



Perhaps you've heard that our church staff has been going through a process of looking at the "volunteer work load" on our congregation. Part of our responsibility is to be good stewards with our human resources not just financial resources. So we're asking the same questions we

ask about financial budgets.

Where are we spending our people's energy? Are we overspending their time and talents in some areas? Are we committing ourselves to ministry programs without having enough "human capital" to support that ministry.

We've discovered that we have people filling 285 roles every month just to support the regular programming of the church—from Sunday School to choir. Of course some people are filling more than one role. In addition we need volunteers for special events, like Easter programs or seasonal outreach efforts. So we have well over 300 volunteer roles to fill monthly!

Why so many roles? Greenville FMC is definitely a "program-driven church." That is, our church tries to develop programs that meet as many needs of our diverse congregation as possible. It's like a buffet line: we keep putting more dish selections out for people. But once we've offered another dish it's assumed we need to keep serving it. And the buffet grows.

Should we be a buffet church? That's the question we're asking ourselves. We're evaluating all our programs. Are they a priority? Are they effective? In the end we may not suggest many changes to what we currently offer. However, we're looking for a smarter ministry model, so we don't try to meet every need with a new program.

Regardless of where we land on these questions, we know that our church's ministry will always require committed volunteers. After all, every church is primarily a volunteer organization.

That's why I am pleased to introduce John and Luna Sparrow as our new volunteer coordinators. They themselves will be serving in this important role as volunteers. Their task is to help recruit, prepare and reward volunteers. We especially want them to involve new folks who are just starting to see GFMC as their home church. All the "church experts" say that in this culture volunteer involvement is the fast track to helping people belong.

Thankfully our church is increasingly community-oriented.

Folks are coming from all walks of life. We want to make sure that every person, no matter his or her background, age or giftedness, finds a place to serve. John and Luna are just the people to reach out on our behalf.

They have already served with excellence as Core Circle Connectors. They take initiative and follow through. Please join me in welcoming them into this strategic role...and if they come knocking at your door, be ready to say yes if you don't yet have a place to serve.

Whether we stay buffet or go gourmet, we need everyone's help to serve the Lord, His kingdom and this community well. ☐

— Pastor Doug Newton



In April the GFMC partnered with the Greenville College Cor 401 program for its third annual Family Fun 5k run/walk/bike event. 236 participants raised \$1,000 for Haiti Relief.



# Camping Ministry at Durley Since the 1880s

## Durley Camp Memories

**Mark Meyers:** Not getting suckered into going out for the midnight ‘snipe hunt.’ Working on crafts under the pole shed. Looking forward to treat time at the snack bar (Rollos & Toastie Rolls!). Canoeing on Bond Lake and struggling because it was windy. Feeling pressured to find a date for the end-of-the-week banquet (I never did have a date). Good times in the tabernacle: singing, interesting speakers, giving my life to the Lord. Swinging on the very long swing east of the cabins. VOLLEYBALL!

Team competitions: I was on Greg Groves’ team and we were called ‘Pink and Purple Polka-dotted Perforated Ping Pong Paddles’; also the longest spit ever made (travelled around the world that night).

Playing ping pong in the game room. Scaring girls outside the windows of their rooms. Finding pitcher plants and other flowers in the woods (also poison ivy!). Swimming in the lake and getting sunburned.

Eating in the old dining commons. I loved the smell of that place. Strange. Always had red and white gingham tablecloths and curtains. I remember being on dish duty. They kept the dishwasher very hot and there was one wash bin and two rinse bins. I couldn’t stand the hot water so got stuck on drying duty. Girls called me a wimp. I didn’t mind — didn’t have to wash.

Jumping on the trampoline — constantly. One time my left big toenail got caught in one of the holes as I was descending. Ripped it right off. Had to have the nurse wrap it up and didn’t have a shoe big enough, so had to go around camp the rest of the week with one shoe on and two socks on my left foot. MAN, that hurt!

**Deb Gasser:** Just before freshman year, accepted Jesus as my Savior as a teenager. My best friend, Sandra, and I rode our bikes out to Durley for the week with only a backpack of our stuff, including our banquet dresses! Meeting old friends and making new ones. VOLLEYBALL! Walking to the graveyard at night. Variety shows, putting on mini plays. Singing around the bonfire.

**Greg Groves:** Getting saved. Getting engaged. The first two months of married life. Being the director of Young Teen Camp the week my son Stephen was born. 48 hours of silence with our GFMC pastors. Helping son Stephen arrange his proposal to Kelsey. □

## Durley Family Camp 2010

(Begins with dinner on Saturday evening, June 5th, and ends after breakfast on Saturday, June 12th.)

### Camp Pastor:

Rev. Jim Slone, Sr. Pastor  
St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church  
Belleville, IL

### Music and Worship Leaders:

Wellspring, Spring Arbor University

## Daily Schedule

7:00 am	Cold breakfast available
8:00 -9:00 am	Breakfast
9:30 am	Praise & worship – all ages
10:00 am	Adult options
	Children’s program
	Young teens
	Sr. teens
11:00 am	Family activity
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	Recreation activity
2:30-4:30 pm	Waterfront activities
5:00-6:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Evening worship*
9:00 pm	Special activity
<b>Sunday schedule change:</b>	
9:30 am	Children and youth programs
10:30 am	Morning worship
*Childcare through age 5 available	

▶ Excellent times of praise and worship, inspiring messages, age-level sessions for children, youth, and adults

▶ Family activities, including waterfront options, zip line, game room, softball game, basketball tournament, bonfire, game night, movie night, Family Fun Night and more!

▶ Great food and a relaxing atmosphere.

▶ Spiritual growth and wonderful Christian fellowship!

### Registration:

\$15/person for all participants

### Meals:

Can be purchased for the week or individually

### Information and questions:

Marty Beans, Director  
[marty.beans@greenville.edu](mailto:marty.beans@greenville.edu)



June 5: Day Camps at Durley and Rushville

June 12: Day Camp at Cowden

June 14-16: Trailblazer (grades 2-4)

June 18-20: Senior Teen (grades 9-13)

June 22-26: Young Teen #1 (grades 6-9)

June 28-July 1: Guide Camp (grades 4-6)

July 5-9: Young Teen #2 (grades 6-9)

Go to [www.durleycamp.org](http://www.durleycamp.org) for more info.



## A Lifelong Witness

Interview conducted by Dan Jensen

*“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” Isaiah 26:3*

**J**oyce Van Horn recognized her need for the Lord at a revival meeting in Kansas conducted by a Mr. Whitney, who was an itinerant purveyor of Raleigh Products, a line of household goods, spices, personal items, and medical supplies. He was also a preacher.



“I’d like to be a Christian,” Joyce told a friend, “but I can’t live the life!” But at the revival meeting, when she left the altar she was “floating on high.” The next night she sought sanctification. The emotional reaction was not quite as intense, but she felt a great peace. “From then on I was a different person. I had a quick temper, and I could fly off the handle with ease. I fought back whenever someone crossed me. But one day after I gave my life to the Lord, I was

climbing a fence, slipped, and skinned my chin. There was no temper outburst! I just sucked air and said, “Ouch!”

Although her faith in God has wavered on occasion, it remains firm. One day as she prayed, she heard a voice — not audible, but definite. It said, “Will you preach for Me?” Shocked, she responded, “Yes, if I’m asked.” At the next prayer meeting she was asked! She preached at three small churches in Kansas.

Joyce’s Christian life has been a step by step process marked by open and closed doors. She trusted God to move her to the right place at the right time. She wanted her children to go to a Christian college, and she came to Greenville in 1959 because there was an opening in the G.C. dining hall for a ‘salad lady.’ Head cook, Geraldine Green (‘Ma Green’) had known her in Kansas and hired her.

Joyce is a painter of remarkable landscapes and flowers. A friend once said to her, “Your paintings are so peaceful.” Another said, “You are an accomplished artist.” She responded, “I don’t know whether I am an artist, but I love painting.”

This dear 91 year old lady is afflicted with an incurable illness, and is near the end of life’s road. She does not want any heroic effort to postpone dying. She wants people to know that the peace she is currently experiencing comes from a warm and loving relationship with her Lord based on God’s Word and His loving care. She says, “Read the Bible and pray every day, and you’ll have the strength to meet whatever comes.”

Joyce witnesses to the love and power of Jesus. She says, “The Lord has the power to see you through. There is no darkness in which He cannot shed light.” To those who want to live the Christian life to the fullest, she says, “It’s quite simple: Want it, ask for it, and accept it.” Indeed, Joyce Van Horn has made this world a better place through her testimony, work, family, art, and friendship. We can do the same. □

## Opal Greer — 99 Years Young!

Interview conducted by Dan Jensen



Opal Greer, mother of the late Arlene Stephens, and of Robert and Dick, committed her life to the Lord when she was a senior at Central College in McPherson, KS. During a campus revival, she

fell under conviction and prayed through with the president of the college. Unfortunately, she received no follow-up support, so her spiritual progress was “uneven.” After she married Robert Greer, she joined the F.M. Church following a six-month trial period. “I knew I had to behave myself to gain this treasured membership.” Many years later someone asked her grandson, Billy, what he thought of his grandmother. His reply: “I think she’s pretty wild!”

The Greers, along with many others, suffered greatly during the Great Depression. Opal can “tell stories you wouldn’t believe.” But despite the hardships and deprivations, she and Bob loved each other and met the challenges together.

When Opal was pregnant with Dick, a mysterious problem in her head caused her to lose her hearing temporarily. Because of severe bleeding, she received eleven pints of blood before the doctor could find the problem. Despite the pain and the very doubtful outcome, she knew the Lord was with her.

Opal always tries to help whomever she can. She strives to be friendly and to avoid being critical of both people and circumstances. She is a peacemaker at heart, and at The Glenwood—her current residence—she tries to encourage all who seem under stress. Some of the residents call her “Smiley,” because her face presents such an aura of love, joy and positive thinking.

Her advice to people who may have sixty or seventy years ahead of them: “Always be truthful. Sometimes it is not advisable to speak the truth, so keep your mouth shut. Always show love. And don’t be critical!” She says that the GFMC “is the huggin’est, kissin’est bunch of people I’ve ever been around!” It’s not difficult to respond that way to such a cheerful, positive, smiling, person as ‘Opie’ Greer. She’s ninety-nine, and we’re all pulling for 100! □



*Celebrate!*

Top to Bottom: Opal and Anita Krober — special friends; Birthday celebration with the family.

# Our God – Alive and Well in Asia!

## Snapshots from a 10-week Teaching/Preaching Trip

By Dan Maurer

### East Timor

Taught Spiritual Leadership seminars to church leaders in villages outside Dili, the capitol. These poorest of the poor greedily soaked up whatever would help them in expanding God’s Kingdom work among their people. A lady named Branca shepherds the believers in this area. She was one of the first to accept Christ. When her younger sister was also baptized, their father kicked them both out of the family, with the threat he would kill them if they did not recant their faith.

Our “first-ever of its kind” 2-day seminar of teaching Leadership Ethics was wonderfully received by a group of top government Cabinet Officers. We were asked to teach how to function as ethical leaders of integrity. They had never heard of such concepts as Service, Integrity, etc. In a country where Protestant Christians are persecuted violently, God was at work. The Secretary of State, not a believer, instructed everyone to “apply every principle you’ve learned here, and change your area of government – because these principles are all from the Bible, and as we apply these, our country will become stronger!”

We also taught leadership and ethics to a group of 35 abused young adult girls who our Brazilian missionary friends are caring for and who work in a café for UN employees as a way of being self-supporting.

### Myanmar

As we taught “Experiencing God” day after day, it was amazing. It was as though they were starving people, who were fed some good, substantial food for the very first time. We literally watched attitudes and assumptions change, right before our eyes!

One day our little Datsun truck broke down. After finding oil and water over an hour away, we topped the fluids off, and I pushed to try and pop-start it... I simply said, “Jesus, please...” and it cranked right over, and started! After a few miles, there was a terrible metal-on-metal screech, with black smoke... we finally caught a tow all the 50 miles back to Yangon. In the back were two Buddhist monks, puffing furiously on Burmese cigars. It seemed poetic that the Enemy’s soldiers were helping tow two Pastors!

I taught a 2-week class in “Methods of Evangelism” to graduate students. One student, Ginzi, after learning the “Plan of Salvation,” felt led to share the Gospel with a neighbor that night. She used the “tool” she learned, walked him through the Scriptures, and he accepted Christ! Two days later our class got to be part of his baptism, with his wife bawling the whole time at God’s goodness!

### Cambodia

Taught two different Seminars during our three weeks in Cambodia, to two different groups. First was a Pastor/Spouse

Retreat in Sihanoukville, on the coast, and second was a School of Discipleship for church leaders in Phnom Penh. I was amazed that so many Cambodian Pastors marry non-believers! They seem to be so pressured to marry, they take anyone they can find, whether they’re Christians or not!

While the Church in Cambodia is alive and growing, lack of older, more mature leadership is a problem. Because of the communist “purgings,” there are very few older, white-haired people left in the culture. So it is very much a youth culture, which means energy, but not much maturity.

Throughout my ten weeks away, I was so grateful for faithful and courageous supportive prayer, as we were constantly in politically-unstable places, often dangerous to westerners and “missionaries.” It was so exciting. Our God is at work around the world, transforming lives. I’m privileged to be a little part of it. □



Top to Bottom: Timorese grandma; Khong Di praying (Yngon, Myanmar); Timorese youngster; Below: Dan Maurer preaching in East Timor.



Dan attended Greenville College in the early ‘80’s and married Patti straight off a Greenville dairy farm. He pastored over 20 years in Indiana, Colorado, and Alberta, Canada. He has traveled in the Third World the past two years, teaching and training pastors and church leaders in Spiritual Leadership Development. Dan and Patti have three children—David and Katie are students at GC, and Andrew is a Senior at Greenville High School.

# CONGRAD

## Celebrating Our FMY Seniors

FMY is preparing youth to grow deeper in “The Current” (this year’s theme) of God. Some of the FMY seniors share about the influence of FMY and what is in store for their futures.



**Jesse Qui:** God has blessed me, so I came to America; and then He gave many new friends to me and a lot of things to enjoy every day, so I know how to bring laughter to my friends. He let me know the meaning of life. I know He is always around me. Thank God. My future plan is to be a businessman.



**Owen Beans:** This summer I will perform at the Springfield Municipal Opera in the show, *Into the Woods*. This fall I will attend Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, to begin work towards a BFA in Musical Theatre. This church and FMY have impacted my life greatly. Being surrounded by other Christians at FMY and other events has been a huge positive influence for me during high school. If not for my involvement in this church, I am sure I would not be where I am today in my walk with the Lord or my life as a whole.



**Logan Shaw:** This summer I plan to work for my Dad, and hopefully find a job somewhere else. I will go to IYC with the FMY. In the fall I will attend Greenville College and study Digital Media. Right now God is helping me to understand the plans He has for me, and I continue to grow in His wonderful grace. My entire four years in FMY have been a blessing. I’ve been able to do some amazing things – riding my bike 100 miles in a day, hiking the Appalachian Trail, and going to Greece. Going to Potosi has been awesome. At GFMC, I’ve learned the importance of having a strong church and mentors to help me in my spiritual walk.



**Aaron Disch:** I plan to pursue a career in mechanical engineering at SIUE. This summer I will go to San Diego for IYC. The most influential spiritual time in my high school career was the Bike Trip. God’s Creation was all around me and He gave me strength to keep riding each day.



Joni Hoag



**Josiah Roberts:** My favorite parts of FMY have been the trips like IYC and Fall Retreat. This summer I will work with Dad at the camp and hopefully another part time job. In the fall I will attend Kaskaskia College to complete the professional welder’s degree.



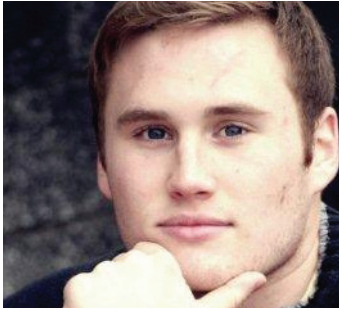
# 2010

**Cassie Washer:** My favorite FMY memory was Potosi my sophomore year. We had a lot of fun, and I felt like we all really bonded with God and with each other. Over the past four years, God has been teaching me to bring all my troubles to Him and He will give me strength and comfort. I plan to attend college with a major in biology and a minor in music. Then my desire is to attend medical school or dental school to become either an anesthesiologist or a dentist.



Jonathan Stampfli

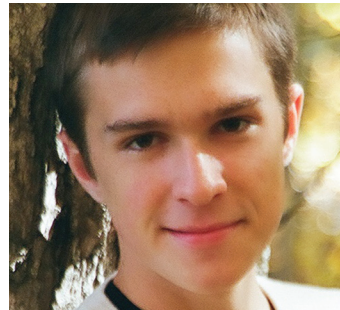
# ulations!



**Andrew Maurer:** The opportunities provided by FMY to attend Durley's Senior Teen Weekend, Frostbite, Potosi, and the mission's trip to Greece and Bulgaria have been a true blessing to me. I love the FMY and hope God will continue to bless it as it has blessed me. Lately, God has been showing me that I have a bright future with His guidance and assurance. I will attend Greenville College in the fall and major in Business and Psychology. I have a job with the student employment at the college.



**Josh Hudson:** This summer I will travel to Europe (France, Swiss Alps, Germany) with a school group and attend IYC in San Diego. In the fall I will go to Greenville College to become a special education teacher. Since I began attending GFMC and FMY in the middle of my junior year, my relationship with God has grown and He continues to work in my life. I have formed great friendships and found a place to worship. In November I was baptized and became a member of the church. My time at FMY and GFMC has greatly impacted my life as a Christian.



**Jace Reinhard:** I feel extremely blessed to have had such an amazing church family throughout these years. Whether coming from an encouraging conversation with Greg, Shawn, or another leader or an uplifting note from the Love Care Team, this church has been a constant web of support. God has also provided a close-knit group of great friends and a solid faith which I believe has helped prepare me for my life outside Greenville. I will attend Abilene Christian University this coming fall to major in Theatre.



**Ryan Cole:** I plan on going to Greenville College in the fall and studying either Physical Education or History Education. I'll most likely play college tennis. My favorite FMY memory was the century ride (riding 100 miles in one day) during the 2008 Bike UP trip. God's been teaching me about His forgiveness lately, and how trusting in Him affects my life in an amazing way.



Julia Gibbs



Jace Reinhard, Owen ► Beans, Oliver Beans and Aaron Disch dressed up as characters from Shrek at Potosi.



**Amber Laurent:** After graduation, I plan on joining the Navy and taking my general courses. Then I will continue my schooling to be an archaeologist. I hope to serve in the Peace Corps. I feel as if this year I have learned to be more compassionate. I have tried seeing things through the eyes of God and seeing each individual as a child of God; I have no room to judge or discriminate. I've tried to come out of my spiritual shell and tell others about my Lord and Savior.



**Oliver Beans:** This summer I will work at Durley and go to IYC in San Diego with the FMY. In the fall I will start at GC. I want to go into some sort of music and production ministries. The FMY has been an amazing part of my life and I have benefited greatly from it. What I have learned by being a part of this church has helped me through many difficult situations.



1367 IL Route 140 • Greenville, IL 62246  
 618.664.2584 • gfmcc@greenvillefmc.org  
 www.greenvillefmc.org

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# Library spot light



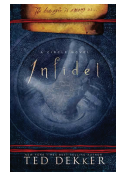
▲ Adventure Plus Group at Science Center  
 Are you interested in being a part of this group?  
 Contact Al and Emily Moore at 664-4253 for more information.

REVIEWS BY OUR PEOPLE



**The Pond: Big Mouth Bass** — DVD: Love Thy Neighbor (even that one...) — What would you do if the neighbor you disliked suddenly disappeared? With the Biblical admonition to “Love your neighbor as yourself,” The Pond creatures set out to rescue the Big Mouth Bass that gave them so much trouble. You will love all the creatures who find ways of living in one, harmonious pond. My children love the catchy tunes these fun loving characters sing, all the while teaching the value of loving your neighbor. Our library has several of *The Pond* video series and they are all fabulous!

— Michelle Iffert (*Mommy of Isabella 3, Olivia and Makayla 2*)



**Chosen, Infidel and Renegade**, is an historical fantasy series of books by Ted Dekker which follow chronologically *The Circle Trilogy* books entitled *Black, Red, and White*. The theme of good vs. evil is portrayed as four teenagers are put in charge of saving the Forest Dwellers from their enemies, the Horde. Meanwhile, they have also been chosen by Elyon to find the seven lost Books of History, which have the power to destroy mankind. These books are hard to put down and are a definite “must read.”

— Elle Shaw, *High School Sophomore*



**God's Universe** by Owen Gingerich. If you take delight in thinking about Genesis 1:1, then you will be captivated with God's Universe, in our church library. The author unfolds the exquisite working of the universe to non-scientists, showing the Creator's amazing wisdom and precision. This book energized and stimulated my faith as I contemplated the intricately designed beginning of the cosmos that gave rise to life.

— Dr. Hugh Siefken, *GC Professor Emeritus of Physics*



# got ideas?

If you have story ideas for the KIT, we'd love to hear them! Contact GFMC Director of Communication, Carolyn Martin at [carolyn.martin@greenvillefmc.org](mailto:carolyn.martin@greenvillefmc.org)