

Fellowship Focus



A Moveable Feast

Sherry Elliott, Executive Director of Administration, Interpretation, and Development



Easter greetings from The Upper Room staff. Christ is risen indeed!

Easter took me by surprise this year. It arrived much too early, before the dogwood trees bloomed and not

long after daylights savings time. This happens on occasion because Easter is observed on the first Sunday after the paschal full moon. This is the first full moon on or after March 21, the spring equinox, according to Wikipedia. Unlike Christmas, Easter Sunday changes its date from year to year and is known as the “moveable feast” on the Christian church’s liturgical calendar.

Interestingly, I did not learn about the “moveable feast” in church but instead while sitting inside an American literature class. Ernest Hemingway’s memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, details his life in Paris during the 1920s, surrounded by a fascinating community of writers and artists. His widow posthumously published the memoir and titled it as such, when she recalled this line he wrote in a letter to a friend:

“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”

I imagine Hemingway is referring to those life-changing experiences that stay with

us forever—those remembrances of people, places, and events that resurrect us, the ones we can call forth easily and bring back to life. Such remembrances will transport us to a particular place and time and renew our soul like Easter Sunday when we celebrate the open tomb, resurrection, and new life in Christ.

My time at The Upper Room has offered more “moveable feasts” moments than I can count. I was lucky enough to go on a recent trip to South Korea and Thailand to meet up, face-to-face, with our dedicated publishing partners who help us print and distribute *The Upper Room* devotional guide throughout Asia. Their stories of labor, faith, and dedication are awe-inspiring. Equally inspiring was my participation in a Walk to Emmaus weekend and the Two-Year Academy. (Shout-out to Academy #41 friends who gathered in Camp Sumatanga, Alabama.)

Friends, thank you for all the ways you stay with us and bring us to life. Your readership, participation in our programs, and ongoing abundant support encourage us daily and give us confidence that we are focused on the right thing: providing transformative content and experiences, “moveable feasts” if you will, that invite people to create daily life with God.

Let us be Easter people together. Amen.



“

You should praise the *Lord* for his *love* and for the *wonderful* things He does for *all* of us.

To everyone who is *thirsty*, he gives something to *drink*; to everyone who is *hungry*, he gives good things to *eat*.

”

—Psalm 107:8-9 CEV

Generous Donors Make Our

Easter joy is followed by the Great Commission to go to all the nations to create disciples. Look at all the ways you are helping The Upper Room spread the Gospel message, enabling us to live out our mission to help people create daily life with God.

THE ACADEMY FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Civil Rights Pilgrimage

The Long Road Towards Justice and Beloved Community

The Academy for Spiritual Formation's first ever Civil Rights Pilgrimage took place November 5–11, 2023. Thirty-four pilgrims made the powerful journey from Nashville to Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma.

"I am learning I owe a great debt of gratitude to those who chose and continue to choose to confront racism in America. . . . God has always been in this story and is healing wounds I only realized recently I had."

—reflection from Paula, one of the pilgrims



Pilgrims spending time at Morehouse College

Spirituality in Practice

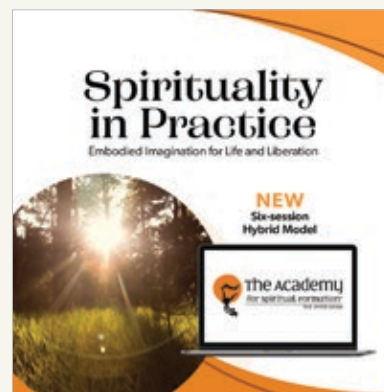
Embodied Imagination for Life and Liberation

Are you seeking an authentic Christian spirituality that is renewing, life-giving, and deeply rooted in your quest for justice and love? If you are, the Academy's first hybrid offering is designed just for you.

Spirituality in Practice: Embodied Imagination for Life and Liberation will be a transformative experience tailored to individuals who want to integrate their spiritual and daily lives and who are dedicated to becoming agents of change in a world that cries out for justice and love.

Join us for six sessions, September 2024–April 2026.

Sign up today at Academy.UpperRoom.org/event/Spirituality-in-Practice2024.



EMMAUS MINISTRIES

International Virtual Gathering

Emmaus Ministries will host its 4th annual International Virtual Gathering via Zoom on Friday, April 19, 2024, at 7:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada). Experience music and a mini-group reunion experience from around the world—plus, much, much more! Register today at UpperRoom.org/emmaus/gathering.

THE UPPER ROOM
Emmaus Ministries
International Virtual Gathering



The GIFT fund

The GIFT fund is a love offering for emerging Emmaus Communities around the world. Did you know that if every Emmaus Community gave \$500 to the GIFT that all emerging communities and regional reps would be fully funded? Dayspring Emmaus/Chrysalis/Face to Face Community in South Georgia has made giving to the GIFT a priority in 2024.

"We are excited to help other communities get started through The GIFT. Our hearts are full knowing that we are not only working to change lives in our area but around the world." —The Rev. Dr. Thad Harvey, Aldersgate Chrysalis #23 (1993)

Thank you Dayspring Community!

Ministries Possible



Caring for Clergy

Rev. Dr. Ron Bell continues to shape and mold The Upper Room's latest program, which supports clergy at the intersection of faith and mental health. Rev. Dr. Bell writes, "Because of the overwhelming need, the first year of this program felt more like a wartime trauma nurse adventure than the slow, methodical development of a program. Many lessons were learned to implement. Your prayers are crucial as we continue this vital work."

Celebrate These International Editions of *The Upper Room*

Marathi edition

Starting with the March/April 2024 issue, the Marathi edition will begin publication again after being out of print for 15 years. Marathi is the third most populous language in India after Hindi and Telugu. Please pray for Dr. Anilkumar Servand, the presiding bishop of the Mumbai Regional Conference, Methodist Church of India, and his team as they lead this devotional revival.



The Marathi publishing team



The original and current covers of the Portuguese-Brazil edition

Portuguese-Brazil edition

The Portuguese edition in Brazil turns 85 years-old this year. A special thanksgiving service will take place on June 16 in Sao Paulo.

Happy Anniversary!

Donors Make a Difference

NAME: Sergeant Brian K. Hankison, U.S. Army Airborne Ranger (retired)

CITY & STATE: Lancaster, Ohio

GIVING FUNDS: The Upper Room Chaplains' Ministry, monthly giver

YEAR OF FIRST GIFT: 2022

WHY DO YOU GIVE TO THE UPPER ROOM?

"*The Upper Room* has been a constant presence in my life, thanks to my mother's dedication. During my military service, I experienced firsthand the challenges of accessing *The Upper Room* in remote locations like Korea and Panama. I also served in the Grenada campaign (Oct. 25, 1983) and was badly wounded, spending more than a year recovering at Walter Reed. Now retired, I'm passionate about supporting military chaplains to ensure that soldiers have access to the daily devotional, a resource that has been a source of comfort and strength for me throughout my life."

The Upper Room is grateful for Sgt. Hankison, a decorated veteran, and his life of service and generosity.





We are overflowing with
gratitude!

2023 giving was out of this world!

9,003 donors gave **17,958** gifts,
totaling **\$1,318,357**

For more detail, including a breakdown of individual funds, please read the 2023 Annual Donor Report. Available online and through email late April.

Your generosity fuels The Upper Room's mission.

Thank you!

Introducing GiveCloud!

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new digital fundraising software, GiveCloud. This innovative platform offers a design-first, donor-centric approach to online fundraising, making it easier than ever for you to support the ministries of The Upper Room. One key feature is the donor portal, which will allow you to take control of your philanthropic journey. Through this feature you can review your contribution history, access tax receipts, handle



recurring donation payments, and more.

We invite you to experience firsthand the power of your generosity by logging on with your donor email address and activating your account.

Scan to log on or visit UpperRoom.org/donorportal

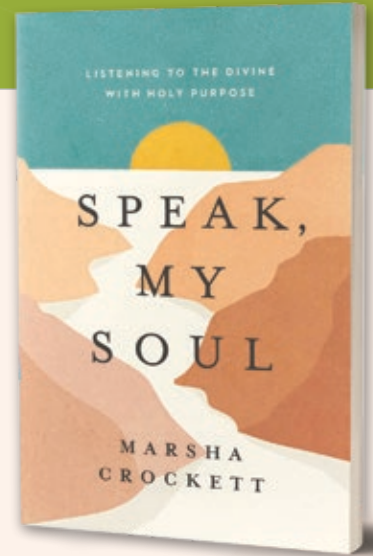
Leave a Legacy of Love

Did you know you can leave a Legacy of Love by including The Upper Room in your will? For more information about bequests or other forms of planned giving for The Upper Room, please contact Chris Caruso at ccarus@UpperRoom.org.



Join The Upper Room's **Fellowship Circle**, a dedicated community empowering our ministries through monthly giving. Designate your gift and ignite change. Visit UpperRoom.org/fellowship or email us at Fellowship@UpperRoom.org.

The Upper Room covers all its ministry expenses from product sales, participants' fees, interest income, and the generous support of donors. We do not receive any apportionment funds from The United Methodist Church or any other group. Donations are needed to help sustain and expand the reach of our ministries so others may experience God more fully.



Our soul speaks ... but can we hear it? In our noisy and overcrowded lives, it's often difficult to find the space to listen deeply to our own inner voice, let alone the voice of God. In ***Speak, My Soul: Listening to the Divine with Holy Purpose***, spiritual guide Marsha Crockett leads us through seven pathways for slowing down and discerning God's promptings in our daily life.

Visit store.upperroom.org for more information, and use promo code **SMS20** to receive a **20%** discount and free shipping when ordering *Speak, My Soul*.

In need of prayer?

Visit UpperRoom.org/prayer



Scan the QR code to give online.

Give today!