

Fellowship Focus



Hope Awaits Us

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

The magnolia trees on The Upper Room grounds are in full bloom. These huge ancient trees, heavy with pink flowers and waxy leaves are as beautiful as ever.



Sherry Elliott

Regrettably, I'm not in the office to admire them as in previous years because The Upper Room staff is working from home. The magnolias announced spring without notice or fanfare as if all

is well. And yet we are fully aware that the last 12 months have been anything but normal. I appreciate their gracious reminder that life goes on and hope awaits us. As Easter people, we believe in resurrection, the possibility of new life, and a faithful God. All shall be well.

The Upper Room is also in a new season. We welcomed a new publisher on January 1. The Rev. Kimberly Orr is at the helm to help us navigate this sea of change impacting our churches and the publishing industry.



Rev. Kimberly Orr

Kimberly served most recently as the pastor of education and discipleship at Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, one of the largest churches in the denomination, and is an ordained elder with the Texas Annual Conference.

Kimberly's prayer for The Upper Room is that we remain open to the Spirit's leading for unity, growth, and shalom. She will seek to build on The Upper Room's legacy by broadening the reach of the daily devotional guide and increasing our digital footprint by thinking playfully and entrepreneurially about how best to open up the gospel of Jesus Christ to a wider audience.

After settling into her Nashville home, she spent her first weeks getting acquainted with staff members. In my first conversation with Kimberly, I was pleased to tell her about the generosity of our donors and their faithfulness to our ministry.

Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. – 1 Peter 1:3, NRSV

Kimberly loves to play board games, watch British mysteries, strum songs on her Gretsch guitar, and hike and camp when possible. She is also the proud mother of two adult children, Miriam and Josiah, and cherishes time with her two grandchildren, Ellie and Sam.

We are so pleased that Kimberly is our spiritual leader during this challenging time and ask for your prayers for the days ahead. Personally, I can't wait for you to meet her. She is gracious, pastoral, and a kindred spirit. And, like the magnolia trees, she is grounded in God's goodness.

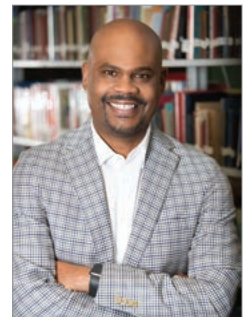
Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Rev. Junius B. Dotson

Our hearts are saddened by the loss of our beloved friend and leader, Rev. Junius B. Dotson. Rev. Dotson was the top executive of UMC Discipleship Ministries in which The Upper Room is a part. He died on February 24, less than a month after sharing with staff the news of his battle with pancreatic cancer.

In Junius' time at Discipleship Ministries, he initiated the "See All the People" movement to help churches see beyond

their walls and into their communities and encouraged church leaders to create intentional disciple-making systems. He was a strong advocate for The Upper Room and promoted its resources throughout the world as essential tools for practicing prayer and spiritual disciplines. Junius was the author of Upper Room Books' *Soul Reset*, a study on spiritual practices to restore our souls, published just months before the pandemic.

Junius had a deep faith and a contagious smile. The Upper Room honors Junius' work and legacy and extends heartfelt sympathy to his family, friends, and colleagues. We will miss him.



1965 – 2021

Innovative digital offerings

Flagship Programs Adapt to Meet Spiritual Needs in COVID World

Thanks to you, our donors who gave so generously, The Upper Room's two flagship programs — Emmaus Ministries and The Academy for Spiritual Formation — have been able to provide new offerings to help people connect to God and neighbor and to grow in faith.

Emmaus Ministries

To offer connection and encouragement to Emmaus communities worldwide, Emmaus Ministries hosted two **International Virtual Gatherings**—one in September 2020 and one in February 2021. A third Gathering is planned for later in the year. 1,300 people from 30 countries attended the first two Gatherings.

Burning Hearts (based on Luke 24), a virtual offering geared towards the spiritual formation of adults who are new to Emmaus Ministries, is currently being tested. It is a seven-session event that will take place over a period of two weeks. Burning Hearts is not a virtual weekend Walk to Emmaus, but rather another offering in the Emmaus family of ministries.

Fourth Day Restore is a virtual experience for people who have attended a Walk to Emmaus or a Face to Face event. The purpose is to help ongoing growth in grace in the Fourth Day and to help communities reach graduates in remote areas.

Sign up for the Emmaus Ministries eNews to stay abreast of Emmaus Ministries' virtual offerings: UpperRoom.org/newsletters.

The Academy for Spiritual Formation

For people looking for ways to create sacred space at home, The Academy began offering **Day Apart Retreats**. These retreats invite participants to join in a rhythm of prayer, worship, learning from wisdom teachers, community, and spiritual practice online for a day.

Spiritual Formation in Today's World, the new one-year online Academy, began in February. There are four, three-day sessions in this new Academy. Like the in-person Academies, people will journey together with the same community and will meet in their covenant groups between sessions. This Academy is designed for newcomers and seasoned Academy participants alike.

A multi-session online Academy in Spanish will begin later this year. Originally planned to be Two-Year Academy #42, the Academy team decided to change the format after listening to the current needs of the Latinx community. Instead, this Academy will be a six-month online cohort-based Academy, making it more accessible to native Spanish speakers in the U.S. and beyond.

Visit academy.UpperRoom.org to stay up-to-date on Academy retreats.



Check out The Academy for Spiritual Formation's award-winning podcasts. academy.UpperRoom.org/podcast



Live from the Chapel

The Rev. Beth Richardson,
Dean of Chapel

Donors fund video equipment for chapel services

Thanks to donor funds, The Upper Room was able to purchase much needed video equipment to broadcast services from The Upper Room Chapel. Here's a note of gratitude from the Rev. Beth Richardson, dean of chapel.

When the pandemic hit, we began to lead daily prayer times from our homes. None of us knew how to do these things, and we learned as we went along. We started to broadcast from the chapel last fall. We hired a consultant and his equipment to teach us how to livestream our Wednesday services. On his recommendation, we purchased the equipment that would allow us to broadcast the services on our own.

We're so grateful to be able to share our services with the world. Before the pandemic, we might have as many as 50 people attend chapel in person—on a good week. Now, we can share the love of the Holy One with thousands of friends around the world.

We are so grateful to you for helping to bring our worldwide community together in this special way. I hope you will join us one Wednesday and witness what your generosity has created.

Join us

on Facebook
facebook.com/UpperRoomCenter

Live from the Chapel

Wednesdays • 11:00 a.m. (Central Time)

A Moment of Prayer

Mondays • 11:00 a.m. (Central Time)



Updates from Asia

Your love and support of the international editions of *The Upper Room* continues to bear fruit around the world. As ministry partners from Asia prepare to meet in October (in-person or virtual, to be determined), we are already receiving exciting news from them.

“Working with *The Upper Room* has been a huge blessing for us, like an exciting journey, enabling us to use *The Upper Room Nepal* daily devotional to reach out to our hundreds of Nepali churches.”



— Deepak Giri, Senior Pastor of New Vision Church and Secretary for *Upper Room Nepal*



JF 2021, Nepali edition



“I encourage people to read and write for *Dhyan Kuteer*, the Hindi edition of *The Upper Room*. The life experiences of others has always been a source of encouragement not only for me but also for others. *Dhyan Kuteer* strengthens our faith.”

— Jasmin Joyce Able, translator, Deaconess in Lucknow Regional Conference, MCI, and pastor’s wife

“The *Upper Room* daily devotional writers’ workshop in Yangon in 2019 . . . led to the publication of the first Lenten devotional in the Myanmar language. I truly believe that through the magazine’s ministry, the Lord will continue to equip people in Myanmar to grow and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

— Dr. Hla Hla Aye (aka Caroline Mawia), medical doctor, wife of the Emeritus Bishop Zothan Mawia of the Myanmar Methodist Church (Lower), and Methodist distribution partner with *The Upper Room* in Myanmar



Please join us in prayer for Deepak, Hla Hla, Jasmin, and the other international ministry partners of *The Upper Room*.

Donors Make a Difference

Name: Beth Viren with Viren and Associates

City & State: Spokane, Washington

Giving Fund: Fellowship Ministry General Fund, Chaplains’ Ministry, Prayer Ministry, and Youth Fund

Year of first gift: 2010

Why do you give to *The Upper Room*?

“I believe we gave originally to the youth fund because we appreciated *Pockets*, which we got for our daughter when she was young. We’ve continued giving because we believe in the ministry of *The Upper Room* daily devotional. In fact, we have given several gift subscriptions to friends and family over the years.

Years ago at our church, we heard a speaker challenge us to give to God first, trusting there would always be enough. It was a huge leap of faith

Looking for the perfect Mother’s Day or Father’s Day gift?

Give them the gift of *The Upper Room*.

UpperRoom.org/subscribe



for us at the time to make that change in thinking; but over the years, we’ve seen the truth in that trust again and again.

Now as small business owners, we always tithe with our income. We even have a sub-account called “God Money,” which we use to support local charities, our church, and other worldwide needs.

During the pandemic, we have seen needs grow. We’ve tried to increase our giving as best we could. It is a blessing to give and a privilege to be able to help, no matter how much you can give.”

Thank you!

NEW FROM UPPER ROOM BOOKS

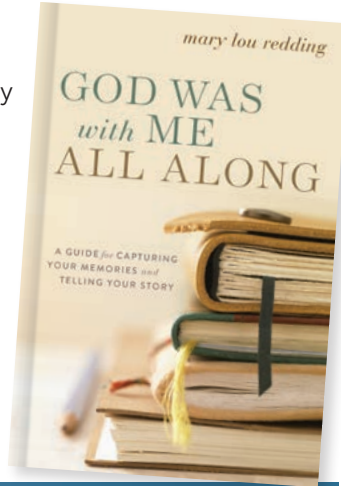
God Was With Me All Along

by Mary Lou Redding



As the editor of *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide for over 33 years, Mary Lou Redding helped people around the globe share personal stories of faith. In her new book, *God Was with Me All Along: A Guide for Capturing Your Memories and Telling Your Story*, Redding tells the stories of her family

while offering prompts for reflection and space for you to "preserve a record of your memories for future generations." Through your stories, you and your loved ones can discover "evidence of God's hand at work" woven through the years.



Order at UpperRoom.org/store.



Mary Lou's legacy for the daily devotional lives on. In 2020, *The Upper Room* received over 4,000 submissions, a record-breaking number. Writers coming from everyday walks of life all over the world continues to make *The Upper Room* unique among daily devotionals. No doubt, you have a story of faith to share, and we invite you to share it. With a readership of more than four million, your words of encouragement would be felt around the world.

Learn more at submissions.UpperRoom.org.

Become a Fellowship Circle Member

Have you made a one-time gift or regular gifts to The Upper Room? Consider joining the Fellowship Circle, our giving circle of friends who support the ministries of The Upper Room by donating monthly. Designate your gift to your favorite Upper Room ministry.

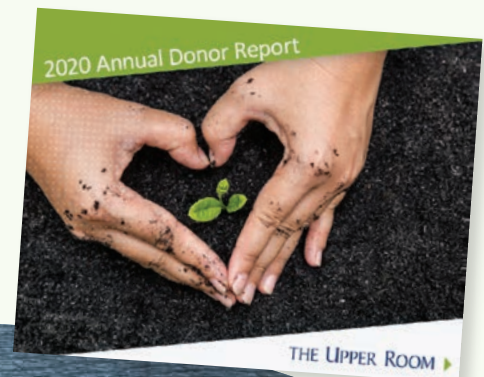
To join, visit UpperRoom.org/fellowship or call 1-877-899-2781, ext. 7212.



In 2020,
9,708
of you gave
\$972,220
to support the
ministries of
The Upper Room.

*We are grateful for
your amazing generosity!*

For more detail, including
a breakdown of individual
funds, please read the
**2020 Annual
Donor Report**
at UpperRoom.org/donor.



Give today!

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.