

Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

Coffee with Jim



It may be hard to realize, but the season of Lent is upon us. Ash Wednesday is February 17 and Easter April 4. Lent challenges us to reflect on our lives and experiences. It is a season in the calendar of the church that is designed to be a time for spiritual introspection. Lent begins with a smear of ash on the forehead. The symbol of the ash is to remind us of our mortality. The ashes are imposed with either the words, “Repent and believe the Gospel,” or

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Which ever phrase is used the point is still the same. We are members of fallen humanity in need of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God and with one another.

I’m fully aware of the fact that not everyone chooses to participate in Ash Wednesday. Regardless of whether we have a bit of ash on our forehead or not the call to reflection and repentance is still essential to our personal spiritual development and crucial to the life of the community of faith. It is easy to become a Christian. One confesses sin and accepts Christ. This is followed by baptism and membership in the Christian community. It occurs to me that perhaps it should be more difficult to join a church. It has become too easy to remove the cross and discipleship from the equation. Lent reminds us that we need to think critically about the decision we are making.

The requirement that Jesus laid down for discipleship was radical allegiance.

Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Luke 14:26-28.

The forty days of Lent challenge each of us to estimate the cost of carrying the cross. We too readily give glib verbiage to our faith but fail miserably when it comes to practice. It is shamefully easy to lift our hands to heaven when we sing praise songs, or hold out holy hands in prayer, while spitefully gossiping about a sister or brother. We are hopelessly lost if we think God does not hold us accountable for those hate-filled words we utter against one another.

We need the season of Lent to remind us of the cost of carrying the cross. The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer sting us if we are bold enough to apply them to our life. “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

From the Pastor (cont.)

This death is more than physical. It is death to self. It is death to the “what about me?” attitude that permeates so much of our lives and relationships. Dying in Christ is laying down my right to myself in order that Christ may live in me.

Yes, it is just a small patch of ash on the forehead, but it calls us to reflection, repentance, reconciliation, and renewal. As we receive the ashes it is with this prayer:

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Jim

Congratulations Pastor Wolfe!!



Rev. Dr. James O Wolfe III currently serves as Vice President of American Baptist Churches USA for the 2020 - 2021 Biennium and has officially received the nomination to serve as president for the term running from January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2023. Prior to coming to Pontiac, Pastor Wolfe served at churches in New Jersey (Memorial Baptist Church in Salem and Calvary Community Baptist Church in Pennsauken). Ordained on March 15, 1981 at the Bethel Baptist Church in South Charleston, WV, he has served here at FBC since March 1, 1990.

Jim is a graduate of Alderson-Broaddus College, where he met his wife Janet. He holds an M. Div. and D. Min. degrees from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Foundation. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Historical Society and serves on the Board of Managers of the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region.

WELCOME HOME!

We were excited to welcome many of our church family back for 'in-person' worship on Sunday, January 17th, 2021. In accordance with the guidelines from the Livingston County Department of Health, we will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Gatherings will be limited to 50 persons
- Social distancing will be practiced
- Face masks ***MUST*** be worn. *For your convenience we have face masks and hand sanitizer stations available.*
- To minimize cross traffic all persons must enter via the gym and exit via the main front doors.
- Registration for worship ***MUST*** be submitted via our website or by phone (815.842.4321) no later than the Wednesday prior to the worship service you wish to attend. ***(Registration for Sunday, Jan. 17th will open on Jan. 5th)***

Due to health and safety concerns, we understand that not everyone is going to feel comfortable returning to corporate worship at this time. To accommodate those who are more comfortable sharing in worship virtually, our Sunday Services will be live streamed at 10:00 am on our YouTube Channel (FBC Pontiac) and will be available for viewing any time following the live broadcast via our YouTube Channel. Links to our YouTube channel are available on our website and FB page.






We ask for your continued patience as we move forward into a “new normal” and remind you that these plans are subject to change at any point in light of new information or state/federal health guidelines. Your pastors and church leadership continue to carefully monitor this situation as it progresses and are in prayer for wisdom and guidance moving forward.





Feb

1 Michael Poshard
2 Mason Christianson
2 Jan Jolynn Staley
2 John and Michelle Bohm
3 Trinity Miller
3 Neisha Hibbs
4 Tyler Lind
4 Gary Brill
6 Bill Battice
9 Aiden Hurd
9 Barbara Sancken
10 Patty Gray
10 Leon Gray
10 Peggie Boldt
11 Caiti Henson
12 Maxine Zytniowski
13 Claire Nyi
13 Joanne Perkins
13 Margaret Turner
14 Barry and Barbara Highland
15 Cheyle Herman
17 Lisa Hurd
19 Calvin Krueger
19 Dean and Kay Sidfrids
20 Karen Gilmoure
20 Alana Christianson
20 John Bohm
22 Marcia Harder
27 Bob and Sharon Matteson
28 Skip and Carol Jones

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	1	2 Groundhog Day 
7 10:00 am Worship	8	9
14 Valentine's Day 10:00 am Worship 	15 Presidents Day 	16
21 10:00 am Worship	22	23
28 10:00 am Worship		

February



Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
3		4		5		6	
10 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK		11 7:00 pm Board of Ministries		12		13	
17 Ash Wednesday 6:30 am Service of Ashes 9:00 am ROMEO Club 12:00 pm Service of Ashes 6:30 pm Service of Ashes		18 		19 Newsletter Deadline		20	
24 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK		25		26		27	

Thank You



I appreciate the fruit and cookies! The wire basket will come in very handy. The greatest gift was that you cared!

Have a happy and healthy new year everyone!

Sincerely,

Evelyn Vietti

We would like to thank our entire church family for the many cards, warm wishes and the generous Christmas gift you shared with us during this Christmas season. We are deeply touched by your thoughtfulness. We love you all very much and feel blessed to be a part of this loving church family.

Jim and Janet Wolfe

Jay and Lisa Hurd

Ash Wednesday



We are pleased to announce that we will offer three Ash Wednesday services this year! In addition to our traditional Ash Wednesday service on February 17th at 6:30 p.m., we will also be offering a brief service of Ashes at 6:30 a.m. and at 12:00 Noon.

We encourage everyone to join us at one of these services for a time of meaningful reflection as we make our way into the Lenten Season.

Newsletter Deadline



All articles for inclusion the March edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, February 19th. You may submit your articles by phone (842.4321), fax (844.6943), by e-mail (Rhonda@fbcpontiac.org) or by leaving them in the black box outside the church office door.

Winter Weather



As we have all been focused on our ability to gather during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it's also important to remember that we are still making our way through another Illinois winter. So, we'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that if Pontiac schools are closed due to inclement winter weather, all church activities scheduled for that day will also be cancelled.

To the best of our ability, church cancellation notices will be broadcast on WEEK, WCIA, and posted to our Facebook page.

We encourage everyone to use their best judgment and be safe during hazardous weather!



**Prayer Chain
Number**

815.419.4454

If you wish to receive prayer chain calls, please contact the church office at 815.842.4321 and request that your name and number be added to the list.

Kid's Corner!



ABK resumed meeting on January 20th. For the safety of both children and staff, we will be carefully following the same COVID mitigation procedures as we did before. However, we're excited to announce that some new programming will be incorporated into the weekly format. The children will be getting involved in service/work projects for the church and community. The kids will start out making Valentine favors for the residents at Accolade Nursing Home. We are excited to get them involved in ways to give back and share God's love with our community!

There will also be an opportunity for the congregation to get involved with the kids for Valentine's Day. They will be creating their own valentines box. These will be set out in the gym with the kid's names on them. You are invited to "send" them a Valentine by dropping them in their box. Valentines will be made available but you can also provide your own. Most of these kids are not a part of the church. Let's let them know how special we think they are. So get ready to shower them with lots of Valentines love!



Thank You

For wearing your mask

And social distancing





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