

Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

Coffee with Jim



In the liturgical calendar of the Christian church Lent is the solemn religious observance commemorating the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This time of fasting and temptation took place as Jesus prepared himself to begin his public ministry.

This forty- day period begins with Ash Wednesday. This year Ash Wednesday is March 2. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday calls Christ-followers to examine their lives and commitments in an attitude of prayer and penitence. The smear of ash on the forehead, accompanied by the words, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return,” reminds one of the ever-present needs to reflect, repent, reconcile, and renew our relationships with God and one another.

As has become our custom we will mark Ash Wednesday with two services in which ashes are imposed on the forehead of those who wish to participate. Services will be offered at 10:30 am and 7:00 pm. The period of Lent will conclude with a service of the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday, April 14.

Lent is a period to time intended to deepen our spiritual relationship with God and prepare ourselves for the message of Easter Sunday. Traditionally, people have thought of “giving something up” for Lent. Rather, than “giving something up” I would suggest that we add something to enhance our spiritual journey. We might choose to add a spiritual discipline such as fasting, volunteer service, or a specific Bible study. The sacrifice we make in this instance is the sacrifice of personal time to deepen our experience of God’s presence in our daily lives. On Sunday February 27 you will be able to obtain a copy of devotions which have been written to enhance your Lenten journey.

The title, For Such a Time. . . is taken from the book of Esther (4:14). Esther is the story of a young Jewish woman who became queen of Persia. When the Jewish people were threatened with genocide, Esther was challenged to intervene for her people with the Persian monarch. When she hesitated, her cousin Mordecai challenged her with these words, “Perhaps, you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

From the Pastor (cont.)

As we enter this Lenten season, the church community would do well to be challenged by these same words. The church community represents Christ in the world and as such we need serious renewal. To live into the image of God means that we take seriously the call of the prophet to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). For such a time as this we are required to treat one another as we wish to be treated. For such a time as this within the church community we are called to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32). We need not speculate as to the cause of declining participation in church. Sadly, Christ-followers demonstrate the same hatred, animosity, and selfishness that we see in the secular world. For such a time as this the church community is commanded to love our neighbor, and practice that love in word and action.

Let’s begin this Lenten season with a covenant to renew our commitment to Christ and the church community. What is necessary for the church to be the body of Christ is for individual members to seek renewal. As we are renewed individually, the church will be renewed corporately. Hear the words of Paul to the church at Rome, “be transformed by the renewing of your minds,” Romans 12:2.

As you read these devotions, I would suggest you keep in mind the following 4Rs.

Reflection: allow ample time to read the text as well as the commentary. Sit with the words and invite the Spirit of God to interact with you as you meditate on what you have read.

Repent: change the course of your thinking and your life. To repent means to change direction and we can all use a course correction from time to time. Repent of angry and hate-filled words. Hiding behind a keyboard on social media does not excuse us from our responsibility to live in the image of God.

Reconciliation: take the first step toward being reconciled with God and with those persons with whom you have had angry words and bitter experiences. The pandemic has divided families, friends, and even churches. It is impossible to be a Christ-follower and hate a brother or sister. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Renewal: is transformation of attitudes, bigotry, and hatred. The church community is not meant to model the secular world. The church community is meant to model the kingdom of God, “on

From the Pastor (cont.)

earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

I recently read a devotion where the author stated that for something to be renewed it had to die first. That’s a strong statement, but it has some validity. If I expect my life to be renewed, I must first die to myself. My human nature is greedy, selfish, and unloving. There is nothing Christ-like in those characteristics.

Think of it this way. Without spiritual renewal I am like a dying plant, the fruit I bear is shriveled and bitter. With a little water and care, I can once again blossom and bear the fruit that God has created me to produce. I would encourage you to allow this Lenten season to be a time of spiritual refreshment that renews your drooping spirit, offers hope in a broken world, and challenges you to be the person God created you to be.

Jim

Board of Ministries

The Board of Ministries met on Tuesday, February 15 at 7:00 pm.

Diaconate: Sending Easter cards to our homebound members.

Stewardship: The America for Christ offering will be received in March.

Children’s Ministries: Sunday School Materials have been ordered for the younger children. They will be used beginning in April.

Sunday Connections: Average attendance has been 24

people with an average offering of \$21.

The food pantry was closed for three days in January due to weather conditions and schedule conflicts. 16 families representing a total of 39 individuals were served in the month of January.

Moderator: Has contacted Rev. Brian Romanowsky of the GRR and Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez from ABC Intentional Interim Ministries for information regarding the Intentional Interim Program.

Has begun work on forming a search committee.

Senior Pastor: Ash Wednesday services will be held during Wednesday Prayer times (10:30 am and 7:00 pm) on March 2nd.

A Lenten devotional book will be available on February 27th and accompanying videos will also be made available.

A baptismal service will be held on Easter Sunday, April 17th.



March

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 Jim and Rhonda Hodges ♥
- 3 Jayme Soule
- 3 Patricia Shoop
- 6 Matt Highland
- 7 Rhonda Hodges
- 11 Bethany Miller
- 12 Tyler Stewart
- 16 Todd Miller
- 17 Barry Schell
- 17 Aaron Waschle
- 17 Julia Bonnavier ♥
- 19 Erik and Chayla Mitchey
- 22 Sheila Ferguson
- 24 Amanda Krueger
- 27 Micah Hurd
- 29 Farrell Porter ♥
- 31 Barry and Sue Schell



Ma

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
		1
6 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Verse Mapping	7	8 6:00 pm Healing Hearts
13 DST Begins 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Verse Mapping	14	15 6:00 pm Diaconate Council 7:00 pm Board of Ministries
20 First Day of Spring 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Verse Mapping	21 	22
27 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Verse Mapping	28	29



March



Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

2 Ash Wednesday

9:00 am ROMEO Club
10:30 am Service of Ashes
1:00 pm Esther Circle
7:00 pm Service of Ashes

3

4

10:00 am Women of Easter

5

9

9:00 am ROMEO Club
10:30 am Prayer Meeting
6:00 pm ABK
6:00 pm ABY
6:00 pm Hebrews Study
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

10

11

10:00 am Women of Easter

12



16

9:00 am ROMEO Club
10:30 am Prayer Meeting
6:00 pm ABK
6:00 pm ABY
6:00 pm Hebrews Study
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

17 St. Patrick's Day



18 Newsletter Deadline

10:00 am Women of Easter

19

23

9:00 am ROMEO Club
10:30 am Prayer Meeting
6:00 pm ABK
6:00 pm ABY
6:00 pm Hebrews Study
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

24

25

10:00 am Women of Easter

26

30

9:00 am ROMEO Club
10:30 am Prayer Meeting
6:00 pm ABK
6:00 pm ABY
6:00 pm Hebrews Study
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

31



Ash Wednesday



We are pleased to announce that we will offer two opportunities to join us for an Ash Wednesday Service. In addition to our traditional Ash Wednesday service on March 2

at 7:00 p.m., we will also be offering a service at 10:30 a.m.

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.

Got Pictures?



We want to keep our website and Facebook pages current and we need your help! With smart phones and digital cameras every one of us is photojournalist ready to document our family life here at FBC! If you attend a church event snap some pictures and send them to us via e-mail at: rhonda@fbcpontiac.org and we'll choose some to share on our website and via our social networking pages. Let's work together to share the awesome things that are happening here at FBC Pontiac.

Small Group Opportunities

The Women of Easter

Encounter the Savior with Mary of Bethany, Mary of Nazareth, and Mary Magdalene. The Lord's resurrection is the most glorious, victorious moment in history. Join us for this small group where we will watch the ancient scenes unfolding through the eyes of these three women who were there and bore witness to these incredible events. All three Marys will show us what happens when we encounter a loving Savior and are transformed. This small group study will meet on Friday mornings at 10:00 am beginning on March 4th in the media room at the church. Sign up sheets are available in the Narthex.

Study on Hebrews

Harlin Dean and Ken Ferguson will be facilitating a small group Study on Hebrews beginning Wednesday, March 9th at 6:00 pm. The group will meet on Wednesdays in the Narthex.

Verse Mapping

Beginning on Sunday, February 27th at 6:00 pm, Janet Wolfe will facilitate a six part study designed to help you unpack the meaning of the Scripture in a simple, easy to understand way, then verse mapping is for you! This group will meet for 6 weeks on Sunday evenings at 6:00 pm in the media room.

Newsletter Deadline



All articles for inclusion the April edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, March 18. 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.

On-Line Giving



With on-line giving, it's easier than ever to tithe or make donations to special fundraising campaigns.

To make an on-line donation, simply visit our website www.fbcpontiac.org and follow the donation link near the top of the page. Our on-line giving is powered through PayPal and allows you to use an existing PayPal account or any debit or credit card you'd like. You'll have the opportunity to leave specific notes about your donation and you'll receive a donation receipt in your e-mail!

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fbcpontiac.org



Prayer Chain Reminder

ALL requests for the prayer chain must be made to the following 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.

Daylight Saving Time



Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 am on Sunday, March 13th, so don't forget to set your clocks ahead before going to bed Saturday night!



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March