

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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FEBRUARY 2023

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MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dearest Faith,

This past Sunday I talked some about the idea of embodying love for one another in community, and how we are called to participate in God's work of building a community here and now that bears the marks of the kingdom of heaven. Dr. King called it the *beloved community*, community centered on God's *agape* love. This kind of community reflects compassion and mercy and peace.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." And in 1 John 4, we read "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (v. 7) and "Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another" (v. 11). This is *agape* love - God's love transforming our hearts and overflowing into our relationships with each other. And how we live out this love together transforms our community.

I have witnessed this kind of love at Faith UMC. Most recently, I've seen and experienced how the Faith UMC community comes together to care for each other when one of us is sick or grieving loss. You call and text and send sympathy cards. You give rides. You cook food. You show up. You love one another, and that makes Faith a loving community. I'm thankful for that. And my prayer is that all that love - God's love embodied in the Faith UMC community - continues to overflow, maybe even beyond our own expectations. Can you imagine?

Grace and peace,
Jed

MESSAGE FROM LAY LEADER

“Where is Jesus?”

I am running a little late this year! I have just now taken down our Christmas decorations at the house. In fact, the undecorated Christmas tree still adorns our living room. The various Christmas collectables are packed away, boxes marked for each room and the physical exercise begins as we take things to the upstairs closet and the Christmas corner in the basement.

As I made my way through the kitchen, something caught my eye. Camouflaged in the kitchen window was a small, five-piece wooden puzzle of the manger, star, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. One lone Christmas decoration left out by mistake, or was it? Just because Christmas is over, is that a reason to put away Jesus? I think not!

So, where is Jesus in your life? Has he been packed away with the Christmas decorations or is he out front for you and everyone to see? Is your life a reflection of the light of Christ that shines in our world?

I hope you will ponder this thought and make sure that Christ is in the forefront of your life in all your words, deeds and actions.

I expect if you attend church regularly, you will be inspired by the meaningful worship services we have and that will give you the encouragement you need to make Christ the most important part of your life. If you have not made attending church a priority, please consider doing so. I can guarantee you will be blessed, and your life will be changed!

Susan



RICK'S REFRAIN

As a musician, I often turn to the Psalms for inspiration. Many of them are beautiful and thoughtful vessels of praise for our wonderful Lord. Psalms 9 begins with these verses:

“I will praise You, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.” (NIV vv 1-2)

In these words, King David bares his heart before the Lord in gratefulness for the wonders God provides every day. He is probably speaking in part of military victories, but giving God praise for His providence in all things. David's joy is in the Lord and praise flows from his lips to God's ear. God is in all and above all else.

In our decadent society, where hedonism reigns supreme, God is not revered by the masses. So many of us humans have tried to pit our puny intellects against God's own intellect. He has been humanized to the point that He is seen (if at all) as a gray-haired elder who is really not interested in our lives and certainly not available to intervene in them.

But David had a deep abiding faith in God and a personal relationship with Him. He was not sidetracked by critical thought or devices. Rather, he thanked God for the love shown to him personally.

In John Wesley's Journal on June 28, 1790, he penned these words:

My remnant of days
I spend to His praise
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few,
My days are His due,
And they are all devoted to Him!

This entry was made in Wesley's 87th year as his full life was nearing the end. Wesley, as David, kept his eyes fixed on the Creator. Neither man was perfect and had to deal with human imperfections in their daily walk with God. Grace found them both. Wesley had the teachings of Christ as his guide and David had access to earlier Scriptures, revealing the nature of God to him.

We can take refuge in our God as these servants did. He is ever-present and available to us all. He cares about us and loves us with unending and unfailing love. I close with the same 2 verses from Psalm 9, this time from the Message:

"I'm thanking you, God, from a full heart. I'm writing the book on your wonders. I'm whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy; I'm singing your song, High God.



BETH'S MISSION MESSAGE

Some of us are just a paycheck away from housing insecurity. Pathways Shelter and Bethel Home are two organizations providing assistance to those who have crossed into that insecurity. Please consider making donations to aid our neighbors.

Haywood Christian ministry has recently issued a plea for canned foods.



SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 10

Smokey has Sunday School lessons for children ages 4 to 12 and Mark has adult lessons each week.



Stewardship News as of January 29, 2023

"I will be loyal to the United Methodist Church and uphold it with my Prayers, my Presence, my Gifts, my Service, and my Witness."

2023 Budget	\$50,519.00
Needed through 1/29/23 for budget	\$5,051.90
Received to date for budget	\$3,603.00
Behind Budget	\$1,448.90
Paid out to date for budget	\$3,527.62

We thank you for your faithfulness!

FEBRUARY 2023 DATES TO REMEMBER

**SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM
WORSHIP 11 AM**

February 2- Candlemas or Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Feast of the Holy Encounter, is

a Christian holiday commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. It is based upon the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22–40. In accordance with Leviticus 12, a woman was to be purified by presenting a lamb as a burnt offering, and either a young pigeon or dove as sin offering. It falls on 2 February, which is traditionally the 40th day of and the conclusion of the Christmas–Epiphany season.

Falling midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, February 2 is a significant day in several ancient and modern traditions. The Celts, for instance, celebrated it as Imbolc, a pagan festival marking the beginning of spring.

As Christianity spread through Europe, Imbolc evolved into Candlemas, a feast commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the holy temple in Jerusalem. In certain parts of Europe, Christians believed that a sunny Candlemas meant another 40 days of cold and snow.

February 14–St. Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine is celebrated annually on February 14. It originated as a Christian feast day honoring one or two early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine and, through later folk traditions, has become a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world.

There are a number of martyrdom stories associated with various Valentines connected to February 14, including an account of the imprisonment of Saint Valentine of Rome for ministering to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire in the third century. According to an

early tradition, Saint Valentine restored sight to the blind daughter of his jailer. Numerous later additions to the legend have better related it to the theme of love: an 18th-century embellishment to the legend claims he wrote the jailer's daughter a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell before his execution; another tradition suggests that Saint Valentine performed weddings for Christian soldiers who were forbidden to marry.

February 21–Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent), observed in many Christian countries through participating in confession and absolution, the ritual burning of the previous year's Holy Week palms, finalizing one's Lenten sacrifice, as well as eating pancakes and other sweets.

Shrove Tuesday is observed by many Christians, who "make a special point of self-examination, of considering what wrongs they need to repent, and what amendments of life or areas of spiritual growth they especially need to ask God's help in dealing with." This moveable feast is determined by Easter. The expression "Shrove Tuesday" comes from the word shrive, meaning "absolve".

As this is the last day of the Christian liturgical season historically known as Shrovetide, before the repentant season of Lent, related popular practices, such as indulging in food that one might give up as their Lenten sacrifice for the upcoming forty days, are associated with Shrove Tuesday celebrations. The term Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday", referring to the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday. Many Christian congregations thus observe the day through eating pancakes or, more specifically, the holding of pancake breakfasts, as well as the ringing of church bells to remind people to repent of their sins before the start of Lent. On Shrove Tuesday, churches also burn the palms distributed during the previous year's Palm

Sunday liturgies to make the ashes used during the services held on the very next day, Ash Wednesday.

In some Christian countries, especially those where the day is called Mardi Gras or a translation thereof, it is a carnival day, the last day of "fat eating" or "gorging" before the fasting period of Lent.



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY

None

February 22-Ash Wednesday is a holy day of prayer and fasting in many Western Christian denominations. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and falls on the first day of Lent (the six weeks of penitence before Easter).

As it is the first day of Lent, many Christians begin Ash Wednesday by marking a Lenten calendar, praying a Lenten daily devotional, and making a Lenten sacrifice that they will not partake of until the arrival of Eastertide.

Many Christians attend special church services, at which churchgoers receive ash on their foreheads. Ash Wednesday derives its name from this practice, which is accompanied by the words, "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or the dictum "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". The ashes are prepared by burning palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1- Edie Tate
- 2- Rev. Terry Rowland