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FEBRUARY 2024

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MESSAGE FROM PASTOR

Dearest Faith,

As I write these words at the beginning of February, it's hard to believe that it's still winter. It seems too soon for signs of spring, and yet it's surprisingly warm outside, and I can hear birds outside my window. I even saw some early flowers trying to poke their heads up out of the soil. Wasn't it snowing just last Sunday? Soon it will be Lent, and then Easter won't be far off. But for a little while longer, it's still the season of Epiphany.

Epiphany is the time when we celebrate the *manifestation*, the appearance of God with us in Christ. Jesus appears to the magi in Matthew 2. These magi had been watching the stars when they saw a sign of the coming of the Lord, and they followed that star until they found him, and there, "they were overwhelmed with joy (Matt 2:10)." Christ had come. God had drawn near.

I tend to think that Epiphany is a good time to pay attention, to look around, for signs of God's goodness and grace. Those magi looked to the stars; we might notice the birds and the flowers on a surprisingly sunny day. Or maybe a hug from an old friend, or even kind words from a stranger. Reminders of warmth, hints of peace. Signs of grace.

I guess it's still winter for a little while longer; it still gets dark pretty early in the evening. May we be reminded that whatever the season, whatever the weather, and even when there is darkness, we are surrounded by the goodness of God's gracious presence.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (Isaiah 60:1)

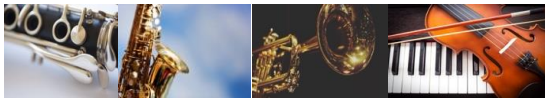
Grace and peace,
Jed



Message from Lay Leader Rachel

As we start this new year, let’s get into it all the way. First let us think of the ones that are not back in church with us. John 15:1-8 states “Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches.” Let’s take these branches and put them to work for Jesus. Our job is to be thinking and praying for the ones that are not in church with us at the present. Let us be the branches and work toward the vine. If we put God first, he will help us toward this goal. With a lot of prayer and a lot of work, we can do this. I would like to see this church shine for the Lord in this community. We can do this together with God’s leadership. We can be the light that shines for this community.

As I have been reading and studying the history of Faith Church, we have come through a lot of hardships. We have always come through because God was in charge. This church will soon be 84 years old, coming from Hazelwood Methodist to Faith Methodist Church. Let’s keep this church going and growing to be strong again. May God bless each one and may His grace shine upon us all.



Message From Music Director Lauren

Hello Faith,

For this month, I have selected Psalm 150 to reflect on. Psalm 150 paints a picture of a symphony that celebrates our connection between music and worship. The Psalm invites the reader to join in praise through music, to glorify God.

“Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with stings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals;

praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!”

In these verses, we read about a wide variety of instruments, each playing a unique role in the symphony of worship. The psalmist calls for praise in the sanctuary and in the heavens, acknowledging the boundless expanse of God’s presence. It is a call for every instrument, every voice, and every breath to contribute to the praise of God.

Music has a remarkable ability to evoke emotions convey messages and unite hearts. Just as the psalmist lists various instruments, we are reminded that our diverse talents and expressions are welcomed in the worship of God. Whether through the powerful resonance of a trumpet, or the delicate melody of a harp, every note, instrument, and person has its place in the grand composition of worship.

As we reflect on Psalm 150, let us not only appreciate the beauty of music but recognize its profound spiritual significance. In our worship gatherings, may we bring our diverse gifts, talents, and instruments to create a symphony that resounds in the heavenly realms. Let us every note and every rhythm be an offering of praise to God, who deserves all glory, praise, and honor.



BETH’S MISSION MESSAGE

February has always meant Valentine's day to me, a celebration of love. This year Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine’s Day. This begins the season of Lent, our preparation for Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Often the Lenten season is observed as a time of sacrifice, fasting and prayer. I will be putting out the Heifer arks to collect pocket change to donate to Heifer International. This organization gives people around the world things they might need to feed their families, maybe seeds for a garden,

animals that might produce milk, meat, and manure or young saplings. Please collect your pocket change and bring them back to church on Easter Sunday, March 31. We cannot match the ultimate gift of our Savior who gave his life for us, but we can help make life a little better for others in his name.

Love to you all, Beth



Stewardship News as of January 29, 2024

2024 Budget \$48,779.00

Needed to date for budget	\$3,902.32
Received to date for budget	\$2,241.00
Behind Budget	\$1,661.32
Paid out to date for budget	\$3,211.06

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS!

FEBRUARY 2024 DATES TO REMEMBER

**SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM
WORSHIP 11 AM**

Of course, February is the month of Valentine's Day and the federal holiday Presidents' Day, and it's when we honor Black History Month too. This year, Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) and Ash Wednesday also fall in February. And with 2024 being a leap year, we get an entire extra day of fun.

February 13 – Shrove

Tuesday/Mardi Gras

The exact date of Shrove Tuesday changes from year to year. But one thing stays the same – it's always 47 days before Easter Sunday.

Shrove Tuesday, also called Pancake Day, Pancake Tuesday, Fat Tuesday and Mardi Gras (which is French for "Fat Tuesday"), is the last day of feasting before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Shrove Tuesday is a movable feast whose date is linked to Easter, so it changes on an annual basis. The date can vary from as early as February 3 to as late as March 9. It is preceded by Shrove Monday and marks the end of Shrovetide, also known as the Pre-Lenten Season.

Shrove, derived from *shrive*, refers to the confession of sins as a preparation for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages. Although the day is sometimes still used for self-examination and introspection, Shrove Tuesday eventually acquired the character of a carnival or festival in many places and is often celebrated with parades. As the final day before the austerity of the Lenten fast, Shrove Tuesday also has many customs pertaining to food. Pancakes are traditional in several European countries because eggs, sugar, and fat, commonly forbidden during the Lenten fast, are used up so they will not go to waste.

February 14 – Ash Wednesday

in Western Christianity, the first day of Lent, occurring six and a half weeks before Easter (between February 4 and March 11, depending on the date of Easter). Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. It is commonly observed with ashes and fasting.

In the early Christian church, the length of the Lenten celebration varied, but eventually it began 6 weeks (42 days) before Easter. This provided only 36 days of fasting (excluding Sundays). In the 7th century, 4 days were added before the first Sunday in Lent in order to establish 40 fasting days, in imitation of Jesus Christ's fast in the desert.

It was the practice in Rome for penitents and grievous sinners to begin their period of public penance on the first day of Lent in preparation for their restoration to the sacrament of the Eucharist. They were sprinkled with ashes, dressed in sackcloth, and obliged to remain apart until they were reconciled with the Christian community on Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter. When these practices fell into disuse (8th–10th century), the beginning of the penitential season of Lent was symbolized by placing ashes on the heads of the entire congregation.

FEBRUARY 14 – VALENTINE’S DAY has a rich history dating back to ancient Rome. The holiday is named after Saint Valentine, a Christian martyr who lived during the Roman Empire. While there are several legends and stories associated with Saint Valentine, one common narrative is that he secretly performed marriages for Roman soldiers, defying Emperor Claudius II’s ban on marriage for young men. Saint Valentine’s actions were driven by his belief in love and marriage, leading to his eventual martyrdom.

It’s an opportunity to express appreciation for the special people in your life and create cherished memories. However you choose to celebrate, make it a day filled with love, kindness, and joy.

FEBRUARY 14-MARCH 28 - LENT

On February 14 this year, some people will be celebrating a day of love, while others will be commencing the start of a season of prayer and fasting known as Lent. During Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday, Christians throughout the world take part in rituals to prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter.

Lenten season can look a little different depending on the person — some might choose things to give up for Lent, like a certain food or habit, others might opt to do something

charitable (also known as almsgiving). One important thing that most of those who observe do, however, is fast.

So if you celebrate the season, before you start coloring Easter eggs or making creative basket ideas, you’ll want to mark down the dates of the holy time.

Lent for Christians starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on either the evening of Maundy Thursday or on sundown of Holy Saturday (day before Easter Sunday). However the practices of Lent do not end until sundown on Holy Saturday for all Christian denominations. So, it is 44 days from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday and another two days with Good Friday and Holy Saturday added to give a total of 46 days for Lent. But Sundays are excluded from fasting during Lent and with 6 Sundays removed from the count we get Lent being a 40-day liturgical period.



February 19 – Presidents’ Day

Washington’s Birthday is a U.S. federal holiday celebrated on the third Monday of February in honor of George Washington, the first president of the United States. Increasingly, the holiday has become an occasion to celebrate the birthdays of both President George Washington and President Abraham Lincoln. Many Americans call the holiday Presidents’ Day.

February 22 was celebrated as a holiday by 19th-century Americans. At least a dozen states officially celebrate the third Monday in February as “Washington and Lincoln’s Birthday,” and another dozen states call it “Presidents’ Day.” In 1971, Congress fixed Washington’s Birthday and several other

holidays on Mondays to create long holiday weekends.

As much as both Washington and Lincoln are revered, the federal holiday officially remains Washington's Birthday. The first president is also honored with many statues around the country and the 555-foot-high (169-meter) Washington Monument in the nation's capital, Washington. Likenesses of both Washington and Lincoln are carved in stone on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, along with Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt.

The holiday is also a tribute to the general who created the first military badge of merit for the common soldier. Revived on Washington's 200th birthday in 1932, the Purple Heart medal (which bears Washington's image) is awarded to soldiers who are injured in battle. As with Memorial Day and Veterans Day, Washington's Birthday offers another opportunity for the United States to honor its veteran.



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY

None



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Edie Tate
- 28 – Rev. Terry Rowland