

M**MARCH 2017**

Tidings

Special dates of interest:

- Ash Wednesday, March 1
- World Day of Prayer, March 3
- Daylight Saving Time Begins, March 12
- First Day of Spring, March 20

GREAT BANQUETS, ETC. TO PRAY FOR IN MARCH:
 March 9-12: HCDC Men's Banquet #25
 March 17-19: Boys Y.E.S.
 March 24-26: Muhlenberg County Jail Women's Banquet #11
 March 24-26: Chrysalis #56 at FUMC

It Takes Grace...

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God."
 [Hebrews 12:1-2]

One temptation I've noticed over the years is for us to assume that we are, by ourselves alone, responsible for all the content and the results of any pre-determined spiritual discipline we take on during the Lenten Season. Do you know what I'm talking about: If we can successfully give up chocolate or coffee or sodas or meat or alcohol or whatever it is we

have promised God we would avoid...Or, on the other hand, if we can successfully read a chapter of the Bible a day or pray for ten minutes every morning or promise to be in church sometime before Easter...If we do or don't do these things as we have planned them out, then, "Praise God! We have had a pretty good Lent! (Now pass the pork, please...)"

The danger of a "successful Lent" is that it tends to grow our egos. Maybe, rather than a successful Lent, we should pray for a "faith-filled Lent," one that grows our humility. The passage from Hebrews 12 reminds us that Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. We do not begin this journey alone and we cannot continue it by ourselves, either. A great cloud of witnesses surrounds us – saints who have been there, done that on the same path we find ourselves on. Sometimes they stumbled (like us); sometimes they fell flat on their faces

(like us). Know, though, that their prayers and testimonies are recorded to encourage you and me to persevere.

Trials and difficulties are a part of life, and they will surely show up over this Lenten Season. Consider the fact that all of them were either permitted or even designed by Christ (read on in Hebrews 12 through to verse 14) – to help us develop the righteousness that allows us to resemble our Savior. Forty days is about as long as we allow ourselves to invest in anything these days. Lent is intentionally not short. So, don't lose heart. Proceed faithfully, being strengthened and healed along the way with sisters and brothers who are on the very same path...walking toward the grace of transformation we long for on Easter Sunday. Pace yourselves. It will be worth it. Especially if we travel together.

Blessings,
 RevLon

THE LENTEN SEASON BEGINS

The time of Lent – the forty days prior to Easter – helps to direct Christians in preparation for Easter. Lent is the antidote to allowing Easter to creep up on us as an egg hunt and choir cantata. We really should allow some time for preparing our hearts. We move through this season, recognizing day by day, at a greater depth, the cost Christ paid for the love God has for us all. By the time Easter arrives, we should rightly be completely overwhelmed by the grace and forgiveness God freely extends to us. By the time Easter arrives, we can truly understand how small our thinking can sometimes be in how we choose to worship and serve our living Savior, and moved toward a focus totally on Him and

less on us. You are encouraged to take part as fully as you are able – maybe even to carefully consider what it is that separates us from Christ, His love, and His body, the church. There will be many opportunities – some typical, some only for this season – for us all to gather in the name of the One who came, and ministered, and died, and rose again. March 1 is the date for our Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:00PM in the chapel, following the Youth fundraiser supper at 5:15. Sundays, March 5 – April 9: Lenten Worship focused on Christ's final day...Walk with Him, sit beside Him, pray with Him, follow Him, desert Him, deny Him...then on Sunday, April 16: Celebrate Him! Our choir will present a special Easter cantata! Wednesdays during the Lenten Season, our Bible

Study will focus on the themes of each Sunday's service, using Adam Hamilton's book, "24 Hours That Changed the World."

There will also be opportunities for everyone to sign up on the Good Friday 24 Hour Prayer Vigil, beginning at midnight in the sanctuary, following our Maundy Thursday Worship at 7:00PM. There will, of course, be opportunities, too, for providing Easter lilies for worship, decorating the floral cross, an Easter breakfast, and egg hunt for the little ones. If we've left anything out, we'll let you know... Seriously, it is the prayer of Christ that we be united in His love (see Rob's article in this newsletter). What better time to do that, or return to doing that, than this Lenten Season?

“Alone”

There are certain things that catch my attention. Survival intrigues me. For some reason, I've had this interest in how folks live off grid or on minimal terms or completely live off the land. There are shows that help fuel my interest and teach how to succeed and quite frankly how not to do some things too. Mountain men that have chosen a life that pits them out of the rat race of society but in a never-ending battle to survive. Live free or die is a show that depicts the lives of those that have moved out of the mainstream into a secluded sometimes isolated existence living off the land and with their own two hands and the wits that they've gained through experience. One show that I've recently enjoyed is titled “Alone”. It's about a group of experienced survival experts being dropped off in the wilderness of Patagonia with just a few essential items and left alone to survive until everyone else quits. It's getting down to the finale and 3 are left, 2 women and one man. And as it is in all of life there are lessons to be learned, even from survival shows, about us and our relationship with God.

The obvious is that we were not created to be isolated, from God or one another. When God made, us it was His intention that we see our value in this fact, that He made us in His image. That value, when we get our hearts and minds to agree on that, gives us our worth re-

gardless of what the mainstream rat race tells us is most important. Our country is at odds right now because many of those that spin the headlines have no clue as to the value God had given to those they report on. We are in the midst of prejudice and racism because we have isolated ourselves from the truth of God's design for relationships. Relationships between us were to reflect the goodness of God and to pursue justice and give value and worth to one another based on that design. God pursues us still today as He did Adam and Eve in the garden even though they and we have traded the truth for lies.

Our struggle though, is that we all have this tug to distance ourselves from God and others. It's not always easy to be around people, certain people, especially is it? I confess that some days I would be perfectly content not speaking to anyone, finding my little piece of isolation, and being just fine thank you very much. But that is not part of our design, is it? God said it's not good for the man to be alone after He had said “it is good” after everything He had created. I believe some of us like to be alone because we don't have to live under other's opinions of us. For others, they like isolation because it gives them a freedom to not give anyone worth or value since they are only wanting to depend on themselves, basically saying they're superior to everyone else.

But the bottom line is that God made us to be in relationship with Him first. Not to isolate ourselves from Him or hide from Him but to see how our intrinsic value is since He made us and made us in His image. No relationships will flourish or be what they could be apart from that truth. Value for one another comes from our creator. He pursues us still in the example of Jesus coming to us in the flesh, vulnerable He gave us His life so we could in turn have eternal life. This to prove without a doubt that God's intent was for us to always be connected and in relationship with Him just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in relationship eternally.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.”
John 17:20-21

God is good all the time and all the time God is good!

In Christ's Love,

Rob

Romans 12

Youth News



March 1 is our Ash Wednesday Youth Fundraiser. Please come and support our youth and enjoy a meal of homemade soups, sandwiches and desserts. And then stay for our Ash Wednesday worship service in the chapel. Thanks for all your support of our youth!

March 3-4 we will host the W. KY Presbytery's Youth Winter Retreat for 6-12 grade students. Part of our time will be helping out in our community with service projects. If you're interested in helping out by donating some of your homemade goodies for our snacks or would like to

help out with preparing meals please let Rob or Denise know. This will last from Friday evening at 6 till Saturday evening at 7. Please pray for all those involved will experience the fullness of what God has for us to receive.

In Christ's Love,
Rob
Romans 12

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS THROUGH A SIMPLE GIFT OF FOOD

Thank you to this congregation for loving your neighbor as yourself by:

1. Years of support through Souper Bowl of Caring.
2. Individuals who have volunteered at the Food Bank and who are or have been members of the Board of Directors.
3. Those who have quietly & faithfully dropped off or sent donations.
4. Those who have supported the ministry financially or recently have donated to the Building Renovation Fund.
5. Those who have participated in the building renovation project.

If you have a heart for serving the poor & hungry, we would love to have you partner with us in this mission. There are a multi-

tude of ways to support this ministry: prayer at home, stocking shelves, assisting families, transporting food donations, giving food items or financial support. Speak with Mike Franklin or Peggy Phelan about ways to get involved. Check out the CFB web page-

www.christianfoodbank.us for the latest CFB news and needs. 2016 CFB served **9,850 households** were provided food assistance with **31,092 individuals** within those households.

CFB is open M, W, Th, Fri from 9:00 – 3:00. Families & individuals are available for assistance every 30 days; exceptions are made for extenuating circumstances.

Each person who comes to the CFB is offered both the oppor-

tunity to shop for a designated amount of groceries based on his/her family size and prayer for specific needs and concerns. Our most frequent prayer requests are for physical healing and jobs. We serve the working poor, the suddenly sick, grandparents on limited incomes now raising their grandchildren, the disabled and seniors, low income families & individuals & the homeless. It is our hope and prayer to be active in our new facility @ 241 W. Center Street by Easter.

Psalm 41:1 *Blessed is he who considers the poor and needy. The LORD will deliver him in the day of trouble.*



Christian Food Bank of Hopkins County

On The Inside

It's an exciting time to be a member of FPC Madtown!

You can truly feel His Spirit moving!

First Presbyterian has just completed the first run of God's Warming Place, an exciting adventure into the plight of the homeless. Next fall we'll be kicking it in high gear running from November through February. During the interim we'll be beating the bushes trying to convince those who are not as fortunate as we that they can trust us and we truly care for their welfare. **And** trying to convince you to help man the station each evening.

Next month we are traveling to the Yucatan to finish the San Diego Buena Vista water project, providing our brothers and sisters with pure clean water and checking on the Peto and Xoy projects. Then hopefully we're off to Arkansas to learn how to set up a solar powered water filtration system that can be set up in Haiti.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to bring the Good News to our own in western Kentucky.

What a great time to be involved in the work of Christ Jesus! The air is electric, can you feel it? If not, perhaps you have been absent

from worship, bible study, or fellowship dinner. If you haven't been here in a while come in from the wilderness. You'll find that not only is God alive, He's present at FPC, and is really busy. Yes, some of us are still a bit annoying, but even Ed and I are improving. Come on in and see the transformation of the renewing of our minds.

Rev. Pete



MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1st	Rick Lee	15th	Bob Wilkerson
2nd	Jo Shepherd		Tyler Conover
3rd	Roscoe Porter	22nd	Alisa Betts
	Karla Cates	23rd	Corey Fischels
4th	Dicie Collins	26th	Phillip Taylor
5th	Marilyn Coates	27th	Janet Agin
6th	Brianna Sutton		Phillip & Amy Taylor (A)
10th	Margie Rawlins	29th	Yvonne Bourland
	Ed & Becky Moore (A)		
12th	MaryAnn Thomas		
14th	Brooks Leasure		



March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1  5:15 Youth Fundraiser 6:00 Worship 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	2	3 Western KY Youth Winter Retreat	4
5	6 9:30 Norma Siria Cr 6PM Great Banquet Team Meetings	7 7PM Session Mtg	8 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	9 Men's Hopkins County Detention Center GB #25	10	11
12 	13 6PM Great Banquet Team Meetings	14	15 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	16	17 Boy's Y.E.S.	18
19	20  6PM Great Banquet Team Meetings	21	22 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	23	24 Chrysalis #56 Women's MCDC Great Banquet #12	25
26	27 6PM Great Banquet Team Meetings	28	29 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	30	31	