

## Information

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**Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

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Pam Burns

Robert Revels

William Patterson

Ramona Blankenship



*Christ Church United Methodist is a welcoming community of faith, hope, and love, serving our neighbors and the world as the hands of Christ.*

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## Pastor's Corner



Welcome to the 2026 Lenten Edition of the Christ Church Courier. Through the pages of this edition, you will get a general idea of what to expect during the Lenten season as we seek to be faithful to God's mission in Charleston, the Kanawha Valley, West Virginia, and the world.

To help us be faithful, we will be answering the question, "What is God's mission?"

To put it simply, God's mission comes from the Latin term, *missio Dei*, which is a theological term translated "mission of God" or "sending God."

Using *missio Dei*, God's mission, as a foundation, 20<sup>th</sup> century missiologist and theologian, David Bosch, believed that mission was an attribute of God more than an activity of the church. He said God was a sending God.

The 20<sup>th</sup> c. German reformed theologian, Jurgen Moltmann, believed the same. He stated that God's mission included the church. He wrote, "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."

In Matthew's good news, Jesus says, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the prophets hangs from them." (Matthew 22: 36-40, The Message).

To say it another way, it is God's mission, and we, as Christ Church, are invited to participate in it. So, we will focus upon God's mission of love as the one true and authentic principle of the church. We will recommit ourselves to God's mission as we allow God's love to flow us through us and into our Charleston community.

As part of God's mission, let us continue to pray for Charleston, for West Virginia, and for our state and local leaders. As the prophet Jeremiah reminded the Hebrew people, as the city goes, we go. Let us also pray asking God to "send us the people no one else wants" and "to receive the people God sends to us."

By choosing to love God and to love your neighbor, we are living our mission as we make the difference needed to transform our community and world. Again, welcome to the 2026 Lenten edition of the Christ Church Courier.

*Tim*



## 2026 Lenten Sermon Series

### *"Take Time to Be Holy"*

The Season of Lent, which begins on February 18, is a time of a deliberate and disciplined walk with God. Amid the pressures and distractions of life, it is a time to slow down and to spend unhurried time in prayer, scripture, and reflection.

The theme in Matthew's gospel is, "God sent Jesus to teach us how to live before God," or how to be holy. True holiness is cultivated through attentiveness to God and reflected in our relationships with the people

we encounter each day.

This series focuses upon the teachings of Jesus that lead to a life of loving God and loving neighbor through acts of devotion and service.

Following Matthew's gospel, sermons will focus upon the teachings of Jesus found in the Sermon on the Mount. The scriptures for the series are as follows:

Wednesday, February 18 - Ash Wednesday

Text: Matthew 6:1-6. 26-27

*"Holy Prayer"*

Sunday, February 22 - First Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 4:1-11

*"Holy Temptation"*

Sunday, March 1 - Second Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 5:21-26

*"Holy Relationships"*

Sunday, March 8 - Third Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 5:33-37

*"Holy Integrity"*

Sunday, March 15 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 5:38-42

*"Holy Retaliation"*

Sunday, March 22 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 5: 43-48

*"Holy Love"*

Sunday, March 29 - Palm Sunday

Text: Matthew 21: 1-11

*"Holy Receptions"*

Sunday, April 5 - Easter Sunday

Text: John 20: 1-18

*"Holy Encounters"*

## Two Worship Opportunities on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026



Our 2026 Lenten journey begins on Wednesday, February 18 with TWO OPPORTUNITIES for the Imposition of Ashes.

The brief service for the Imposition of Ashes, led by Rev. Ashley Wood, will take place at 12:05pm in the church chapel. Then, that evening at 6:30pm in the Centrum, we will hold a more traditional worship service that will be led by Rev. Dr Timothy Bias, with music provided by the Chancel Choir.

### Why is Purple the Liturgical Color for Lent?

The liturgical color for Lent is purple because the color symbolizes both the royalty of Christ and the penitence, suffering, and mourning of the season, drawing from the biblical story where Roman soldiers mockingly dressed Jesus in a purple robe before His crucifixion. It's a dual symbol: acknowledging Jesus as the "King of Kings" while also calling believers to reflect, repent, and prepare for Easter through self-examination and fasting, fitting the somber, preparatory mood. The color purple during Lent serves as a powerful, visual tool that invites the faithful to reflect on their spiritual lives and prepare for the celebration of Easter. As we see the purple, not only in the Centrum, but in churches throughout the Kanawha Valley, we are reminded to turn our hearts towards God and the profound mystery of redemption that Lent prepares us to celebrate.



### Prayer Labyrinth Available During Lent

When our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday, you are invited to continue that "journey" by walking our Memorial Prayer labyrinth in the Centrum, which will be available for personal meditation beginning on Monday, February 23. Printed meditations will be available each week if needed. Lent is a season of reflection and penitence, and a 30-minute walk on the labyrinth can be a time that leads the pilgrim to a greater understanding of the presence of God in their life. The labyrinth will be available from Monday-Thursday from 9am to 5pm, and on Friday from 9am to noon.



### Holy Week Worship Services

Holy Thursday, April 3, 6:30pm - Service of Holy Communion  
Good Friday, April 4, 12:05pm - Service of Tenebrae

## **A Methodist Understanding of Lent**



### **History, Practice, and Purpose**

For Christians across the world, Lent is a sacred season of preparation, reflection, and renewal. Observed during the forty days leading up to Easter (excluding Sundays), Lent invites believers to remember Christ's journey to the cross and to examine their own lives in light of God's grace. While the observance of Lent predates Methodism by many centuries, the Methodist Church has embraced and shaped the season in ways that reflect its deep commitment to spiritual growth, disciplined living, and active faith.

### **Lent in the Early Christian Tradition**

Lent has its roots in the earliest centuries of the Christian Church. By the fourth century, Christians were observing a forty-day period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter, inspired by Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness. This season became a time of repentance, instruction, and renewal, particularly for new believers preparing for baptism on Easter Sunday. Over time, Lent developed into a structured season marked by prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and acts of devotion. Ash Wednesday emerged as the formal beginning of Lent, offering worshipers the sign of ashes as a reminder of human frailty and dependence on God. The words spoken, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," continue to ground the season in humility and grace.

### **John Wesley and the Methodist Embrace of Lent**

Methodism emerged in the eighteenth century as a movement within the Church of England, deeply rooted in traditional Christian practices while emphasizing personal holiness and social responsibility. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, held the spiritual disciplines of the early Church in high regard, including the observance of Lent. Wesley believed that fasting, prayer, and self-examination were vital tools for spiritual growth. He himself fasted regularly—traditionally from sundown on Thursday until mid-afternoon on Friday—and encouraged others to do the same. For Wesley, fasting was never about punishment or legalism. Instead, it was a means of opening one's heart more fully to God and aligning one's life with God's will.

Early Methodists observed Lent as a season of intentional devotion. Class meetings often emphasized repentance, accountability, and acts of mercy. Lent was understood not as a withdrawal from the world, but as preparation for faithful Christian living within it.

### **Methodist Practices During Lent**

Throughout its history, the Methodist Church has encouraged a thoughtful and balanced approach to Lent. Rather than prescribing rigid rules, Methodism invites individuals and congregations to engage the season prayerfully and with intention. Common practices during Lent include focused prayer, worship, study, fasting, and acts of service. Worship services often take on a simpler and more reflective tone. Many Methodists choose to give something up or take on a new discipline, not as an obligation, but as a way to create space for God. In keeping with Wesley's emphasis on faith expressed through love, Lent is also a time to serve others through generosity and compassion.

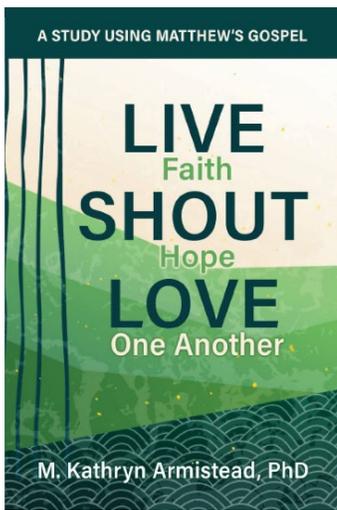
## A Methodist Understanding of Lent (continued)

### **Lent as a Season of Transformation**

At its heart, Lent is about transformation. In the Methodist tradition, this transformation extends beyond personal devotion into the way believers live out their faith in the world. Wesley taught that holiness of heart must be joined with holiness of life, a belief that continues to shape Methodist observance of Lent today.

Rather than viewing Lent as a somber obligation, Methodists are invited to see it as a gift—a time to slow down, listen more closely for God’s voice, and prepare their hearts for the joy of Easter. Through repentance, discipline, and devotion, Lent leads believers not only to the cross, but to the hope of resurrection and new life.

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### **Church-Wide Lenten Study “Live Faith, Shout Hope, Love One Another”**

by Kathryn Armistead

In *Live Faith. Shout Hope. Love One Another.*, author Kathryn Armistead uses passages from the Gospel of Matthew to guide us and frame our conversation. This is fitting because, for centuries, the church used Matthew to teach the basics of faith. These fundamentals can help us put our faith into practice as Jesus intended.

Copies of “Live Faith, Shout Hope, Love One Another” may be picked up in the church library.

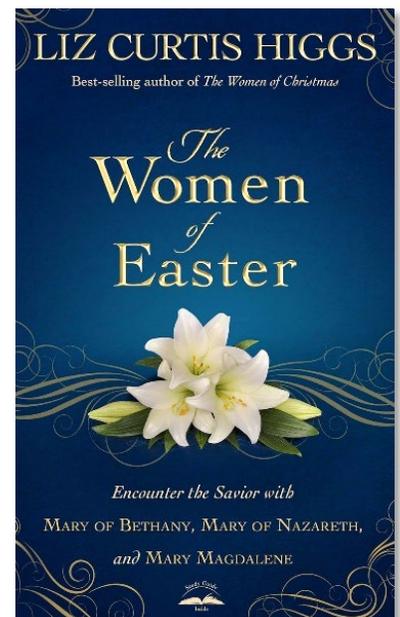
### **United Women in Faith Lenten Study**

#### **“The Women of Easter”**

by Lizz Curtis Higgs

The Thursday Women’s Study will begin Thursday, February 5 at 1:00pm. During Lent, the group will read *The Women of Easter* by Liz Curtis Higgs, an eight-week study focusing on Mary of Bethany, Mary of Nazareth, and Mary Magdalene, and how their encounters with the risen Christ transformed their lives.

Blending biblical scholarship with engaging storytelling, this study offers a meaningful exploration of Scripture. All are welcome. Watch for an announcement when books arrive in the church office so you can be ready to discuss Chapter One during the first meeting.

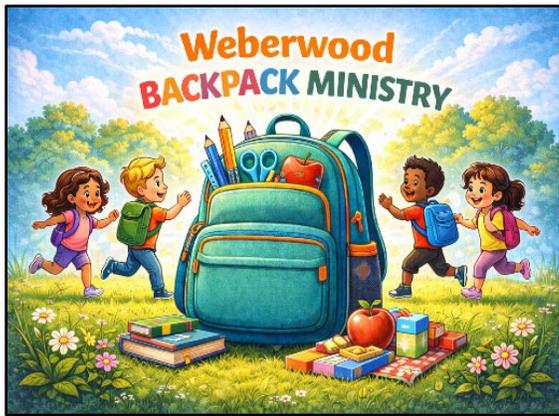


## A Wesley Fasting Plan for Lent, 2026



John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, regularly participated in a ritual fast. As part of your Lenten Discipline for 2026, you might consider a fasting routine. John Wesley advocated fasting not only for himself, but for anyone he was going to ordain. For Wesley, a fasting from food began at sundown on Thursday, which was in continuity with the Jewish and Christian tradition, and ended at 3:00pm on Friday, a normal “teatime” in England. If you would like to consider trying this, please keep these few things in mind:

1. Be flexible and listen to the Holy Spirit. Don't get caught up with the act of fasting itself that you forget why you're doing it in the first place.
2. Decide whether you're going to do a complete fast (water only), a no-solid-food fast that allows milk, juice, coffee and tea, a no-meat fast, or some other kind of fast. There are no fixed rules here but it's always good to try to keep the fast you set out to do. Some fasts are more difficult than others, and there will be times you may feel led to switching things up.
3. Plan Friday as your regular fasting day. There's nothing "magic" about Friday. It's simply a historical day for fasting in many Christian traditions, largely because Jesus was crucified on a Friday. If for some reason another day of the week makes more sense for you, then fast on that day.
4. Only fast for more than one consecutive day after you've consulted with your doctor and only if you're sure you're physically able to handle it.
5. Make sure you drink plenty of water while fasting, no matter what kind of fast you choose.
6. Remember, there will be times when it makes sense to skip your Friday fast or move it to another day of the week. For example, if you have an opportunity to have lunch on a Friday with someone you've been wanting to connect with for a while, don't feel compelled to create an awkward situation by sticking to your fast. Just change your fast day that week. Guideline #1 applies here.



## Weberwood Backpack Ministry

*From Lenore Tweel*

As we journey through Lent, please continue to keep the Weberwood backpack ministry in your prayers. We lift not only the students who receive this ministry, but all students and staff that they may know the love and hope of Jesus. We continue the gift of service through the food items and monetary donations which are necessary to fund this ministry.

The following is from the Weberwood school counselor: "We are deeply grateful for your continued support through the weekend food bag program. Your compassion and commitment to meeting the needs of our students make a meaningful difference in their lives, not only during the holidays but throughout the entire year."

Thank you for being that difference.

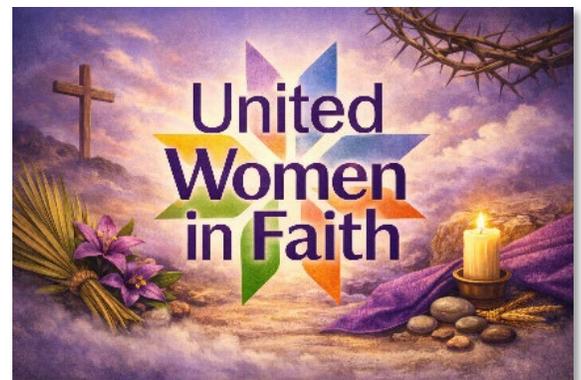
## United Women in Faith Book & Hot Dog Sale

The United Women in Faith will host a Book and Hot Dog Sale on Saturday, March 7, 9:00am-2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. This fun and welcoming event is a wonderful opportunity for our church family and community to come together for fellowship while supporting meaningful ministry.

Guests are invited to enjoy a classic hot dog meal while browsing a variety of gently used books for all ages. Proceeds from the sale will directly support the ministries and mission work of the United Women in Faith, helping further their ongoing commitment to service, outreach, and care for others both locally and beyond.

Donations of gently used books are gratefully accepted, and volunteers are also needed to help with set-up, serving, and assisting during the event. If you are able to donate books or share your time, please contact Barbara Carpenter or Krissa Frontz in the church office.

Your participation, whether through attending, donating, or volunteering helps make this event a success and supports the important work of United Women in Faith. We hope you will plan to join us!



## Children & Youth News & Events



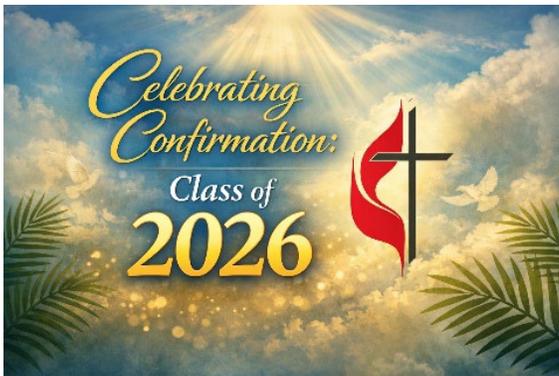
### **Sweetheart Dinner Supports Youth Ministry**

Rev. Ashley and the Youth Group invite the congregation to a Sweetheart Dinner on Sunday, February 8, in the Fellowship Hall, following the 11:00am worship service.

Enjoy a delicious spaghetti dinner with all the usual fixings, lovingly prepared with help from the United Methodist Men. This meal is more than a time to enjoy good food and fellowship. It is also a fundraiser that supports the Youth Group and their

ongoing ministries and activities.

Whether you attend with a spouse, a friend, family, or on your own, all are welcome at the table. Your presence and support help encourage our youth and invest in their faith, service, and growth. We hope you will plan to stay, share a meal, and support our Youth Group.



### **Confirmed in Faith, United in Christ**

On Palm Sunday, March 29, during the 11:00am worship service, we will joyfully welcome the Confirmation Class of 2026 as members of Christ Church. Following the service, a small reception honoring our confirmands will be held in the Potter Room.

Please join us in celebrating this important milestone and in welcoming these young people into the life and ministry of our church.

### **2026 Easter Egg Hunt**

Rev. Ashley and the Youth Group invite children and families to join in the fun at the annual Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 29, immediately following the 11:00am worship service.

Children ages 2-5 will hunt for eggs on the playground, while children ages 6 and older will enjoy their egg hunt in the green space across the street under the trees. Eggs will be filled with toys, small objects, and candy, reminding us of the joy of Easter and God's love.



This event is a favorite tradition and a wonderful way for families to spend time together after worship. All children are welcome to participate, and families are encouraged to plan to stay and join us for this outdoor Easter celebration.



*Renewed and Resounding*  
A Golden Jubilee Organ Recital Series  
Christ Church United Methodist  
1221 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25301 (304) 342-0192 ccumwv.org



**David Donathan, Sunday, January 11, 2026, 11:00am & 2:00pm**

Christ Church's Minister of Worship Arts/Organist, David Donathan, will give the first recital of the series. The instrument will be dedicated during the 11:00am worship service, and the recital will be held that afternoon. David is in his 33<sup>rd</sup> year at Christ Church and is an ordained Deacon in the United Methodist Church.



**Dr. Brenda Portman, Sunday, February 8, 2026, 2:00pm**

Brenda Portman will make her Charleston debut by giving the second recital of the Jubilee Series. Brenda is a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, where she serves on the faculty of Xavier University as an Adjunct Professor of Organ. She also serves as the organist at Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church in Cincinnati. Her services at Hyde Park began when our Lead Pastor, Dr. Timothy Bias, was serving Hyde Park UMC as the Lead Pastor. Brenda and Tim have known each other for years. An award-winning organist, Brenda is quickly becoming a well-known composer of organ and chamber music, and many of her compositions are released through the Lorenz Corporation Publishing House.



**Peter DuBois, Sunday, February 22, 2026, 2:00pm**

Peter DuBois will be returning to Charleston to give the third recital in the Jubilee Series. Peter served here at Christ Church as the Director of Music/Organist from 1981-1991. In 1991, he took the position of Director of Music/Organist at Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York. Recently retired from the church, Peter is still the host and producer of the nationally syndicated public radio program, "With Heart and Voice." He also tours on a regular basis giving organ concerts in the United States and in Europe. (This recital is co-sponsored by the Kanawha Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.)



**Paul Fey, Sunday, March 29, 2026, 2:00pm**

International and Internet sensation, Paul Fey, will be giving the fourth recital in the Jubilee Series, and we are fortunate that he will be touring in the United States this spring. A resident of Leipzig, Germany, Paul has become an Internet sensation with his organ videos on YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram where he celebrates almost 100,000 total subscribers. To help pay for his formal education, Paul started selling his organ compositions through his website. He is now a full-time composer and performer who travels the world promoting the art of playing the pipe organ.



**Dr. Janette Fishell, Sunday May 10, 2026, 2:00pm**

Dr. Janette Fishell will be returning to Charleston for a third time to give the final recital in the Jubilee Series. In the August, 2025 magazine of the American Guild of Organists, the interviewer called Janette "organist royalty" because of her popularity and personality. Janette is a Professor of Music and Chair of the Organ Department at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, one of the largest organ schools in the country. She also travels internationally giving recitals and lectures. She is a passionate church musician, and part of her teaching career was spent at Scarritt Graduate School in Nashville, Tennessee where she served on the faculty. Christ Church's Minister of Worship Arts/Organist, David Donathan, met Janette when he was a student at Scarritt from 1985-1987 and they have been friends and colleagues ever since.

## Yarnettes: Stitching Love into 2026

The start of 2026 has been an exciting one for the Yarnettes! Over the past two weeks, we have welcomed 11 to 12 people at each gathering, all eager to work, learn, and share in fellowship.

Our current projects include delivering prayer shawls and lap blankets to church members who could use a little extra love and comfort. We also continue to support the Assistance Ministry each week by creating thoughtful gifts for our community friends. Baby blankets are still being lovingly made for Women's and Children's Hospital and Thomas Hospital, wrapping our youngest neighbors in warmth and care.

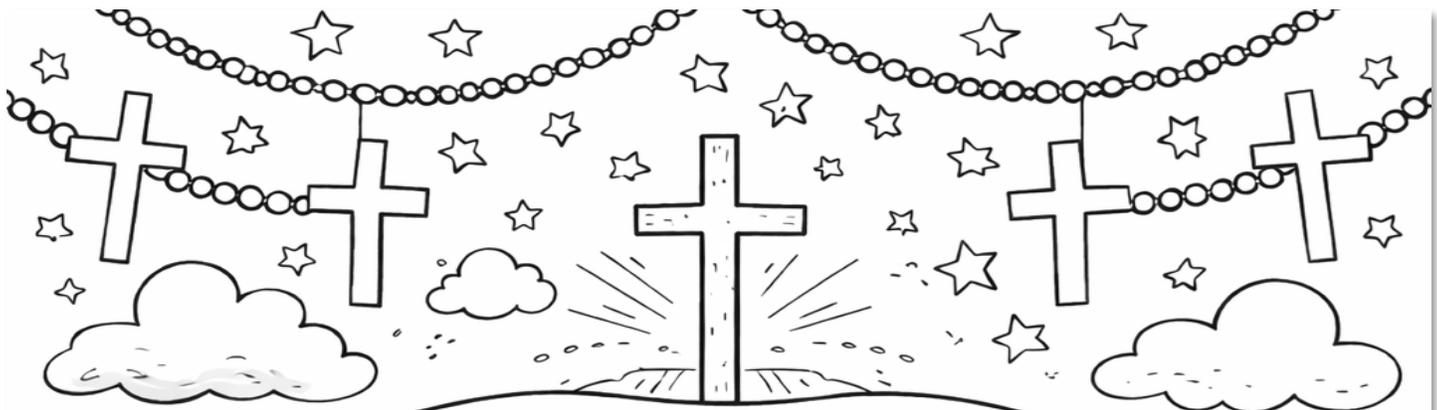


In the coming week, the Yarnettes will assemble care packets filled with essentials such as soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and tissues. These packets will be shared with our church neighbors in need.

Beyond the stitches and the service, the Yarnettes are also building meaningful friendships and a strong sense of community. If you are interested in joining us, please know that no crochet experience is required. Help and encouragement are always provided. Come as you are, learn something new, and be part of a group that creates with purpose and heart.

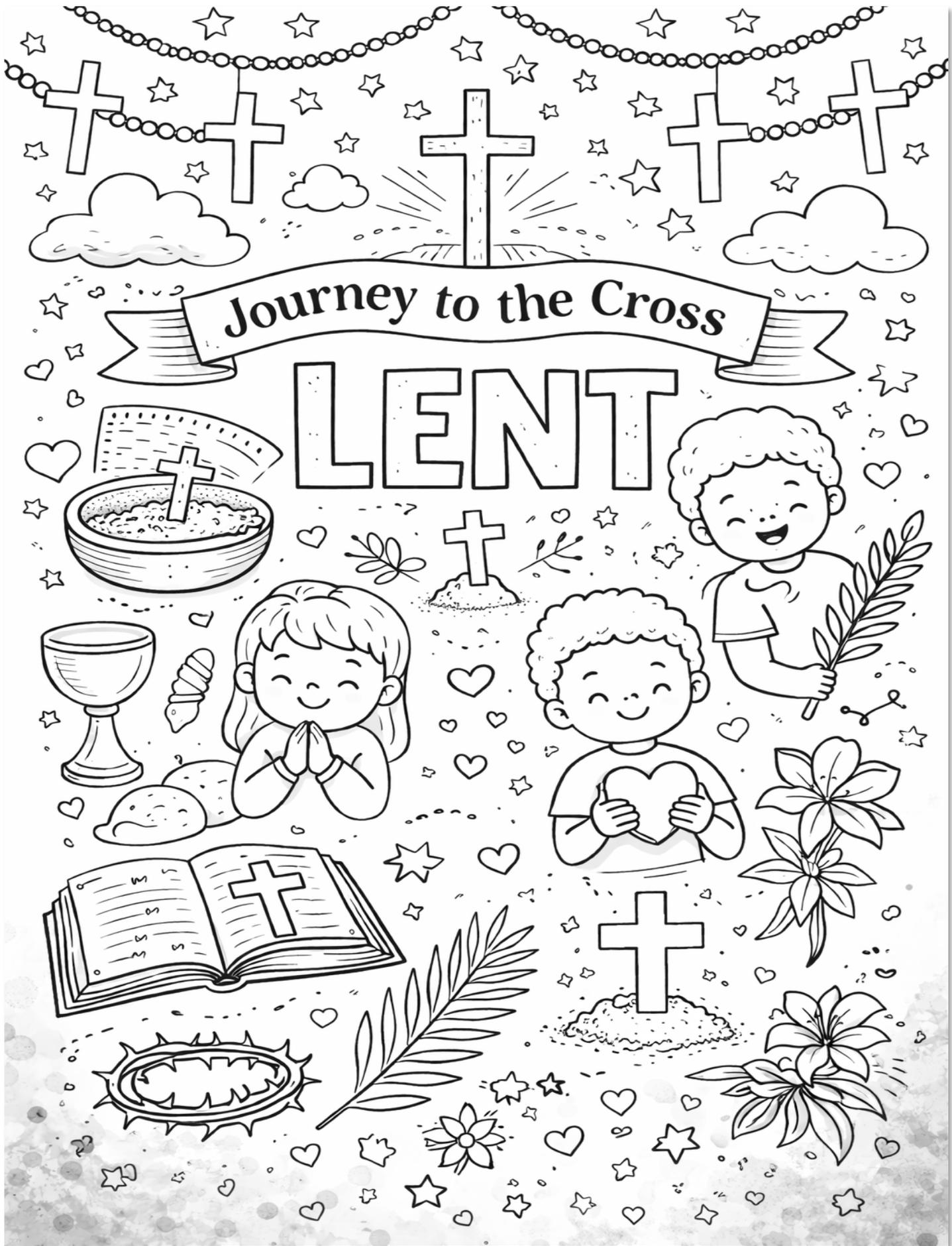
We would love to have you join us!





Journey to the Cross

# LENT



## Birthdays

### February

1<sup>st</sup> Bev Mullins  
2<sup>nd</sup> Jan Narciso-Morris, Sammy Stump,  
Ashley Wood  
3<sup>rd</sup> Denise Harper, Robin Rector  
4<sup>th</sup> Emma Carpenter, Hannah Shreve  
5<sup>th</sup> Christy Shaw  
  
7<sup>th</sup> Dee Rumbaugh  
8<sup>th</sup> Vicki Harper  
9<sup>th</sup> Taylor Johnson, Steve Rodberg  
11<sup>th</sup> John Burdette, Jane Ann Hammett  
12<sup>th</sup> Alexander Rodberg, Melissa Wandling  
14<sup>th</sup> Katie Kelsh  
15<sup>th</sup> Linda Meszaros, Dan Tate, Cabot Williams  
16<sup>th</sup> Phyllis Osenton  
17<sup>th</sup> Jim Douglas  
  
19<sup>th</sup> John Barid, Diane Strong-Treister  
20<sup>th</sup> David Hill, Margaret Shaffer  
21<sup>st</sup> Jim Matheney, Bill Milam  
24<sup>th</sup> Joyce Mash, DF Mock, Dorris Moses,  
Hampton Rose, IV, Daniel Smithson Jr.  
25<sup>th</sup> John Baird, Sue Price  
26<sup>th</sup> Katie Clark  
27<sup>th</sup> William Bartley, Chris Gunnoe,  
Sarah Henley, Matthew Lord, Chad Robinson  
28<sup>th</sup> Jonah Wandling

### April

1<sup>st</sup> David Bungard, James Holsclaw 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jennifer Clarke, Kristi Silkwood  
4<sup>th</sup> Carolyn Turner  
6<sup>th</sup> Thomas Flannery  
7<sup>th</sup> Beth Strickland  
8<sup>th</sup> Annie Fisher, Ella Gillis  
9<sup>th</sup> Chris Kirksey  
11<sup>th</sup> Ryan Frankenberry, Diane Gillis, Elisabetta Mastracci  
13<sup>th</sup> Jenny Parsons Ross  
14<sup>th</sup> Steve Holsclaw, Parke Wolfe  
19<sup>th</sup> Alexander Johnson, Alex Martin, Emily Strickland, Meredith Thomas  
21<sup>st</sup> Harvey Creasey, Sharon Iskra, Jessica Lane, Ed Wheatley  
23<sup>rd</sup> Kristy Fidler, Carlos Neccuzi  
24<sup>th</sup> Alexandra Flannery, Gretchen Frankenberry, Erick Silbernagel  
26<sup>th</sup> Cohen Burgess, Mary Palmer Carmichael, Nick Harmon, Will Stewart, Jonathan Vickers  
28<sup>th</sup> Elayna Ross, Beau Vickers  
29<sup>th</sup> Larry Bissett  
30<sup>th</sup> Conrad Haskell

### March

1<sup>st</sup> Diana Green  
4<sup>th</sup> Jim Kelsh  
  
5<sup>th</sup> Ellen Thomas  
6<sup>th</sup> Sheila Luechauer, Brian Resler, Jackson Wilkinson  
7<sup>th</sup> Meredith Jenks, David Jenks, Becky Mahan,  
Erick Silkwood  
9<sup>th</sup> J.B. Browning, Jennifer Weaver  
10<sup>th</sup> Amy Burdette, Judy Hanlen, Bob Shupienis  
12<sup>th</sup> Cora Clark  
14<sup>th</sup> Brittany Behm, Benjamin Young  
16<sup>th</sup> Dave Haden, Ross Johnson  
18<sup>th</sup> Jordan Gunnoe, Cristian Sirbu  
19<sup>th</sup> Paul Gunnoe, Bonnie Stark  
21<sup>st</sup> Laurence Hancock, Susan Stewart  
24<sup>th</sup> John Adams, Gavin Burdette, Solomen Kent,  
Brennan Malone, Mark Rollins  
25<sup>th</sup> Juliana Serefin, Joe Wong  
26<sup>th</sup> Mike Sauvageot  
27<sup>th</sup> Gary Good, David Mullins  
28<sup>th</sup> Anna Kate Silkwood  
29<sup>th</sup> Tom Burger, Sherry Clarke  
30<sup>th</sup> Dedra Johnson  
31<sup>st</sup> David Donathan, OT Elmore II

## Anniversaries

### February

4<sup>th</sup> Daniel & Ruthann Smithson  
5<sup>th</sup> Melvin & Bernice Harshberger  
15<sup>th</sup> Jane & Wendel Turner  
20<sup>th</sup> David & Sandy Kirby

### March

21<sup>st</sup> Chris & Trish Johnson

### April

3<sup>rd</sup> Rod & Nanya Friend  
5<sup>th</sup> Russ & Carolyn Smith  
12<sup>th</sup> Linda Harrah & Bill Johnson  
12<sup>th</sup> Eric & Sharon Iskra  
14<sup>th</sup> David & Allison Bungard  
15<sup>th</sup> Lawrence & Marilyn Bissett  
20<sup>th</sup> Kevin & Elizabeth Hoalcraft  
26<sup>th</sup> Dan & Liz Tate  
29<sup>th</sup> Mark & Ingrid Ferrell





Christ Church United Methodist  
1221 Quarrier Street  
Charleston, WV 25301

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Charleston,  
WV  
Permit No. 940

Sunday Morning Contemporary Worship: 8:45am  
Adult/Youth/Children Classes - 9:50am  
Sunday Morning Traditional Service: 11:00am

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**