

St. James United Church of Christ

News from Pastor Ken

Newsletter
March 2017
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You should love March if for no other reason than it's the month that officially starts spring, even though it may not feel like it.

Many of us struggle to get through this winter and what has seemed like endless cold, grey days of winter. Just a couple days ago, as I was walking up the drive way looking at my muddy dormant gardens and I felt the warm sunshine on my face for a few moments but then again today the afternoon clouds and cold took over. What a feeling of hope I had even though I knew in my heart there is more than a little winter left. That is what I like about March. Somehow, we know that regardless of what winter weather is left to come that spring will not be denied. I wait with anticipation as the snow melts to see the little buds starting to appear and the daffodil shoots pushing up. And Don Robertson keeps me posted on his current robin count. There is hope.

There is hope and preparation for greater things to come. That is what this month in the church calendar is about as well. This year March is full of Lent starting March 1st with Ash Wednesday. Lent provides us a wonderful opportunity to consider and pray about how we can get closer to being the person God would have us to be and to consider what it is God would have us to do.

Many consider Lent simply a time of giving up something we like for a few days but I think that just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness contemplating his ministry, we too are called to spend time considering our own ministry. Let us use this time for planning and preparing. Lent is a time of spiritual preparation. I invite you not to simply give up something but to take time to prepare your spirit for an exciting new journey. Here are a couple suggestions. Spend an extra few minutes each day in prayer and meditation. Read a book on spirituality, commit to reading the Upper Room every morning with your coffee (it's only a small page), read one proverb everyday from the bible (there are 31), commit an anonymous daily and intentional act of kindness, join me in a day of fasting, you get the idea. Prepare yourself for what God has planned for you.

Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued

Upcoming Events

- ◆ March 1 - Soup & Salad Dinner and Ash Wednesday Service
- ◆ March 5 - Communion Sunday
- ◆ Wednesday March 8 - Study Group
- ◆ March 12 - Daylight Savings Time Begins
- ◆ March 14 - Council Meeting
- ◆ Wednesday March 15 - Study Group
- ◆ March 17 - St. Patrick's Day
- ◆ March 18 - Euchre
- ◆ March 19 - Communion Sunday
- ◆ Wednesday March 22 - Study Group

As many are aware that during the purple seasons of the Christian calendar, I fast. It has become a wonderful practice for me that has truly changed my spiritual journey. I invite you to share in "A day of fasting with the pastor" this year. Fasting is not about suffering. It is designed to help us focus on our relationship with God. I follow an Islamic tradition of fasting which includes nothing to eat or drink from sunrise to sunset each day, but more importantly four times a day intentional prayer and meditation. Please remember, if you have medical or physical issues that make it unsafe to fast, DO NOT do it. Again, I encourage you to not just "give up" something but to add a little something that will feed your spirit.

Although most of us think of Lent as not an uplifting time of year I would like us to think about Lent the same way gardeners think about March. It is a time of thinking, planning, and preparing for spring. It is a time of great anticipation. We dream about and prepare for new growth in our gardens, we remember projects from last year that we want to finish, we sharpen our tools and start ordering seed. We remember the exciting successes of springs past and prepare to start this spring full of expectation and optimism.

This is my vision for us at St James. As we begin our journey into Lent, let us not think of this as a season of spiritual winter but rather a time of preparing for our own spiritual spring, both personally and as a community of faith.

Remember, whoever you are and wherever you are at on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here in at St James.

Take care and be well, Peace
Ken

Prayers for....



Karen Marie
Sue
Scott,
Mimi
Dan
Kathy
Rich
Maraleen
Doug
Gordy
Jack Bishop Sr. & Jr.
Shirley
Megan & Family

George
David
Deborah
Lynn
Johnnie
Paul
Peggy
Bobbie
Marion
Jerry Bunger
Rev. Perkins
Harmony & Mike

Outreach Ministry

Kids in Distress

Current needs are as follows:

Pants and shirts for boys and girls sizes 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Underwear for boys 4 and 10-12, girls size 6

Socks for little girls' sizes 4-6 and 6-10

Hygiene items for young children such as body wash and shampoo

Twin sheets and blankets as well as full size, twin size is the priority, can be gently used.

Blue Water Area Rescue Mission - B-WARM

Blue Area Rescue Mission needs cleaning supplies and paper products. Collection bin (B-WARM) is in the church basement. B-WARM provides emergency shelter and mission program 7 days a week, 365 days a year for the homeless of St. Clair County as well as a discipleship program.

St. Augustine Richmond Food Pantry

In need of... spaghetti sauce, pancake mix/syrup, coffee (regular and decaffeinated), canned tomatoes (diced, stewed, etc.), J-ello and jam/jellies in assorted flavors

Corned Beef Dinner

St. James is having the annual Corned Beef dinner on March 26 at Perch Point. This is a fund raiser that supports many of the committee and items needed to meet our financial needs for the year. So, remember to get your tickets ahead of time and to sell as many as you can. Sign-up sheets for volunteering and donating are in church basement.

Happy Birthdays in March

3 - Taylor Lindke
12 - Becky Pittman
12 - Nancy Uppliger
15 - Josh Mahnke
30 - Don Robertson

Happy Anniversary's in March

7 - Frank & Judy Tringali
17 - Rusty & Collen Stover

Earthly Gifts Ministry

Financial Goal Report

February Financial Goal Report

The goal for February is \$5,760.00.
Donations thus far are \$3,241.20 as of February 19th. Please remember St. James still needs to meet our financial obligations.

Spiritual Growth Ministry



ASH Wednesday, March 1st, we will be having a potluck Soup and salad dinner in church basement at 6pm. Ash Wednesday service will be at 7pm.

Study Group to resume Wednesday, March 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th from 7pm to 8pm.

In need of adults to volunteer and assist Sue Tews in providing our young folks with Sunday School. Sign-up sheet is provided in the basement.

The Discretionary Fund March 5th, 2017

Did you know this fund is utilized to aid with rent, utilities, medical supplies, food and transportation to doctors, etc?

This is generated from the loose change collected the first Sunday of each month. Please empty your pockets and change purses that day to meet the needs of our church and community.

Fellowship Ministry

Ladies Tea in May - Plans are in the making. Save the date, Saturday, May 13th from 1 to 4pm. Donation \$5.00, lunch, games and fellowship.

Baseball Game - Summer at Utica's new Jimmy John stadium to watch our local teams play on a Saturday night at 7:05pm. More information to follow.

Worship Ministry

Volunteers Needed

Usher/Greeter, Liturgists and Altar Care are all ministries we invite ALL to participate in. Sign-up sheets are provided in the basement for each ministry. Many have found that serving in these roles enriches their worship experience.

Christmas Shoebox Items Needed for March 2017

March 2017 collection is for toys, craft supplies (crayons, colored pencils, glue, ruler, craft kits, fun things for teenagers). Items accepted anytime: toys, tote bags with handles, school supplies, notebooks, coloring books, crayons, pencils, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, washcloth, combs, socks, hats, gloves or mittens and always \$7.00 for mailing costs.

We will be having a sewing day after service on March 12th (just a few hours) if you can spend some time helping to make the tote bags. Please bring any of the following supplies you may have at home (sewing machine, scissors, rotary cutter, cutting board, rulers, or other quilting supplies you may have. If you have none of the supplies, we still can use people to cut the pieces to be sewn and thread the draw strings through the tote.

If you are not a shopper, you can still donate to this worthy cause by providing a cash donation.

Roof Collection



As of Sunday, February 19th 1,537,00 has been contributed towards paying back the Memorial Fund. Original draw from the Memorial Fund was \$2,498.45 so the balance that must be paid back to the Memorial Fund remains at \$961.45. All donations received are recorded to your donations report for the next years' tax filing.

Donations can be made either in a pew envelope marking it "Roof" with your name or envelope number or regular envelope marking how much is being donated for the roof.

Fun Page



Altar Care

March - Lynn Robertson

Communion Servers

Preparer: Teri Wagner
Communion Servers: Mark Tews

Ushers & Greeters

March 5 - Devon Klomp
March 12 - Audrey DeFer
March 19 - Lynn Robertson
March 26 - Sherrie Ingles

Liturgists

March 5 - Teri Wagner
March 12 - Sue Tews
March 19 - Audrey DeFer
March 26 - Sherrie Ingles

Scripture Readings for March

Sunday, March 5
First Sunday in Lent
Gen 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7
Ps 32
Rom 5: 12-19
Matt 4:1-11
Abundant Grace

Sunday, March 19
Third Sunday in Lent
Ex 17: 1-7
Ps 95
Rom 5: 1-11
John 4: 5-42
Thirsty Voices

Sunday, March 12
Second Sunday in Lent
Gen 12: 1-4a
PS 121
Rom 4: 1-5, 13-17
John 3: 1-17 or Matt 17: 1-9
Bold Blessing

Sunday, March 26
Fourth Sunday in Lent
1 Sam 16: 1-13
Ps 23
Eph 5: 8-14
John 9: 1-41
Restored



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NEWSLETTER