

St. James United Church of Christ

9008 Meisner Road, Casco, MI 48064 / www.ourstjameschurch.org/

News from Pastor Ken

Newsletter
March 2018
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I just can't help getting excited about March. The month when Spring officially arrives, even though it may not feel like it. Even though I know it will still unofficially be winter until.....

The grey seemingly endless days of winter are such a struggle for so many of us. However, just a couple days ago, as I was walking up the drive way looking at my very muddy dormant gardens and I felt the warm sunshine on my face for a few moments. Then again, the afternoon clouds and cold took over. But 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. I keep an eye toward the feeders looking for the first robins to arrive. 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. As a reminder, 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.

Lent is not 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 continue to invite you not to simply give up something but to take time to prepare your spirit for an exciting

Upcoming Events

- ◆ March 4 - Communion Sunday, Discretionary Fund
- ◆ March 7 - Evening Prayer & Discussion Group - St. Johns
- ◆ March 13 - Council Meeting
- ◆ March 14 - Evening Prayer & Discussion Group - St. Johns
- ◆ March 17 - St. Patrick's Day & Euchre
- ◆ March 21 - Evening Prayer & Discussion Group - St. Johns
- ◆ March 18 - Communion Sunday
- ◆ March 25 - Palm Sunday
- ◆ March 25 - Corned Beef Dinner at Perch Point
- ◆ March 29 - Maundy Thursday w/ Communion, Striping of the Altar
- ◆ March 30 - Good Friday Service / Stations of the Cross
- ◆ March 31 - Great Easter Vigil
- ◆ April 1 - Easter Breakfast & Communion Service

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 every day 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.

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/Orthodox 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 that Lent is 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, optimism and wonder.

This is my vision for us. 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.

Take care and be well, Peace
Ken

Prayers for....



Karen Marie
Sue
Scott
Mimi
Dan
Rich
Maraleen
Dale
Irene
Clark Russell
Tony

George
David
Deborah
Lynn
Johnnie
Paul
Peggy
Marion
Roslynn
Joanne

Outreach Ministry

Kids in Distress

Current needs are as follows:

Diapers Size 5, Bath Towels, Twin Sheets
Pots Pans/ Dishes/ Silverware,
Fabric Softener Sheets, HE Laundry Soap

St. Augustine Richmond Food Pantry

In need of... assorted jams and jellies, saltine crackers, canned tomatoes (sauce, stewed, diced, etc.), pancake syrup, Campbell's chunky soup or Progresso soup, Chef Boyardee spaghetti-O's, mini ravioli, ABC's etc.

The Discretionary Fund March 4, 2018

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.

Blue Water Area Rescue Mission - B-WARM

B-WARM NEEDS

Cleaning supplies: Toilet bowl cleaner, bleach, laundry soap, dish washing detergent, bathroom cleansers.

Men's clothing: sweatshirts, coats, and jackets.

Paper supplies: paper towels, napkins, toilet tissue, kleenex.

Miscellaneous: deodorants, shaving cream, shampoo, disposable razors.

B-WARM still has a need for volunteers to cook part time, make phone calls, and do some sewing. They are also looking for someone who specializes in writing grants. If anyone is especially generous and has a van they don't drive anymore, they could use one of those too.

Happy Birthdays in March

3 – Taylor Lindke
4 – Cindy Maddelein
12 – Becky Pittman
12- Nancy Uppleger
13 - Josh Mahnke
15 – Josh Mahnke
18 - Amy Klomp
21 – Dan Klomp
24 - Kayla Wendt
25 – Hunter Wendt
30 – Don Robertson

Anniversaries in March

7 – Frank & Judy Tringali
16 – Cindy & Dan Klomp
17 – Collen & Rusty Stover

Spiritual Growth Ministry

We need volunteers to assist with Sunday School, please let Sue Tews know if you can assist.



Military Prayer List

I will be including a list in the newsletter of our men and women in the military, to acknowledge those who serve and to pray for their safety. Please submit your love one's, family member or friend's name, rank and branch of service to Roberta Fisher to be placed on the list.

Worship Ministry

Volunteers Needed Please sign-up

Please consider signing up for the ministries of Usher/Greeter, Liturgists and Altar Care. Sign-up sheets for each are provided in the basement.



Roof Collection

Contributions for replacing \$25,000.00 in the church investment funds is at \$8,062.35. Donations of any amount can be made by using your regular envelope and marking how much goes to the Roof or using the small pew envelopes with your name or envelope number marking it roof.

Earthly Gifts

Donation Goal for February is \$5,750.00, so far donations received is \$1,770.00. Please donate what you can so the needs of St. James may be met. All contribution statements have been mailed for 2017, if you did not receive yours please contact Ralph by phone [586-727-7347](tel:586-727-7347) to receive yours.

Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.



Christmas Shoeboxes

We collect the below items for boys and girls from the age of 2 to 14 years old. Our goal is to fill 100 boxes by November 2018 without running out of items. March 2018 collection is hats, gloves and socks. Items accepted anytime are: hat, gloves, socks, toys, school supplies (pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, small note books, glue, crayons), hygiene items (soap, washcloths, combs, toothbrushes, floss), headbands, barrettes and bows.

We can no longer provide toothpaste, toy guns or army men, paint sets and glue bottles.

If you are not a shopper, you can still donate to this worthy cause by providing a cash donation or monies to cover the \$9.00 mailing costs.

St. James / St. John 2018 Lenten & Holy Week Schedule

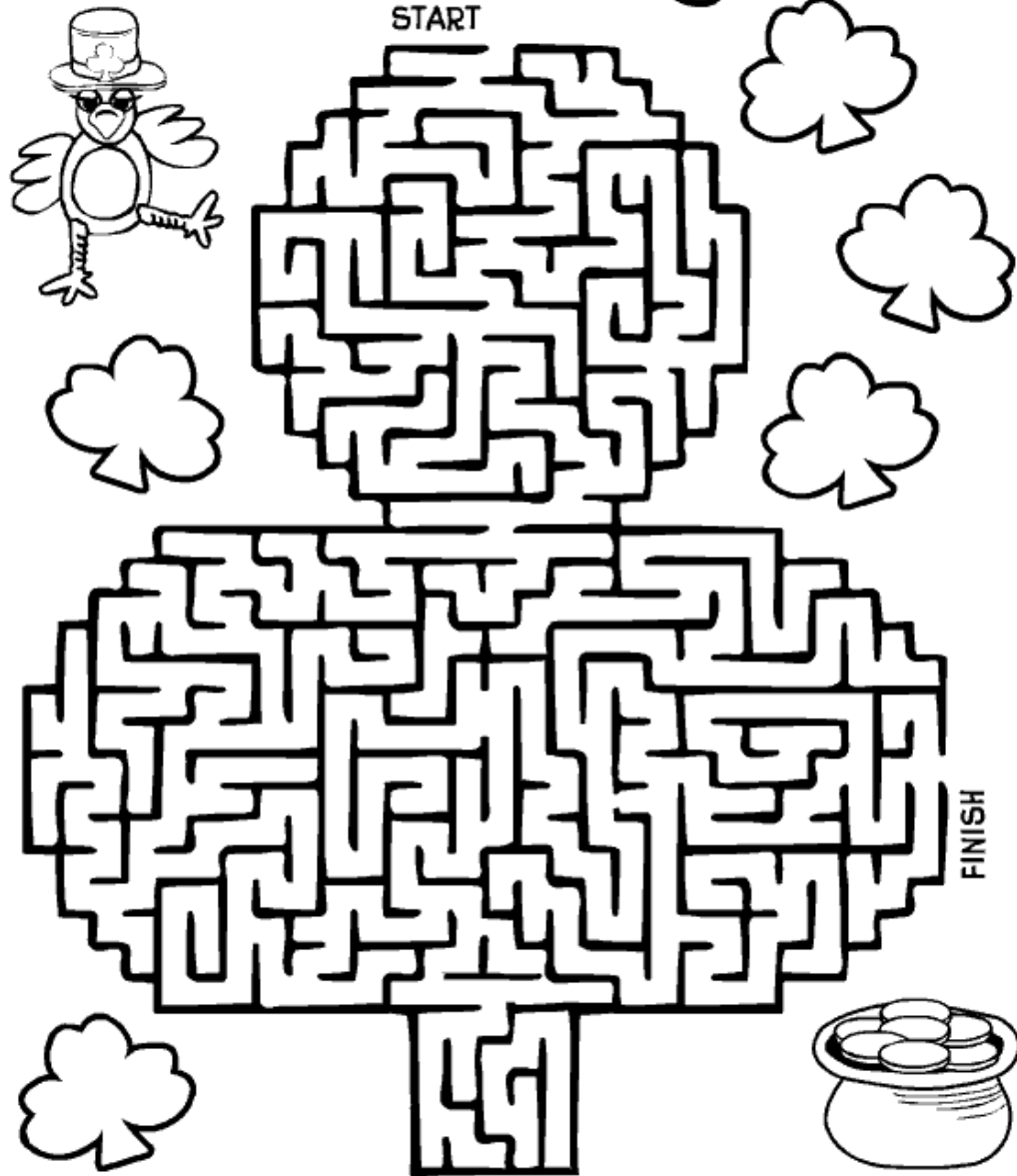
February 14 - Ash Wednesday 7pm St James
February 21 – Evening Prayer / Discussion Wednesday 7pm St Johns
February 28 – Evening Prayer / Discussion Wednesday 7pm St Johns
March 07 – Evening Prayer / Discussion Wednesday 7pm St Johns
March 14 – Evening Prayer / Discussion Wednesday 7pm St Johns
March 21 – Evening Prayer / Discussion Wednesday 7pm St Johns
March 25 – Palm Sunday 9am St James
March 25 – Palm Sunday 11am St Johns
March 29 – Maundy Thursday w/ Communion, Stripping of the Alter, 7pm St James
March 30 – Good Friday Service / Stations of the Cross 12:30pm St James
March 30 – Good Friday Service / Stations of the Cross 7pm St Johns
March 31 – Great Easter Vigil 7pm St James
April 1 – Easter Communion Service 9am St James
April 1 – Easter Communion Service 11am St Johns

Bottle / Can Collection

We are collecting empty and clean bottles and cans with a deposit on them to support our Christian Education Program. Please bring them to church, there is a box in the basement, back room, by the door for them.

Kid's Page

St. Patrick's Day! Maze



Altar Care

March - Open

Communion Servers

Preparer: Sherrie Ingles
Communion Servers: Sherrie Ingles & Roberta Fisher

Ushers & Greeters

March 4 - Open
March 11 - Open
March 18 - Open
March 25 - Open

Liturgists

March 4 - Open
March 11 - Open
March 18 - Open
March 25 - Open

Scripture Readings for March

Sunday, March 4
Third Sunday in Lent
Ex 20: 1-17
Ps 19
1 Cor 1: 18-25
Jn 2: 13-22
Beautiful Law

Sunday, March 18
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Jer 31: 31=34
Ps 51: 12 or Ps 119: 9-16
Heb 5: 5-10
Jn 12: 20-33
Deep in Our Hearts

Sunday, March 11
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Num 21: 4-9
Ps 107: 1-3, 17-22
Eph 2: 1-10
Jn 3: 14-21
No Matter What

Sunday, March 25
Sixth Sunday in Lent
Palm / Passion Sunday
Mk 11: 1-11 or Jn 12: 12-16
Ps 118: 1-2, 19-29
Isa 50: 4-9a
Ps 31: 9-16
Phil 2: 5-11
Mk 14: 1-15:47 or Mk 15: 1-39, 40-47
Into Jerusalem



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MARCH NEWSLETTER