

Wednesday, March 2nd marks the beginning of the Lenten, or Easter, season. And though we as a church traditionally don't really highlight this season the way other churches do, it can be an important part of the calendar, especially as we (hopefully) move away from winter and into the spring season. To help us prepare for Easter this year, we'll be doing a sermon series called "Witness" and looking at the story of Jesus' signs or miracles in the book of John. And it's these signs that John uses to show to us who Jesus is and gives us reasons for why we should believe and trust in him.

And I'm excited about that series but to help us engage in that series a little more, I want to encourage you to do a few different things over this Easter season.

First, I want to challenge you to read through the book of John from beginning to end at least once. There's only 21 chapters, so one chapter a day should get us through it at least once before Easter. As you read, I encourage you to highlight cues or stories that reveal to you how Jesus is showing himself to be the Messiah and Savior. These can be personal notes that help solidify or strengthen your faith.

Second, I want to encourage you to write out a list or a letter for why you believe and follow Jesus. I'm not looking for a research paper or a list of Bible verses, but Peter writes to us in 1 Peter 3.15, "...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect..."

(ESV) Again, this isn't something that needs a lot of work and I'm not expecting anyone to turn it in to me, but we should have a reason and an answer for why we love and follow Jesus. It might not have much more to do than our own experience and the relationships we have with others, but I think there's power in writing that out or at least having some idea of what we'd tell someone who asked us.

Lastly, I want to encourage you to engage in as many services as possible. There are multiple community services and activities over the next few weeks and they are listed below and will be helpful to prepare us for Easter in different ways through different people and experiences.

So my prayer for us this Easter season is that we slow down enough to hear and experience God amid the ever increasing demands that we have on us, especially as more and more activities are coming back into our schedule. The church calendar can help us do that if we're willing to allow it to help shape our lives and our schedules, too. But either way, God wants to have more and more of our lives and our hearts and that requires us to slow down for him to engage with us. In our fast paced and frantic worlds that slowing down feels nearly impossible, but it is truly only in the quiet and slower moments that our hearts and minds can change.

And so, I'm praying that each one of us will take the considerations I'm outlining here and that we'll know and experience God in a unique way this Easter season. We still need

revival from him in an earnest and powerful way, and I'm still praying for that. I hope you'll join me.
Serving Him and you,
Matthew

Easter Services

As we draw closer to the traditional season of Lent, we want to make sure you're aware of our upcoming community services for this season. First, the UMC offers an Ash Wednesday service on **Wednesday, March 2nd** usually around 10am. Then we have our Community Lenten Service on **Sunday, March 6th at 6:00pm** at Grace Bible Church. We plan to resume a program for Good Friday on **Friday, April 15th at 6:00pm** as well. We will also have our Sunrise Service here at 7pm on Easter as well as breakfast and a Resurrection service. Please plan now to attend these services as we prepare for a time of revival and renewal this Easter season.

Adult Night Out

On Tuesday, March 8th we will be heading down to Los Charros to enjoy an evening out to encourage and uplift one another. We will meet at 5:30pm at the church to carpool or you can meet us at 6:00pm at the Rushville location. A signup sheet will be available in the back of the sanctuary or let Matthew know you're coming.

Church Clean Up Day

Since we are doing our church cleaning on a volunteer basis now, we are having a church cleanup day on **Saturday, April 9th** starting at 9:00am to clean and fix parts of the church that need addressed. If you have items that we should have on our list, let a board member know but also plan on coming to help that morning. Many hands make light work!

Prayer List

Jerry Armbruster – serious health issues
Bobby Blickenstaff – cancer treatments
Tammy Bowman – hospital in Chicago
Becky Crossman – cancer treatments
Mike Grater-cancer
Haiti – earthquake, tropical storm, government unrest (Blessing Hearts mission)
Gary Hulett – heart failure
Danny Jones – MRI/meeting with doctors
Glenna Perry – oxygen levels
Clyde Prater-cancer
Lori Rodriguez – stage 4 cirrhosis of liver
Randy & Derek Sorrells – health issues
Todd Stambaugh – stage 4 glioblastoma

February Financials

Date	Weekly Actual	Yearly Actual	Yearly Budget
Feb 6th	\$1,027.00	\$6,868.03	\$6,121.14
Feb 13th	\$998.00	\$7,866.03	\$7,141.33
Feb 20th	\$699.00	\$8,565.03	\$8,161.52
Feb 27th	\$936.00	\$9,501.03	\$9,181.71

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You Are Welcome At
Our Services!

Sunday

Morning Worship.....9 a.m.

Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Family Night.....6:00 p.m.

Events:

Wed, March 2nd-Ash Wednesday Service
10 am @ UMC

Wed, March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th-
Youth Group 6:30-7:30 pm

Sun, March 6th-Lenton Service @ 6 pm at
Grace Bible Church

Tues, March 8th-Adult Night Out @
6:00pm at Los Charros in Rushville (carpool
leaving church at 5:30pm)

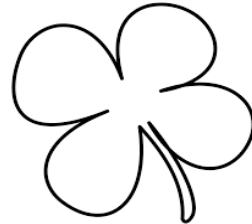
Sun, March 13th-Board meeting 6 pm

Mon, March 21st-Camp Fellowship at
Central CC (Browning) TBD

Tues, March 22nd-VBS meeting @ 4 pm

Sun, March 27th-Worship & Prayer @ 6
pm at ACC

All events are subject to change. Please
keep up to date by checking the bulletin,
Facebook page or website.



Let today be the
day you give up
who you've been
for you who can
become.

Blessed **Ash Wednesday**