

Our Journey Together

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



We are fast approaching the season in the church known as Lent. But what is Lent? It is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word

lencten, which means spring. The season is a time of preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts and then became a time for penance by all Christians.

From its earliest time, the church has observed with great devotion the days of Jesus' passion and resurrection. In remembrance and honor of his suffering and death, it became custom for believers to prepare for those days through a season of penitence and fasting. It was also a time in which those, because of their actions, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled to the fellowship of the church through repentance and forgiveness.

Through these rituals of preparing new believers, repenting, reconciling with the penitent, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in Scripture, and the need which all of us continually have to renew our repentance, and our faith.

So, as we enter this holy season, I invite and encourage you into a journey of self-examination and repentance – through prayer, fasting, and reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

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Content Due

Do you have items you would like included in next month's newsletter? If so, please have them into the church office no later than Feb 24.





February Ushers and Greeters

Feb 5 & 12—Doug & JoAnn Testerman

Feb 19, 22 (Ash Wed) & 26—Royce & Linda Blackburn

If you need to miss a week in which you are scheduled to usher, it is your responsibility to find someone to fill in for you.

Please remember also, there are other ways in which you can help serve the church. We are always looking for folks to serve coffee fellowship, to be communion stewards, and lead small groups.

Financial Update from Administrative Council

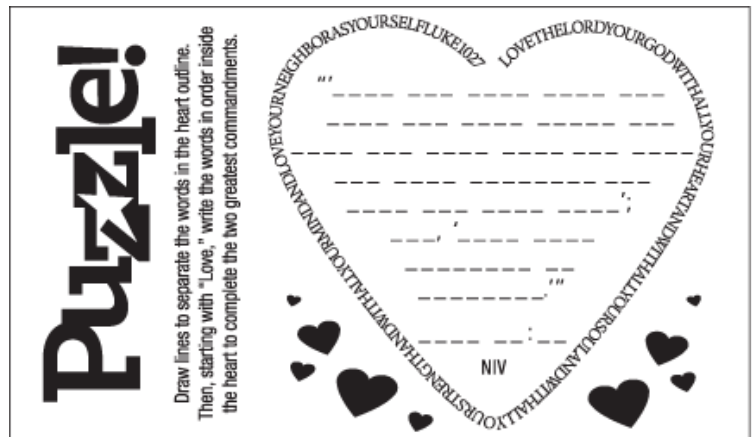
Financial Update as of December 31, 2022:

2022 General Fund Income Year to Date: \$201,962.17
 2022 General Fund Expenses Year to Date: 167,791.90
 General Fund Difference: \$34,170.27



WHO WILL WIN THE BIG GAME?

Between now and Feb 12th, bring any non-perishable, not expired food items and place them in the fellowship hall under the logo for the team you want to win the big game. All donated items will go to Helping Hands. On the 12th, everyone is invited to wear t-shirts or jerseys, etc for their favorite team, no matter who that is.



Answer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27, NIV

Birthdays:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Feb 1 Journey Palmer | Feb 22 Nathan Bertsch |
| Feb 5 Dennis Fawcett | Feb 22 Edward Fritzsche |
| Feb 10 Robert Steptoe | Feb 23 Melanie Lampert Bowar |
| Feb 12 Doug Testerman | Feb 23 Eugene Moncur |
| Feb 12 Jett Wharton | Feb 23 Collin Otteson |
| Feb 14 Gordon Slunecka | Feb 24 Glenda Bertsch |
| Feb 18 Taya VanDerWerff | Feb 25 Emma Fritzsche |
| Feb 20 Darlene Cox | Feb 25 Jim Keeter |
| Feb 20 Emily Rodgers | Feb 25 Amber VanDerWerff |
| | Feb 26 Bev Yost |
| | Feb 27 Sara Gates |



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Anniversaries:

No anniversaries in February

February 2023

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2	3	4
	 Feb 13-17					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Pastor out of office at Clergy Leadership Academy ←—————→					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
 POTLUCK DINNER		 United Women in Faith Ranch Café 1:30pm	UWF workday Trinity 10-2 Leadership Team 5pm	 FEEDING SOUTH DAKOTA Food Truck Noon-1pm		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
			 Ain't Nothing Service @ 7pm			
26	27	28				



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (Feb 22nd). Here are the opportunities and happenings that are scheduled as of now.



Ash Wednesday worship will be in our sanctuary on Feb 22nd at 7pm. There will be no youth group that night, but all youth are encouraged to attend worship.



Our Sermon series and Bible study for Lent will be based on the book “Embracing the Uncertain” by Magrey DeVega. If you would be willing to facilitate a small group, please let Pastor Teresa know. If leaders are found, the hope would be to have 3 opportunities for small groups: Sunday mornings at 9:30, Sunday evenings at 6:30 and Tuesdays at 2:00.

Just turning on the news lets us know we are living in uncertain times. Economic instabilities, eruptions of violence, and natural catastrophes can alter the lives and landscapes of entire communities. Our individual lives are often just as unsteady: relationships can break, plans can falter, and confidence can fail.

Uncertainty can definitely be uncomfortable. Many of us prefer stability and a predictable future to an unknown fate. We are wired to want to control our destiny.

The reality is that in our fast-changing, unpredictable world there are few guarantees in life. It's those who are willing to embrace uncertainty and make the risky decision to follow Jesus despite the many "unknowns" who will reap the greatest rewards.

Embracing the Uncertain invites readers this Lent to engage and wrestle with life's uncertainties, not ignore them. The first six chapters focus on six post-Transfiguration, pre-Passion stories in the Gospels. Each of these stories are signposts in the gospel narrative, pointing down at a world filled with uncertainty, but pointing us forward to a cross that can show us how to follow Jesus with courage, hope, and obedience.



Study books are available (in regular and large print)

There are also Lenten devotional books that go along with this study.

Books are \$10 each, but if cost is an issue, please see Pastor Teresa.

Meet the Bishop



“I want to be where our people are, hear their hopes and dreams for our conference, and see the places they live, love, and worship,” said Bishop Lanette Plambeck, who began her assignment as resident bishop for the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area on Jan. 1.

That’s precisely what our new bishop hopes to do at a series of upcoming gatherings in each district. United Methodists in the Dakotas are invited to come to meet Bishop Lanette, hear some of her story, worship together, enjoy warm hospitality and good conversation, and leave with a renewed sense of hope for the future.

“There is a misperception that ‘the conference’ is a building and certain staff positions,” said Bishop Lanette. “The truth is every single United Methodist lay person and clergy, including those in extension ministry, are the Dakotas Annual Conference. I’m getting out to meet the conference. In order to lead a people, you need to know the people...I’m excited to be in the places where the United Methodist Church is engaged across the states—sharing and showing the love of Jesus.”

Many bishops begin their assignment with an official installation service; elements of such a service will be weaved into the Episcopal Address at the 2023 Annual Conference. But Bishop Lanette is eager to get to know United Methodists in North and South Dakota before then.

Bishop Lanette began onboarding Nov. 13 after being elected Nov. 2 at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She said her initial weeks have been both inspirational and revelatory.

The upcoming gathering will include a time for Bishop Lanette to share about herself and to answer questions from attendees. What does she most want Dakotas United Methodists to know?

“I want people to know that I love Jesus and the United Methodist Church,” she said. “I want to assure them I am committed to leading in a way where all are welcome and wanted. I want United Methodists throughout the Dakotas to see how my life and leadership are deeply rooted in the Wesleyan Way. I also want to listen deeply for their hurts, pains, and celebrations and also to hear how we are growing as disciples of Jesus and transforming the world.”

The past few years have been challenging, to say the least: From the global pandemic that impacted mission and ministry to the deep divisions in our world, country, and church, there’s been much to discourage us. More than ever, we need connection—a value that the Dakotas Conference holds deeply. There is hope and encouragement that comes from being together and looking to the future. That’s precisely what these gatherings will offer.

“When we gather together, we have the assurance that we are not alone in this and that best of all, God is with us,” Bishop Lanette said. “So come. Worship. Connect. Pray. And be emboldened. I am very much looking forward to meeting the people I already love.”

Bishop Lanette will be at the Pierre 1st UMC on Sunday, March 5th, 4:30-6:00pm. Anyone wishing to go will need to register. We will be organizing car pool to Pierre for this gathering. Please call or stop by the church office to register to attend.

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Going out of our way

In mid-2022, Mediterranean Shipping Company, a world leader in container transport, voluntarily changed its routes, on the advice of scientists, to protect large populations of blue whales off the Sri Lankan coast. Going out of its way 15 nautical miles has led to a whopping 95% drop in whale strikes.



Jesus counseled people to go out of their way for one another, especially for the vulnerable: "If anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." Further, "whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water ... will by no means lose his reward" (Matthew 5:40-41; 10:42, ESV).

Paul likewise urged his listeners to voluntarily give up eating meat, even if they didn't believe in and weren't challenged by the idols to which it had been sacrificed, for the sake of new believers with weaker faith (Romans 14).

Faith calls us to go out of our way for the sake of others; sometimes a wealthy corporation opts to do the same. God's hand is at work in both, protecting vulnerable humans and nonhumans alike.