



March TOWER TOPICS

Not Quite Home...

from Pastor Scott

Easter comes early this year. It could come earlier, but this year it is still coming early. It arrives before the start of April. It could arrive as early as March 22, but still, March 31st seems pretty early.

If you are not careful, it might even catch you off guard.

Well, the truth of the matter is that it almost always catches us off guard to some degree. We are talking about the Resurrection. We are talking about celebrating Jesus' victory over sin and death. That tends to catch us up short no matter how much we are looking for it.

This year throughout the season of Lent we are looking at the life of Peter. In one of the first stories about this disciple, Jesus talks him into casting his fishing nets in the middle of the day and Peter catches more fish than he could handle. Peter's response is to eventually leave everything and follow Jesus.

In John 21, a post Resurrection story, Peter is again out in his boat fishing. (Yeah, I thought he left everything too, so I guess he went and bought a new boat.) But he's still out there in the lake fishing when some stranger on the shore says something about casting their nets on the other side of the boat. When they do, they catch a huge haul of fish again. Someone in the boat makes the proclamation that the stranger must be Jesus. Peter jumps in the water and swims to shore. Well, actually, the text says that Peter put on his clothes, jumped in the lake, and swam to shore.

I think the appearance of Jesus caught him a little off guard, too.

It is amazing to me that in both stories, the story where Peter becomes a disciple, and the story where Jesus comes to the disciple after the Resurrection, Peter is the recipient of a "grace-filled" catch of fish. Even if he is caught short by the

appearance of Jesus, Jesus is ready to pour out his grace upon this disciple.

Easter comes early this year. The reality is that "Easter" can come at any moment. Jesus' victory over sin and death means that he might

decide to appear in our lives at any moment. We may think we are getting ready for a particular date to celebrate the Resurrection, but that is such a world changing event, we may never truly be ready.

All I can tell you as your pastor is this:

Easter is coming. Jesus is ready to meet you right where you are. And Jesus is ready to pour out God's grace upon you. Don't worry about being ready to go meet Jesus at Easter. Just go. Jesus is ready to meet you right now.

Peace,

Pastor Scott

Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) Service

To continue our "Wandering Heart" series on the life of Peter and the song *Come Thou Fount*, we will be holding a special service at 7:00 pm on Thursday of Holy Week this year, March 28th. This service will take place as you are seated in pews but will have the "feel" of going from one prayer station to another as you reflect on passages of Scripture, readings, and art. This creative liturgy invites you to walk "the way of sorrows" to the cross, but through the eyes and experiences of one of Jesus' closest disciples. As a nod to the "Stations of the Cross," this service highlights Peter's role in the crucifixion narrative. In this way, we follow Jesus to his death with Peter as our companion. By focusing on Peter, we imagine how we might have acted and behaved had we been there as one of Jesus' followers and friends.

Easter Sunday Service

Our Easter Sunday Service on March 31st will include Confirmation and Holy Communion. If you are interested in becoming a member of First United Methodist Church, please contact Pastor Scott @ (304) 615-4715 or sears.scott@gmail.com

Church News

Easter Flowers

If you would like to purchase flowers for use in the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, we will have the following available:

6 1/2 inch Tulips—\$15.00

6 1/2 inch Hyacinths—\$15.00

6 1/2 inch Daffodils—\$15.00 each

8 1/2 inch Hydrangea—\$30.00 each

Ferns and Azaleas may be available, please watch bulletin for more information.

Order forms will be available in the bulletin and online in early March.

Easter Monday

The office of First United Methodist Church will be closed on Easter Monday, April 1, 2024. In case of emergency, please call Pastor Scott @ (304) 615-4715



March Dinners

March 6—Spaghetti

March 13—Baked Steak,
Mashed Potatoes, & Green Beans

March 20—Lasagna

March 27—Pork Loin,
Baked Potato, & Green Beans



Financial Report

Received in January: \$39,705.40

Expenses in January: \$46,658.70

Paid towards Annual Conference Apportionments:
\$5,000.00 (of \$110,349)

Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry

Cridlin Pantry is asking for 96 cans of chili this month. If you would like to donate please drop off donations either at the Church Office or by the soda machines downstairs by the multipurpose room.

At Cridlinpantry.org you can access information about the shelter, current needs, and a form to fill out to get involved.

We Care Ministry

The We Care Ministry has been an important way to connect with those who are homebound or ill but have not been active in the past few years. So, a team has come together to share their gifts of love and compassion through visitation, card writing, home communion, and other ways to be attentive to the needs of our congregation. Tim Hamilton is leading this team with the help of the pastoral staff in equipping laity to care for those who need it. If you would like to be included on the list of those who want to receive at-home communion, please call the church office at 304-522-0357. Volunteers of the We Care Ministry can participate in whatever form they feel comfortable, but if you feel called to serve in this way, reach out to Tim Hamilton at 304-529-7260.

Celebration of Mission Event 2024

Where do the hopeless go to find hope?

Why should our church support the Celebration of Mission Event?

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **James 2:15-17**

To many families across the West Virginia mountains, winter is a hectic, desperate time. They are struggling to have enough heat, water, and adequate supplies to face the cold. Even if both parents are working, they cannot always deal with frozen pipes, illness, or an unexpected skid on the ice. Most of what people need to survive winter is not cheap. That is where we come in by supporting all of our West Virginia Conference Mission.

They help families that we will never meet, up the hollows and down the street.

COME—The Celebration of Mission Event is an ingathering of money and goods for ALL West Virginia Mission Projects sponsored by the United Methodist Conference:



Ebenezer Community Outreach Center—Huntington
Heart and Hand House, Inc.—Philippi
Heart + Hand Outreach—S. Charleston
House of the Carpenter—Wheeling
Scott's Run Settlement House—Osage
Tyrand Cooperatives Ministries, Inc.—Mill Creek
Upshur Parish House—Buckhannon
Greater Clarksburg Cooperative Parish—Clarksburg
Volunteers in Mission
New Vision Depot



All of these missions are fighting the cold with food, clothing, heating vouchers, and home repairs. But, they don't stop there. Each is unique in the services they provide for their communities. Each is the same in the message of God's love they extend to those communities. They try to provide what their community needs. But, they cannot do their work if we do not do ours. The churches of the West Virginia Conference must provide the work funds, stock the shelves, and volunteer the muscle.

What are their stories? Each is different but all are involved in providing families with basic needs—food, clothing, utility, and rent expenses. That help can take many forms from thrift stores, to backpack food for school children, Christmas baskets, layettes, community lunches, community gardens, childcare and after-school mentoring, art classes, Bible schools, and work teams. No matter the activities, each Mission Project represents all of us, serving as God's hands in West Virginia.

In 2023, total Conference giving to the Celebration of Mission Event was \$90,271.35—down about 10%. In 9 Rivers our giving did not double as it should, but fell to a little over \$9000 plus goods. As usual First Church was the leader in giving with \$3200 plus donated goods.

In 2024, 9 Rivers will be emphasizing Ebenezer Outreach, House of the Carpenter, and Volunteers in Mission. **We don't yet have details for an ingathering, but it is not too early to begin raising funds and collecting goods. Below are the mission needs lists:**

Ebenezer—Copy Paper, Paint Brushes, Playdough, Puzzles for Ages 2-12, Blocks, Baby Dolls, Baby Wipes, Children's Toothbrushes, Children's Toothpaste, Toilet Paper, Laundry Detergent, Dish Soap, Lysol

House of the Carpenter—Personal Care Items (Soap, Shampoo, Deodorant, Feminine Hygiene, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste) & Cleaning Supplies (Dish Soap, Laundry Detergent, Floor Cleaner, Bathroom Cleaner)

Monetary donations/contributions to Volunteers in Mission should be sent to
WV Conference Treasurer, Receipts Office
PO Box 2469
Charleston, WV 25329



Sincerely,
Jane Morse
(740) 744-7087
jandjmorse@gmail.com



Youth News

Young Adult Outreach



Schauna Chambers has some ideas but would love to get feedback from young adults. She is looking for people who would be willing to grab lunch or coffee to get insights, opinions, and suggestions to people so she can provide the best ministry opportunities for our ministry and our community. Contact her at 304-634-9684.

Broken Glass Workshop



We had to move the broken glass workshop to April due to the facility we are going to be using. Please be on the lookout for this event, it will be one you won't want to miss.

Thank You Church

Just wanted to give a shout out of thanks to the people who helped be the hands and feet of Jesus and packed 10,000 meals in February. Little actions turn into big moments and because of your actions, there are children around the world that will be fed. Let us look for more ways to come together and serve our community.

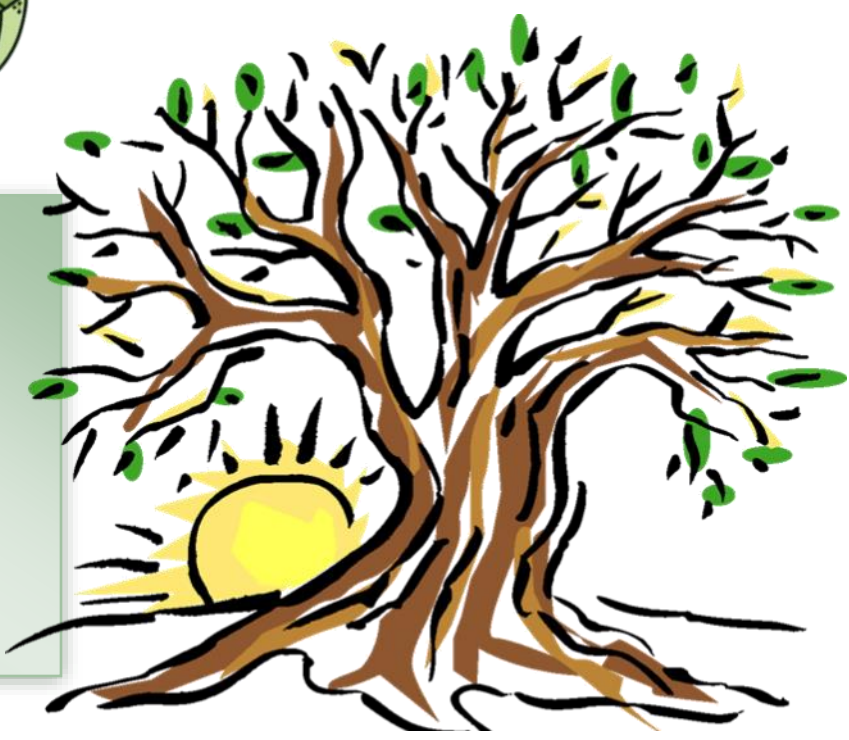
Youth Meeting

There will be a youth/parent meeting on **March 13th at 5:30 pm** in the panel room. This is discuss summer opportunities, end of the school year and other things to come.



Hiking Church!

Hiking Church will begin **March 10th**, weather permitting. We will meet at Rotary Park for our first week back at 9:30 am. I encourage you to use this opportunity to invite friends and family. We will try this out for a couple of months and may switch days in order to reach more people. If you have any questions or suggestions about hiking church contact Schauna Chambers at 304-634-9684.





Choir News

Sanctuary Choir News

We are missing a very important member of our bass section lately: Gene Weekly. As many know Gene is recovering from an illness and his absence has left a very big hole in the choir loft. Interesting fact: Gene, Willa May and the children joined FUMC 50 years ago – back in 1974 and they have been cornerstones of The Sanctuary Choir ever since. Please join us in celebrating their faithful musical contributions throughout the years AND pray for Gene's continued recovery. We'll keep the light on for you, Gene!

We have lots of special music coming up in March. We'll have soloists Cindy Legg, Dr. Ed Bingham, Jonathan Bradley, Chris Chiles; and of course selections from Sanctuary, Wesley & Bell Choirs, all leading up to a glorious Easter morning celebration. Plan to make the Lenten journey with us each week.

On Easter Sunday we will be ending our worship service by singing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" and invite members of the congregation to join us in the choir loft. We'll have extra copies of music for you.

Pentecost is on May 19 this year and Sanctuary Choir will be celebrating by presenting a program of music accompanied by Lincoln Brass Ensemble. If there are singers who are interested in "short term" singing, join us each Wednesday from 7-7:30 when we'll be working on this program's music.

Remodeling of the Choir Room is nearly finished and we are excited to move in. We have more room and better storage for our robes and music. Stop in and check it out! We're indebted to Jody Eddins, Chuck Hanshaw and The Trustees for making this happen. THANK YOU!

Wesley Children's Choir News



The Wesley Choir will be singing for church again on Sunday, March 19; we have a very "enlightening" message to share with everyone that day. AND we're rehearsing every Wednesday at 6:00 for our Spring Musical which will be presented on Sunday morning, April 28th in the sanctuary. Parents: stay tuned for costume information coming soon!

Children's News

Kids for Christ (KFC)

Wednesday, March 20th

Will be our Easter egg hunt and celebration! The kids will begin their evening in choir as they would on a normal Wednesday. Afterward, they will be joining Katrina for a glow-in-the-dark egg hunt, games, and treats. Our festivities will end at 7:30pm instead of the typical 7:15pm. If you would like to donate candy or party favors for our treat bags, please contact Katrina Lee. We will have a QR code with our wishlist posted throughout the church and on the KFC & Youth Bulletin Board. We hope to have your kids there to enjoy the celebration with us!

March 25—March 29

This week is Cabell County Schools' Spring Break Week. We will still be having choir and KFC that Wednesday.





SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT



03/02 Edna Brooks
 03/03 Meghan Elkins
 03/04 Charles Neighborgall III
 03/05 Carter Bacon
 03/06 Janice Naegele
 03/07 Linda Hay
 03/08 Brian Masse
 03/09 Hunter Masse

Christopher Reardon
 Belle Thomas
 Parks Ward III

03/10 Bert Fulk
 03/11 Logan Bush
 03/12 Scout Arthur
 03/13 Sophie Bright
 03/14 Cordie Jo Canterbury
 03/15 Marcia Canterbury
 03/16 Daniel Maue
 Winifred Chiles
 Jon Dawson
 Shelby Nelson
 Ken Wolfe

03/17 Joy Brown
 03/18 Caroline Chiles
 03/19 Suzanne Forsythe

03/20 Katte Fulk
 03/21 Pat Daugherty
 03/22 Nikki Kimball
 03/23 Michelle Adkins
 03/24 Shaylyn Kutcher
 Lynn Cummings
 Susan Nickels

03/25 Diana Archer
 03/26 Ian Bowman-Vidal
 Jonathon Perry

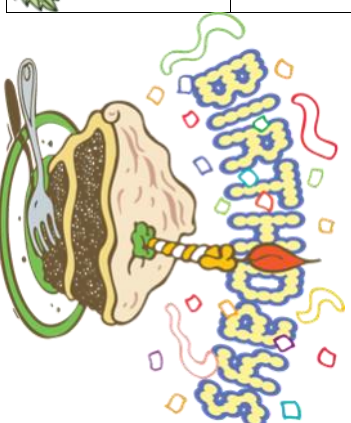
03/27 Alec Cyrus
 03/28 Norrah Gerlach
 03/29 Nancy Crum
 Rebecca Hamilton
 Vern Reichenbecher

03/30 Eric Legg
 03/31 Hayden Drakes
 Stephanie Wilson

Wednesday Night Activities
 5:00—Dinner
 6:00—Bell Choir, Bible Study, Children's Choir, Youth, & Yoga
 6:45—Kids for Christ (KFC)
 7:00—Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
 7:15—Youth Bell Choir



3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Daylight Savings 9:30 am Hiking Church @ Rotary Park	Finance Course	Dorcas Circle	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 6:00 pm Finance Meeting	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 11:00 am	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	Visitation for Judy Eblin 2:00 pm Funeral for Judy Eblin
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Finance Course	Finance Course	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 5:30 pm Youth/Parent Meeting 6:00 pm Trustees Meeting	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 11:00 am	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
St. Patrick's Day	Finance Course	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 6:45 - 7:30 pm Easter Egg Hunt	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 11:00 am	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Palm Sunday	Office Closed Finance Course	Pastor Scott's Lent Study 11:00 am	Maudy Thursday 7:00 pm Maudy Thursday Service	Good Friday 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting		
31						
Happy Easter!						



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CHANGE SERVICE
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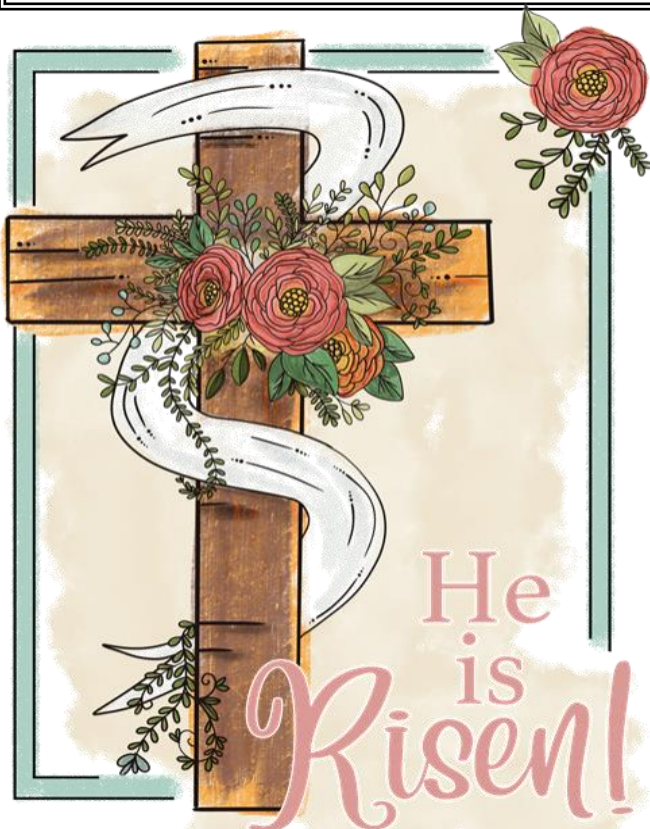
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Pastor: Scott Sears
Music Director: Debbie Bradley
Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry: Schauna Chambers
Director of Children's Ministries: Katrina Lee
Church Hostess: Susan Nickels
Office Manager: Allie Bright
Financial Secretary: Pam Grandstaff

Sunday Worship Opportunities
Small Groups 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.



Next Tower Topics Deadline: March 22



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Eternal God! Grant us gratitude enough to look backward and be thankful; courage enough to look forward and be hopeful; faith enough to look upward and be humble; kindness enough to look outward and be helpful. Together let us pray...

For those who are grieving, sick, or homebound,
Dawn Aikin, Sue Atkinson, Hunter Barry, Kathy Bartram, Pris Beard, Family of Gomer Bradley, Pat Broce, Chase Childers, Debbie Conley, Lisa Cooke's family, Mark Cornell, Myra Creek, Judy Davis, Leona Davis, Family of Judy Eblin, Linda Eddins, Jackie Eplion, Mary Griffith, Family of Tom Hanshaw, Emma Mace, JD Maue, Jane McColgan, Beth McVey, Bob Palmer, Nancy Palmer, Rev. Jim Plyburn, Jack Patrick, Sally Richards-Bartram, Craig Rogers, Marlene Sheets, Dan Smith, Alice Stone, Maria Thacker, Jean White, Carolyn Waggoner, Gene Weekly, Family of Peggy Wills, Carole Wilson (cousin of Lisa Lucas)