

Ash Wednesday

We will be holding a traditional Ash Wednesday service on February 18th at 6:00 PM. The practice of the imposition of ashes draws on the ancient symbol of ashes that can be found throughout the Hebrew Bible. Ashes can be a symbol of our finitude and mortality, as when Abraham admits he is not worthy to question the judgment of the Lord, as he is “but dust and ashes.” (Gen. 18:27) It is also commonly used as a symbol of grief and repentance, as can be seen in the book of Job (Job 30:19, 42:6) Both meanings are present in the practices of Ash Wednesday. In addition to the imposition of ashes, we will take the time to sing, pray and hear the Word of God. It will be a beautiful and solemn service that provides us with the opportunity to meditate on our mortality and our need for divine grace. Mark your calendars and come join us on this holy evening.



For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. -Psalm 103:14

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February
Lectionary Readings

February 1
Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

February 8
Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 112:1-9
1 Corinthians 2:1-12
Matthew 5:13-20

February 15
Transfiguration Sunday
Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2
Psalm 99
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

February 18
Ash Wednesday
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 22
First Sunday in Lent
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11



February Mission Focus

This month, our mission focus is MN FoodShare. Family Pathways will once again partner with the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches in the MN FoodShare Campaign—the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state. The campaign brings together organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals to support nearly 300 food shelves across Minnesota.

Family Pathways operates nine food shelves year-round, helping bridge the gap for families facing food insecurity. Donations made to our local Family Pathways Food Shelf during February also qualify for a MN FoodShare financial match, stretching our dollars even further.

Our support helps keep food on the table for neighbors in need and also helps fund the weekend “backpack” food program we deliver to Wyoming Elementary School each Wednesday.

To support this effort, please donate during the month of February and mark your check or envelope “FOOD.” Thank you for your generosity!



Your \$10



Your food shelf's \$10

Food shelves can stretch cash further than donations of food because of their access to discount products and programs. Help us feed more Minnesota families by donating cash to your local food shelf today.



For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD. -Psalm 117:2

From the Pastor...

My friends, I do not have to tell you what a challenging moment that we have been living in. The current immigration crackdown by ICE agents in the Twin Cities has led to a situation where our state feels significantly less safe and more divided. The air is heavy with fear, anger, and heartbreak. I talk to so many people who just feel helpless, unable to know what to do at this moment. I share your feelings and confusion. I do, however, know where we, as Christ’s church, should stand on this issue. We must categorically reject the violent and inhumane treatment that has been plaguing our state and our country. In a recent statement by the United Methodist Church’s Council of Bishops (dated January 26th), our church leadership writes:

The United Methodist Church deplores the use of violence, fear, separation, and intimidation as a means of creating social order. Such means do not build beloved community. We reaffirm our longstanding commitment to the sacred worth of every person and to the way of peace taught and embodied by Jesus. We stand against the separation of children from their families. We detest the inhumane, evil actions that are perpetuated by governmental authorities.

I applaud this statement by our church, which draws on the witness of scripture and the social principals of the United Methodist Church. This is not a question of partisan politics. I have not, nor will I ever, tried to tell you which party to support or which candidates to vote for. Nor is this a question of immigration policy – as there is plenty of room for debate and discussion as to how the United States should structure our immigration policy. This is not a categorical attack on law enforcement, who have difficult and dangerous jobs. Neither is this a statement that defends or supports violent rhetoric or actions against ICE by non-peaceful protestors. This is a question of Christian morality and basic human decency.

We are seeing a pattern of actions which violate the image of God that is present in all human beings. We as Christians cannot support this.

In this moment, I have two things that I would urge of all of you. Firstly, if you feel led to protest or witness against the actions that have happened in our state that you always do so as Christians. Do not engage in hateful speech or violent and destructive acts. Do not be cruel to those who disagree with you. Always act with charity and love. You are the body of Christ, the physical presence of Christ within time and history: never forget that. Secondly, I would urge you to come together as a church. When we experience dark and troubling times such as these is when we need each other most of all. We need to be together in community and to remind ourselves that our hope is grounded not in a government, a country, or even in lofty principles like democracy or justice – our hope is grounded in the eternal God who we have met in Jesus Christ. Come to church and be fed by this hope that will not fail you.

- Pastor Jeff

February Celebrations				
Birthdays				
2-4	Taylor B.	2-25	Nancy K.	
			LeAnne P.	
2-6	Abby J.	2-27	Jasper B.	
2-7	Lisa S.	2-28	Katie A.	
2-9	Rich R.		Trevor J.	
2-11	Wade R.		Duane S.	
2-13	Jim P.	2-29	Tristan S.	
	Jeannine Q.			
2-14	Rick K.	Anniversaries		
2-20	Mike K.	2-27	Norb & Deb H.	
2-24	Deb H.			
	Donna L.			
	Richard S.			

* If we don't have your special date listed, please contact the church office!

Details of the Church Conference

We are so grateful for everybody who came out on January 25th to take part in our annual Church Conference meeting. It was a bitterly cold weekend, and it was heartening to see so many people brave the cold to show up at church and to stick around for this crucial meeting. We approved this year’s slate of nominees for leadership positions, approved the budget for 2026, and celebrated the work our church has done, both within our congregation and beyond. Especially lovely was Missions Chair Jane Rylander sharing the different ways our congregation has shown up in a spirit of generosity to serve our community. Your generosity and commitment to the mission of being Christ to the world is apparent! We also acknowledged the challenges that 2025 represented, including sharing a moment of silence to honor the seven church members who died in this last year: Tom Warneke, Sr; Dorothy Bierma; Bernie Sausen; Gordy Pietruszewski; Shirley Johnson; Mary Salmela; Buck Broadbent. Even in the midst of celebration, we are aware that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses and grateful for the lives of these saints of God. If you were unable to attend the meeting and would like to see a copy of the report, please contact the Church Office.

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone for their compassion, prayers, and support you shared with our family following Buck’s passing. Your kindness continues to carry us through a very difficult time. We are grateful to be part of such a loving and caring church. We ask that you continue to keep our family in your prayers.
-Yvonne and family

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. –Colossians 3:12



Our Joy Bells Kids

As you know from last month’s newsletter, we had a banner year for our Joy Bells program. Twelve families, with a total of thirty-six children, participated—our largest year yet. Your generosity was evident in the \$4,591.00 donated in cash and gift cards to support families in our community.

We also learned that two families had children with significant medical needs. Carli Belle has Type 1 diabetes and required surgery for a small intestine issue, and another child, Promise, underwent major facial reconstruction surgery. In response, an additional \$500.00 was raised for gas cards to help with travel to medical appointments. These gas cards were presented in a gift bag along with a beautiful handmade quilt from the Stitch ’n Rip Quilters, offering both practical help and heartfelt comfort during a difficult season.

The photo at the top to the left shows Carli Belle and her mom when they stopped by to pick up their quilt and gift cards. Carli Belle is the picture of a typical little girl—adorable, playful, and full of life—and a bit camera shy. The second photo is of Promise. His mom shared that the surgery went well and that he is healing beautifully. She says the prayers are truly working and looks forward to bringing him to church once he is fully healed. He has a CT scan and follow-up visit with the surgeon on January 29.

The parents are deeply grateful for your generosity and prayers for these precious children.