



The First Word

February 2018

First United Methodist Church, Racine

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Ash Wednesday- a rehearsal of human Mortality

Imagine you are either listening to your favorite radio Station or watching one of your best loved TV Show; or you're in the middle of an interesting news broadcast, and you unexpectedly either see or hear this message: "This is a test of the emergency broadcast system" pops up! The sound can be awful and a bit frightening too. For me, it's always an unwanted interruption! But somewhere in my inner self, I also know that it is a necessary interruption. It is necessary because it's helpful to know what's coming in order to be prepared to take the needed action that might possibly prevent an emergency situation.

When the prophet Joel calls upon the people of Zion to "**Blow the trumpet,**" he is essentially setting off an emergency broadcast system! Unfortunately for Zion, and even for people of all times, this alarm is not a test. It is a signal that they are in a state of emergency. What's the emergency? The day of the Lord is drawing closer and closer, it's coming soon! Remember, this "coming" of the Lord is far different from His coming we celebrate each Advent and Christmas Season. Just as the early prophets and John the Baptist called upon the people to prepare the way for the coming of the "Messiah" so does the Prophet Joel and the Apostles remind all of God's people to be prepared for the Savior's second return.

How the people are to respond in preparation for the Lord's return is prescribed: They must begin the preparations by assembling the people and calling on them to return their hearts to the Lord. There is no time to waste, says the Prophet Joel. They must gather the people, sanctify a fast, and throw themselves on the mercy of the Lord before it is too late. (**Joel 2: 1-2,12-15**).

While Ash Wednesday may not signal an imminent return of the Lord (**for no one knows the day or the hour of his return, not even the angels in heaven or the Son, but only the Father**), (**Matt. 24: 36; Mk. 13:32**), it does serve as a required test of our emergency response system as disciples of Jesus Christ.

It calls upon us to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance through fast and prayer; self-less life and living; reading and meditating on God's Holy Word. As "Church people," it is wakeup call for us to allow God's Spirit to revive our volatile spirits, while for the "Unchurched," an opportunity to begin critically reflecting on their mortality, all through acts of sincere repentance. Accepting the vulnerable state of this mortal life puts one on the right path with others needing the courage and power to live as the people who are prepared to stand before their Lord at any time, even as early as this very hour, to receive the judgment that the Lord might render upon their lives.

Ash Wednesday is a stark reminder that life is brief. Every moment is precious. We never know when our time on earth will come to an end. Therefore, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we must do all that we can in this present life, with each second and minute and hour and day that our Lord grants us, to live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ has taught us.

As Christians, our call is not to seek to please either ourselves, love ones or those who look, think and act like us, but to reverently please the God who made us. In Matthew's gospel, we read that the way to "Please God" is ***"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*** (Matt. 6:19-21).

As we begin this holy season together, let us not ignore the warning signs that sound so loudly by the emergency response testing system that is built into our tradition. Let us instead take it as a definite call to action. Let us hear the invitation to observe a holy Lent as our marching orders. We must get up, leave our comfort zones, to both be and do that for which we are called to prepare including whatever may come this day and every day. As disciples, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may we march courageously and faithfully through this preparatory season side by side, shoulder to shoulder, in the efforts at taking the Good News of salvation to all in the name of Jesus Christ. We can do so by completely trusting in the promises of our God, never to leave or abandon us made known in Jesus Christ. Let us strive to be remembered as the generation that passed on the torch of faith and salvation to the next, not as a generation that FAILED to reach-out to the "Unchurched," and thus starved and deprived the spiritually hungry and thirsty of God's Fulfilling and Quenching love and salvation as found in the life and work of God's beloved Son, the Only Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

As we enter this New Year, I invite us to take along this Bible verse as our spiritual mantra: **"For God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity, but the spirit of power, love and self-discipline."** (2Timothy 1: 7)

Happy and very blessed New Year in Jesus' name!

Rev. Jakes

SCRIPTURES AND THEMES 02/2018

Epiphany – 5th Sunday/ Holy Communion 02/04/2018

Psalm 147: 1-11

Isaiah 40: 21-31

2Corinthians 1: 1-9

Mark 1: 29-31

Theme: Setting Priority in order - First thing first...

Epiphany -Last Sunday /Transfiguration 02/11/2018

2Kings 2: 1-12

Psalm 50: 1-6

2Corinthians 4: 3-6

Mark 9: 2-9

Theme: Glimpses of the Inner glory

ASH WEDNESDAY

02/14/2018

Psalm 51: 1-17

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

2Corinthians 5: 20b- 6:10

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

Theme: "Heed the Trumpet's call"

Lent - 1st Sunday

02/18/2018

Genesis 3:1-7

Psalm 25: 1-10

1Peter 3: 18-22

Matthew 4: 1-11

Theme: Giving up Control

Lent – 2nd Sunday

02/25/2018

Genesis 12: 1-4a

Psalm 22: 23-31

Romans 4: 1-25

John 3: 1-17

Theme: Giving Up Expectations

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN
FEBRUARY**

- 1 – Ron Tremelling
- 2 – Shirley Schimek
- 3 – Erika Meredith
 - Linda Tremelling
- 7 – Chris Larson
 - Eric Buhler
- 9 – Adriano Mireles-Rangel
- 10 – Austin Feest
- 10 - Mariah Mireles-Rangel
- 13 – Pat Held
- 14 – Christian Ferguson
- 18 – Ellen Spiering
- 27 – Esther Voker

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IN
FEBRUARY**

- 11 – Robert & Elissa Pischke
- 14 – Scott & Joy McClelland
- 25 – Jakes & Esther Voker

ALTAR FLOWERS – All dates are currently open in February.

**FOOD BANK ITEM FOR
FEBRUARY**

will be dried potatoes. **Plastic or heavy grocery bags with handles are needed for clients that walk, ride the bus or bike. Thanks so much for your support of this mission.**

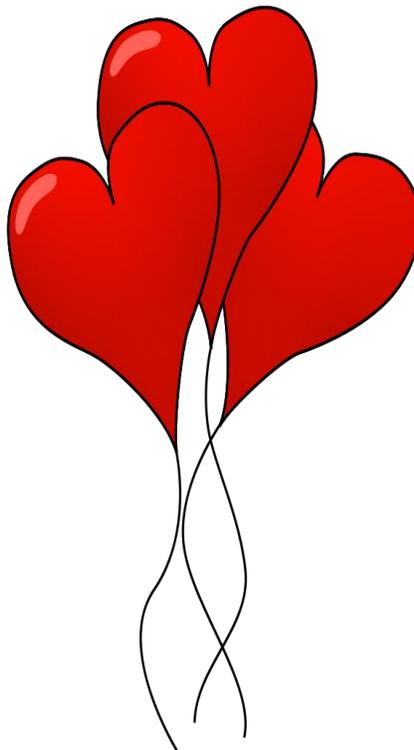
Bring your donation to the church and place it in the crate near the church entrances. All items collected will be taken to the North Side Food Pantry at Trinity UMC for distribution. This item is just a suggestion – all items are welcome at any time so if you see something on sale, feel free to purchase that item as well. Thanks for helping feed the hungry of our city. Cash donations are also welcomed.

**RUMMAGE SALE IN THE
WORKS**

Mark your calendars and start collecting your rummage! The United Methodist Women will host the Rummage Sale on Saturday April 21st, in the church social room Books, toys, linens, household items, decorations, etc., will be appreciated (no clothing, please). We'll then need help in setting up on Thursday and Friday of that week. Watch for additional details in the weekly bulletins.

**LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING
FOR FEBRUARY**

will benefit the Hospitality Center at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. Meals are offered during the day so let's continue to help our neighbors as they serve the most vulnerable of our city.



USHER SCHEDULE

February 4

Jeff Fernholz
August Grulich
Ricky Castro

February 11

Chuck & Jane Bragg
Jan Rosellini

February 18

August Grulich

February 25

Jeff Fernholz
Ricky Castro

If you are unable to be a greeter/usher on your assigned day, please contact someone from the usher list to substitute for you. Thanks.

Others, who might like to serve the church in this way, please contact the church office.

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS

We have recently found somethings left behind after service. The items are on top of the coat rack in the main entrance hallway.

United Methodist Women News

The **Christmas** Luncheon meeting was enjoyed by all. Everyone had the opportunity to participate in a skit led by Patti Walker. Several people volunteered to distribute poinsettias to our shut in members. We closed the meeting by singing carols accompanied by Betty Oakley.

A \$500 Scholarship for the 2017/18 has been awarded to Cassie Meredith. This brings the total scholarships for this year to five. \$57 was raised in the Thank Offering boxes; this money is forwarded to the Conference and is designated for missions.

Our faithful group of workers – Jane Jarrett, Jayne Dressen, Gwen Swanson, Earl Christianson, Liza Michna and Carol Feest prepared and distributed the sack lunches **January 6**.

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to Deb Vasy Johnson and her crew who prepared and served the Hot Meal Program at St. Luke's **January 22nd**.

UPCOMING DATES

March 8 – UMW luncheon meeting.

April 21 – Annual Rummage Sale. Items can be brought to the church at any time.

April 27-29 – Womens's Retreat at Lake Lucerne Camp and Retreat Center.

May 18-19, 2018 Quadrennial UMW Assembly, Columbus Ohio. Registration is now open for this worldwide forum of United Methodist Women who gather to worship and learn more about the needs of women, children and youth in the 21st century. For more information go to www.umwassembly.org2018.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each Sunday

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Faith To Life Bible Study | 9:00 am |
| Morning Worship | 10:00 am |
| Fellowship Time | 11:15 am |
| Keith Griffin Pokémon League | 1:00 pm |
| Casa de Dios Worship Service | 5:00 pm |

Each Monday

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|--------------------------|---------|
| OFFICE CLOSED | |
| Casa de Dios Bible Study | 6:30 pm |

Each Wednesday

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| Kiwanis Club Luncheon | Noon |
| Choir Rehearsal | 6:00 pm |
| Young Adult Dinner & Discussion | 7:30 pm |

Each Saturday

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| Sack Lunch Program | Noon |
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Saturday, February 3

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| Controlling Community Violence | 9:00 am |
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Sunday, February 4

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| FFRANC Breakfast | 9:00 am |
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Tuesday, February 6

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| Survey Committee Meeting | 5:30 pm |
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Tuesday, February 13

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| Finance Meeting | 6:00 pm |
| Council Meeting | 7:00 pm |

Saturday, February 24

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Controlling Community Violence | 9:00 am |
|--------------------------------|---------|

If you'd like something in the February newsletter Please send your information in by February 20th Send it to racine1umc@tds.net or give me a call At (262)633-7632 Thank you

The First Word is published monthly by First United Methodist Church
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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

745 Main Street

Racine, WI 53403-1211

First United Methodist Church

The Vision statement:

- **To provide a community for people to experience God and find inspiration for daily living.**

The Mission statement:

- **To welcome and encourage all to live faithfully through Jesus Christ in ways that impact them and others.**

“A perfect church for imperfect people”