

ON THE JOURNEY

This month we enter into the season of spring, but before we get to that, we enter into the season of Lent. Lent is the forty days before Easter, not including Sundays. Sunday, for Christians, has always been a day to celebrate our risen Lord and his indescribable victory over sin, Satan, and death. The number of days, forty, was chosen to coincide with the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, in which Jesus clarified his calling, and prepared himself for his ministry.

These forty days before Easter were set aside by the early church for its members to re-examine their lives and to rededicate themselves to Christ. It was also used to prepare baptismal candidates for their baptism. The significance of baptizing on Easter is that just as Jesus rose from the grave with new life, so Christians are born again with new Spiritual life, and more than that, Christians literally share in the Resurrected Life of our risen Lord, a life which death can never claim.

Today, Lent is practiced in most Christian Churches as a season of soul-searching and repentance in preparation for Holy Week. Individual Christians imitate Jesus' withdrawal into a wilderness by committing themselves to some kind of a fast, giving up something they enjoy, and entering into a time of self-examination, self-denial, and seeking God for a period of forty days before Easter.

Our Lenten worship theme at First Mennonite this year will take us on a journey through the seven "I AM" sayings of Jesus that we find in John' Gospel, in which Jesus stakes his claim to Divinity, and tells us what he does for those who follow Him on their journey toward God.

I invite us all to enter into this holy season of Lent by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word, by being sensitive to the leading and nudges of God's Holy Spirit, and then by recommitting our lives to God. And I also invite us all to read through the Gospel of John in preparation for our worship times together.

Submitted by Pastor Phil

CALENDAR

Wed 3/6	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:30 pm	Board
	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Service
		Music Practice
Sun 3/10	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 3/11		Health Department
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 3/12	6:30 PM	Discipling Commission
Wed 3/13	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:45 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Thurs 3/14	9:00 am	First Mennonite Women
Sun 3/17	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 3/18	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 3/19	6:00 pm	Community Life Commission
Wed 3/20	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:30 pm	Administration Commission

	7:00 pm	Music Practice
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Administrative Assistant Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Closed Friday

Phil Yoder Office Hours:

Monday 12:00-4:00 PM,

Wed. 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, Thursday 1:00-6:00 PM

- **All newsletter submissions need to be in to Maribeth by noon on Tuesday.**

March Birthdays

Eva Kurtz – 6

Vera Miller – 6

Virginia Hershberger – 8

Gordon Kauffman – 8

Ruby Bontreger – 15

Tim Keller – 20

Jake Schwartz – 23

Linda Miller – 25

Bernie Miller - 28

WORSHIP

Focus statement: Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world. Light dispels the darkness and makes things visible. Light calms the fears that paralyze in the darkness. Light is essential for life. It is not mere coincidence that when God created the world, the first thing God created was light. Light was essential for everything else that followed in the creation story. Of all the things that Jesus implied when he claimed to be the light of the world, one of them was that HE is the beginning of a new creation. Just as light was the first thing God created in the physical creation, so the light of Jesus is our first glimpse of a new spiritual creation, a creation that does not include death, or sin, or sadness.

Background scriptures: John 8-9, Exodus 3:1-15, Revelation 21-22

Coffee Prep Volunteers

This Sunday: Ward and Pam Bingaman

Next Sunday: Kris Rheinheimer

Welcome Center

This Sunday: Carolyn Miller

Next Sunday: Karen Pletcher

Lent Season begins March 6, with Ash Wednesday (our Service will begin at 7:00). Other dates & Services you will want to take note of are: Palm Sunday, April 14; Maundy Thursday Service, 6:00 p.m. with a Meal/Communion/Foot & Hand Washing on April 18; Community Good Friday Service on April 19 (TBA); and Easter Celebration & Service on April 21. There will be carry in breakfast at 9:00, Worship Service at 10:00, no scheduled Sunday School. We hope you can each participate in all of these opportunities during the Lent Season. Pastor Phil has planned out services you won't want to miss. This is such an important season in the Christian Faith! Bring guests and Join us!!
Worship Commission

ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Report for March 3:

Money Given to Budget \$8,449.00

Amount Needed Weekly for Budget \$5,565.25

Year-to-date Money Given to Budget \$148,975.01

Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget \$150,261.75

Note: A copy of the 2nd quarter treasurer's report has been placed in your mailbox. A copy is also in an attachment to the newsletter.

Administration Commission met in February and learned our average attendance for this quarter is 98. Our YTD giving is slightly behind budget. The Administration Commission has been given permission to open three (3) accounts with Everence Foundation (two connected to our Endowment monies and one for excess Capital Expenditure funds). We plan to meet with a representative to begin this process. We are hopeful to confirm an internet/phone provider at the CR 16 property soon. We plan to broadly review our building rental guidelines to make sure our custodian and audio support persons are compensated adequately. We have agreed and informed the rental management company to not renew our rental leases for our properties on E. Lawrence. The houses will be marketed and sold. We are waiting on bids for a new HVAC system and roof.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The preschool fundraiser of Rise 'N Roll baked goods is happening right now. The last day for ordering is Wednesday, March 20. Orders will be delivered before Easter to the church on Wednesday, April 17. We thank you for your continued support of preschool!

DISCIPLING

Tickets are available for Goshen College's Spring Musical, "Bright Star," in the Umble Center March 15, 16 & 22 at 7:30 p.m. and March 17 & 24 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for students/seniors/GC staff. "Bright Star" is an uplifting musical journey featuring the Grammy-nominated Americana score by Steve Martin and Edie Brickell. Set in 1940s North Carolina, after a chance encounter with a young, aspiring author just home from World War II, literary editor Alice Murphy relives the harrowing journey that helped shape her.

Registration is now open for the 18th Annual Goshen College Conference on Religion and Science, Mar. 29-31, 2019, featuring Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, an evangelical Christian, atmospheric scientist and climate change expert. Dr. Hayhoe will offer two free public lectures on Friday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. and on Saturday, March 30, 10:30 a.m. A third lecture for registered conference attendees will take place on Sunday, March 31. These

lectures will take place in Goshen College's Church-Chapel. Learn more and register at goshen.edu/religionscience

Tickets for Goshen College's annual International Student Club Coffeehouse, Saturday, March 23, are now available. Come enjoy delicious homemade food from more than a dozen different countries, followed by a performance of music and dance from around the world. Dinner is at 5 p.m. in the Church Fellowship Hall, and the performance is at 7:30 p.m. in the Music Center. Tickets for the dinner and performance are \$20 for adults (\$14 performance only), and \$14 students/children (\$6 performance only).

OUTREACH

First Mennonite Women's next project is collecting items for RETA. Items needed are: car seats, dish soap, 409 cleaner, stool cleaner, toilet paper, childrens clothes (infant to 6X), and glass cleaner. Dora Graber will have devotions at the next meeting.

From Outreach Commission:

1. Change For A Dollar program. Most recent assistance given to a pantry volunteer for rent payment in Dec. 2018. Please continue to contribute your spare change and continue to look for individuals in your community who may be in need of assistance. You may obtain a form from Maribeth when you know of someone in need.
2. Planning to do a Summer Bible school program, To Mars and Back, in conjunction with United Methodist Church the week of July 8th. There will be more information to come and will be looking for volunteers to assist with the program.
3. Kids Night Out opportunity for preschool families on April 28th from 4:30-7:00.

All are invited to the **FRIENDS OF AMIGO BANQUET**, 6 pm March 14th at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church. Come to hear an update about what is happening at Amigo Centre this past year and what we're working on in 2019. Please call to let us know you are coming!

Amigo Centre wood splitting and workday will be on April 13th. We have a lot to do in preparation for the summer. Rain or shine we'll be tackling projects all over

camp. If you are interested in helping prepare campfire wood and cleaning up areas of the timber, we'll be cutting and splitting firewood. Please RSVP by calling 269-651-2811 or emailing info@amigocentre.org

Habitat for Humanity Panel Build March 16: Bethany Christian Schools is hosting a Habitat for Humanity panel build on Saturday, March 16, and students are raising \$10,000 to help with the cost of materials. Anyone interested in volunteering at the build or donating money towards the build should contact the school (574 534-2567)—more information available online at bethanycs.net/habitatbuild2019.

The last week of March, Bonnie Klassen, Mennonite Central Committee Area Representative for South America, Mexico and Cuba will be in the Goshen area sharing compelling stories about MCC's work south of the U.S. border. Learn more about the roots of migration and how resourceful leaders and congregational partners of MCC in Mexico and South America are addressing the issues of violence and inequity and are working for dignity and peace across the region. We hope you can attend one of these gatherings! Opportunities include:
Sunday, Mar. 24 9:30am – Berkey Ave. Mennonite, Goshen, IN/6:30pm – Sunnyside Mennonite, Elkhart, IN
Monday, Mar. 25 9:30am – Seniors for Peace, Jennings Auditorium, Greencroft, Goshen, IN/ 6:00 p.m. – Young Adult Gathering, Anna's Bread, Goshen, IN
Wednesday, Mar. 27 7:00pm – College Mennonite Church, Koinonia Room, Goshen, IN

Daylight Savings Time begins this weekend. Don't forget to "spring forward".



