



The MESSENGER

➤ Gifts for Another Table



Non-perishable food items brought to church during the month of February will be given to Salvation Army. Suggestions are canned fruits & vegetables, box meals (such as Hamburger Helper or macaroni & cheese), canned soup, crackers, peanut butter & jelly, and cereal. Bringing even one or two items will help make this a successful effort.

➤ Brown Bag Bible Bunch



We are beginning a new study on the book of Revelation. All are welcome. Jim Warren leads the group on Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 PM in the Conference Room.

➤ Winter Vendor Fair



*Saturday, February 25,
9:00 AM-Noon in Major Hall*

- All proceeds from table fees go to the 19th Annual Block Party/The King's Carpenters
- Come out and enjoy a day of shopping with our vendors
- No pressure to buy -- take your time looking at several companies in one day
- All sales go to our vendors
- Warm and inviting environment
- Enjoy these vendors:
LuLaRoe, Pink Zebra, Longaberger, Perfectly Posh by Amy, and many more

-- Julie Robinson, Sponsor
828-4335 jerobinson21409@yahoo.com

➤ Ash Wednesday



Our Ash Wednesday service will be on Wednesday, March 1, in Fellowship Hall beginning with sharing a meal at 6:00 PM followed by the service. Baked potatoes and toppings will be provided. If you could help by providing a salad or dessert, please contact Vicki Hall at 454-3081 or vicbillh2@comcast.net.

➤ Disciples Women's Ministries



With our numbers reduced due to illness and travel, the February 2 meeting of DWM still met and found us learning from Julie Robinson about "Mary, the Mother of Jesus." She gave us several new things to think about. Following the program, the Love Boxes were packed and ready to be sent to our college students and military families. We have already received several thank yous from the recipients. Special thanks to Pam Yerkes and Mary Helen Haskell who chaired the program this year. Our deep gratitude to all those who generously contributed the "treats" and money for the postage. What a lovely way to make sure these young people know their FCC family is thinking of them.

The Thursday, March 2, meeting will start at 1:00 PM in the Conference Room next to the elevator. During our business meeting, our own Luella Mahannah will give an update, ways we may help, and answer questions on INtegrItY Counseling. The program will be given by Shirley Wotherspoon, on "Hagar." All ladies of the church are encouraged to join us for a time of study and renewal.

Be sure to mark Thursday, May 4, on your calendar. This will be our Spring Tea. Special program and events are being planned by our committee already. It will be a great chance to renew old friendships and meet new friends while learning about different ministries. This event will be in Fellowship Hall starting at 1:00 PM. More information later.



A Season of Prayer – Lent 2017

➤ Grief Journey Support Group

Those who have experienced the death of a loved one are invited to the Conference Room on Thursdays March 9 & 23, April 6 & 20, and May 4 & 18, 5:00-6:30 PM, for support, education, and healing through your journey of adjustment (no fee). Leadership will be given by Ed Taylor, the Compassus Hospice Bereavement Coordinator.

➤ Women's Spring Gathering

Saturday, March 25, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM, at the Chiara Center (4849 La Verna Road, Springfield). The Rev. Dr. Marti Steussy will be speaking on the Psalms, and there will be opportunities to explore a variety of prayer disciplines. Registration forms are available on the Regional website. Cost of the event is \$45.

➤ Fellowship Time

Do you enjoy having coffee and donuts after worship? We could use more volunteers to make that happen. Contact Vicki Hall at 454-3081 or vicbillh2@comcast.net.

March 1 – Ash Wednesday

Psalm 51 – “A Call to a Season of Prayer”

The Ash Wednesday meditation will be an invitation for people to enter into a Lenten season of prayer.

March 5 – First Sunday of Lent

Luke 11:1 – “The Four W’s of Prayer”

Jesus’ praying was so powerful that the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. This sermon will look at the Who, What, When, and Where of prayer.

March 12 – Second Sunday of Lent

Mark 9:14-29 – “The Last W of Prayer”

The “why” of prayer will be the focus this morning. These verses tell the story of the man whose boy is possessed by a demon. The disciples could not cast out the demon, but Jesus could. When asked why they couldn’t cast out the demon, Jesus responds, “This kind can come out only through prayer.”

March 19 – Third Sunday of Lent

Acts 1:12-14 – A Time for Us to Pray

I am asking us to pray because it feels like our church is in an “in between” time. This passage explains what the disciples did between the Ascension and Pentecost: they prayed. They prayed, and God gave them the Holy Spirit.

March 26 – Fourth Sunday of Lent

Psalm 42 – Prayer Isn’t for Sissies

Sometimes our only experience in prayer is that of absence; God doesn’t seem to respond to our prayers. What do we do when that happens?

April 2 – Fifth Sunday of Lent

(I will be gone this Sunday)

April 9 – Palm Sunday

Luke 22:39-46 – Can We Pray Like Jesus?

This passage records Jesus praying in the garden. Jesus prays, “Father, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” Are we able to pray so selflessly? Are we willing to empty ourselves so completely?

April 16 – Easter Sunday

Luke 24:1-12 – Surprised by God

Upon hearing of Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples thought it “an idle tale.” Peter, however, ran to the tomb, saw the linen cloths, and went home “amazed.” Sometimes God will surprise us in the most amazing ways, even through prayer.

Witness of the Faithful

Attendance:

2/5: 168, 41
2/12: 177, 28

Offerings:

General Fund	24,481.28
Capital Campaign	160.00
Other	1,030.09
Total:	\$25,671.37

Prayer Concerns

OSF St. Joseph: Marilyn Kopp

Aftercare: Helen Joyce Barclay, Betty Beer, Gail Corbett, Lori Craig, Mickey Drexler, Don Dungan, Gene Fowler, Dave Phillis, Dorothy Sallee

Other: Joe & Jan Violano **Treatment:** Dave Eyman

Assisted Living: Alma Samuels (at Taylors’ home)

Hospice: Darlene Bethel, Marsha Reeves

Nursing Homes: Judy Feezor (Aperion); Eugene Hunter, Merle Murray, Virginia Warren (Heritage, Blm.); Sonna West (Heritage, El Paso); Harold Goyen (Heritage, Normal); Corena Meyer (Liberty, Clinton); Niola Daily, Dave Dungan, Lois Murray (Martin Health); James Fry (McLean Co.); Roberta Blomgren (Sugar Cr)

Military: Chris Kavanaugh (Marines, CA); Harley Scott (Phillis niece/Navy, VA)

Sympathy to: Richard Jacobs and family on the February 2 death of his wife, Stella Geraldine “Jeri/Jerry” Jacobs

Thank You

Notes posted on the Information Center bulletin board have been received from Harley Scott and McKale Craig (Love Boxes) and a Valentine Card has been received from Eddie Dill.

A long obedience in the same direction...

Yard Signs

You've probably seen these yard signs sprouting up around town. They are green, blue, and orange, and say, "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor" in Spanish, English, and Arabic. They are a way of saying that our neighbors are important to us, and we welcome them here.

Jesus was once asked, "Who is my neighbor?" It was a lawyer who posed the question because he wanted to show how righteous he was. Jesus' reply was to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. You can read it in Luke 10:25-37.

Many of you are probably familiar with this story. A man was attacked by robbers, who left him for dead. Two members of Israel's religious leadership, a priest and a Levite, walked by and did nothing. But along came a Samaritan (Samaria was a different country) who cared for him and found him a place to recover.

At the conclusion of the story, Jesus asks, "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The lawyer answered, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus' parting words were, "Go and do likewise."

Jesus turned the question upside down. The lawyer asked who his neighbor was. That was a limiting, excluding question. If the lawyer could define specifically who his neighbor was – and wasn't – then he could show kindness to a select group of people and ignore the rest.

Is being a neighbor defined by geography? If so, then only those who live within a specified distance from us are neighbors, and everyone else isn't. Is it defined by some common trait: ethnic, religious, national, etc.? If so, then those who don't share that certain trait are not my neighbor. Classifying people as "neighbor" or "not neighbor" limits those to whom one must be neighborly.

Jesus never answered the lawyer's question directly. Instead, He asked the lawyer who was a neighbor to the man who'd been robbed and beaten. Clearly it was the Samaritan because he alone showed mercy. The Samaritan and the injured man didn't live close to each other or share anything in common, but that didn't matter to Jesus. What was important to Jesus was being a neighbor by showing mercy to someone in need.

"Go and do likewise," were Jesus' words to the lawyer, and to us.

Sometimes we get hung up on who deserves our help. We exclude some from receiving our compassion and mercy because they live in the wrong place, believe the wrong things, speak the wrong language, come from the wrong country, or don't look and act like we do. We let our fears and prejudices control us and so decide that those who are different from us aren't worthy of being helped.

Jesus admonishes us not to decide who's in and who's out as a neighbor. Rather, Jesus encourages us to be a neighbor to anyone in need. We are to show mercy and compassion, regardless of who or what the other person is.

God places people in our lives who need our help. It's easy to help some of them, and almost impossible to help others. But God has given all of them to us and asks us not to differentiate between the deserving and undeserving. The sole criterion for helping another person is that person's need.

Who needs you today? God places people in our lives who need our mercy and compassion. They may live next door or on the other side of the world. That's not important. What is important is that we be their neighbor and show them God's love.

Jesus says to you today, "Go and do likewise."

-- Jim Warren



Lenten Study Group Announced

Jim Warren will lead a Lenten study group titled *Listen: Hearing that still small voice and finding your own*. This study will look at the many ways the voice of God speaks to us, and explores things we can do to strengthen that connection. From meditation and music to study and social action we will listen for the voice of the Spirit and find it active in surprising places.

Each session includes a 25-30 minute video in which preachers, pastors, theologians, teachers, spiritual guides, and musicians explore places where God speaks to us and how we can best listen for that voice. You will have the opportunity to hear how other Christians experience God and to reflect on – perhaps even expand on – the ways in which you encounter God in your life. In addition to the video we will look at scripture, ask questions, and discuss the video.

This study will meet Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 PM in the Conference Room. The study includes seven sessions beginning March 8 and ending April 19.

Our church's Lenten theme is *A Season of Prayer*, and this study will help us enter into this holy season.

A Season of Prayer

The Lenten worship series is titled *A Season of Prayer*. Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 1, and running through Easter Sunday, April 16, we will examine the contours of prayer and how we can make prayer an integral part of our relationship with God. Lent, the weeks leading up to Good Friday and Easter, are a time of reflection on our faith and of preparation for remembering Christ's death and resurrection.

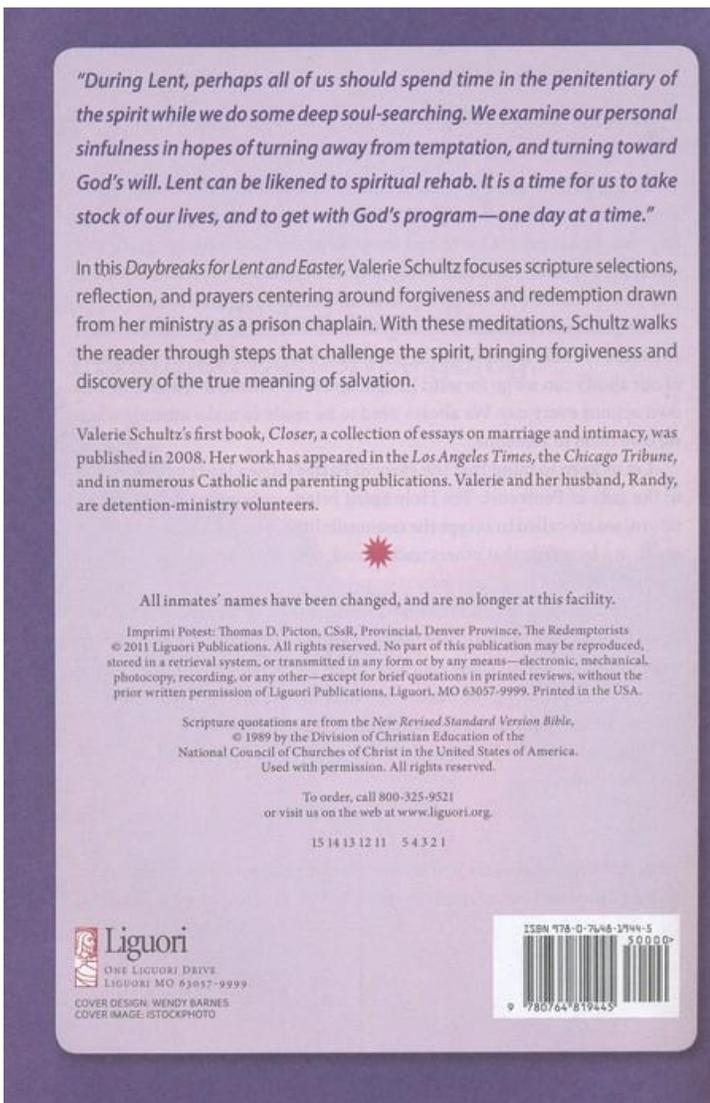
Jim Warren invites us to make this Lent *A Season of Prayer* and asks us to devote ourselves intentionally and regularly to prayer. He specifically asks us to pray for our church, along with our usual petitions for family, friends, neighbors, nation, and world.

Make this Lent *A Season of Prayer* and spend time waiting on God.

Lenten Devotionals to Be Available

Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter is the Lenten devotional for the upcoming season of Lent. In this devotional Valerie Schultz focuses scripture selections, reflections, and prayers centering on forgiveness and redemption drawn from her ministry as a Roman Catholic prison chaplain. With these meditations Schultz walks the reader through steps that challenge the spirit, bringing forgiveness and the discovery of the true meaning of salvation.

Many of you have commented on how helpful our Lenten devotionals are for centering your prayer life during this season. These devotionals will help you answer Jim Warren's invitation to make this Lent *A Season of Prayer*.



**See February Calendar
on website**

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bloomington's Oldest Continuing Congregation - Founded 1837



401 West Jefferson Street
Bloomington, Illinois 61701

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Bloomington, IL 61701



Serving Sunday, February 19

Acolytes: Ellie Chapman, Maddie Chapman
Child Care: Trish Logan, Naomi Kosier
Deacons: Stacey Erickson, Matt Davis
One and All Deacons: James & Libby Nussbaum
Jr. Deacons: Austin Metz, Seth Newton
Driver: Ralph Lehmann
Elders: Art Taylor, Gregg Kieseewetter
Homebound Elders: Marianne & Don Dungan
Fellowship Time: Bill & Susan Chaney
Fill Candles: Becky White
Greeters: Darrell & Teri Arvik, Matt & Naomi Kosier
Information Center Host: Susan Chaney
Scripture: Emily Campos
Sound Tech: Dave Phillis
Time for Children: Linda Lehmann
Video Tech: James Nussbaum
Worship & Wonder Greeters: Jessica Davis, Jenny Hall
Pulpit: Jim Warren – *God's Vision for the World*
 Isaiah 11:6-9 God imagines the world as a place of peace where unity reigns. The earth will be full of the Lord.

Serving Sunday, February 26

Acolytes: Bekah Warren, Gabriel Warren
Child Care: Trish Logan, Stephanie Reed
Deacons: Nancy Guither, Vicki Hall
One and All Deacons: Reena Rhoda, Ryan Newton
Jr. Deacons: Sadie Newton, Alea Cleaver
Driver: Ryan Newton
Elders: Sharon Warren, Matt Chapman
Homebound Elders: Art Taylor, Gregg Kieseewetter
Fellowship Time: Pam Yerkes
Fill Candles: Becky White
Greeters: Ron & Nancy Gramley, Jim & Carolyn Hepperly
Information Center Host: Karen Crusius
Scripture: Don Mahannah
Sound Tech: James Nussbaum
Time for Children: Holly Irvin
Video Tech: Nate Damery
Worship & Wonder Greeters: Heather Damery, Kim Cox
Pulpit: Jim Warren – *God's Vision for Community*
 Acts 2:37-47 These verses describe the church as it came into existence after Pentecost. God envisions the contemporary church including similar qualities. How well does FCC embody these qualities? What do we need to do?

Mailed: February 15, 2017

Sunday Traditional Worship 9:00 AM
One and All Worship 10:15 AM
Sunday School for All Ages 10:15 AM
Youth Groups..... 5:00 PM

Senior Pastor
 James Warren.....212-6873
jwarren@blmfcc.org

Minister Emeritus
 John Trefzger

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 Holly Irvin, Director of Music & Youth Ministries
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 Lou Ann Fillingham, organ/piano
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