



The MESSENGER

➤ Gifts for Another Table



The Regional Alternative School Program (RAS) has been in existence since 1989 providing educational services for students throughout Dewitt, McLean, and Livingston counties. The program emerged from an interest of local school administrators and educators to provide programming for students considered to be at-risk of dropping out of school. The program was initiated to provide students who did not qualify for special educational services and were not experiencing success in the traditional day school program, for a variety of reasons, with an option to continue their education.

Non-perishable food items brought to church during the month of March will be given to the Regional Alternative School families. 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.

➤ Pastor's Class



This Class is for young people in the 6th grade and above who would like to be baptized on Easter and join the church. Our first meeting will be this Sunday, March 5, at 11:30 AM in the Founders' Room.

➤ Christian Singles Dinner/Games

Friday, March 10, 6:30 PM
College Park Christian Church
(116 N. Cottage, Normal)
Please bring finger food or dessert to share and your favorite game.

➤ Disciples Women's Ministries



Join Disciples Women's Ministries (DWM) this Thursday, March 2, at 1:00 PM, in the Conference Room by the elevator. All women are invited and urged to come. We meet to study and

learn together about ways we may minister to our church and our community.

There will be great fellowship and a continuation of our study of "Women of the Bible" - this month's program will be given by Shirley Wotherspoon on "Hagar." Following our business meeting, our own Luella Mahannah will give us an update, ways we may help, and answer questions on *INtegrity Counseling*.

The Spring Tea Committee (Mary Helen Haskell, Kim Rott, Pam Yerkes) is busy making plans for our annual tea to be held, Thursday, May 4 in Fellowship Hall. Plan now to attend. A sign-up sheet will be at the Information Center.

➤ 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.

➤ Time Change

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night, March 11.

➤ Wednesday Supper Club

~All Are Welcome~



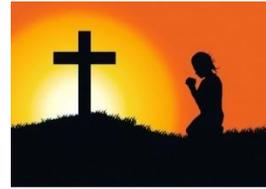
March 15, 5:30 PM
PIZZA RANCH

Wednesday senior day is \$1.00 off regular price

Note Number Attending on Sunday Attendance Pad **Or** Phone FCC Office (829-9327)
Before 4:30 PM, Monday, March 13

➤ *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.



A Season of Prayer – Lent 2017

Witness of the Faithful

Attendance:

2/19: 130, 32

2/26: 175, 39

Prayer Concerns

Aftercare: Helen Joyce Barclay, Betty Beer, Lori Craig, Mickey Drexler, Gene Fowler, John Hensley, Forrest Kaufman

Other: Joe & Jan Violano

Treatment: Dave Eyman, Sharon Warren

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, Marilyn Kopp (McLean Co.); Roberta Blomgren (Sugar Creek)

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

Sympathy to: ... the family of Mary Harsha on her death February 16 ... Kathie (Alan) Chapman family on the February 15 death of her aunt, Louise Campbell, and February 16 death of her cousin, David Campbell

Don't Miss a Facebook Post, Especially During Lent!

To make sure you don't miss a post from FCC, including Jim Warren's Lenten Devotional posts (to go along with the Lenten Devotional, available at church), follow these instructions:

1. Visit the First Christian Church of Bloomington IL 61701 Facebook homepage.
2. Below the cover photo, see the button called, "Following" and click on the down arrow.
3. Beside "Notifications" see a pencil icon and click on it.
4. On the window that pops up, next to "Posts," and below "Get notified when this Page posts something new," click the small box next to All Posts.

Jim will also be tweeting his devotional posts. His Twitter username is @PastorBLMFCC

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

Psalms 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?

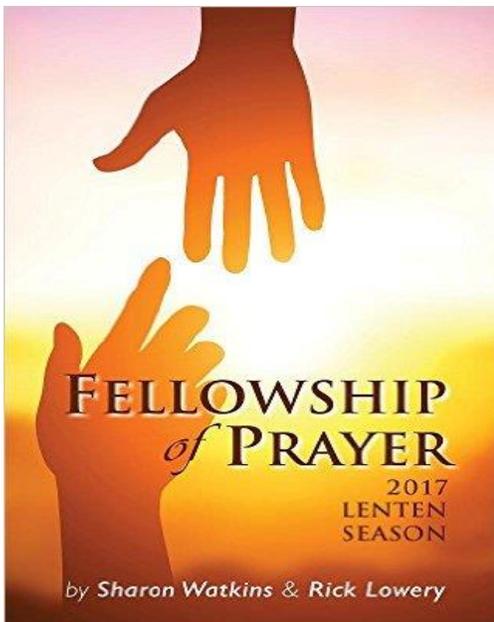
April 16 – Easter Sunday

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.



Jim Warren will lead the study *Listen: Hearing that still small voice and finding your own* Wednesday evenings from 5:30 – 6:30 in the Conference Room. It begins Wednesday, March 8, and concludes April 19. This study looks at 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, the sessions look for the voice of the spirit ... and find it in surprising places. Each session includes a 25-30 minute video and lots of discussion.



Pick up a Lenten devotional the next time you're at church and make it your companion through Lent. Our devotional is *Fellowship of Prayer* and includes a scripture, meditation, and prayer for each day of Lent from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. (The devotional advertised in the last *Messenger* was on back order.) The authors, Sharon Watkins and Rick Lowery, describe the devotional in these words:

"The Lenten Journey we will take together through the daily readings this year gives us the opportunity to reflect on the bold witness of humility. There's tremendous, sacred, life-giving power in humility, in compassion and empathy, and in being in deep solidarity with the most vulnerable of the world. The God we see in the ministry, death, and vindicating resurrection of Christ Jesus calls us to understand this vulnerable power and to embody it in our daily walk of faith."

The devotionals are available at the Information Center and outside Fellowship Hall. Please take one!



To help us keep *A Season of Prayer*, which Jim Warren has invited us to enter during this Lent, Jim is providing us with daily "prayer prompts" on our church's Facebook page and Jim's Twitter account (@PastorBLMFCC). One prayer prompt will be related to the daily Lenten devotional, but you can use the prompt without reading the devotional. The second prompt will remain the same throughout Lent: What is God's vision for our church? You can use these prompts in your prayers, or write about them in your journal. When you go to work or go for a walk, you can take the questions with you. You can record your response on Facebook and start a conversation. Maybe they could even be dinner table conversation starters. You're encouraged to pray these questions to help you focus your prayers.

A long obedience in the same direction...

What Is God's Vision for Our Church?

What does God want our church to be and do? The sermon series "*Where There Is Vision, the People Flourish*" concluded last Sunday. We explored what God's vision is for the church, and the sermon ended with the question: "*What is God's vision for First Christian Church?*"

I invite us to ponder that question together in the coming weeks. It's not an easy question to answer, and the best way to begin is in prayer. I'm asking all of us to enter into **A Season of Prayer** during Lent and be intentional and regular in prayer. I encourage you to pray every day that we discern God's vision for our church.

To aid you in your praying, we have several prayer helps for you. There is *The Fellowship of Prayer* Lenten devotional available at church at the Information Center, outside the Sanctuary, and at the entrance to Fellowship Hall. Use these daily devotions to help focus your prayers.

If you're on Facebook or Twitter, you'll find the prayer prompts I'm posting daily beginning Wednesday. I ask two questions. The first arises from the day's devotional reading, but you don't have to read the devotional to profit from the question. The second question is the same every day: What is God's vision for our church? That's a question I hope we can get some clarity about during these weeks of Lent.



You will receive a small metal cross during worship as a prayer reminder. Put it in your pocket, wallet, or purse. If you have a way to keep it with your phone, that would be great. The simple purpose of the cross is to remind you to pray. When you reach for your money, credit card, or phone and come upon the cross, pause for a moment and say a prayer. Use the cross to remind you to pray.



You can color! Look for the large coloring pages at the Ash Wednesday service and at the Sunday services to follow. These pages follow the "Stations of the Cross," an ancient Christian practice that walks with Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem to the cross. Coloring, you know, is not just for children! If you like to color – regardless of your age – have a go at these pages. There will be a different coloring sheet each week, and we'll display the finished "masterpieces."

We're going to set aside time in worship for silent prayer. We don't do that very often, but we will each Sunday of Lent. This will be a time to quiet ourselves and come before God.

The weekly sermons will focus on prayer, and you'll find the Lenten sermon schedule elsewhere in this *Messenger*. The sermon series, **A Season of Prayer**, supplements my invitation to make this a church-wide time of prayer.

I'm leading a Wednesday evening study, *Listen: Hearing that still, small voice and finding your own*. It begins next Wednesday, March 8, from 5:30 to 6:30 PM, and ends April 19. The study looks at many ways the voice of God speaks to us, and explores what we can do to strengthen that connection. Each session includes a 25-30 minute video and lots of discussion.

The concurrent seasons of Lent and Prayer begin Ash Wednesday, March 1, and continue through Easter Sunday, April 16. I believe this is a time when our church needs to be praying together actively and seeking to discern God's vision for us.

Let's make this Lent a true **Season of Prayer** for each of us and for our church. Let's pray together to understand what God is asking of us in this time and in this place. May this be a Holy Lent for all of us.

-- Jim Warren

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Serving Sunday, March 5

- Acolyte:** Charlie Campos
- Child Care:** Trish Logan, Michelle Kieseewetter
- Deacons:** Justin & Kim Cox
- One and All Deacons:** Brian Metz, Ted Logan
- Jr. Deacons:** Averie Kieseewetter, Abby Logan
- Driver:** Gary Thompson
- Elders:** Patti Jamerson, Darrel Arvik
- Homebound Elders:** Sharon Warren, Matt Chapman
- Fellowship Time:** Betty Steinlicht, Susan Hinrichsen
- Fill Candles:** Connie Rapp
- Greeter:** Shirley Wotherspoon
- Information Center Host:** Kathy Dailey
- Scripture:** Nate Damery
- Sound Tech:** James Nussbaum
- Time for Children:** Patty Thompson
- Video Tech:** Todd Chapman
- Worship & Wonder Greeters:** Ryan Newton, Karen Crusius
- Pulpit:** Jim Warren – 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.

Serving Sunday, March 12

- Acolytes:** Evelyn Kosier, Clark Kosier
- Child Care:** Trish Logan, Marcia Christensen
- Deacons:** Scott & Valerie Fisher
- One and All Deacons:** Robyn Loftin, Liberty Nussbaum
- Jr. Deacons:** Emily Varner, Sadie Newton
- Driver:** Rich Crusius
- Elders:** Kathie Chapman, Madonna Courtright
- Homebound Elders:** Jill West, Kathie Chapman
- Fellowship Time:** Tamara Shields
- Fill Candles:** Connie Rapp
- Greeters:** Pete Whitmer, Cindy Rousey
- Information Center Host:** Jan Dyer
- Scripture:** James Nussbaum
- Sound Tech:** Dave Phillis
- Time for Children:** Matt Chapman
- Video Tech:** Austin Metz
- Worship & Wonder Greeters:** Kim Cox, Sue Bandy
- Pulpit:** Jim Warren – 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.”

Mailed: March 1, 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

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Minister Emeritus

John Trefzger

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