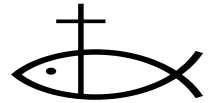




Community Congregational Church United Church of Christ



March 2018 Newsletter

Recently we had a guest speaker come to talk to us about Stewardship. I know that for many even the topic of Stewardship makes them want to put on a pair of sneakers and run for the hills. No One, (and I really mean NO ONE!) likes to talk about money! This is especially true when it comes to the church and money. Many people wish that churches didn't have to ask for money and I must admit that I am one of them. I wish we had all the resources in the world to run God's church by spreading the good news of the gospels to all of God's children. But we live in this world and because of that we need money to pay for the tools needed to run the ministry of God's church. Money and the running of a church go hand in hand. But Stewardship and the church is so much greater than just money. Stewardship makes the connection between the ministry tools of finances and the act of faithful living and giving. When we make a pledge to the church, we are declaring our faithfulness to God and asking God to lead us and guide us.

Now, here is the difficult part of this article. I want you to know how your pastor supports God's church, not because I want to draw any kind of attention to my giving, but rather because I want you to know just how much faith I have in this congregation and in the Holy Spirit. Each month, I make a monthly pledge to the church and have it electronically sent from my bank to the church. When I first came to CCCUCC, I was told that our church was running a deficit and that we needed to cut back as much as possible. At that time, I decided to "give" the church back the \$1,000 a year that is outlined in my contract for my mileage. When I first made this decision, I was making a one-year commitment to personally pay for all the gas I use to preform home visitations, hospital calls, attend clergy meetings, purchase materials needed for ministry and to meet the responsibilities of being your pastor. Since we are still experiencing a faith gap in our budget, I have continued this practice and have personally paid for my mileage expenses since 2015. In addition, I have a cell phone that I use for church business. The cost of this phone and the monthly carrier service charges are not paid for by the church. I personally pay for these fees and have ever since I became your pastor. I also pay a monthly Microsoft fee on the computer that I use for work and it is not uncommon for me to pay for the cards that I send to parishioners or for other ministry items. Why do I do this? My family and I do this because I believe deep within my heart of hearts that God will use these gifts through the ministries at CCCUCC., to heal the ill, welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, and bring hope to the broken. I believe that God is calling us to be the living breathing healing, loving and compassionate community. My girls and I give because God tells us to share the gifts we have received with the ministries of Jesus Christ. I have explained to my children that the monies I give to the church are an act of

faithfulness and a way for us to express our love for Jesus Christ. I have also told them that we give because I believe with every fiber of my being that God has called me to this church and that God has an amazing plan for our future. I feel the Spirit moving within and among our church and I know that God is alive in our congregation. I believe in the work that we do through our outreach and I believe that the Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in New Port Richey is being called to be a beacon of God's love and acceptance in our community and beyond.

We have a faith gap in our budget. Our income (tithes, gifts, offerings and fellowship hall rentals) minus our bare-bone expenses leave what some call a deficit, but what I choose to call "a faith gap." That means we are moving forward in faith, with gratitude and fortitude with the missions of our church. We are moving forward in faith knowing that this is God's church, and God will lead us, in faith, to find ways to fill the budget gap. Yes, we can "dig into our meager savings/investments" to fill the gap, but, instead, we let's step out in complete faith that we will find the ways to raise the funds we need, and, we absolutely believe God will help us as we step forward in faith.

No one likes to talk about money, but the truth is, money is a tool for ministry. I shared my story of giving with you, not to draw attention to my giving, but rather to let you know that I believe in this church and hope that you will believe in the work that the Spirit is doing here, too. As we continue to seek ways to meet the financial needs for sharing God's love in this world, I would like to ask each one of you to please pray for the finances of our church. The Spirit is alive at CCCUCC! Jesus has a plan for us! May we each trust in the power of our God and seek ways to share our faith with God's church. Peace and Blessings: Victoria

Holy Week Schedule...Mark Your Calendar

- March 25, Palm Sunday: 10:00am Worship
- March 29, Maundy Thursday, 7:00pm
- March 30, Good Friday Healing Service: 11:00am
- April 1, Sunrise Service: Sims Park 7:00am
- April 1, Easter Service: 10:00 am

We are all blessed with an Attitude, let's keep ours one of Gratitude!

A Heartfelt Thank you!!

I want to thank everyone who sent me emails, cards, text messages, and called me after Miranda and I were in a car accident. Your love and support meant the world to us and we cannot tell you how much we appreciated you during this difficult time.

Thank you!!

Also, I want to **thank** the entire congregation for the lovely present I received on Staff Appreciation Sunday!! It is now hanging in my office, so I can see it from my desk. Thank you!!--I am so blessed to be able to say that I am your pastor. Each of you is very special to me! Thank you for letting me be your pastor and for walking with me in faith!! Victoria

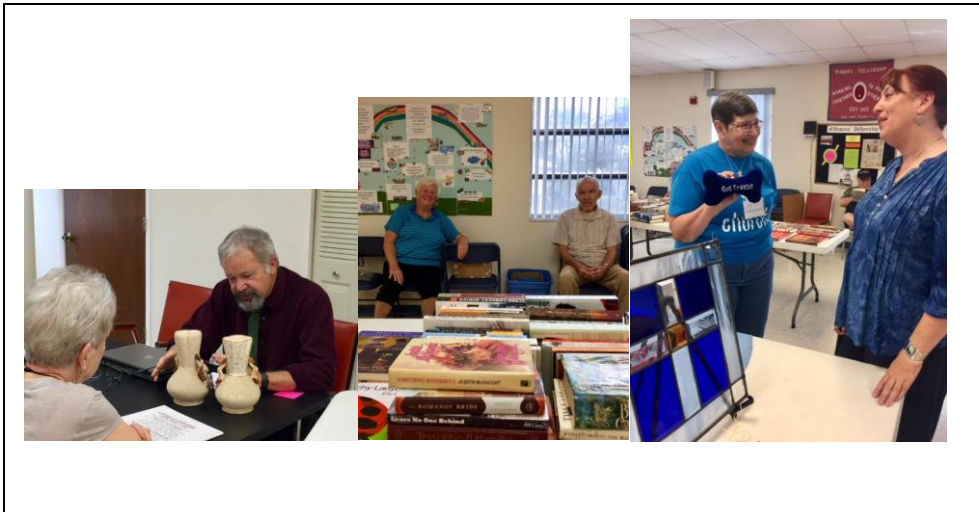
Christian Education: Hooray!!

Our Christian Education Committee is off and running! We had our first meeting in February and we are so excited to begin planning for future events. The Christian Education Committee plans to continue to support and offer adult education opportunities to the congregation. The Tuesday Bible Study group will continue to meet under the guidance of Rev. Dan Van Winkle. Also, we want to thank the Rev. Dr. Lloyd Hunter for his wonderful study on the psalms. Throughout the year we plan to continue to offer programs for adult Christian Education, so keep an eye out for upcoming events.

Believing that the body of Christ is intended to include all of God's children, the Christian Education Committee has made a gigantic leap of faith and we have set the goal to offer a Vacation Bible School to young families in the year 2019! We are asking the entire congregation to pray for this ministry, as we turn to the Holy Spirit to guide us on this journey. We know that this may seem like an unattainable goal, since we do not currently have a large number of young families worshipping with us, but we believe that God is calling us to share the good news with the next generation. This is one way that we can answer this call and we would appreciate your prayers as we explore this possibility.

The Christian Education Committee is also looking for volunteers who would be willing to be trained to help us run the nursery. We would like to have a plan in place so that when a young family worships with us we can offer them childcare. If you are interested in learning more about this new ministry and/or would like to be volunteer to a nursery childcare volunteer, please speak with Cindy Madden. Cindy is the chairperson of this committee and she is full of wonderful ideas and energy!

A big thank you to **Della O'Shea** and her crew for the outstanding work February Fund Raiser, "Antiques Appraisal Fair & Silent Auction" such a wonderful success. A grand total of \$2,236.50 was raised for our church. \$225.00. Pictures below show just how much fun was



had by all. Thank you ...to Church members & friends who donated items to the Silent Auction: Jessie & Del Smith, Cathy Bramer, Della O'Shea, Mickey Darrohn, Robin Kenna, Sydney Kenna, Kim Hoffman, Jan & Lloyd Hunter, Marilee Mills, Connie Diel, Pam & Art Vasali, Gloria Hess, Ben Smith, Karen & Gene Duffy, Jodie & Larry Thomas, Kathy Burk, Rallph Stonier, Bill O'Bad, Bob & Jess Shopey, Lois & John Boyer, Noelle Flanders, Ray & Joan Debri, Terry & Larry Sonnenberg. Thank you ... to those who donated books and baked goods; to those who helped set-up and organize, to those who attended and purchased items; to those who brought items to be appraised.

Let's all thank & support the local businesses that donated to our event; Dulcet, Johnny Grits, Beef O'Brady's, Rosa's Bistro, TCBY Yogurt, Ottaway's Parkside Ice Cream, White Heron Tea & Gifts, Winn Dixie, Sugar Darlings, Ed's Shoe Repair, and Bell Chiropractic Center

Big news of the month: The vote has been cast, we as a church have voted to be an "Open and Affirming Community". We would like to thank all the members for participating in this very important statement. We are all proud that the congregation has listened and voted with our hearts to be totally inclusive.

The **Games Group** enjoyed celebrating the 7th Anniversary of their Thursday Game Day with a visit from one of their founders, Elaine Smith, Director of the NPR Recreational Center. They were reminded of the four original reasons for the founding of this community service group: The need for socializing—for having a safe place to gather—for a low cost—and for a fixed day and time. We are grateful for the use of Andrus Hall each week since June 2015 to continue to welcome folks to come and

take part in this afternoon of fun and games—12:30 to 3:30 pm each Thursday. Call Georgia 727-232-0537 for more information.

Lois and John Boyer wish to thank everyone for the cards, phone calls and prayers during this time of healing. It might take a while so keep those prayers coming. Again, Thank you all!

Robin Kenna is on the mend, thank you to all for the prayers of healing and the cards that lift the spirit. God Bless you all.

Men's Fellowship: A request from the Men's fellowship has asked our church leaders and members of the church council for guidance and assistance while planning future activities. Many members who have served this group in the past have become unavailable or have relocated.

We have been a service and fundraising arm for our church and have continued planning events for the future. Men's fellowship and the Building and Grounds committee share membership for both groups and have worked well together for many activities.

The Men's Fellowship group WILL NOT be able to hold meetings until a Chairman and Recording Secretary/Treasurer have been elected and installed. Our treasury has been relocated to the church banking facility, where it will be administered by the church treasurer.

Let us ALL think proactively about the future direction our congregation, our groups and all committees will take!

Respectfully,

Bob Riley

Past Chairman, Men's Fellowship

Nancy Cox, along with her husband **Gerald**, have begun a project to raise funds to purchase a four-octave set of handbells and accessories. For \$50.00, an individual may choose a bell to dedicate in honor of a loved one, an organization or a cause of their choice. During the February 10th event, \$300.00 was raised for handbells.



Rollin Hartman passed away. February 6th a memorial will be held following the Sunday Service on the 4th. Let us rejoice in his memory and support Faye.

Have you thought about Legacy Giving? What is it? Well, it is a gift to your church endowment fund that will continue to give beyond your lifetime. Secure your church ministries for the future generations. Leave your legacy.

We can increase God's gifts so that they can grow, provide security, and leave a legacy that glorifies God as we introduce our community to a personal relationship with our Savior. Please stop by the church office for more information.

Birthdays for March are as follows:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Jim Lane | 2-Mar |
| April Lockowandt | 3-Mar |
| James Shuman | 4-Mar |
| Winnie Wargo | 10-Mar |
| Heidie Budny | 17-Mar |
| Mo Raphael | 20-Mar |
| Suzanne Meachum | 22-Mar |
| Mae Wiggins | 24-Mar |
| Jim Atchison | 25-Mar |
| Candy Atchison | 25-Mar |
| Susan Spranger | 26-Mar |
| Clarice Emley | 27-Mar |
| Ruth-Elin Riley | 27-Mar |

Anniversaries:

Jackie and Jim Lane married on 3-29-1959 and have been married 59 years.

Did you know?

I have thought long and hard on how I was going to approach this topic, I did a lot of research and then I decided to take a very personal approach and share our story.

When Lisa and I moved to Florida to retire we had big plans to find our home, and continue traveling, rest and

relax on our deck and watch the water from our rocking chairs. Unfortunately, that was not to be.

Yes, we finally found our home and after several trials and tribulations, a flood, two hurricanes and a devastating diagnosis of cancer we moved in. We found that traveling for us was done.

We also realized we needed some spiritual guidance that we had been unable to find in all our travels and life in CT. We prayed and asked a friend for ideas of where to look for a home in a church. She got back to me in a week with this church and asked me to check it out. We came, were late (as usual) and were let in the door by Roy Pulaski. John Boyer greeted us and helped us get seated. It was a wonderful service with a Pastor so full of life that we were just amazed. After the service several people came and greeted us very warmly. We met John's wife Lois and Roy's wife Mona. It was wonderful, and we decided to return the next week. We were again welcomed by John and Lois at the door and many others greeted us. We found a place to sit and again were mesmerized by a delightful sermon. The music that the choir produced was super and we began to feel at home.

Lisa's cancer was already taking its toll, and the Pastor came and visited us at home. We cried together and prayed together. It was in January that we joined the church, Lisa was so very weak we weren't sure that she could do it. She was strong enough to make it and we became active members of a church. This was huge. Neither of us had felt welcomed into a church for 40 years! This is just background for what I really want to talk about.

Our Pastor, and what she does for us. In the past year I have witnessed so much love from this woman to every member of the congregation, the sick, the shut ins and those in need of attention for a multitude of reasons. Then there are the committee meetings she attends, the business of the church she is responsible for, all of it with loving attention. Were you aware that when she was hired you hired a family of four, the Pastor and three daughters! As a church family we are just as responsible for their wellbeing as she is for ours.

She is always on the go, if she is not in her office she may be visiting the sick or ministering to a shut in or a family in need. She may be leading a grief class or attending a meeting. She may be dropping off one of her daughters at school or waiting to pick one up and if, so she is working in her car, returning phone calls, giving advice or information to a church member. She is in the office early and often working late into the night from home. Between all the meetings and visits she researches her topic for her sermon and prepares it, picks bible readings and music for the service with input from the music committee or Jim. Prepares the bulletin for Sunday and coordinates the office volunteers so there is coverage. Really what does this woman not do? At night I have received texts of encouragement and prayers when I needed them, she answers emails and texts at all hours of the night and day.

This is not a full-time job, it is her life, her calling! She is the most giving person I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. Did you know in an effort to hold costs down she has given back to the church her phone allowance, mileage charges and tithes to the church? She has done this since she came here. She has encouraged me to become a Deacon. This is such a stretch for me to do as for so long I was lost to God and this Pastor with this church family has rescued me and brought me back from the brink of despair. I thank you all for your loving care and friendship. I thank our wonderful Pastor Victoria for the gentle encouragement and prayers and friendship. Think about this, without her I would not have returned to the church, Lisa would have passed without the comfort of believing she was going to Gods House. Can anyone ask more of a Pastor? I do not think so.

Helping Our Neighbors

A member of our church, Jessica Beebe, is the owner of Sugar Darlings Cupcakes. Jessica has been giving out free lunches in her shop in Downtown N.P.R. to anyone that is hungry. They ask no questions and do not refuse anyone, unfortunately many of the people are homeless. Jessica does this out of the goodness of her heart.

Some of us at church would like to help her offset the cost, in some way. If you would like to join Jessica in helping our less fortunate neighbors, we will be placing a box in the kitchen marked "Sugar Darlings". We would be collecting any non-perishable items: Peanut Butter, Jelly, Individual boxes of Raisins, Granola Bars etc. Anything that could be placed in a lunch bag. Thank you in advance, if you should choose to help.

Any questions please contact Connie Diel 862-4452.

The Altar Committee

Due to our vendor not selling Lilies this season and not being able to find a new one, we will not be taking orders for Easter lilies this year. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

To reflect the joy of Easter Sunday, if you choose, you may bring in a spring plant of your choice: Lily, Tulip, Daffodil, Hydrangea etc. just no Hyacinths please and we will place it on the altar. You can put your name on a card with the plant and dedicate it in memory or in honor of your loved ones. A list will be printed in the Newsletter or Bulletin after Easter. You may bring in your plants to the church, on Saturday morning March 31, 2018. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Pike 813-679-2000.

Women's Fellowship

Will meet on March 9th at 11:00am in Andrus Hall. Betty Mitchell will be the guest speaker. All women of the church and guests are welcome. Final plans for the "This-n-That" sale will be determined. Election of officers and final study of the budget are on the agenda.

Deacons Met on 2/13/18

There was a discussion on how we can make visitors more welcome to the church and help them find activities that may suit them.

The new pictorial directory is helping to get to know people better. It was suggested that the use of name tags for visitors may help identify them. There are now, "Hello, my name is" paper tags available as visitors enter the church.

Deacons are encouraged to circulate in the congregation before church to invite families with children to use the Nursery as soon as the Christian Education Committee is ready. This will be discussed further in the next meeting.

An Extensive Membership Audit was completed last year by the deacons and included in the annual report. Members listed for removal or a change of status were terminated or up dated in Church Windows during January 2018.

Assignments for the back-door greeter, and Communion were made for February and March. Flower duty will be as needed.

Hands of Faith groups were drawn. Each Deacon will contact their groups as soon as possible.

You might have noticed that the 2nd Saturday dinner has been Revised! We have decided to do these four times a year instead of monthly. This is because the attendance has dwindled. Having it four times a year with entertainment that is fresh is the goal. Please watch for future notices of the event.

Stewardship Committee:

The Stewardship Committee reviews the giving pattern and overall health of the church. This year we will try to keep the congregation better informed, to educate and encourage members to give time, talents, and treasures. The congregation had the opportunity to meet with Jennifer Brewer who has launched **Giving Made Fun**, a program for churches designed to increase annual giving, attendance and engagement, and community outreach. She stressed the importance of spiritual giving. We need to take our giving to heart. There are many ways to give, not just monetary. We are asking everyone to make a pledge weekly to give _____ hours to God: in prayer, in Bible study, in volunteer hours, and in church participation. We are asking each of you to search you hearts for ways that you can make this church the glorious ministry God wants it to be. Can you donate time in the office? Could you sit with a shut-in and free up their care giver? Could you help park cars for a parking event? There are many ways we can help each other and our church. The Stewardship Committee will bring some these opportunities forward each week. How much will you pledge this week to God's mission, our mission.

Daily Lectionary Scripture References March 2018 (Year B)

Fri., Mar. 2 Psalm 19 Exodus 19:9b-15 Acts 7:30-40

Sat., Mar. 3 Psalm 19 Exodus 19:16-25 Mark 9:2-8

Sun., Mar. 4 Third Sunday in Lent Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 John 2:13-22

Mon., Mar. 5 Psalm 84 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Tues., Mar. 6 Psalm 84 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19 Hebrews 9:23-28

Wed., Mar. 7 Psalm 84; Ezra 6:1-16 Mark 11:15-19

Thurs., Mar. 8 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Genesis 9:8-17 Ephesians 1:3-6

Fri., Mar. 9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Daniel 12:5-13 Ephesians 1:7-14

Sat., Mar. 10 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Numbers 20:22-29 John 3:1-13

**Sun., Mar. 11 Fourth Sunday in Lent Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21**

Mon., Mar. 12 Psalm 107:1-16 Exodus 15: Thurs., Mar. 1 Psalm 19 Exodus 19:1-9a 1 Peter 2:4-10

22-27 Hebrews 3:1-6

Tues., Mar. 13 Psalm 107:1-16 Numbers 20:1-13 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Wed., Mar. 14 Psalm 107:1-16 Isaiah 60:15-22 John 8:12-20

Thurs., Mar. 15 Psalm 51:1-12 Isaiah 30:15-18 Hebrews 4:1-13

Fri., Mar. 16 Psalm 51:1-12 Exodus 30:1-10 Hebrews 4:14—5:4

Sat., Mar. 17 Psalm 51:1-12 Habakkuk 3:2-13 John 12:1-11

**Sun., Mar. 18 Fifth Sunday in Lent Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16;
Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33**

Mon., Mar. 19 Psalm 119:9-16 Isaiah 43:8-13 2 Corinthians 3:4-11

Tues., Mar. 20 Psalm 119:9-16 Isaiah 44:1-8 Acts 2:14-24

Wed., Mar. 21 Psalm 119:9-16 Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23 John 12:34-50

Thurs., Mar. 22 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Deuteronomy 16:1-8 Philippians 2:1-11

Fri., Mar. 23 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Jeremiah 33:1-9 Philippians 2:12-18

Sat., Mar. 24 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Jeremiah 33:10-16 Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

**Sun., Mar. 25 Passion Sunday or Palm Sunday Palms: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Mark 11:1-11 or
John 12:12-16 Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:511; Mark 14:1—15:47 or
Mark 15:1-39 [40-47]**

Mon., Mar. 26 Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11 Hebrews 9:11-15; John 12:1-11

Tues., Mar. 27 Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 John 12:20-36

Wed., Mar. 28 Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70 Hebrews 12:1-3 John 13:21-32

**Thurs., Mar. 29 Maundy Thursday Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14 Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 1
Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

**Fri., Mar. 30 Good Friday Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Psalm 22 Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16;
John 18:1—19:42**

**Sat., Mar. 31 Holy Saturday Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24 Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
Psalm 148 1 Peter 4:1-8 Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42**

Junk in the Trunk: March 3, 2018 at 8:30 to 2:00. Please join us!



Welcome to new member Ralph Stonier



March 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 6:30 NA AH | 2 7 NA AH | 3 Junk in Trunk Noon NA AH |
| 4 10 Worship/Svc for Rollin Hartman, 11:30 Finance Bd., 7:30 NA | 5 5:30 Tai Chi-AH | 6 10 Bible Study – PH 10 K & C - AH | 7 11 Lenten – PH, Noon NA – AH, Choir at 5, Bells at 6:15 | 8 12:30 Games AH, 3:30 Ex BD PH, 6:30 NA AH | 9 11 Women's Fel. AH 7 NA AH | 10 Noon NA-AH |
| 11 10 Worship/Coffee 12 to 5 NA-AH, 7:30 NA-AH | 12 5:30 Tai Chi-AH | 13 10 Bible Study - PH | 14 11 Lenten – PH, Noon NA – AH, Choir at 5, Bells at 6:15 | 15 12:30 Games AH 6:30 NA AH | 16 2 Magnolia Condos rent AH 7 NA AH | 17 Noon NA-AH |
| 18 10 Worship/ Coffee 11:15 Finance Info. Mtg., 7:30 NA-AH | 19 5:30 Tai Chi-AH | 20 10 Bible Study – CR 10 K & C – AH, 10 Deacons - PH | 21 11 Lenten – PH, Noon NA – AH, Choir at 5, Bells at 6:15 | 22 This N' That Set Up 6:30 NA Choir | 23 This N' That Sale 7 NA - Choir | 24 This N' That Sale Noon NA - Choir |
| 25 10 Worship/Coffee Blood Drive, 7:30 NA- AH | 26 5:30 Tai Chi-AH | 27 10 Bible Study – PH 6 Italian Women | 28 Noon NA – AH Choir at 5, Bells at 6:15 | 29 12:30 Games, 6:30 NA – AH, 7 Maundy Thurs. Svc. | 30 11 Good Fri Healing Svc, 7 PM NA-AH | 31 Noon – NA AH |
| | | | | | | |

EVENTS

This N' That Sale

Thurs, March 22 set up at 9 am
 Fri, March 23 First Day of Sale
 Sat, March 24 Second Day of Sale
 where a bag of sale items is one price.

Lenten Study

Wed, March 7, 14, and 28 at 11 am in
 the Parish House.

Church Committees/Activities

Sun, March 4 Finance Board 11:30 am
 Thurs, March 8 Executive Board at

3:30 pm Parish House

Fri, March 9 Women's Fellowship at 11
 am Andrus Hall
 Sun, March 18 Financial Information Mtg.
 for the congregation at 11:15 am AH
 Tues, March 20 Deacon's Meeting at 10
 am Parish House