

The Parish Visitor

February, 2017

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What Do Growing Churches Do?

by Rev. Mark

I will admit it right up front- I am a geek. I geek out about ALL sorts of things. But one of the things I geek out about is church growth. I am passionate about it. AND...I read a lot about it. And I read an article on church growth I want to share with you. Written by Brian K. Dodd, the article focuses on what growing churches do. Dodd has a list-

1. Growing churches focus on church health more than church growth.
2. Growing churches demand excellence.
3. Growing churches are vigilant about their mission, vision and core values.
4. Growing churches are willing to stop unproductive ministries.
5. Growing churches not only embrace but also foster change.
6. Growing churches celebrate.

For my money, that is a fascinating and powerful list. Notice #1- if you want your church to grow, don't focus on growth! Focus on health! That makes good sense to me. And I see us doing that in so many ways. We are not about excluding people. We are not about different "factions" jockeying for position and power. We ARE about welcoming everyone and recognizing that we are all radically equal in the eyes of God.

Then there's #2. Again, I feel we are working really hard on that one. It's important that we refuse to settle for less than excellent- it's what God deserves. No less. We want to always try to make everything we do as good as it can possibly be.

#3 says we have to be vigilant about our mission. Can you name the mission of your church? If you have been coming here more than a few months...I'm nearly positive you can! "We exist to connect people to Jesus Christ". We measure everything we do with that yardstick.

The hardest one of the bunch might be #4. Why? Because that means if we have a ministry that is beloved...but is unproductive and doesn't support our mission...we need to be willing to put that that one to bed. It's HARD to shut down ministries. But it's sometimes essential. And I see us more and more willing to evaluate and re-evaluate, measuring which ministries are working and which one are ready to be "put to bed".

#5 probably SEEMS like the hardest...because it has the word "change" in it! (Gasp!) Let's recognize the 400 pound gorilla in the room- change can be hard. But healthy things grow. And when they grow...they change. And if they CAN'T...or WON'T...change, they don't grow. And if they don't grow...they eventually die.

And then there's #6. We like to celebrate, don't we? We celebrate the big things, to be sure. But we also celebrate the small things. (We sing "happy birthday" nearly every Sunday!) We have a lot to celebrate and we should be ready and willing to regularly do just that!

At the end of the article, Dodd says, "While your church may have grown numerically, is Jesus happy with the church that has been built?" That's a VERY good thing to consider. And when I'm honest in regard to that question, I think the answer is "Yes!" I am confident that Jesus is happy with who we are and where we're headed. I also am convinced that He has a LOT more for us to do!

SPECIAL DATES:

- February 2 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- February 5 Communion & Food Pantry Sunday
- February 6 Finance Meeting 6PM
- February 6 Trustees Meeting 7PM
- February 7 "A Happy Heart" UMW Fellowship Event 6PM
- February 10 Renovate Youth Conference 7-9:45PM @ East Moline Christ UMC
- February 11 Renovate Youth Conference 9AM-4PM @ East Moline Christ UMC
- February 15 Preschool Screening 8:30AM-3PM
- February 16 Preschool Screening 1:30-7PM
- February 17 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- February 17 Late Valentine's Date 6:30PM
- February 19 Relay for Life Fundraiser Meal 11:30AM
- February 19 Administrative Council Meeting 7:15PM
- February 20 Office Closed for President's Day Holiday
- February 20 UM Men Meeting 6PM
- February 23 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- February 26 CIA Luncheon 11:30AM
- February 27 Relay for Life Meeting 6:30PM

PASTOR'S CURRENT BIBLE STUDIES

The Trinity: Practically Speaking

WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Tuesday morning Bible Study

WHEN: Tuesdays @ 9AM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe'

WHY: Three Gods, or One, or Three-in-One? Since the word Trinity does not appear in the Bible, many people wonder whether the doctrine is anything more than an intellectual puzzle created by theologians. This book takes readers on a guided tour of the logic leading to understanding God as a Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Bible (and in Christian experience) are all vital to the reality of salvation. All three save. A robust understanding of the Trinity fosters a more full and transformed Christian life.

WHAT ELSE: The books are...FREE and it is NOT too late to join!

The Gospel of Luke

WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Wednesday morning MEN'S Bible Study

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6:30AM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: With a historian's precision, Luke's Gospel shows painstaking care both in detail and in expression. Of equal distinction is the universal appeal of the Gospel. Dr. William Barclay wrote that this Gospel makes " Christ the open door for all without reserve. " In many areas that were either minimized or neglected by the other Gospel writers, Luke's account is more complete, emphasizing prayer, the dignity of women, and praise of God. Barclay's insightful comments help each of us to see the infinitude of God's love through Luke's eyes.

WHAT ELSE: The books are \$15 and it is NEVER too late to join!

Living a Contagious Life

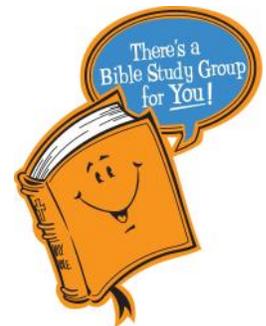
WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Wednesday evening Bible Study

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6PM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: The examples of Levi, Daniel, and Nicodemus and how they influenced those around them are a few of the characters you will be studying while practicing the five elements of a Purpose Driven Life: Connecting, Growing, Developing, Sharing, and Surrendering. There are short reflections to seek God at home throughout the week along with optional questions for deeper study.

WHAT ELSE: The books are...FREE and it is NOT too late to join!



DID YOU MISS SUNDAY'S SERMON?

If you miss church on Sunday, there are TWO ways you can STILL experience the sermon. You can go to the church website (www.myaledoumc.com) and select "Sermon Video Archives". It will take you to videos of the sermons- taken from our live streaming on Facebook at 8AM every Sunday morning. You can also go to www.stickwithjesus.com. Scroll down the main page until you find the date you missed- that day's blog will be a transcript of the sermon! If you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at revmark@stickwithjesus.com. Please share these links with your friends and family.

CURRENT SERMON SERIES

by Rev. Mark

The New Testament story of the Prodigal Son is one of the best known, most scrutinized stories in the Bible. But at its heart...what is the story REALLY about? Who IS the Prodigal? And what does it have to tell us about life in 21st Century America?

In January, we began asking all of those questions- and many more- as we started **The Long Journey Home**. Each week, we are focusing on a few verses from the Prodigal Son story- unpacking it to see what is underneath and, more importantly, what it has to say to us. The remaining weeks the series look like this:

Sunday, February 5, 2017- Celebrating (Luke 15:22-24)

Reunited...and it feels so good! (Psalm 150, Philippians 4:4)

Sunday, February 12, 2017- Realizing (Luke 15:25-27)

Sometimes, the truth is hard to hear. (Proverbs 18:2, Colossians 4:6)

Sunday, February 19, 2017- Accusing (Luke 15:28-30)

Jealousy often leads to pain. (Isaiah 53:7, Jude 1:3)

Sunday, February 26, 2017- Reconciling (Luke 15:31-32)

Though the sorrow may last for the night, the joy comes in the morning! (Psalm 34:8, Ephesians 4:32)

Come each week expecting God to show up in powerful ways!



HOLY LAND TRIP

by Rev. Mark

In January of 2018, Joanne and I will be helping lead a trip to the Holy Land. And WHAT a trip it will be- it will focus on following the path of Jesus' life, from Bethlehem all the way to the Garden Tomb.

We will fly out of St. Louis on Jan. 8, 2018, landing in Tel Aviv on the 9th. That night, we will stay in a hotel in Bethlehem. On the 10th, we will explore one of the most exciting archeological digs in Israel- the Herodion, the palace fortress and final resting place of Herod the Great. Then it's on to Bethlehem, where we will visit the cave where Jesus was born, the Church of the Nativity and the Shepherds' Field, where angels first proclaimed the Good News.

On the 11th, we will visit Tel Megiddo (the Biblical site of Armageddon), Sepphoris (the cosmopolitan Roman capital of Galilee), Nazareth (Jesus' boyhood home) before remembering wedding vows at the Franciscan Wedding in Cana (the site of Jesus' first miracle). On the 12th, we will visit the Valley of the Doves, Magdala, Capernaum and the traditional site of the feeding of the 5,000 before having worship on a boat on the Sea of Galilee. We will spend the night in Galilee.

On the 13th, it's on to Northern Israel, Tel Dan, Caesarea Philippi, Golan Heights and the Mount of Beatitudes before remembering our baptism at the Jordan River. On the 14th, we will tour Beit Shean, Qumran (where the Dead Sea scrolls were found) and the Mount of Olives before going on the Palm Sunday Walk, ending in the Garden of Gethsemane. On the 15th, it's into Jerusalem to see the Emek Tzurim (the Temple Sifting Project), the Gihon Spring, Hezekiah's Tunnel, the Pool of Siloam and the Southern Steps of the Temple. We will end the day with a visit to Mt. Zion and stand in the Upper Room.

On the 16th, it's on to morning prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Kidron Valley before walking to Via Dolorosa (the path Jesus walked to the cross). We will also visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and take Communion at the Garden Tomb, where the Resurrection happened. On the 17th, we fly back into St. Louis.

(continued on page 9)

A Happy Heart UMW Fellowship Event Tuesday, Feb 7th 6-8PM



This is the first of four social events for 2017 and it's open to ALL ladies of the AUMC. It is an opportunity for the ladies to gather for an evening of food, fun and fellowship. We will be decorating Valentine cookies and making up trays of goodies to take to shut-ins and people who are in need of some cheer. Plates or trays of treats will be delivered to church members residing in each of the nursing homes, Brookstone Assisted Living, and to the elderly who still reside in their own homes.

As Proverbs 15:13 says: A HAPPY HEART MAKES THE FACE CHEERFUL. Our mission is to lift the spirits of those needing it most on Valentine's Day. There will be a sign-up poster for items to donate, or simply to sign up to join in on the food, fun and fellowship. Please join us in bringing some happiness to others.

If you know of someone who may not be on our list and would benefit from one of these trays, please call the AUMC office with information by February 1.

CHURCH WEBSITE

Have you looked at your church's website? If not, go to www.myaledoumc.com and see what's going on! Not only can you see the "basics" about the Aledo United Methodist Church, you can find the most church current calendar. Also, the monthly newsletter can be found on our website. Stop by and check it out!



VALENTINE'S DAY

Love is an amazing thing. It breaks all the rules. It has a mind of its own. And it cannot be stopped. Think about it- there are people you love, and you can't even begin to explain why...you just do. Likewise, there are people who love you, and sometimes you can't imagine for the life of you why they do. Another truth about love is that it is so much more than simply an emotion. Love is a conscious choice that takes dedication, perseverance, and some good, old-fashioned hard work.

We all know that February 14th is Valentine's Day- the day we send cards, flowers, and candy to loved ones. (Hallmark and Hershey's have made several fortunes based on that fact.) This Valentine's Day, I hope you do that again (if it is your habit). But along with the conventions, I have a challenge for you...2 challenges, to be exact.

Your first challenge is to make a list of the people you love the most. Write down the 5 things you love the most about them. And then...TELL THEM! Share with them what you love about them. Leave out ANY negatives (we all have them), and focus on the positive aspects of the person. It will make them feel so good, and, surprise, surprise, it will make you feel good, too!

Your second challenge is to spend a total of 15 minutes every day this month in prayer, letting God know how much you love Him.

You may be saying, "15 minutes?!" I said total. Split it up- 5 minutes at a time. You may be saying, "EVERY day for a MONTH?!" Remember, February is the shortest month of the year! You may be saying, "How much I love God?!" Yes, we are called to love God, above all else. God loves us SO much that He sent His only Son to live among us, teach us, die for our sins, and rise for our eternal lives. When you look at it that way, how could we NOT love God? Make sure you tell those around you they are loved. Also, make sure you tell God how much you love Him.

CANDLE...WHAT?

On February 2nd, we recognize a little-noticed day in the church calendar- Candlemas. Described in the Gospel of Luke (2:22-40), it's the day Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem forty days after his birth to both complete Mary's required post-childbirth purification and perform the redemption of the firstborn.



When they arrived at the temple, they met Simeon, who had been promised by God that "he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord." He took Jesus in his arms and prayed the prayer that would become known as the Canticle of Simeon, which prophesied the redemption of the world by Jesus. This was baby Jesus' introduction to God's house, as well as the church's 1st "formal" meeting with the Messiah.

God chose to come down in the form of a newborn- that fact never ceases to amaze! Churches often talk about "Christmas and Easter People" (those who only come to church on special holidays), but we ARE Christmas and Easter people. We worship a God Who chose to do the miraculous- a birth in a manger and a death on a cross- FOR us, so that we might be redeemed. We should keep the miracle of those seasons in our hearts all year long.

SPECIAL OBSERVANCES IN FEBRUARY

February is American Heart Month, Black History Month, Cherry Month, Embroidery Month, Grapefruit Month and Responsible Pet Owners' Month. Some special days include: 1st- Freedom Day, 2nd- Groundhog's Day, 3rd- The Day the Music Died, 4th- Create a Vacuum Day, 5th- Western Monarch Butterfly Day, 6th- Lame Duck Day, 7th- Olive Oil Day, 8th- Clean Out Your Computer Day, 9th- Toothache Day, 10th- Umbrella Day, 11th- Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk Day, 12th- Plum Pudding Day, 13th- Get a Different Name Day, 14th- Valentine's Day, 15th- Gumdrop Day, 16th- Mashed Potato Day, 17th- Random Acts of Kindness Day, 18th- Battery Day, 19th- Chocolate Mint Day, 20th- Hoodie-Hoo Day, 21st- Love your Pet Day, 22nd- Be Humble Day, 23rd- Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day, 24th- Tennis Day, 25th- Quiet Day, 26th- Carnival Day, 27th- No-Brainer Day, and 28th- Public Sleeping Day. Celebrate the best, the worst, the sweetest and the oddest in February!

COOKING FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

We all LOVE to eat! But maybe you also love to cook! We could use your help. Ruth Dulaney is scheduling groups to provide Wednesday Night meals for the "Spring semester". We need individuals, groups, or families to sign up for those 2017 WNFs. There IS a budget, so if covering the cost of the food is a problem...don't let it be! It is a true joy to be able to provide dinner for others. The sign-up board has empty spots just waiting for YOU to be the hands and feet of Jesus!

FUEL- OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by Rev. Mark

Our Wednesday Night Children's ministry- **FUEL**- is off and running. And the leadership couldn't be more excited! The emphasis is built around "Hands-On Bible". The kids have fun while they learn more about the great stories of the Bible...AND how those stories impact their lives! We are SO excited about the positive impact this ministry has on our children! If you have children or grandchildren, please consider helping them be a part of this exciting new program. If you have friends or neighbors who have kids, please invite them. Let them know that they are welcome to come for dinner at 5:15PM, stay for an adult Bible study while their kids are ministered to from 6PM to 7PM and be home, working on homework and getting everybody ready for bed, by 7:15PM!

Thank You

Thank you very much for the fruit and cookie plate you gave me for Christmas. I appreciated it very much.

Katharine Jones

Aledo UMC,

Thank you very much for your generous gift of money. We feel so blessed to be able to serve your church. We appreciate you thinking of us.

In Christ,

Kent & Colleen

Aledo UMC,

Thank you for the food basket and ham. We are enjoying it so much! It is a joy and honor to serve your church. We appreciate your generosity.

In Christ,

Kent & Colleen

Thank you for collecting box tops for our school! Your donation of 386 Box Tops equals \$38.60 towards our new playground equipment, which we hope to have installed in 2017.

Sincere thanks from

The New Boston Elementary PTO

Thank you for the monetary gift that I received as Treasurer for the Church. It was much appreciated.

Dwight

Thank you for the food basket that was delivered to us. It was greatly appreciated.

Don & Gerry Harmon

To each and everyone,

Thank you for the large container of all kinds of goodies that were sent to me at Christmas. It was so good and much appreciated.

Thanks again,

Ed Nesbitt

Dear friends,

Thank you for your generous gift to Samaritan's Purse. I am deeply grateful for your partnership and prayers that make this ministry possible.

Sincerely,

Franklin Graham

I want to give a heartfelt "thank you" to the UMC women for delivering the food basket to my home. It was very tasty and very timely. I'm sure it was prepared and given in the true spirit of Christmas. May God bless each and everyone involved.

Thanks again,

Frazier Hunt

Dear Aledo UMC,

Thank you so much for your gift to the Mercer County Family YMCA Annual Campaign. The compassionate support of individuals like you makes it possible to exist and makes our neighborhood a great place to live. We are so lucky to have you as a donor; thank you for investing and believing in our cause!

Sincerely,

Sarah Brown, CEO

Dear Church Members,

Thank you very much for the wonderful Christmas basket. It is so nice of all of you to remember me during the holiday season. Thank you all for your love and support.

With love,

Rita Haizlip

God has blessed you with a talent for caring about others and spreading happiness. Thank you for sharing this wonderful gift with those around you.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Grace

Thanks ever so much. It was a lovely Christmas basket of goodies and delight from AUMC.

Marchia and Renee Forber

Thank you to the Aledo UMC for the huge Christmas basket I received. I know it took many hands and much time to prepare it all. The fruit, baked goods, candy, soup, etc, I enjoyed it all. I received it on one of those really cold days we had some time ago. I was home thinking how glad I was to be home and warm. Soon a knock at my door made me wonder who would be out on such a cold day. She had this huge basket from the church. I asked her in to get warm, but she had more baskets to deliver. So thank you to everyone who prepared or delivered the goodies, and braving the cold weather to bring joy and happiness to me and others. Sure was good soup! God bless you all.

Gladys Johnson

To everyone who was so thoughtful,

Thank you so much for everything. Hope everyone the best for the new year.

Barb Thompson

Dear AUMC

Thank you for welcoming our family into your church family. We feel so blessed and grateful to be a part of the membership here. Thank you for the thoughtful and generous gifts of a blanket and burp cloths for Carter. We definitely put them to use.

Sincerely,

Pete & Natalie Nelson

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

02/03/2007– Jesse & Connie Midkiff
 02/07/1954– Richard & Beverly Norton
 02/13/2011– Ron & Diane Engstrom
 02/20/1993– Larry & Clara McCreight
 02/21/1954– David & Beverly Haney
 02/26/1977– William & Kathryn Newswander



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

02/01– Connie Shaw
 02/14– Molly Paulsgrove
 02/20– Sheila Spencer
 02/21– Dora Mae Howlett
 02/29– JeAnne Balmer



The deadline for the next
 Parish Visitor is
Friday, February 17 at 8am.
 Please have all articles submitted
 by this date!

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Hank & Betty Allan	Dalon Helm
Bill Bewely family	Devan Helm
Richard Bridge	Keaton Helm
Karen Burke	Geri Howie
Chris Camp	Don Howlett
John & Bev Carlin	Carol Cody John
Jane Chandler	Kimberly & Donny
Dawn Chapel	Wayne King
Jin Droste	Megan Klauer
Erma Dobbins	Allison Kuk
John Earll	Nancy Livingston
Chris Engstrom	Dan Lloyd family
Ron Engstrom	Tiffanee Lloyd
Soni Engstrom	Brent McCurdy
Lyn & Don Franks	Landon McIntosh
Carol Freeman	Jim & Amy McWhorter
C.J. Friedel	Mick Miller
Teresa Gilbert	Monica & Robert
Ted Granquist/cancer	Tom Nees family
John & Donna Grove	Scott Pannier
Rena Hains	Bill Pollock
Mary Hall family	Bryce Rathje
Beverly Haney	Charles Rebello
Rev Mark and family	Pam Retherford family
Michael Harris	Paul Riley
Pam Heath	Richard & Pat G.
	Mary Rillie/health

Richard Rockhold
 Bob Smith
 Dianna Spencer
 Nick Staves/leukemia
 Pam Truman
 Marilyn Wagler family
 Alice Wainright
 Tim Weeks
 Evelyn Yerkey
 Eric Zimmerman
 Shut-ins/Nursing Home Resi-
 dents
 Military & families
 All ill/in hospitals
 Our nation & world
 AUMC members & families
 Mental health
 The homeless
 Unity for our country
 Our youth
 Emergency Crews
 President & Cabinet
 Broken families

Mercer County Schools
 Administration, Teachers, Students
 and Staff
 National and Local Governmental
 Leaders

Lord,
 Hear Our
 Prayer

THANK YOU

Thank you for all the Christmas goodies and wishes. We appreciated them very much. Also, thanks to Barb and Jim Runyon for delivering with smiles and wishes, too!

Kathy, Bev, and Dave Haney

Thank you! God gave you a big heart, and then He super-sized it! Thank you for thinking of us during the holiday season. You all mean so much to the both of us.

Adam Douglas & Tammy Friedel



I'd like to thank the UMW for a really nice Christmas basket. I felt so special. Also, thank you for the card inside. Thank you, Ruth, for taking the time to deliver it. The visit was also a joy! Happy New Year to all the United Methodist Church family. May we continue to grow and bring joy.

With God's blessings,
Nadine Liby

I want to thank all the women who spent so much time on my food basket. It will last me a long time. Blessings to all.

Mildred Harris

Thank you for the monetary gifts from the UMM, the UMW, and the congregation during the Christmas season. What a joy it is to serve our Lord at Aledo United Methodist Church. Your love and support are greatly appreciated. Live in the love of Jesus!

Mike Millar



Thank you so much for the Christmas basket. It was thoughtful, and it was good!
Bettie Speer

Need a ride to church?

Contact Greg Cobert at 309-737-5621, or the office at 309-582-2169 to make arrangements to be picked up.



Thank you!!!

Thank you so much to the United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Men for the generous Christmas gifts. I feel so blessed to be able to work for my Church family.

Debbie Swank

Aledo UMC,

Thank you for displaying our Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby information. Not only did you do us a great favor, but you also helped the community. We truly appreciate your support! Thank you!
Mercer County Health Department



Wednesday Night Fellowship

Food and Fellowship

Come Join Us on Wednesday Nights

Meal: 5:15 – 6:00 PM

February 1st: Ad Council will serve a Baked Potato Bar

February 8th: United Methodist Men are cooking

February 15th: Wednesday Night Bible Study Group will prepare our meal

February 22nd:

March 1st: Fat *Tuesday-Wednesday*: Rev. Mark is preparing pancakes!

If you and your friends would like to serve a meal, please sign up with Ruth Dulaney



CONNECTION COINS FOR FEBRUARY

The Connection Coins (or as Rev. Mark calls them, the “thinly-veiled Pringles cans”!) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, during the Children’s Moment, the ushers pass around those cans. You are encouraged to drop your change in- although we WILL accept “folding money”! And that change goes toward helping fund a ministry within the church.

This month (February 12th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward another important ministry. Our youth programs continue to grow and flourish. And there are times when the cost of a youth event or conference is such that one of the kids simply can’t afford to go. So 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 12th of February will be used to help fund scholarships to enable more youth to be able to more fully participate. What a GREAT way to help connect people to Jesus Christ. So bring your change on February 12th!

Young Adult/Family Ministry Event

February has become the month of the “Late Valentine’s Dinner” at AUMC. And well...it’s that time again! On Friday, February 17th from 6:30PM-8PM, we will host the 4th Annual Young Adult/Family Late Valentine’s Day Dinner! The evening will start off with a GREAT dinner, served in courses and followed up with a marvelous dessert! Some “entertainment” will happen after dinner, as well as some conversation as to where this group heads in 2017. The evening will wrap up at 8PM. Nursery WILL be provided. Watch for the sign-up sheet on Sundays or simply make your reservation through the office. The cost of this event is...ready?...ZERO! Please plan on attending!

Holy Land Trip (Continued from page 3)

Bethlehem. Nazareth. Jerusalem. The Upper Room. The Garden of Gethsemane. The Garden Tomb. Renewing wedding vows in Cana of Galilee. Worship on the Sea of Galilee. Remembering baptisms at the Jordan River. Communion at the Garden Tomb. It's hard to even wrap your head around. To say that Joanne and I are excited about this trip is a GROSS understatement! And the possibility of taking this trip with part of our church family makes it that much better!

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GIVING
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C.I.A. (Caring Individual Adults) Luncheon February 26th

by Joanne Harris

CIA continues to flourish! This group is aimed folks who often find themselves eating alone. This includes (but is NOT limited to) anyone who has lost their spouse, divorced or separated, or whose loved one is in the nursing home. The CIA luncheon happens once each month. This month, the luncheon will be on Sunday, February 26th, immediately following the 10:30AM worship service. You don't have to bring anything except yourself. Feel free to invite a friend to share the meal and fellowship. I look forward to seeing you on the 26th of February at 11:30AM!

Lenten Invitation

By Rev. Mark

The season leading up to Easter- a time for reflection, preparation, sacrifice...Lent. Its beginning is signaled by, of all things, Shrove Tuesday (we know it better as Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras and it is February 28th this year.) and is immediately followed by Ash Wednesday (March 1st this year). We receive the ashes of Ash Wednesday on our foreheads, representing our need and desire for repentance. And then we begin a long and challenging journey that will lead us all the way to Easter Sunday.

Easter is, without a doubt, one of the best, easiest, least threatening days of the entire year to invite someone to church. Do you like what's happening at your church? Are you being fed spiritually here? If so, share that fact with someone! Chose a relative, neighbor, co-worker...whoever...and tell them what God is doing in your life. Then...invite them to come with you to church on Easter and see what it's all about!

Current Women's Bible Study

WHAT: Experiencing Spiritual Renewal, Joanne Harris' NEW Women's Study

WHEN: Tuesdays at 2PM

WHERE: Fellowship Cafe

WHY: Every athlete, performer, and artist trains to reach his or her goals. As Christians, our goal is to be more like Jesus. Spiritual practices are the ways we train to be like Jesus. In this 12-session small group Women's Bible study, participants will look at two types of spiritual disciplines—those that are primarily active and call us to do something and those that are primarily inactive and call us to undo something. Through this study, participants will look at familiar spiritual practices like prayer, study, service, and fellowship through the lens of Scripture and find a renewed zest for life and loving God.

WHAT ELSE: Books are \$5 and it's NOT too late to join!

I am excited to be able to dig deeper into the Word and learn about these women and see how it applies to my life today. Come and join me! - Joanne

Relay for Life Fundraiser Luncheon

The Aledo UMC Relay for Life team will have a luncheon following the 10:30AM Service on Sunday, February 19th. The menu will be walking tacos/taco salads and desserts. Please join us as we begin our fundraising for the year.

Library News

Check out the DVDs in the library! There are **new arrivals** including *Noble*; *Different Drummers*; *God's Not Dead*; *God's Not Dead 2*; *Dolphin Tale 1&2*; *Miracles from Heaven*; and *Woodlawn*. Thanks to all for the recent DVD donations. If you wish to donate books or DVDs, see Mike Millar.



Worship Tech Opportunities

Do you like electronics? Then your church needs YOU! We need people to help operate the sound system and/or the computer during Sunday worship services. What do you need in order to run these things? The list is LONG- a church anyway! Do you feel God calling you to step up and help? Talk to Rev. Mark or Ruth Dulaney.

Where do I fit in?
What can I do?



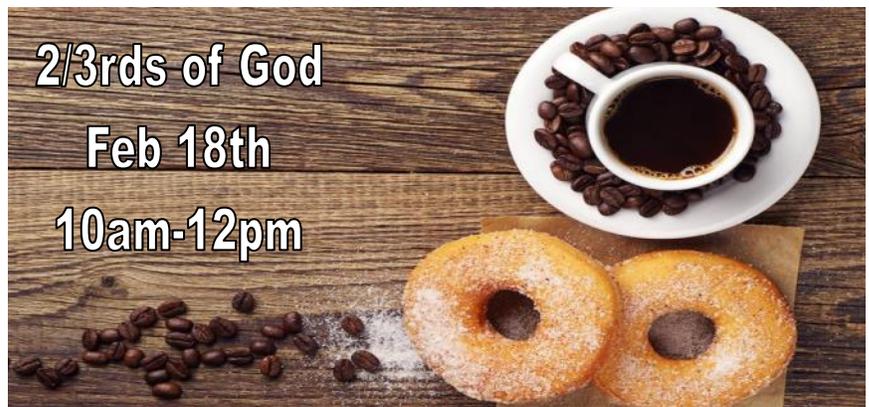
Confirmation Begins!

THE TIME IS NOW! Confirmation, when young people dig into what it means to be a Christian and prepare to become full members of their church, will start in middle of **THIS MONTH!** This opportunity is for youth 7th Grade and older. They will spend 7 Sunday afternoons, starting at 1PM on February 12th and ending March 26th, with Rev. Mark and Melissa, learning more about what it truly means to be a Christian. There will be lots of conversation and reflection, but there will also be music videos and fun “game shows”! Then on April 2nd, they will be baptized (if they have not been), confirmed, and become full members of the church! If you have a youth who is in 7th Grade or beyond, let Rev. Mark or Melissa know that you are interested in this great opportunity!!

youth
FELLOWSHIP

Feb 26th

11:30am-12:30pm



What's Coming Up, TAG:

ATTN, 6-8th graders, Join us on every Tuesday, 5-6:15pm

Senior High (9-12th), come learn and fellowship with us every Sunday, 6:00-7:15pm

Youth Bible Study—Wednesdays, 6-7pm



TAG FACT: Did You Know?

That EVERY meeting involving the Teens Among God includes a meal and a lesson from the Scripture, custom-designed to be applicable to their lives!

**PRAYER WALK
THROUGH THE
CHURCH EVERY
SUNDAY MORNING
AT 7AM.**



**WORSHIP TIMES:
Sundays 8AM,
9:15AM, & 10:30AM
Sunday School
9:15AM**



Sewing Project

Do you like to sew? We have a project to sew costumes for our church's "Live Nativity" setting for December 2017. Come to an informational meeting to learn the details and see if you would like to help with this project. The date is Thursday, Feb 23, 2017 at 2PM. *Martha Rittenhouse*
309-582-7927



FAT TUESDAY DINNER/ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

On **Wednesday, March 1st at 5:15 PM**, we will have a special Wednesday Night Fellowship dinner of pancakes to commemorate Fat Tuesday (technically the day before!)- the day to empty your pantry of fatty food in anticipation of Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent. (see accompanying article) **It will be followed at 6:30PM** by a special Ash Wednesday worship service to commemorate the beginning of Lent. We will look at the reason for the season and more specifically the significance of the ashes. Communion will be served.

FINANCIAL MATTERS (WEEKLY NEED \$6,689)

Date	1/1/2017	1/08/2017	1/15/2017	1/22/2017
Attendance	152	256	278	258
Receipts (Toward Budget)	\$5,826.34	\$4,534.75	\$5,821.00	\$3,482.56

