



February 2022



Lonoke First United Methodist Church

### Lent: A time to intentionally seek God

I know this is a little early for Lent talk, it officially begins in March, but I want to give you some time to consider your options and things you might do this year. I think it is important and I like to consider an important decision for a few weeks before making a commitment, so I decided to talk about Lent this month and give you a few weeks to plan and consider your path. Lent is the 40 days, excluding Sundays, leading up to Easter. It begins with Ash Wednesday, which is March 2<sup>nd</sup> this year. It is a time to prepare and seek God. We draw the model from the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting before beginning his public ministry. It is a time that early Christians would use to prepare for Easter, and new believer would spend preparing for their baptism. It is a time we can pause and reflect on our relationship with God.

Lent is a great time to “repent”, which in the biblical tradition means to change your ways or change your direction. A special time we stop and think about the need to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. Christians have traditionally done three things during Lent to help with this process, fasting, service, and prayer. I invite you to do any or all of them.

**FASTING:** I think this can be in the literal since of going without food for a day or the common method of giving up (fasting) from a specific thing for all of Lent. The small group that the Wesley brothers (Charles and John Wesley who started the Methodist movement) were a part of a group in college fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays. They went a step further than just fasting by adding giving to the process. They would take the money they would have spent on food that day and they gave it to help feed the poor. They removed food and replaced it with an act of service to bring them closer to God. Replacing what you are giving up with something meant to move you closer to God is key. You can fast from candy, tv, soft drinks,

cigarettes, meat or many other things. The key is to not only give up, but to replace it with something that will bring you closer to God. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like tv to spend time outside enjoying God’s creation. The possibilities are endless, just take some time, form a plan, and do not be discourage if it does not go perfect. The key is staying with it or as a wonderful spiritual advisor for me often says, progress not perfection.

**SERVICE:** Christians take something on for Christ during Lent. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children (that may be a little more difficult this year with Covid), or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend every day of Lent. We might decide to write letters or thank you notes. Serving others is one way we serve God. Jesus said “whatever you have done for the least of these, you have done for me.” These acts of service and kindness help us to love our neighbor and God more fully and completely.

**PRAYER:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, come up with a simple breathe prayer that you can say repeated throughout the day or make some time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God. I have several different books on prayer in my office and would be happy to loan them to you if you want to learn or practice a different type of prayer. Prayer is a great habit to develop during Lent. You can say little one sentence prayers throughout the day, use written prayers or just talk to God in a conversation.

God be with you and draw you closer to God, though Jesus with the aid of the Holy Spirit this Lent.  
Peace be with you  
Rev. Jeremy Pressgrove



### Staff Thank You

Your Lonoke First United Methodist church Staff is very grateful for the many gifts and love offerings we have received from all of you. We are all uplifted by your expressions of kindness, both in these gifts and in our daily interactions. Being in ministry with you is a joy, and we look forward to a bright 2022 partnering with you in ministry.

### Fat Tuesday Gumbo Supper

Bring your appetites and join us for a **Fat Tuesday Supper on Tuesday, March 1.**

Bring your friends and family and join in the fun and fellowship. Gumbo is \$15/ quart for dine in or carry out. Please contact the church office to purchase tickets.



### Childcare Center Update

We are excited about some of the changes taking place in the CCC right now! We have added an infant classroom, thank you for the space! We are/have added sidewalks extending from the emergency exits to the back alleyway. This will make rolling the baby beds much easier when we have to evacuate for fire drills (or heaven forbid an actual fire/emergency). 8 of our teachers are going to school this spring semester and 7 are completing the CDA Block and the other is taking classes towards her associates degree in Early Childhood Education. Some who are working on their CDA are also planning to continue on to work towards their Associates as well. There is a lot going on right now! Thank you, as always, for all of your support in so many ways!

Stephanie Studer, Director



### Update from The CALL

We are extremely grateful for the outpouring of support from the community in providing care baskets for sick foster and adoptive families in Lonoke and Prairie Counties! Everyone truly can do something to share the love of Christ with children and teens in foster care. Please pray with us that

God continues to move on the hearts of His people to meet the needs of the vulnerable in our own community.

Melissa Furnell, County Coordinator



Volunteers are needed to help feed the youth. Please contact the church office if you are available to help.



### NYC Renovation Campaign

Congratulations church family! The goal to raise \$60,000 for the immediate needed repairs to the Nix Youth Center has been met. To date gifts, allocated memorials and pledges total \$62,006.00. This figure breaks down as follows:

Gifts Received -	\$39,596.00
Memorials Families have allocated to the NYC project -	10,610.00
Outstanding pledges to the NYC project -	<u>11,800.00</u>
<b>Total -</b>	<b>\$62,006.00</b>

We all can be proud of the success of this campaign. In less than two months we have gone from the announcement of the project, to reaching and surpassing the goal, and the actual work on the repairs starting.

God has blessed LFUMC with momentum going into the future on our effort to improve this facility to better suit our church's needs going into the future.

Steve Clark, Finance



### Lonoke First United Methodist Church

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### Upcoming Meetings and Events

**Youth will meet on Mondays from 6-8pm.**

**Volunteers are needed to feed the youth. Please contact the church office if you are available to help.**

**Fat Tuesday Gumbo Supper, March 1st, 6:30pm.** Please come and invite friends from the community to support our youth. Gumbo is \$15/qt. You may dine in or get it to go. Please contact the church office to purchase tickets.

**Church Council Meeting, Sunday, April 3rd, 6pm.**

### Prayer List

Our prayers are with:

Debbie Depriest, Emily Clark, Marlo Johnson, Lonnie Davis, Art Cole, Jim Goode, Brenda Dobbs, Morgan Burnett, Mary Evelyn McCloud, Bailey Crane, Charles Parker, Ron Gault, Beth Wright and Christian sympathy to the Burks family on the death of Debbie's mom, Sharon Coleman, to family and friends of Tammy Parker on her death and to family and friends of Hugh Keller on his death.

If you have any changes or additions to the prayer list, please call or email the church office.