Preparing for the Cross

17 If our God—the one we serve—is able to rescue us from the furnace of flaming fire and from your power, Your Majesty, then let him rescue us. 18 But if he doesn’t, know this for certain, Your Majesty: we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you’ve set up.” Daniel 3:17-18 CEB

These words from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remind us of the strength it takes to have complete faith and trust in God. Even though they were facing death and being given a chance to recant, to take back, their faith in God, these three men stood strong in faith and faced the fiery furnace. They were not going to give up worshiping God to worship an idol.

Jesus did the same thing when tempted in the desert. Satan gave Jesus three opportunities to turn from his faith in God and place his faith in his own power or that of Satan himself. But, Jesus remained loyal to God; he remained strong in his faith and in his worship of God, Almighty. During the season of Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday, March 1, we have the opportunity to assess our faith. We have 40 days to look at our relationship with God in Jesus Christ and ask ourselves how we are doing. What in our lives needs to be addressed so that we are being faithful and obedient to God in our worship and in our service to him? This is the question we will ask during this time of self-assessment and reflection.

Each Sunday in March we will look at what can help us grow closer to God, discern more clearly what God desires of us, and we will see where our strength in life comes from. We will look at Jonah, Daniel, and Jesus and ask what we can learn from each of them that will help us remain strong in faith, remain clear in our loyalty to God, and to find the strength we can to go to the cross with Jesus.

We will also have the opportunity during Lent to experience a service of Prayer and Healing. This service will happen on Sunday, March 5 at 4:00 pm. We will gather in the Chapel for a time of worship in song, a time of prayer, and a time for personal anointing with oil for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational needs in our lives. You can participate for yourself or on behalf of another. This will be a time of making room for God to enter into our space, to move our hearts and open us to the power of his healing touch.

This time of preparing for the cross is to make room in our lives to hear God. We also make room to confess our sins, to take stock of our lives in relation to God in Christ, and to make room for God to move in us so we understand in new ways what the cross means for us. The cross is God’s way of telling us that his grace, his mercy, is sufficient for us. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had a strong faith in God. Those young men understood what it meant to worship God and God alone. Can we look at the “fires” of life or the “powers” of this world and say that if someone offered us a way out that would move us away from God we would stay firm in our faith? Lent helps us look at our lives in light of God’s mercy and answer that question. We are called to repent, to confess Christ, and to follow in worship and service the God who loves us deeply. May God cover you today in his grace and love, may God fill you today with his presence and peace, may you give God your trust and loyalty, remaining faithful in difficult and joyous times.

See you Sunday,
Pastor Amy

Our mission is To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. At First UMC Decatur, we do that as we Connect in Community, Grow in Faith, Serve in Love as followers of Jesus Christ.
Lent 2017
Preparing for the Cross

Ash Wednesday
March 1, 7:00pm
Ashes to Ashes

Sunday Mornings in Lent
March 5
Jonah: Obey or Flee
Jonah 2:1-10

March 12
Daniel: Faithfulness in Fasting
Daniel 1:1-17

March 19
Daniel: Faithfulness in Worship
Daniel 6:25-27

March 26
Jesus: More than Bread
Thank You Notes . . .

Dear Church Family,

We want to thank you for all the support you gave us for the recent mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Your prayers and monetary donations allowed us to treat the dental and spiritual needs in the impoverished area of Cien Fuegos. With our combined team of 25 servants in two separate clinics, we were able to treat 544 people in all. 101 people accepted Christ as their Savior. Praise God! For us this experience helped us draw closer to the Lord and closer to each other. We were humbled by the fact that we have so much we take for granted. How fortunate we are and how blessed we are, especially blessed to have church family like you. Thank you again.

Love,
Steve & Mary Pilkington

Dear Friends of Fishes & Loaves,

Thank you for the food to share in our food pantry. Thanks for all you do to help feed God’s children, no matter what age! May God richly bless each of you.

Cindy Thieme & St. Mark’s Food Pantry & Missions Team

DRIVERS NEEDED:

Golden Meadows and others in our community have requested rides to church on Sunday mornings. We are currently picking up 4 persons from Golden Meadows and a few people from the Wednesday night meal. We pick them up at 9 am and take them back after the 10 am service is finished. So far, Mike & Carol Pettibone have volunteered to pick up the first Sunday of each month. Steve & Mary Pilkington the second Sunday of the month. Phylis Ulman the third Sunday of the month. Scott & Shelley Porter have helped. We are looking for any help possible. You may commit to a set Sunday per month or any way this outreach fits your schedule. You would let Janet in the office know your availability and she will mail reminder cards with phone numbers and instructions. All our drivers are currently using their own cars.

March Birthdays
3/01 Nan Cook
3/02 Samuel Rash
3/03 Brenda Huggins - G.M.
3/04 Rhonda McIntosh
3/05 Chase Stahl
3/07 Jake Hawkins

March Anniversaries
3/04 Alfred & Elaine Plew
3/04 Grant & Deb Porter
3/29 Lou & Vicky Koning
3/31 Seth & Kelly Coleclasure
THE HOPE CHEST
The Little Shop with a Big Heart

We will be collecting Easter Basket Items beginning March 13th thru April 7th. The baskets are given to children at the Crisis Shelter, Wed. night meals and the hospital.

We are now taking spring and summer items. Remember us when you clean those closets, attics, garages and basements.

Daylight Saving Time
March 12th
Set your clocks ahead 1 hour


Thank you for your continued support.
The Hope Chest Staff
Tana's Colorful Words
PARENTS...
Find out real quick of the ups and downs raising a family and it's not always easy. Yet “Don’t blink, before you know it they’ll be grown up.” Many of us have heard those words. Yes, the days may seem long but the years are short so “Enjoy every moment.”
Looking back the following holds true. We create family fun and memories when we spend time playing board games, reading, making art projects, going to the zoo or watching movies. As we build family quality time we're allowing our children to grow and become the person God created them to be. An important part of creating our family, is keeping a strong marriage. Parents, do take time to share, relaxing together, talking and listening to each other. Children see their parents as an example of positive love. When we live happily, caring about others and praying. We’re teaching our children about God and His everlasting love. Taking time and raising a family filled with God and love is so rewarding. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13
Remember Live, Laugh, and Love, but don’t blink!

Until the come out Again!

That's A Fact
CHANGE
It’s a fact, we all age and grow with growth comes many changes. We might really notice changes if you have a baby, many diaper changes. It can be unbelievable how many changes take place right before our eyes. Watching children grow, develop brings awareness to change. As a child grows in diaper size, clothes, crib, even car seats. But some parents forget to upgrade pacifiers, bottle nipples, sippy cups.

Did you know it's a safety and development issue if you are still giving a 6 month old a pacifier that was designed for an infant's birth up to 3 months. A child's sucking pattern and needs change and develop as they grow! So check those pacifiers, bottle nipples, and sippy cups to make sure they are age appropriate!

That’s A Fact
Opportunity to Serve!

It takes about 30 people to put on this community outreach event. If you’d like to help please sign-up on the board in the lobby online at www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094baeaa2ea3f58-road

Join us for an interactive walk through the events of holy week! This intergenerational experience will be taking place between 5-7pm on Sunday, April 9th.

Check the church website, Facebook page, your email or Sunday bulletins for more info or contact Annette Gower at 301-2244 or gowercrew@gmail.com.
ANNUAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2017
Time: 6:30 pm
Meal followed by music & business meeting

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
901 E. MONROE STREET
DECATURE, IN 46733

JOIN us for a time of fellowship with others, food, singing, and a time of praise!

Reserve your spot today by calling the number below!

Contact person: Love INC
728-4503

RSVP by: March 7, 2017
Present: Pastor Amy Covington, Gracie Covington, Frank Montgomery, Jo Bollinger, Clint Knaub, Aaron Gower, Annette Gower, Leanna Noble, Penny Hinsky, Helen Walters, Jason Brune, Beverly Stuck

1. Opening: Sharing words of praise of recent God sightings. A photo was shown of the Rising Sun “canvas” painted by God.  Communion & Prayer: Pastor Amy

2. Approved Minutes: November 15, 2016 Jo Bollinger moved to approve, seconded by Frank Montgomery, and approved by all.

3. Approved 2017 Financial Budget: Aaron Gower stated all bills for 2016 are paid and we are currently on track. Budget was so moved with Clint seconding and approved by all. Frank stated a grant was written to the church endowment for possible purchase of a different church van. The current van has seen “much better days!” Charlie Brune has done a great job keeping the van running. Helen Walters motioned Ad Council accept budget, Jo Bollinger seconded and approved by all.

4. Resignation: Mike Pettibone has resigned Ad Council Chairperson. Carol Pettibone resigned from Evangelism.


6. Leadership Training/Planning Event: Notes with Focus for the year are in the church office for anyone wanting to read. Pastor Amy stated the 2 main concerns she heard were:
   1. Reach out to all people making them feel part of the congregation.
   2. Who or What is our real focus?

7. Vision and Focus for 2017: The need for open communication to the entire congregation. It is important for all people to feel informed. Solution possible Care Team similar to Shepherding our people. Small Groups are a priority. Also the need for leaders who have the gifts to be facilitators and help organize. If interested talk with Pastor Amy.

8. Red Bird Mission: St. Mark’s will be going September 17-23 and have asked First UMC to join them. If anyone would like to take part Craig & Sue Anderson are the ones to talk with.

9. Next Meeting: There may need to be a called meeting March 21. Next scheduled meeting is April 17, 2017.

Closing Prayer: Gracie Covington

Submitted by: Beverly Stuck
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<td><strong>1 Ash Wednesday</strong>&lt;br&gt;5-6 pm-Community Meal&lt;br&gt;7 pm-Ash Wednesday Worship Service</td>
<td><strong>2</strong>&lt;br&gt;7 pm-Worship Design Team</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong>&lt;br&gt;8:15 &amp; 10 am-Worship&lt;br&gt;11:15-Discipleship Groups&lt;br&gt;4 pm-Service of Prayer &amp; Healing, Chapel&lt;br&gt;5 pm-Youth</td>
<td><strong>6</strong>&lt;br&gt;6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts</td>
<td><strong>7</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Pastor Amy out of office in the morning</strong>&lt;br&gt;9 am-MamaTalk&lt;br&gt;2 pm-Bible Study&lt;br&gt;5:30 pm Staff Meeting&lt;br&gt;7 pm-A.A.</td>
<td><strong>8</strong>&lt;br&gt;5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
<td><strong>9</strong>&lt;br&gt;5 pm-Endowment Committee&lt;br&gt;7 pm-Communications &amp; Hospitality Teams</td>
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<td><strong>12</strong>&lt;br&gt;8:15 &amp; 10 am-Worship&lt;br&gt;11:15-Discipleship Groups&lt;br&gt;5 pm-Youth&lt;br&gt;SPRING FORWARD AN HOUR -- Daylight Saving Time Begins</td>
<td><strong>13</strong>&lt;br&gt;6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts</td>
<td><strong>14</strong>&lt;br&gt;2 pm-Bible Study&lt;br&gt;6:30 pm-Love INC Annual Dinner Meeting&lt;br&gt;7 pm-A.A.</td>
<td><strong>15</strong>&lt;br&gt;5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
<td><strong>16</strong>&lt;br&gt;Pastor Amy out of office</td>
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<td><strong>19</strong>&lt;br&gt;8:15 &amp; 10 am-Worship&lt;br&gt;11:15-Discipleship Groups&lt;br&gt;5 pm-Youth</td>
<td><strong>20</strong>&lt;br&gt;6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;&lt;strong&gt;Newsletter Deadline&lt;/strong&gt;</td>
<td><strong>21</strong>&lt;br&gt;9 am-MamaTalk&lt;br&gt;2 pm-Bible Study&lt;br&gt;6 pm-Stewardship &amp; Finance Team&lt;br&gt;7 pm-A.A.</td>
<td><strong>22</strong>&lt;br&gt;5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
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<td><strong>26</strong>&lt;br&gt;8:15 &amp; 10 am-Worship&lt;br&gt;5 pm-Youth</td>
<td><strong>27</strong>&lt;br&gt;March 27-31-Spring Break</td>
<td><strong>28</strong>&lt;br&gt;7 pm-A.A.</td>
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<td><strong>29</strong>&lt;br&gt;5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
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<td><strong>30</strong>&lt;br&gt;7 pm-A.A.</td>
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Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

CONNECT—GROW—SERVE

February 12th "Cereal Sunday" Successful

St. Mark's and First UMC working together. This picture shows First UMC’S 65 boxes of cereal donated to St. Mark’s Food Pantry. The two churches collected 268 boxes of cereal. “What an awesome way to share with others in our community.”

Thank You one and all.