

Faith's Happenings...

April, 2024

Happy Birthday

Mary Lou Fitzgerald	4th
Tom Jackling	11th
Marie Rutherford	13th
Gary Boehler	13th
David Jacobson	13th
Ann Banting	14th
Kathy Myers	22nd
Gloria DeMeritt	26th
Jeanne Kittleson	27th

Happy Anniversary

Gary & Marcia Wilkins 24th

**If we missed your name/date, we're sorry.
Please notify Barbra in the church office
to have your special dates added.**

April at a Glance

*Mark your calendars now!
Men of Faith Breakfast: April 2
Ladies Luncheon: April 10*

Of Note This Month:

**We go back to one service on April
7th.**

**Sunday School resumes the first
Sunday in April at 10:30.**



Thank You

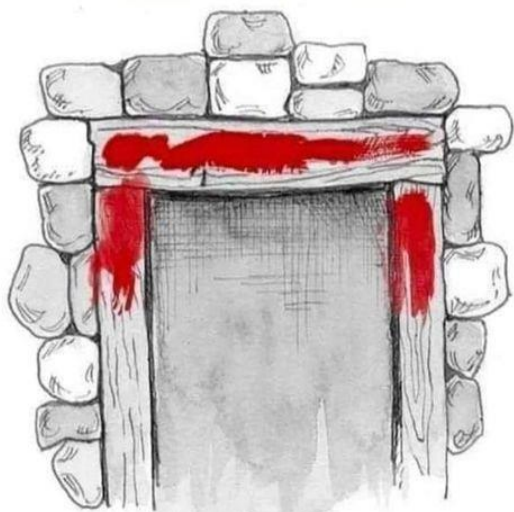
Thank you very much to everyone who prepared soup, dessert, set up and cleaned up, and attended our Lenten soup suppers this year. Your food offerings and help were much appreciated by everyone. It is always a wonderful opportunity to meet other members and get to know people aside from worship.

Men's Breakfast

Guys, you are invited to join us on Tuesday morning, April 2nd, at Stefanos. We meet at 7:30 for some great food and fellowship. You can stay as long as you like and get to know your church brothers. No sign-up necessary.

Long Term Prayer

This prayer list is for those who need continued, long-term prayer. We try to keep the weekly prayer list short, so people named may be moved to the newsletter after a few weeks in the bulletin. If you want to add someone to this list, contact Barbra in the church office (697-3313). Please keep these folks in your prayers: Joanne Best, Kathy Kanak, John Schleede, Carl Jaspers, Lois Howell, Gary Wilkins, Scott Schultz, Alex Hoops, Tom Jackling, Ginny Linsberg, Jack Myers, Rosie LaQuay



The LORD did not check
who inside the house was worthy.
HE checked for the BLOOD
on the doorposts.
None of us is worthy.
Only the blood of Jesus can cover us.

Sunday School

Sunday School resumes April 14 after worship (10:30). Meet in the doublewide to study the book Just Like Jesus by Max Lucado.

Ladies Luncheon for April

The April Ladies Luncheon will be held at 11:30 am, Wednesday April 10th, at Ken & Barb's Grove City Grill. The restaurant is located just off Placida Road at the bridge near the high school. We will order off the menu with separate checks. Come for the enjoyment of fellowship and laughter! Deadline to sign up is Sunday, April 7th. The sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you need more information, see or call Kathie Wiley (941-662-5383).

New Refrigerator

Our very old refrigerator was no longer functioning properly, so it had to be replaced. Thanks to Jeff Kamm for finding the new one and making arrangements for it's delivery. Check it out next time you are in the church.



NOT APRIL FOOLS

The day after Easter Sunday is April Fool's Day, one day I just could never really relate to. Still, as a youngster, I probably participated in it more than I care to admit. For a child it can be a day of tomfoolery, playful pranking and fun for jokesters. However, as adults we come to realize it is a day that is predicated on deception, telling lies or half-truths where everything is made alright by adding "April Fool's."

In Luke 5, when the Pharisees and scribes begin murmuring against Jesus for dining with Levi the Tax Collector, Jesus answered them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do." (Luke 5.31 NHEB) Jesus has come for all who are, sick, broken, carrying heavy burdens, guilt, regret, and the list goes on.

Jesus came into the brokenness of our lives and our world to bring hope. In reaching out to Levi, the Lepers, the women, the centurion, the Greeks and Romans, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the children of God, Jesus brings hope. He dies on the cross paying the price for our sin. On Easter Sunday, God raises Jesus from the dead so that we will know life, have our hope renewed, and find strength to live in God's will each day. Our hope comes from both days: Good Friday and the cross, Easter Sunday and the empty tomb.

Matthew West's song, "Truth Be Told" speaks about the truth of Jesus' teaching and helps us understand the significance of what Jesus says in Luke 5.31. There is a verse which says...

There's a sign on the door
It says, "Come as you are," but I doubt it
'Cause if we lived like that was true
Every Sunday morning pew would be crowded, yeah

**But didn't you say church should look more like a hospital
A safe place for the sick, the sinner, and the scarred, and the prodigals**
Like me

As people of God, we are gathered together, not because we are worthy, holy or already perfect. The closing hymn of The Billy Graham crusade was, for as long as I can remember, "Just as I am". Two of the verses that ring in my heart are...

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come

**Just as I am, Thou wilt receive
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
Because Thy promise I believe**
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come

We are gathered together by God because we are loved, forgiven, cleansed, relieved, broken hearts and lives made whole by the grace and love of God. This is the power of the cross. This is the power of the empty tomb. This is the source of our hope, not that we are perfect, but that God loves us.

The plaque on the Statue of Liberty reads: "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" When the Statue of Liberty was erected and that plaque placed, it was a symbol that was a beacon of light, and hope for the nations of our world. Assurance that here on these shores, people who were battered, abused, homeless, hopeless, could find something different, could find new life.

Our track record as a nation is spotty at best when it comes to living up to that ideal. However, it remains before us as reminder, not of where we have been, but what we aspire to be. I think Maya Angelou puts this into true perspective when she says, "I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better." We continue to move forward, not perfect, not perfected, but aspiring to do better for our generation, our children and grandchildren, and all who will come after us.

As people of God and people of Faith, the Cross and the Empty Tomb stand before us as inspiration and hope for our aspirations. May we live, love and care for one another so that hope is renewed.

God's blessing as we enter the Easter Season! No foolin',
+Pastor Brian