

## ***The TRUMPET***

**March 2024**

A publication of the East Woodstock Congregational Church, 220 Woodstock Road, East Woodstock, CT 06244

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**The Trumpet deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month!**



### **Journeying – slowly, intentionally – to Easter**

We are in the season of Lent which leads us to the celebration of Holy Week – Palm Sunday (March 24<sup>th</sup>, the day that Jesus entered into Jerusalem to great fanfare, knowing that he would soon be arrested by the authorities), Maundy Thursday (March 28<sup>th</sup>, when we celebrate Jesus' last supper with his disciples), Good Friday (March 29<sup>th</sup>, when we remember Jesus' crucifixion), and finally the glorious celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The season of Lent is not as popular as Easter itself. We like Easter with its emphasis on resurrection and new life. We think of butterflies and flowers, new beginnings, forgiveness and the chance to begin again. Can't we just skip Lent and go right to Easter?

But no – we'll actually have a deeper appreciation of Easter if we take the time to journey through the days of Lent. Here is one way to think about Lent – the poet Ann Weems writes about the Lenten season in her book *Kneeling in Jerusalem*: "Lent is a time to take the time... to let the power of our faith story take hold of us... A time to intensify our living unto Christ... A time to ponder and a time to wonder... Lent is a time to allow a fresh new taste of God!"

Lent is about taking time. We can't hurry to Easter. We can't "pass Go and collect \$200" without first taking all the necessary steps in between. We can think of these 40 days of Lent as a gift to us – a time to prepare for Easter and an invitation to deepen our relationship with God.

There are no "rules" about Lent – you may want to experiment with different spiritual disciplines and approaches and see what works best for you. Maybe you want to make an effort to attend worship every Sunday during Lent. Perhaps you'll want to join in our Lenten conversations (in person or on zoom) as we talk about the book *A Different Kind of Fast* Christine Paintner. Maybe you will experiment with different forms of prayer, or you will try new ways of living out your faith with acts of kindness or giving some time to volunteer activities. You might want to try to read the Sunday Scriptures in advance of Sunday – they are listed in the Trumpet and in the bulletin.

There are unlimited ways to feed our spirits and become more aware of God's presence – the challenge is to be intentional enough to actually take the time to do them. That is the beauty of Lent – it offers us the gift of time. Time to spend with God.

Let me know how you choose to mark the days of Lent. May your journey to Easter be blessed.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Susan J. Foster

**The following are the scriptures for the month of March:**

You are invited to read them as part of your daily devotions and as preparation for worship.

**March 3**

Exodus 20:1-17  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
John 2:113-22

**March 17**

Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Psalm 51:1-12; 119:9-16  
Hebrews 5:5-10  
John 12:20-33

**March 31 (Easter)**

Acts 10:34-43  
Isaiah 25:6-9  
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
John 20:1-18

**March 10**

Numbers 21:4-9  
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22  
Ephesians 2:1-10  
John 3:14-21

**March 24 (Palm Sun)**

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29  
Mark 11:1-11  
John 12:12-16



## WORSHIP NEWS

*Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in our sanctuary. You can also join in online on Facebook Live or YouTube Live at 10:00 a.m.*

*Recordings of the service can be found on the church's Facebook page and our YouTube channel.*

**March 3:** Communion Sunday

**March 10:** City Reach Reflection

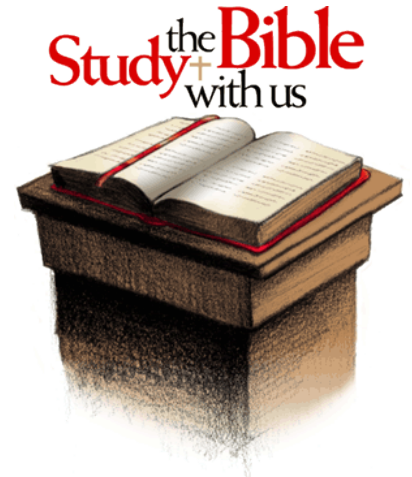
**March 17:** Blessing prayer shawls. Bell choir playing. Following worship: Conversations on Sue's retirement (led by Rev. Dr. Denise Esslinger)

**March 24:** Palm Sunday.

**March 28:** Maundy Thursday. 7:00 PM

**March 29:** Good Friday. Prayer stations in our sanctuary. Stop by during the day to enjoy the beauty and quiet of our sanctuary.

**March 31:** 6:00 AM Easter Sunday Sunrise Service (behind Woodstock Academy cafeteria)  
Easter Sunday service, 10:00 AM



*A mid-week  
opportunity for  
conversation, coffee,  
learning, and  
laughter.*

*Give yourself the  
gift of time...*

*Wednesday morning  
study group  
10:00 a.m.*

*Everyone is welcome!*

Dear Members of East Woodstock Congregational Church,

We hope this letter finds you well and blessed in the grace of our Lord. As your Pastoral Transition Team, we wanted to reach out to provide clarity and guidance regarding the upcoming transition process as we prepare to bid farewell to beloved Pastor Susan Foster and welcome new spiritual leadership into our congregation.

Over the coming months, Pastor Sue will be transitioning out of her role as our spiritual leader after 36 years of serving the East Woodstock Congregational Church community. While this news may bring about mixed emotions, it's essential for us to approach this transition with faith, unity, and a sense of anticipation for what God has in store for our congregation.

A transition team comprised of members from Deacons and Council has been established to oversee and facilitate a smooth progression to new leadership. In our role, we will work closely with area ministry to find an interim pastor. Our interim pastor will work with a search committee that will be put together by the church, likely through a nominating process.

We will also be organizing informational meetings for the congregation in the coming weeks. These meetings will be the first step for us all to work together to learn about the process of Pastor Sue's retirement and finding a new pastor. Now, more than ever, we need you. Together, we can support one another throughout the transition process and navigate it with positivity and gratitude. Let us not forget that Pastor Sue has led us by empowering strong leadership and teamwork within our church, and this will serve us well in the days to come.

Throughout this process, transparency and open communication will be paramount. We commit to keeping you informed every step of the way, providing regular updates on the progress of our search for an interim minister.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to our congregation. Together, let us remain steadfast in our faith and united in our pursuit of God's will.

With Blessings,

Jennifer Griffin, Amy Hiller White, Dorrie Scranton, Taryn Tomkins  
Pastoral Transition Team, East Woodstock Congregational Church

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## News from the Pews

*Do you have a special event you would like to share with your Church family – a birth, a graduation, a new job, an engagement, a wedding, a special honor, etc., etc.? Drop a note off in the secretary's office or e-mail Heidi at [churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org](mailto:churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org).*

We celebrated two baptisms in February: **Phoenix Fox Mondino** son of Jeanna Mondino and **Connor Steven Graber**, son of Jacquelin (Lee) & Matthew Graber. We give thanks for the gifts that they are and ask for God's blessing on their life journeys.

***A Women's Retreat***  
***Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25***  
***at Camp Wightman, North Stonington, CT (40 minutes from our church)***

***Released***

John 11

We will immerse ourselves in the rich story of Lazarus being set free by Jesus, as we wonder what might be holding us back, what we need or want to be released from, what will help set our spirits free. This retreat will include time for renewal and fellowship. The retreat will start at 3:00 pm on Friday and conclude at 4:00 pm on Saturday. You are welcome to come just for the day on Saturday if you are not interested in spending the night. There will be free time for knitting, scrapbooking, reading, quilting, or even just relaxing. Please fill out the registration form and return it to Heidi Tucker as soon as possible. The cost for both Friday and Saturday is \$100. This price includes dinner on Friday evening, lodging for Friday night, breakfast and lunch on Saturday. The cost for just Saturday will be \$40. This price includes breakfast and/or lunch on Saturday plus all activities. The start time on Saturday is 9:30 am and concludes at 4:00 pm. Breakfast is served at 8:00 am. Visit our website [www.eastwoodstockchurch.org](http://www.eastwoodstockchurch.org) for more info!

Registration Form

Paid:    ☐ By Check # \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ By Text

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, please contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I will be staying overnight on Friday, March 22. Cost is \$100. Dinner on Friday, breakfast and lunch on Saturday are included. Please check one:

☐ I will be there for dinner.      ☐ I will **not** be there for dinner.

☐ I will be coming just for the day on Saturday, March 23. Cost is \$40. Please check one:

☐ I will arrive by 8:00 am for breakfast & lunch. ☐ I will arrive by 9:30 & stay for lunch.

Please return this registration form and your check to us by Sunday, March 10. Make checks payable to EWCC, with the word "retreat" on the memo line. Or text your payment to 860-357-6119 (Example: \$100 Retreat)

Financial assistance is available:

☐ I need financial assistance. Please call me with more information.

**If your plans change, please let us know before March 10.**

We cannot do refunds after that date.

## **Conversations on Sue's Retirement: March 17<sup>th</sup>**

You're invited to join in a time of conversation about what it means for us, as members and friends of the East Woodstock Congregational Church, and our relationship with Pastor Sue, following her retirement in June. Serving as a Pastor is a unique position and responsibility, and there are ethical considerations and boundaries for her and for us that we all need to be aware of.

Rev. Dr. Denise Esslinger, who is a member of the East Woodstock Congregational Church and served as the Pastor of the Gilead Congregational Church for 23 years before her retirement, will be leading these conversations, sharing her experiences, as well as answering any questions you may have.

The gathering will be held after worship on **Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>** in the Sanctuary. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Rev. Esslinger at [desslinger2@gmail.com](mailto:desslinger2@gmail.com) or call the Church Office (860-928-7449). We hope this conversation will be helpful as we prepare for this time of transition ahead.



### **All Hands in Prayer**

We as a congregation and community are moving into a transition as we prepare to say good-bye to our beloved Pastor Sue and her family. Many of us are just so unsure of the “what now?” and “what are we going to do?” and “how will it be for Sue?”.

The answer is prayer. Prayers for Pastor Sue, prayers for our church and all the uncertain times ahead. Jeremiah 29:12 says, “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you.”

The Diaconate has set up a “prayer schedule” so that someone will be praying for our church and Pastor Sue morning, noon and night seven days a week. This will be your committed time to pray. I encourage you to sign up for a time slot that works for you. The schedule will be available in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour. You can also email Anne Sorensen ([annesorensen065@gmail.com](mailto:annesorensen065@gmail.com)) or myself ([susanconverse1@gmail.com](mailto:susanconverse1@gmail.com)).

Matthew 21:22 “And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

Susan Converse

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### **Heidi Tucker is Retiring**

After 22 years of dedicated service to our church, Heidi Tucker announced her retirement plans to the Society Committee. Heidi has been a remarkable and committed support staff to our church and Pastor Sue. As Office Manager, Heidi supported our congregation in many behind-the-scenes functions, preparing the bulletin each week, publishing the Trumpet, Weekly Reminder, Annual Report, and all church correspondence needs, to name just a few of the many duties that were always professionally completed. We all wish Heidi a well-deserved and relaxing retirement.

Heidi's last day is scheduled for June 28, and the Society Committee is beginning the search process now with plans to have a new Office Manager available to begin training with Heidi and Pastor Sue by May 13. UCC Conference guidelines recommend hiring support staff from outside of our congregation, with this in mind we will advertise outside of the congregation.

Our objective is to provide ample time for the new Office Manager to work with both Heidi and Sue to learn the many, many functions that our Office Manager performs to support our church. Please wish Heidi well and thank her for all she has done for us all.

Society Committee

# THANK YOU!!!

*The “church” is not the building. The “church” is all of us, offering our time and talents to share the Good News of God’s love and hope. This month we especially would like to thank...*

**All the bakers and soup makers** who made it possible for all of us to enjoy good food and wonderful fellowship. Thank you to everyone who brought muffins and fruit for our Breakfast Church in January. And many thanks to everyone who created a wonderful variety of tasty soups for our Jazz Sunday lunch. It’s wonderful to share a meal together as a congregation – thank you for making it possible!

**The LBS** for hosting our delicious breakfast for Breakfast Church. It was a wonderful time of worship, fellowship, and looking past and forward at our annual meeting.

Our volunteers who help with snow removal: **Seth Spalding, Dennis Kelly, Mark Billings, Glen Lessig, Christine Lessig.** Thank you for making it safe for us to get to church!

**Our generous congregation** who donated a total of \$1051 to Abba’s Army, the volunteer group who supports veterans in our area by building ramps and offering hands-on help. More information: [www.abbasarmy.com](http://www.abbasarmy.com)

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## History of the Palm Sunday Men’s Chorus

All men are invited and encouraged to keep this tradition going! Come to the rehearsal and be ready to sing on Palm Sunday!

According to a news clipping quoting 82 year old George Wetherell, in 1933 Vernon T. Wetherell created and directed the first Palm Sunday EWCC Men's Choir which sang *The Palms, Lift Up Your Heads*, and *Nearer My God to Thee* as arranged by Mr Wetherell. All men in the community were welcomed to sing. Families filled the pews. Ladies and daughters wore hats and gloves. Mr. Wetherell directed the choir through 1971, the year he died.

It was this same VTW who, as a young farmer, was inspired and dedicated to raising funds to replace the reed organ with a Frazee Pipe Organ. Our organ was installed and dedicated April 1929 just before the Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression!

All men are invited to carry on our rich music history by joining in the men’s Palm Sunday chorus. Please come to rehearsal on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

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## LBS NEWS

(Ladies Benevolent Society)

**Our next meeting is on March 20, 2024 at 1:30 in Fellowship Hall.** We are looking forward to getting together again after our two-month hiatus! Pam Brown will do a presentation on the Roseland Park Committee Legacy Campaign. The meeting will be hosted by Cris Waldron and Faith Armstrong. Please join us! ***All are welcome! There is no membership, only fellowship.***

The schedule for the next two months is:

- |            |                 |                         |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| ❖ April 17 | Alaska          | Christine & Glen Lessig |
| ❖ May 15   | Visionary Women | Ellen Duzak             |
|            |                 | ○ Celebrating Gardening |

Kerstin Forrester  
President, LBS





I would like to order flowers for Easter.

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

To Honor: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

***Flower Choices:***

Tulips (6"): \$13.00 ea   Lilies (6"): \$16.00 ea   Daffodils (7"): \$17.00 ea

Tulips \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$13.00 ea

Daffodils \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$17.00 ea

Lilies \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$16.00 ea

Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_

*Fill in the necessary information using back of this form if needed. Enclose a check for the cost of the pot(s) wanted, made out to EWCC. Mail to: EWCC, PO Box 156, East Woodstock, CT 06244, text your payment to 860-357-6119 (Example: \$17 Easter) or drop it off at the church office.*

***Deadline: March 17.***

## Outreach Committee News



### ***Easter Baskets For Covenant-to-Care & Domestic Violence Shelter***

Outreach will once again be participating with DCF in our Easter "bucket" gifts for children in the care of the CT Department of Children and Families, as well as children who are housed at the Domestic Violence and Homeless Shelters.

- Bucket with Tags that identify the child will be available on **Sunday, March 3.**
- Each person who takes a bucket must sign list
- Buckets will be due back no later than **Sunday, March 24.**
- DCF will pick up on **Monday March 25;** items for shelter children will be delivered to shelter.

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**No Clothing Donations:** Unless a special clothing drive is announced, we can no longer accept clothing donations. If you have clothing to donate, please consider bringing you donation to the following places:

1. Daily Bread – 53 Grove Street, Putnam 06260 – (860) 456-7270. Please call to find out when donations are accepted.
2. WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministries -866 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226. 860-456-7270. Please call to find out when donations are accepted.
3. The Arc Emporium – 22 CT-171 Woodstock, CT 08281. (860) 928-4727. Donations are accepted on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
4. Bethlehem Closet at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 345 Main Street, Southbridge, MA 01566. (508) 347-7927. Please call for donation hours.
5. Any clothing donation bins in various locations in area towns.

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### **First Friday Food Fair**

**For anyone who could benefit from additional food support**

**Fridays, March 1 & April 5 9 to 10 am**

**We continue to appreciate and collect non-perishable food it**

**Collection bins are on the ramp by the entrance to Fellowship Hall or on the Outreach table.**

**Thank you!**

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**Prayer Shawls** are available for those who might benefit from the comfort of the shawls. Please see Pastor Sue or a member of the Outreach Committee if you know of a person who is in need. The **Blessing of the Prayer Shawls** will take place on March 17!!!

## CARING CONTINUES!

We are continuing to collect Grape Jelly in plastic containers to help Woodstock school children in need of food assistance.

Our donations make a difference!



## Senior High School Scholarship

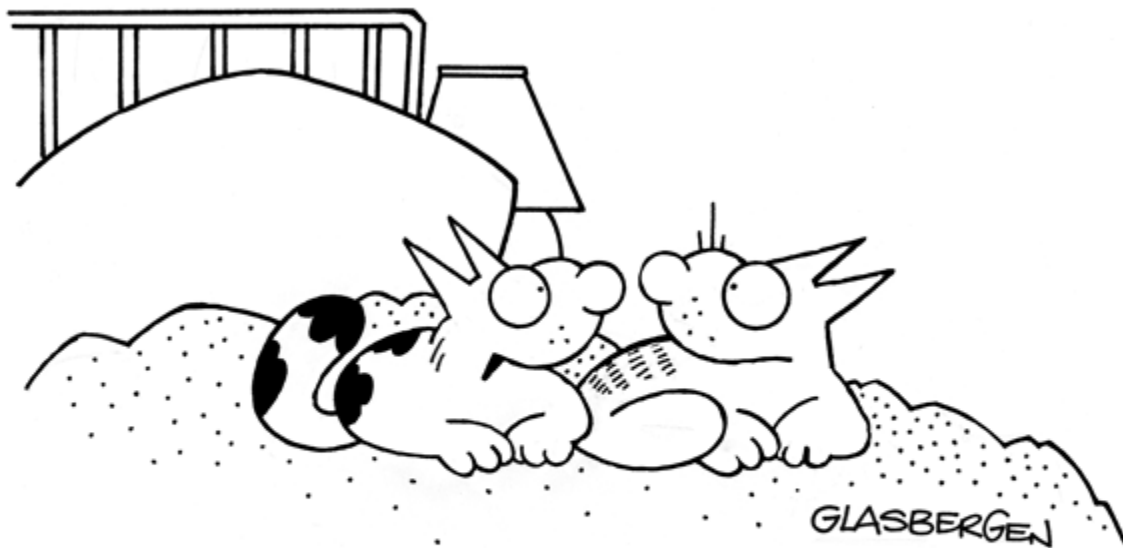
A scholarship is awarded each year to a student who is associated with EWCC and is pursuing their

education in the field of ministry or in a field related to human services/social services such as teaching, nursing, social work, etc.

Applications are available for download on the church web site Outreach page or in the church office and are due back by May 1.



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**“Personally, I wouldn’t mind at all if God sent a plague of mice to rain down upon the sinners of the modern world.”**



*You are invited to*

## **Holy Week Services**

Please join us for these special services in celebration of Holy Week:

**Palm Sunday.** Sunday, March 24, 10:00 am

We gather together for a special worship service including our traditional singing of "The Palms" by our Palm Sunday Men's Choir and music by our Bell Choir.

**Service of Tenebrae.** Maundy Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm

The word "tenebrae" means shadow. Hear the story of Jesus' final hours as he chooses to let the shadow of death overcome him. This is a quiet, moving service when God's love and God's willingness to give his Son for us is made clear.

**Good Friday.** Friday, March 29

You are invited to enjoy the peace and silence of our sanctuary which will be open from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm for quiet reflection. There will be a variety of prayer stations to help you offer prayers on this special day.

**Easter Sunday.** March 31

6:00 am Sunrise Service (behind Woodstock Academy)

*"On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb...  
and found the stone rolled away from the tomb".*

Come and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the beauty of the early morning.

10:00 am Worship

Celebration of the Resurrection!

Let us sing our praises  
to God and give thanks for the gift  
of forgiveness and new life.

# Sunday School News

## Children's Corner Chapel

Hello Church Families of ALL Ages!

Yes, we are still in the season of Lent. Yes, the younger members of our church are learning about Jesus' Love in different ways every week. Yes, they enjoy being together with their church family members. And yes, we can always use more teaching helpers, so please let me know if you can teach even once in the next 3 months!

Next, I would ask you to save the date of June 9, 2024. That Sunday we will be celebrating the children in our church family and all they have learned in Sunday School this past year. The children of the church would like to share how they have grown closer to God through their explorations of prayer and play. Please join us as they lead us in that day's worship.

For families with young people, please bring them to prepare in the weeks ahead of June 12<sup>th</sup> and know that on Children's Sunday not only do our youngest members lead us in worship, but they also get celebrated in many ways. There will be Bible's gifted to specific ages and other recognitions given during the service.

Second, we will be having Vacation Bible School (VBS) this summer! VBS will follow the same format as last year; we will meet for 4 different Wednesday evenings. We will have lots of hands-on activities for campers who have completed Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. However, we need adults to help! If you can lead a workshop, cook a dinner, or be a shepherd, please let me know! Now is the time for planning! Please sign up to volunteer by letting Jessica Weaver Boose know if you are available one evening or all four. This will be an exciting church and community event. ALL are welcome to join. Invite your neighbors and visiting family members!

If you have any questions, please reach out to Jessica at [jessalou@mac.com](mailto:jessalou@mac.com)  
Peace.

Jessica WB



## Children's Page



God Hears and Answers Prayer

## MARCH 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 9 am - 10 am Friday Food Fair	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> Communion Sunday 10 am Worship	<b>4</b> 9 am Community Kitchen Prep	<b>5</b> 7:00 pm Choir	<b>6</b> 10 am Study Group 7:30 pm AI-anon	<b>7</b> 7:00 pm Bells	<b>8</b> 9:30 am MOMs	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 8:00 am Men's Breakfast 10 am Worship Daylight Savings	<b>11</b> 6:00 pm Outreach 6:30 pm Deacons	<b>12</b> 7:00 pm Choir	<b>13</b> 10 am Study Group 7 pm Lenten Conversation 7:30 pm AI-anon	<b>14</b> 7:00 pm Bells	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 10 am Worship Blessing of Prayer Shawls 6:00 pm EWCB Easter Flower Orders Duel!	<b>18</b> 7:00 pm Society 7:00 pm Dartball	<b>19</b> 7:00 pm Choir	<b>20</b> 10 am Study Group 1:30 pm LBS 7:30 pm AI-anon <b>TRUMPET DEADLINE!!</b>	<b>21</b> 7:00 pm Bells	<b>22</b>  Women's Retreat →	<b>23</b> 5:00 pm Dem. Town Committee
<b>24</b> Palm Sunday 10 am Worship 6:00 pm EWCB	<b>25</b> 7:00 pm Book Discussion	<b>26</b> 7:00 pm Council 7:00 pm Choir	<b>27</b> 10 am Study Group 7:30 pm AI-anon	<b>28</b> Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm Service of Tenebrae	<b>29</b> Good Friday 6 am – 8 pm Sanctuary Open	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> Easter Sunday 6 am Sunrise Service 10 am Worship						

Looking Ahead:

April 7: Men's Breakfast


March Birthdays:

Jaxson Waufle	March 7
Emmitt Plona	March 10
Eva Nester-Wheeler	March 13
Kaylyn Converse	March 17
Owen Plona	March 24
Callie Nester-Wheeler	March 26
Gavin Bottone	March 30
Gavin Washburn	March 30

# PRAYER PAGE

*Today and every day let us be open to God, who promises always to be with us.*

## **An Irish Prayer**

You've blessed me with friends and laughter and fun  
With rain that's as soft as the light from the sun  
You've blessed me with the stars to brighten each night  
You've given me help to know wrong from right  
You've given me so much, so please Lord give me too  
A heart that is always Grateful to you.

## **Christ Be With Me**

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks to me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.  
Salvation is of the Lord.  
Salvation is of the Christ.  
May your salvation, Lord, be ever with us. -- St. Patrick

## **Lenten Prayers:**

Loving God, help me to see this holy season of Lent as a time of spiritual renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Motivate me to reach a new level of experiencing your grace. Amen.

Dear God, during this Lenten season give me a new and expanded vision for my life. Help me to live full of faith. Teach me to find hope in the face of adversity. Amen.