

THE FLAME

Volume 52, Issue 3

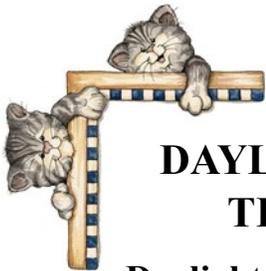
March 2022



The Lenten Season in 2022

Join us in worship!

Ash Wednesday:	March 2, 2022, 6:00 PM
Palm Sunday:	April 10, 2022, 10:00 AM
Maundy Thursday:	April 14, 2022, 7:00 PM
Good Friday:	April 15, 2022, 7:00 PM
Easter Sunday:	April 17, 2022, 10:00 AM



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

**Daylight savings time officially
begins Sunday, March 13th.**

**Make sure you move your clock
ahead one hour before you go to
bed (yes, you lose an hour of
sleep) or you could be very late
to church!**

BACK TO BASICS

Sunday evenings, 6:00 PM

Join an exciting exploration into the meaning of our Christian faith and the purpose of our church as we return "Back to Basics." The study/discussion group will meet each Sunday beginning March 6th at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your Bible, writing material and a heart seeking the Holy Spirit. We will use scripture, articles, demographic material and prayer to discern our faith in 2022 and how FUMC can best reach the Ponca City community of today. We are working on having childcare so our younger families can participate. For more information please contact Pastor Don.





Pastor
Don Griffin

Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days and they have nothing left to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, or they will faint along the way."

The disciples replied, "Where would we get enough food here in the wilderness for such a huge crowd?"

Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?"

They replied, "Seven loaves, and a few small fish."

Matthew 15:32b-34

This is not a typical passage you would see quoted by a writer in an article without the rest of the passages that follow that complete the story. For those of you who have not figured it out yet, Jesus tells them to have the people sit and they pass out the small amount of food they have and miraculously it feeds 4000 men plus women and children (not to mention the leftovers!) But I want to focus on the ex-

change between Jesus and the disciples prior to the miracle and how it reveals a truth for those who serve in the church today.

In the early days after the resurrection of Jesus, the followers who continued to share his message and work were more focused on the movement. This is true for the next few decades as the early disciples felt Jesus was going to return at any moment and their concern was continuing the message. As the years turned into decades and the people began to transition from a movement to more of a permanent institution, writers began to accumulate the stories of Jesus into writings to be copied and shared. Evangelists like Paul, who spread the message to those outside of the Jewish faith, wrote letters to the converted communities about the meaning of following Jesus. The earliest followers were called "of the Way" and eventually the term "Christian" emerged which simple means "one of Christ's". As time progressed the early movement had evolved into a church and was eventually embraced by Rome and declared the state religion of Rome. As the church gained power, the base message of Jesus and the movement he spawned got lost in the bureaucracy of the institution. We have been struggling with that since 325 c.e. when it occurred.

On Sunday, March 6th at 6 pm and each following Sunday evening, I invite you to join me on a journey as we seek to get "Back to Basics" when it comes to our faith in Jesus. The study/discussion group will examine the teachings of Jesus as depicted in the New Testament and talk about our ministry together. We will seek to find the answer to the core question of why First Church exists and how

God is calling us to serve Ponca City in 2022 and beyond. We will read a few articles by some of the most prominent Church experts of today. We will examine the demographics and trends facing our community. Our time together will embrace our heritage of being the first church in Ponca City (1893), but will consider what our heritage will be to the next few generations.

Some may question the need to do this deep dive into our purpose today, "If what we did in the past worked then, it will still work now!" Tradition is such an important part of who we are as a congregation. Our identity as a traditional church is well established. Covid has greatly challenged our congregation and all churches. The average church in America has 30 - 60% of their pre-Covid attendance in worship. FUMC is closer to 70%. But did you know in 2010 our average worship attendance was 170? Even before Covid worship attendance had steadily declined to 122 in 2019, our last full year before Covid. Those that attended Prayer and Praise last Wednesday night heard this information then. Our spiritual family must find new ways to connect with our community to reverse this troubling trend. What will our heritage be in twenty years? Fifty years?

(Cont'd on page 3)



Thank you so much



Dennis and Ken Wilson would like to say thank you to their amazing church family. The cards, calls and prayers were truly appreciated.

CHURCH-WIDE EMAILS

Weekly announcements are sent out each week to members who are on our email lists. If you do not get them you may need to update your email address with the office. Either call the office (580)762-1681, or email us at fumcpc41@gmail.com.



On Sunday, March 13th there will be a called Charge Conference after worship beginning at approximately 11:15 AM. The only agenda item will be to officially correct a Charge Conference form. The Charge Conference agenda is limited to the one item. Once the DS adjourns the meeting, Teri Harris (Administrative Chair) will call to order our Administrative Council to address the 2022 Budget.



CHURCH KEY FOBS

I recently sent an email to everyone that has been assigned one of our entry key fobs. If you did not get the message, but have a fob, please let us know in the office.



HAIKU FOR MARCH

Lamb led to slaughter
Selected, rejected, spurned
By those whom He loved

~Wayne Moore

(Cont'd from page 2)

Now read the scripture quoted above again and consider what it communicates. Jesus saw a profound need among those he was ministering. The disciples immediately responded that they were not equipped to meet the need and asked how it could be done. Jesus then simply asked (my paraphrase), "What do you have to offer?" We often forget in our personal journey and in our church ministry that it is not about what we have to offer but what God can do with that which we offer. Back to Basics is going to examine these two questions of Jesus to us:

1. What is the need we see in our community?

2. What do we have to offer?

We will then trust God to do the rest.

Please join me in this important study/discussion group. Everyone has something to input, and God needs us all working together.

Serving Jesus' Movement,
Pastor Don



*Always pray to have
Eyes that see the best in people,
a Heart that forgives the worst
a Mind that forgets the worst
and a Soul that Never
loses faith in God.*



Hey youth and youth parents,

This month we will have a lot going on. We will continue W.O.W every Wednesday night this month along with Spring Break activities. All youth who come and work 3 out of 5 of the service days during Spring Break will get to go on the end of week day trip that Saturday. Below is a list of the service projects we will be doing each day.

Monday, March 14

Clean church property, 1:00 -4:00

Tuesday, March 15

TBA @ 1-4

Wednesday, March 16

Work at bus barn, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Wednesday, March 17

WOW, 4-5:30 PM

Thursday, March 18

Work at bus barn, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Friday, March 19

Work at bus barn, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Saturday, March 20 (TBA)

Day Trip for those who worked at least three of five events during the week.



“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.”

– Dr. Seuss

Dessert Auction rescheduled.

March 9th

6:00 PM



**WOW, Wednesdays
4:00 PM**

**Spring Break Activities
March 14-19**

**Day Trip
March 20**



March

2022



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	2 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Chancel Choir	3 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	4 UMW Sack lunches for East Middle School	5
6 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church 6:00 Back to Basics	7 9:00 Staff Gathering	8 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Board of Trustees 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	9 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Chancel Choir	10 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	11	12 Move clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed
13 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church 11:15 Charge Conference 11:30 Administrative Council 6:00 Back to Basics	14	15 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	16	17	18	19
SPRING BREAK						
20 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church 6:00 Back to Basics	21 9:00 Staff Gathering 6:30 UMW	22 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	23 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW Bake Sale 5:30 P&P 7:00 Chancel Choir	24	25	26
27 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church	28 9:00 Staff Gathering	29 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	30 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Chancel Choir	31		

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

Steve Fields	03/02	Laura Evans	03/14	Craig Poet	03/18
Wyatt Hollingsworth	03/03	Francis Rhodd	03/14	Larry Davidson	03/19
Betsy Pendleton	03/07	Colten Seidel	03/15	Dorothy Dewan	03/20
Jill Jackson	03/09	Drew Markle	03/16	Knox Campbell	03/22
Amanda Biery	03/10	Daniel Bergfield	03/17	Krista Harbeson	03/24
Larry Lenhart	03/12	Madison Bookout	03/17	Marcia Caudle	03/28
Don Whitfill	03/13	Cathie Gilliland	03/17	Chrisa Markle	03/30
Kelly Campbell	03/14	Marilyn Sanders	03/17		

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PRAYER CORNER

Wonderful Savior, please help me to use this newly revived springtime season to revive a newness in my heart, my home, and in my life. Help me to be more loving, generous, and thoughtful. As I live day by day, remind me of the beauty of spring, and what new beginnings mean. Place those in my path that need help. Present me with situations where I can support others, teach me what to pray about, and give me insight on when to show compassion. In Jesus's name, I pray. Amen.

*"Where words
 fail, music
 speaks."*

*Hans Christian
 Andersen*



CITY-WIDE CLEANUP

March 20 is the scheduled day for the city-wide clean up. At our 'Rethink Church' meeting many of you showed interest in participating. We will be getting back with everyone with more details as we get them. This is a great time for us to join with many other churches in Ponca City to spread God's love to many around our city.

UMW NEWS

UMW continues to pass out sack lunches to students at East Middle School. In March we will be passing out lunches on March 4th. If anyone would like to join us in making lunches or passing them out to the students, please join us at 2:00 PM on the 4th. We also need cookies for the lunches. The students seem to be very pleased and thankful for the lunches.

Our next UMW meeting will be Monday, March 21st at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall. We will be making dinners to freeze for people who may need a meal or just a "thinking about you" gesture. Please feel free to join us in fellowship and love in action.



OUR STAFF

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March 2022 Daily Prayers



for our YOUTH

- Our Sons/Daughters, Grandsons/Granddaughters
& all the ones we love.

1

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ~ Romans 8:31

Savior Jesus,
Please infuse XXX with the confidence that You are with her. May she not fear anyone who rises against her. Amen!

2

... "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." ~ Acts 3:19

Awesome God,
May XXX repent of all his sins, turn to You, God, and be refreshed and renewed.
Amen!

3

'Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.' ~ Deuteronomy 3:22

Dear Father,
May XXX not fear those who rise against her, as You, the LORD our God are fighting for her on every realm. Amen!

4

"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment..." ~ Philippians 1:9

Eternal Lord,
May XXX's love for You, Father abound more and more, with his knowledge and all discernment. Amen!

5

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
~ Romans 10:9

Jehovah God,
May XXX declare with her mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe wholeheartedly that God raised her from the dead, and he is saved. Amen!

6

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ~ Ephesians 2:8

Sovereign Father,
Please save XXX by Your grace. May he understand this was Your gift when he believed, not something he earned or deserves. Amen!

7

... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." ~ Romans 6:4

Everlasting Lord,
May XXX walk in newness of life, just as Christ was raised from the dead.
Amen!

8

He has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.
~ 2 Timothy 1:9

Father God,
May XXX believe it is You who saved him, and You have called him to a holy life, not because of his works but for Your own purpose and grace for his life. Amen!

9

But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. ~ Exodus 14:13

Abba Father,
May XXX stand firm, and fear not! Open her eyes to see Your salvation which You will accomplish for her today. Amen!

10

The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid? ~ Psalm 27:1

Gracious Lord,
You are the light of XXX's life and his salvation. Your Word is the stronghold of his life; there is therefore nothing he is to fear or be afraid. Amen!

11

Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ~ Luke 10:19

Savior God,
Please give XXX the assurance that You are bigger than her challenges. You have given her authority over all the power of her enemies. Nothing will injure her. Amen!

12

Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. ~ Psalm 31:16

Almighty Father,
Let your face shine on your servant, XXX. May he enjoy Your gracious presence. Save him in Your unfailing love. Amen!

13

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." ~ Luke 19:10

Precious Lord,
May XXX never believe she is beyond redemption as the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost! Amen!

14

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ~ Ephesians 6:17

Loving God,
May XXX don the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, each and every day!
Amen!

15

Therefore, my dear friends, ... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling ~ Philippians 2:12

Holy Father,
May XXX make every effort to work hard to show the results of her salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. Amen!

16

You were wearied with the length of your way, but you did not say, 'It is hopeless'; you found new life for your strength, and so you were not faint." ~ Isaiah 57:10

Dear Lord,
May XXX always remain hopeful, trusting You for strength. Amen!

17

Therefore He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.
~ Hebrews 7:25

Almighty God,
Please save XXX completely, as she draws near to You through Christ who intercedes for her. Amen!

18

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?
~ Mark 8:36

Everlasting Father,
As I pray for XXX's success, and he strives to achieve his goals, keep us mindful that there is no profit to gaining the whole world if he should lose his soul
Amen!

19

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." ~ Isaiah 65:17

Loving Lord,
May XXX focus on the new things You are creating. Please keep her looking forward to the bright future You intend for her.
Amen!

20

I tell you for certain that everyone who has faith in me has eternal life. ~ John 6:47

Sovereign God,
May XXX believe with all certainty, that everyone who has faith in Christ has eternal life. Amen!

21

Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ~ Psalm 37:4

Gracious Father,
As You are pruning and shaping XXX into a woman after Your own heart, I pray that You do the same in her future spouse. May they both learn to love as You love us. Amen!

22

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
~ Philippians 4:6

Blessed Lord,
May XXX trust You enough not to be anxious about anything. May he present every challenge he faces to You, thanking You in advance for Your solution. Amen!

23

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? -Isaiah 43:18-19

Everlasting God,
May XXX not dwell on the past and be aware of Your hand at work doing new things in her, for her and around her.
Amen!

24

Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath! ~ Psalm 116:2

Jehovah Father,
Please give XXX the assurance that You know and love him. May he understand that You bend down to listen when You hear his voice when he calls on You in prayer. Amen!

25

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
~ Isaiah 43:18-19

Savior Lord,
May XXX not dwell on the past and be aware of Your hand at work doing new things in her, for her and around her.
Amen!

26

But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.
~ 1 Samuel 12:24

Eternal God,
Like Samuel, may XXX fear You Lord, and serve You faithfully with all his heart and soul. When doubts arise, remind him of the great blessings You have given him.
Amen!

27

... and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. ~ Ecclesiastes 7:8

Loving Father,
Please gift XXX with patience and tolerance. May she be long-suffering; for the patient in spirit is better than the proud. Amen!

28

"I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.
~ Isaiah 42:8-9

Sovereign Lord,
Please convict XXX. May he worship only You the Creator of all things and give only You the glory. Amen!

29

Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.
~ 2 Timothy 2:5

Mighty God,
I pray XXX will learn to work, play and compete with grace, honor and integrity. May she learn the value of training and persevering as she follows the rules.
Amen!

30

"...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. ~ Isaiah 40:31

King of Kings,
may XXX's strength be renewed in You. May he soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint.
Amen!

31

After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.
~ 1 King 19:12

Awesome Father, please unplug XXX from the clamor of the world so she hears Your gentle whisper as You speak with her. Amen!