



FAITHnews

Monthly Newsletter of Eldridge United Methodist Church

MARCH 2024

Dear Church Family & Friends,

It seems that we have been on a rollercoaster of this fluctuating weather. One day it got so warm and nice, and the next day, it turned out to be so cold. I heard that many folks were feeling tired and some were even sick, not knowing what the cause of their sickness was. I think that is because of the ongoing adjustment of our bodies to this changing weather. So, please take good care of your body before the spring arrives for our enjoyment.

Sitting on my couch to meditate on God's Word as part of my daily devotion during this holy season of Lent, I was reminded of the final life and ministry of Jesus, especially the way how things so quickly changed. The crowds who had followed Jesus with awe and excitement about Jesus and his amazing works of miracles and teachings grew cold. Many of the same folks, instead of shouting for joy and adoration, got angry, yelling out at Jesus, "Crucify him," on the first Good Friday. We call this shifting of mind as *crowd mentality*.

Today *crowd mentality* can be found in every arena of our society, impacting individuals on their decisions & behaviors. Even the church can be influenced by crowd mentality, reflecting much more of what is going on in our world rather than the truth of God they should anchor in.

According to many studies, one of the reasons some people never seem to make progress in their life is that they don't have a clear vision, purpose, and goal for their lives. They just wander through life, like a leaf blown by the wind, drifting away by changing circumstances. This is very true in our spiritual life. The Bible says in James 1: 6-8:

"But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do."

When our life is not anchored in the truth of God, we are likely to be double minded and unstable in how we think and live; probably that is why some Christians have felt stuck in their spiritual journey, not making any progress in their lives.

As we are on this journey, walking with Christ toward the Cross, I want us to think of some basic and fundamental questions: Living in the midst of a more rapidly changing world, where is our life anchored? Have you found the true meaning and purpose of your life as believers? If your answer is, "Not Yet", this Lenten season is a good time to explore these questions.

And the invitation of this Lent is this: Come closer to Jesus and follow his footsteps. He will guide you through and you will find the right answers for you. My prayer goes out for you that the grace and blessings of the Lord may envelop you with his wisdom, guidance, and abundant blessings throughout your Lenten journey. Amen.

Therefore, I invite you to come and join this journey with a reverent spirit and joyful anticipation.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor JaeHee Lee

LENTEN SEASON & HOLY WEEK

We are currently right in the middle of **LENT** – with this coming Sunday being the 3rd Sunday of the five Sundays of Lent, **Palm Sunday** on March 24th and triumphant **Easter** on March 31st. Not only is this about as early as Easter ever comes but if March goes anywhere near as quickly as February did – *even with its extra “leap” day* – Holy Week is just around the corner! Much planning is already occurring and we hope you will mark the importance of the days to come with your support of and/or attendance at the following activities and events. *For instance:*

1. **EASTER LILY ORDERS:** Now is the time we reserve an Easter Lily in honor or remembrance of family & friends. They will be put out on Easter Sunday morning with a bulletin remembrance of your personal dedication. Then immediately after church that day, you can take your lily/lilies home to enjoy or to share with others in your life with whom you'd like to show your love. Each lily is \$15 and, of course, you may order as many as you like. Order forms and the drop-off box will be available at the end of a table in the Gathering Area starting this Sunday. You can order through the office during the week as well. Orders must be placed and paid for no later than March 20th,
2. Many of you like to surprise your kids/grandkids/friends/family with one of our specially curated (ooh, ooh, aren't we fancy!?!) **EASTER BASKETS**. The **SILENT AUCTION** will open on Sunday morning, March 17th, continue throughout that week into the hour before church on Palm Sunday. Top bidders will be determined and ‘winners’ can take their baskets home that very morning after worship. Be planning ahead...more details to follow.
3. Holy Week begins with **PALM SUNDAY**, marking Jesus' triumphal entrance to Jerusalem but also noting how things quickly change to the climate that takes him through his darkest moments leading to the crucifixion. Worship that morning will begin with the “Parade of Palms” and warm our hearts with much extra beautiful music from our Chancel Choir.
4. **MAUNDY THURSDAY**, especially commemorating Jesus' LAST SUPPER and his prophecies to his disciples about how his earthly life would come to its end, will be celebrated as a joint worship service at McCausland UMC at 6pm on Thursday, March 28th.
5. We are planning a VERY special **GOOD FRIDAY** service here at EUMC on Friday, the 29th! This too will be a joint service with McCausland coming here this time, also at 6pm. Many of you may remember the drama we put on the Palm Sunday we returned to worship from the long quarantine of Covid. CJ will once again direct a performance of **“The Road to Calvary”** by Robert Blaskey. The events at Calvary changed the history of the world. It's easy to identify with the people involved as you'll listen to their stories: Peter, Pilate, Mary Magdalene, Judas, Caiaphas, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Dramatically staged, you'll be moved by the perceptive monologues, the beautiful music and the special moments of prayer that will help everyone watching to internalize the conflict, heartache, uncertainty, love, forgiveness and eventual hope found in each character's story. Please mark that night as a very special moment in your own personal *“Road to Calvary”* this Easter season by planning to attend.
6. And of course...**EASTER SUNDAY!** Easter lilies all over the altar, special choir music, and the beauty of worshipping together in celebration of Christ's resurrection to save us all from our sins! After worship, there will be an **Easter Egg Hunt** for the kiddies, special treats for all, and a wonderful time of fellowship as we gather together in celebration of the most important day in our lives as Christians.

In Other News...

- **FOOD PANTRY** emphasis for the month of MARCH is jelly, crackers, and pasta. Also, they will take gently used children's books to pass out, please.
- **McCausland UMC CHOCOLATE EASTER EGGS:** They are hand-dipped, rich, huge and delicious. There is a selection of filling flavors as well. Unfortunately, we have a VERY small window of time to place our order this year, so please place your order **THIS SUNDAY** if you are at church or call the office Tues-Fri mornings this week. Place your order as soon as you can so that we can tell them how many to make for us and then you can pay later if necessary.
- Please note that we have nobody signed up to bring **ALTAR FLOWERS** for the next three weeks (10TH, 17TH, 24TH/Palm Sunday) leading up to our lily display on Easter Sunday. Help?
- Here are upcoming **MARCH CALENDAR DATES** of importance:
 - *Mondays / 10am – Quilters Bible Study at Joyce's house
 - *Tuesdays / 10am – Bible Study in the Library
 - *Wednesdays / 9am – YOGA in the sanctuary
 - 3rd – Choir Practice / 4pm
 - 4th – Trustees meeting / 5:30pm
 - 6th – Worship Committee meeting / 1:00pm
 - 9th – Men's Breakfast Fellowship / 7:00am
 - 10th – **SPRING FORWARD!** Set your clocks ahead 1 hour so you're not late for church!
 - 14th – Administrative Council monthly meeting / 6:30pm
 - 17th – Easter Basket Silent Auction begins (*ends on Palm Sunday, the 24th*)
 - 19th – Missions/Outreach Committee meeting / 6pm
 - 20th – Easter Lily Orders due by noon
 - 23rd – *Possible* Choir Rehearsal / 9:30am
 - 24th – **PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP**
 - 25th – Blood Drive at EUMC / 2-6pm
 - 27th – United Women of Faith meeting / 3pm
 - 27th -- Dress Rehearsal for "The Road to Calvary" / 5:30pm???
 - 28th – **MAUNDY THURSDAY – Joint Service in McCausland / 6pm**
 - 29TH – **GOOD FRIDAY – Joint Service here / "The Road to Calvary" / 6pm**
 - 30th – *Possible* Choir Rehearsal / 9:30am
 - 31st – **EASTER SUNDAY / Hallelujah, He is Risen!**



MARCH
birthdays



Mar 2	Gary Abbas
Mar 4	Lyman Miller
Mar 7	Melissa Willey
Mar 14	Dennis Eudaley
Mar 15	Jack Hawker
Mar 16	Devan Reickard
Mar 18	Spencer Frazee
Mar 22	Quentin Coffman
Mar 24	Reece Riewerts
Mar 25	Leona Lightner
Mar 28	Daisy Schoonover
Mar 29	Logan Frazee