

February Worship

Sunday, February 4	9:30am	
"Godsmacked"		Isaiah 40:21-31
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>		<i>A Celebration of The Lord's Supper</i>
Sunday, February 11	9:30am	
"Visible Mending"		2 Kings 2:1-12
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>		
Wednesday, February 14	7:00pm	Ash Wednesday
"Fugitive Fools"		Psalm 51:1-17
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>		
Sunday, February 18	9:30am	
"Why We Sing Sad Songs"		Psalm 25:1-10
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>		
Sunday, February 25	9:30am	
"The Pretend Problem"		Mark 8:31-38
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>		



Dates to Remember

Friday, February 2	1:00pm Federated Food-shelf Day
Sunday, February 4	Communion 10:30am Pre-K Sunday School w/ Parents
Tuesday, February 13	6:30pm Ministry Nite
Wednesday, February 14	7:00pm Ash Wednesday
Thursday, February 15	6:30pm D&E Meeting
Monday, February 19	Presidents' Day - Church Office Closed
Wednesday, February 21	5:30pm Lenten Service 6:00pm Lenten Supper
Wednesday, February 28	5:30pm Lenten Service 6:00pm Lenten Supper
Friday, March 1	1:00pm Federated Food-shelf Day
Sunday, March 3	Communion 10:30am Pre-K Sunday School w/ Parents
Wednesday, March 6	5:30pm Lenten Service 6:00pm Lenten Supper



Sometimes I'm surprised anyone shows up for Ash Wednesday worship. I mean, think of the primary message of this day, what I said to you when you received ashes and what you heard me recite over and over to others: "You are dust and to dust you shall return." In other words, "You're going to die." **But we're here anyway.**

Sometimes we talk about how Christianity is counter-cultural. When we follow Christ we often walk against the prevailing direction of our culture. There is no more counter-cultural occasion in the life of the church than Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday we gather to confront the reality that our bodies are perishable vessels that will not last forever . . . at least not in this fallen form. **But we're here anyway.**

Another hallmark of our culture is affirmation. We watch TV personalities and pay big money to hear motivational speakers, who tell us how lovable and capable we are, who feed our desire to believe we have what it takes within us to be the best people we can be. "Self-help" books are always featured prominently on the best seller list. But on Ash Wednesday we are reminded that the Bible is not shelved with the self-help books because its message is ultimately that we cannot help ourselves. We confess that we are sinful to the core and sinners from the start, in the words of Psalm 51 "I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me." **But we're here anyway.**

As we confess our sins and our sinfulness on Ash Wednesday, we don't even get to hear that we are forgiven. We begin almost every other service of the year with words of corporate confession, followed immediately by the pronouncement of God's forgiveness. But not on this day. On Ash Wednesday our confession is different: not only is it longer, but its breadth and depth are far greater. "We have not loved you...we have been unfaithful...we have not forgiven others...we have been self-indulgent...we have been negligent in worship," and so it goes. Those words of contrition linger, burning our consciences without the balm of absolution. Confession on Ash Wednesday is painfully brutal, glaringly honest. **But we're here anyway.**

Thank God we are here! Thank God we have this opportunity to be counter-cultural, to remember who we were and who we are now with God's grace and forgiveness. For it is only in acknowledging our desperate condition, our inability to save ourselves and our inability to even desire salvation without the prompting of the Holy Spirit...it is only in acknowledging our powerlessness and our helplessness, that we can rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. "Rejoice" may be a strange word to associate with Ash Wednesday, but it is to rejoicing that our penitence ultimately leads. Ash Wednesday is not meant to beat us up with our failures and our failings. Ash Wednesday is not a time to wallow in the despair of our condition as fallen sinners. Out of our honest humility comes sincere thankfulness and praise and, yes, rejoicing. **No wonder we're here!**

Ash Wednesday is just the beginning of a journey. We set out on this Lenten journey marked not just with ashes to remind us of our sin-stained mortality but marked with ashes in the shape of a cross as a sign of hope. The cross of Christ has overcome all our sins and our sinfulness. No matter how hard we try to mess ourselves up, the cross of Christ puts us right. All our failures and our regrets and our self-delusions and all the other ways we have let God and ourselves down, and all the ways we continue to fall short, all of that has lost its power over us. All that garbage was nailed to the cross, the cross to which we will journey during these 40 days. **No wonder we're here!**

Ash Wednesday is vital, an event which at its root is "life-giving." To fully grasp the new life we receive through Christ, we must realize that we were truly dead in our sins. We acknowledge that we are not just sinners but also hypocrites, that we are not the paragons of virtue that we try to convince others and ourselves that we are. As Martin Luther said, "God does not forgive fictitious sinners." It is only real, honest-to-goodness sinners who need the cross. Sinners like us. **No wonder we're here!**

Lent begins with honest confession and a reminder of our mortality. We will spend the next 40 days encouraged to take a good look at ourselves, and to call on the Holy Spirit to change us from the inside out because we cannot do it ourselves. And we will rejoice that God loves us anyway. We rejoice that no matter who we are and what we have done, the cross is for us. **No wonder we're here!**

The focus on Ash Wednesday is sin and death; but those ashen crosses on our foreheads remind us that Jesus defeated sin and death at Calvary. Through the grace of God, his victory is our victory; and because Christ lived and died and rose again, you and I can experience new life abundant in God's blessing right now. Lent is an opportunity to begin anew, to recapture the reality of God's power and presence in our lives, and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to live out our baptismal identity as children of God for the sake of the world. What a blessing it is to begin this journey with you! **Sometimes I'm surprised anyone chooses to miss Ash Wednesday worship.**

Blessings on your Lenten journey,
Pastor Doug



Church News

Church Office

The church office hours in February are from 10am-2pm Monday-Thursday and 9am-12pm on Fridays. The church office will be closed on Monday, February 19th for Presidents' Day.

Federated Food Shelf Day

Federated Food Shelf Day is the Friday after the 4th Sunday of every month from 1-4pm. They will meet next on Friday, February 2nd. If you have questions about the dates, contact Brianna in the church office.

Coffee Hour

Women's - Tuesdays at 10am
Men's - Fridays at 10am

Local Mission

Thank you for your continued generosity with the Local Mission Fund! Those who are helped by this fund are extremely grateful for the extra support they receive during tough times. According to our policy, we are able to help each family or individual three times during a 12 month period, with up to \$100 a time, depending on funds. We assist with food, utilities, rent, and, in emergency situations, a night at a hotel. Donations can be put in the offering plate with Local Mission Fund in the memo line or dropped off in the church office. Thank you!





Christian Education and Youth Rev. Karen Anderson

2024 is kicking off to a great start! We are looking ahead at a busy winter-into-spring with great opportunities for every age. Here is the line-up of activities as of the beginning of February.

Kidz Club

We continue to meet each week on Wednesdays after school for learning and fellowship. This year we are covering the life and ministry of Jesus. By the end of the program year 2023-2024 our elementary-aged children will know SO many stories, parables, miracles, and teachings of Jesus. They are also so inquisitive and ask incredible questions every week. We will continue to meet each week until the end of April, with one week off on March 13th.

Sunday School

After a wonderful pageant at Christmas, our Sunday school kids are continuing our fall study of the fruit of the Spirit. In addition, each week they are getting the opportunity for an introduction to playing bells with our bell director, Tessa Nord. We hope they will be able to share some music later this spring during worship.

Confirmation/Middle School Youth Group

As we move closer to March, we are getting our 9th grade students ready to be confirmed on Sunday, March 17th during worship. We have a large group professing their faith this year, and they are just a fun bunch of people to spend time with. Our 7th and 8th grade class are also moving forward in their faith development, meeting after school on Wednesdays for fun and learning. This younger group will continue to meet for class and youth group throughout the spring.

Senior High Youth Group

Our senior high students kicked off 2024 with a winter retreat at Clearwater Forest. It was a small but energetic crew who made use of the good weather to take hikes, sled, and create walking sticks using branches from the forest. Using various tools and materials (drills, wood-burning pens, leather straps, beads) to individualize each stick, everyone went home with a unique work of functional art! Our theme for the weekend focused on the gift or gifts of the Spirit that God provides to all believers. Everyone had the opportunity to take an assessment and see what gift they may have to share with the church and the world. It was a very special weekend. Our group continues to meet each Wednesday at 7:30pm to tackle topics of faith and current events.

Bible Studies

Our women's Bible study meets each Tuesday at 11:15 in the parlor. We continue to study the book of 1 Samuel. We have a NEW Bible Study on the book of Revelation that meets every Monday evening at 6:30pm, in the parlor. This group is for men and women, and we are slowly making our way through this fascinating and timely book. Please feel free to join either group for an opportunity to dig into God's word with other believers.

VBS is set for June 24th-28th! Mark your calendars!



Pastoral Care

Pastor Ali Haugerud

In a couple of weeks, we will begin the season of Lent. In the lectionary, the First Sunday in Lent is usually the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness for 40 days. Before Jesus entered the wilderness, he was baptized by John the Baptist and the heavens parted and a voice from heaven declaring Jesus as God's Son, who is beloved and with whom God is well pleased. When Jesus went into the wilderness, he went with the baptismal waters of the Jordan still clinging to him and name of "Beloved" ringing in his ears. Jesus went into the wilderness where he would have no food, no water, no community, nothing that was familiar to him and have to wrestle with the devil for the next 40 days with the knowledge of his own name. Beloved.

As we look at our own landscape of the forty days of Lent, we too, have that name echoing in our ears. As we enter into the terrain of this season, we too have that knowledge that we are the beloved of God. As we cross with Christ into the landscape of Lent and into the mystery that lies ahead of us, may you, may we, know at least this about ourselves – that our name, too, is Beloved.

Beloved Is Where We Begin by Jan Richardson, from *Circle of Grace*

If you would enter into the wilderness, do not begin without a blessing.

Do not leave without hearing who you are: Beloved, named by the One who has traveled this path before you.

Do not go without letting it echo in your ears, and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart, do not despair. That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst, from the scorching of sun or the fall of the night.

But I can tell you that on this path there will be help.

I can tell you that on this way there will be rest.

I can tell you that you will know the strange graces that come to our aid only on a road such as this, that fly to meet us bearing comfort and strength, that come alongside us for no other cause than to lean themselves toward our ear and with their curious insistence whisper our name:

Beloved. Beloved. Beloved.





Committee News

Worship Committee

Lenten Services
Join us on Wednesdays during Lent. Worship will be at 5:30pm and supper at 6pm. All services will be live-streamed.



Speakers

- February 21st - TBD
- February 28th - TBD
- March 6th - Dave Loeks
- March 13th - Amber Gerstmann
- March 20th - Erin Anderson, Executive Director, Clearwater Forest Camp

Suppers

- February 21st - Mark Rodning (Meatballs)
- February 28th - Rick Schara (Pork Loin)
- March 6 - Karen Anderson & Youth (TBD)
- March 13th - Dennis Bowman (Chili)
- March 20th - John MacFarlane (Beef Stew)

Holy Week

- Palm Sunday, March 24 (9:30am)
- Maundy Thursday, March 28 (7:00pm)
- Good Friday, March 29 (7:00pm)
- Easter Sunday, March 31 (9:30am)

Bell Choir Rehearsal

The Bell Choir practices on Wednesday nights at 6pm through Easter. If you are interested in joining, please contact Tessa Nord at 218-205-8627.

Choir Rehearsal

Choir Rehearsal will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. If you are interested in joining or know someone who might be interested, please contact Jack Raaen at 701-367-0021 or by email: jackraaen@yahoo.com.

Fellowship Committee

Birthday Cake Sunday is February 25th after worship at 10:30am. If you would like to bring a cake a sign-up sheet is in the Narthex, or you can let Brianna in the church office know. Please Sign up next to the month you want to bring for. All extra cakes will be auctioned off.

Mission Committee

Meals By Wheels
Federated Church is scheduled to deliver Meals by-Wheels Monday-Friday, February 19th-23rd. Meals are still scheduled to be delivered on President's Day. Drivers should gather at the Senior Center at 11:00am. It takes about an hour to deliver these meals. If you would like to volunteer anytime please contact Char Zielin 218-205-8762.

Up Coming Committee Events & Services

- Wednesday, February 14th - Ash Wednesday Service @ 7pm
- Wednesday, March 17 - Confirmation Sunday Service @ 9:30am
- Sunday, April 14th - Softball Pancake Breakfast @ 10:30am
- Sunday, April 21st - Senior Brunch @ 10:30am

Greeters

January 2024

Sunday, February 4

Worship 9:30am w/ Communion
Steve & Melinda Wienbar

Sunday, February 11

Worship 9:30am
Pete Konrad & Gerry Worner

Sunday, February 18

Worship 9:30am
Mike & Patty Shol

Sunday, February 25

Worship 9:30am
TBD

REMINDER: Greeters are also passing the offering plate for that Sunday. Check your email for reminders on greeter duties. Greeters are asked to refrain from contact (please do not shake hands or pass out bulletins). If you are uncomfortable worshipping in person or serving as a greeter, please let Brianna know. We understand the need for safety and respect your choice.

Federated Family,

Thank you for your support during my Eagle Scout project. Your donations have helped buy new furniture for the nursery. I hope the children of the congregation will enjoy the updates in the nursery.

William Nuss



The church staff wants to know...

We rely on you to contact us with your email, phone or address changes. If you are not receiving our emails, but would like to, please contact to church office. Also contact us for pastoral care needs. Please call 218-739-3227 or email church@federatedff.org

Ministry Nite: February 13- 6:30PM

Please email your minutes to church@federatedff.org. If you are unable to attend, please contact your chairperson. If your committee does not make a quorum, please schedule a time for your committee to meet before the next Ministry Nite.

Stewardship Report

General Fund Report	
Revenue	\$33,954
Expenditures	\$42,828
Year to Date Pledge Offering	
Budgeted	\$378,716
Actual Received	\$397,952

Grocery Receipts THE GROCERY RECEIPTS

Service Food	
December	\$5,4217.54

Newsletter Deadline

Articles and announcements are due the 15th of each month. Please send the by email whenever possible. The church staff reserves the right to edit articles for content and space.



224 North Union Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Time sensitive information
Please deliver by February 1st

If you would like to Text "give", please **text the message give to 855-235-5961**. Click on the link to the setup page and enter your information.



If you would like to receive text updates from Federated Church, please **text the message @federated to the number 81010**.



Follow Us On Facebook and Instagram
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February Birthdays



02/01	Ella Childs	02/14	Josie Buchfink
02/02	Robin Andrews	02/18	Finn Christianson
02/03	Donna Hendel	02/19	Love Eli Hultin
02/03	Karen Orcutt	02/19	Marjan Schuetze
02/03	Jona Brown	02/20	Ashlynn Eckhoff
02/03	Trevor Undseth	02/20	Shana Johnson
02/04	Norma Loomer	02/21	Barb Flom
02/05	Olivia Jensen	02/21	Sean Rufer
02/06	Tanya Westra	02/22	Maura Fransen
02/08	Patty Lindholm	02/22	Norma Worden
02/08	Ida Gustafson	02/22	William Johnson
02/09	Lee Syverson	02/24	Madilyn Michael
02/10	Luke Collins	02/25	Harvey Beske
02/10	Kurt Johnson	02/27	Benjamin Schierer
02/10	Andrew Link	02/27	William Nuss
02/10	Rylee Rodning	02/28	Gary Nelson
02/11	Kitt Schara	02/28	Mark Thompson
02/12	Greg Truax	02/28	Ruby Schmidt
02/12	Alicia Paulzine		
02/14	Doug Dent		
02/14	Jon Fransen		
02/14	Kristi Rufer		



The Federated Church is a joint ministry
of The Presbyterian Church (USA) and
The United Church of Christ.

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02/14 Kristi Rufer