

Montoursville Presbyterian Church

March 2019

Ashes to Resurrection

“I think you've got something on your forehead there.” One of the benefits, perhaps, to our having our Ash Wednesday service in the evening every year instead of during the day is that there is less of a chance of someone misunderstanding or not realizing that we don't need their help to clean up our faces! When we impose ashes towards the end of the service, we leave with a physical sign, a mark, upon us, clear for others to see. The drawback to our worshiping in the evening, of course, is that it is such a simple way to draw others into conversation about our faith—whatcha got on your face there? An obvious invitation to talk about faith does not always result in our eagerly sharing who Jesus is, and what He has done for us and the world. One Lent in North Carolina, I was at my “Office East,” a Starbucks out on Interstate 95, and I'd brought a book about the Lenten season with me. As I paid for my coffee and was ready to make my way to the corner to read and write and plan, the barista asked me about my book: *Chocolate for Lent*. I was really wanting some alone time and was probably running behind and needed that prep time, so I hurriedly explained that it was a different way to approach Lent: instead of giving something up for Lent, it was about appreciating God's good gifts in the midst of the season. To which my friendly coffee person replied, “Oh, so you're Jewish.” Does a pastor need any more obvious sign that a spiritual, even overtly evangelistic, conversation could be started than that? Did I start that conversation? No! I stumbled over the confusion between Christian Lent and Jewish Passover, and could hardly have snatched my coffee off the counter faster. Oof. What a missed opportunity. Sometimes, however, we have to fail, even spectacularly, so that we are prepared for the next opportunity, whether in things of faith or in things of life. Not that there wasn't a great cost for my negligence and stumbling. I may have been the priest on the road to Jericho so anxious to attend to the flock that I ignored the lost sheep right in front of me. I've regretted that interaction ever since.

Lent is a good time to put regrets and errors, sins and stumbles, in their proper spot. Before the “Imposition of Ashes,” I will pray: *May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by Your gracious gift are we given everlasting life.* Even the Invitation to the Observance of the Lenten Discipline, which comes earlier in the Ash Wednesday service says: *We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

We begin Lent with the sign of ashes on our forehead, being willing to surprise someone else (or even ourselves, if we catch sight of ourselves in a mirror, having forgotten we have ashes on our head!) with an obvious sign that we are repentant, that we are different, and that we are given life eternal because of and through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I began that Lent long ago with egg on my face, for flubbing what should have been an easy and natural way to talk about faith and sin and life and the Lord Jesus. But I've begun Lent ever since with ashes on my face, acknowledging that I will still blow it, I still need forgiveness, and I'm still willing to walk out of church looking a bit strange as I join with our sisters and brothers around the world in preparing for the great celebration of our redemption and Christ's victory over sin and death in the joy of Easter and Resurrection. We are Resurrection people every day. Lent begins with our being people of the dust of the earth for one day. Just as God breathed life into the dust of the earth that became Adam, so God still breathes life into His children. May God bless our Lenten preparation and worship and eventually our Easter celebration!

David

Greeters & Ushers for March 3rd Women's Sunday

Greeters & Ushers (8:15) *Doris Schild & Cathy Rush*

Elders (8:15) *Ruth Reigle & Kelly Crist*

Ushers (10:45) *S. King, B. Mathias, D. Messersmith, A. Messersmith*

Elders (10:45) *W. Kremser, K. Rush, J. Mathias, L. Wheeland*

Greeters & Ushers for March 10th and March 17th

Greeters & Ushers (8:15) *Doc & Kay Shearer*

Greeters (10:45) *Bradley family*

Ushers (10:45) *J. Lapinski, D. Peace, J. Fetterman, M. Bogart*

Greeters & Ushers for March 24th and March 31st

Greeters & Ushers (8:15am) *Bill & Ocie Hoffman*

Greeters (10:45am) *The Prindle family*

Ushers (10:45am) *G. Casella Jr., D. Casella, D. Konkle, Dan Messersmith*

Liturgists for March

March 3rd - *Diane Casella/Wendy Smith*

March 10th and 17th - *Nancy Butler/Dave Shimmel*

March 24th and March 31st - *Carl Fulton/Wendy Smith*

Church Attendance

		<u>8:15</u>	<u>10:45</u>
February	3	38	75
February	10	30	86
February	17	37	77
February	24	34	82

Please extend your sympathy and prayers to the families and friends of:

Pearl Fulton 1/27

Joan Robinson 1/31

Cade Logue 1/31

Dick Mathias 2/7

Committee Notes

Session

Met on February 13, 2019

- Ash Wednesday service will be March 6. Annual Lenten suppers and worship services will begin on March 13.
- Approved various treasurers for 2019. Church treasurer is George Casella Sr., assisted by Deb Cillo. Other treasurers: Winnie Kremser, Deacons; Carl Fulton, Sunday School; Beverly Mathias and Karen Rush, Women's Circle 1; Leanne Wheeland, Women's Circle 2. A treasurer is needed for Hugs from God.
- Approved MPC Annual Statistical Report for submission to PCUSA.
- Approved donating money raised from Souper Bowl of Caring (\$387) to local food pantry.
- Approved baptism of Ellie Marchioni, daughter of Lindsey (Wert) and Elliott Marchioni, for June 2.
- The baby grand piano in the sanctuary, which was donated several years ago, is showing its age and having some struggles. Session has approved replacing it with a console/upright piano our piano tuner, Phil Marchioni, received from Barb Hall. The piano is being donated to the church.
- "Gifts of Women" Sunday will be held March 3.
- Approved use of facilities for Montoursville Little League for its annual Opening Day festivities on April 27.
- Anyone interested in being a liturgist should contact Elder Donna Bixler or Wendy Smith.
- Next meeting: March 12, 7:00 p.m., MCEC.

Pastor's Report

- Participated in Director of Music Ministries interview process.
- Had to reorganize Presbytery meeting since it was postponed one week due to January 19 snowstorm.
- Assisted Mathias, Kurtz, and Robinson families with funeral arrangements and services.
- Worked with Clerk of Session in preparing MPC Annual Statistical Report for submission to PCUSA.

Upcoming Events

Baked Steak Dinner ✦ March 16th

Dine In: 4:00 to 6:30 ✦ Take Outs: 3:30 to 6:30

Price: \$9 for Adults ✦ \$5 for Children under 12

Baked Steak Dinner Update

The 2019 Baked Steak Dinners will be held in March and October. The dinners have four purposes: Fellowship, Evangelism, Outreach and Fundraising. The earnings from the dinner are used to underwrite a large portion of the Vacation Bible School Day Camp. The VBS Day Camp is an investment in the faith and future of our children, our congregation and our community. The earnings from the 2018 dinners were \$2,795 for March and \$1,583 for October. The October dinner was the first time since 2006 that the earning dropped below \$2,000. This was due to a drop in ticket sales. The solution is straightforward: We need new customers. Stewardship asks for the support of the friends and members of MPC to seek out new partakers of what we believe is the best tasting meal for the money in this local market of fundraising dinners.

Lenten Dinner Sign-ups Begin!

Every Wednesday evening during the Lenten season the MPC church family gathers for worship at 7:00 p.m. and enjoys a time of fellowship with a simple meal before each service at 6:00 p.m.

Now is the time for individuals and groups within MPC to consider sponsoring a meal on one of the following dates: 3/20, 4/3 or 4/10. Please consider preparing a simple meal and sign up now!

Call or e-mail the church office at 368-1595 or montourpc@gmail.com. Thank you!

Blood Drive March 18th from 1:00pm to 6:00pm MPC Fellowship Hall

There is no substitute for blood and volunteer donors are the only source. Please consider donating. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org and enter: MontoursvillePresbyterian to schedule an appointment. Save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions.

Announcements

Food Pantry Mona Rudio, Coordinator

Our United Churches Food Pantry provides food and drink to those in need. Donations are always welcome. Some suggestions are cereal, soups, coffee, juice, pasta, canned fruit, and healthy snacks. There is a grocery cart in the church hallway for your contributions.

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
					Office Closed Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH)	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship 8:15am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am	Prayer 8:30 (MCEC) Yoga 10:15am- Noon Circle 1 Noon (FH) Memorial Service 6:00pm (S&FH)	Decorate Church for Lent 6:00pm	Ash Wednesday Service 7:00pm	Garden Club 1:00pm (FH) Commission on Ministry 5:00pm- 7:00pm (C) AA 7:00pm- 8:00pm (FH) Choir 7:00pm	Office Closed Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH)	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Worship 8:15am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am FISH 5:30pm (MCEC)	Prayer 8:30am (MCEC) Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH)	Session Meeting 7pm (MCEC)	Lent Supper 6:00pm (FH) Lent Service 7:00 (S) District 48 AA 6:30pm- 8:30pm (FH)	AA 7:00pm- 8:00pm (FH) Choir 7:00pm	Office Closed Baked Steak Dinner Set- up All Day (FH)	Baked Steak Dinner All Day (FH)
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worship 8:15am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am	Prayer 8:30am (MCEC) Blood Drive All Day (FH) Worship Committee 6:30pm (MCEC)	Deacon Meeting 6:00pm (C)	Lent Supper 6:00pm (FH) Lent Service 7:00 (S)	AA 7:00pm- 8:00pm (FH) Choir 7:00pm	Office Closed Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH)	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Worship 8:15am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am FISH Meeting	Prayer 8:30am (MCEC) Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH) Building Use 4:00pm- 9:00pm (FH)	Circle 2 Meeting 6:30pm (C)	Lent Supper 6:00pm (FH) Lent Service 7:00 (S)	AA 7:00pm- 8:00pm (FH) Choir 7:00pm	Office Closed Yoga 10:15am- Noon (FH)	FISH Youth Group - Winter Jam
31						
Worship 8:15am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am						