



# The Messenger

Red Oak First United Methodist

## From Jenn's' Pen

Ezekiel 37:1-6 (MSG) (*The Valley of Dry Bones*)

*"God grabbed me. God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them-a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain-dry bones, bleached by the sun. He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"*

*I said, "Master God, only you know that."*

*He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones: 'Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!'"*

*God, the Master, told the dry bones, "Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life. I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am God!"*

This scripture has been ringing in my ears as I plan for the season of Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 5. (We will have a joint service at 2pm at the Red Oak FUMC, I truly hope you come!)

As I'm sitting here on this 10-degree day and looking out my window at the white snow all around, I am feeling quite dead and dry. I do not like winter, but also, I am very thankful that the skies are blue, and the sun is shining. I am very much looking forward to next week when the temps are supposed to be in the 40's and 50's. (Do I talk too much about weather in my newsletter articles?)

I digress. It's somewhat easy to feel dead and dry this time of year. (I seem to be inhaling lotion instead of air and my bones seem to crack and moan at every move I make!) But folks, spring is on its way! And beloved, so is the hope of Easter!

This Lent we are going to explore what it means to Grow in Grace. Is grace something you need to work on?

-Continued on Pg.2

Maybe you need to show more grace towards that annoying co-worker, your spouse who breathes the wrong way and you're yelling down their neck, the child who is defiant, or yourself whom you talk negatively to and think I'd never talk to another human being that way!

We all need Jesus. And one of the main reasons is because Jesus gives us grace. He shows us unconditional love no matter what we do or say. And, beloved, if we listen to his words and watch his actions, he will show us how we too can show grace and mercy to those around us, and even to ourselves.

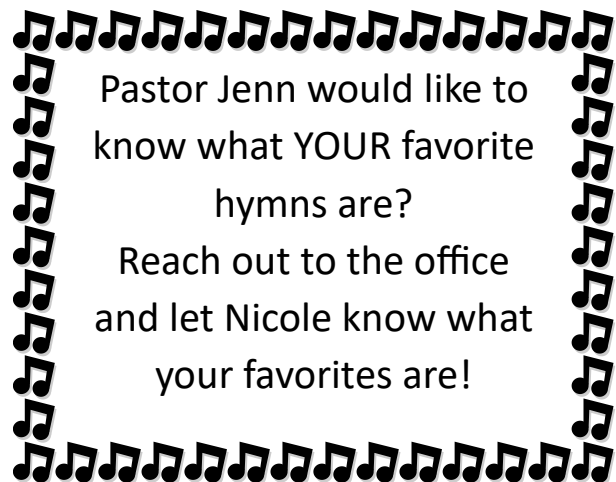
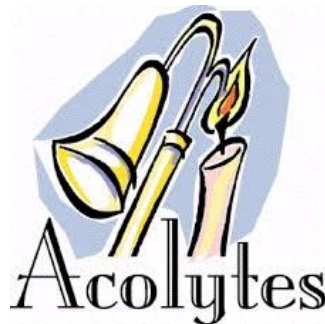
Please join us in worship this Lenten season to learn how we can Grow in Grace and ***"You'll come alive, and you'll realize that I am God!"*** Ezekiel 37:6



Please remember to sign up to bring treats for Sunday morning fellowship. Those yummys don't just appear!



Please let the office know if you would be willing to help acolyte during church service. Thank you!!



# February



Awwww....February!

I'd like to say that winter is almost over, and spring is nearly here, but the reality is that snow and cold can still come at any time; so, I will resist writing about spring and it's expectant coming.

I will though talk about what is guaranteed to happen in February and that is love...and Valentine's Day on February 14.

It's fun to see my newly engaged daughter and her fiancé prepare how they are going to celebrate Valentine's Day. I enjoy hearing the excitement in her voice as she tells me their plans.

On the flip side, there's my hubby and I. John just told me this week that since he has Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup> off for President's Day, he is going to take a long weekend and go see his parents, which he needs to do since his mom has been ill. When he told me this, he said, that will include Valentine's Day, not necessarily asking me for permission, just stating a fact. I joked with him that it'll be the second time in our marriage that "he has left me on Valentine's Day." (Several years ago, he went to report on an event honoring past Clarinda resident Glenn Miller, that was held in San Diego). We have been married nearly 30 years and very rarely celebrate Valentine's Day. I cannot remember the last time he bought me something on the day, and I'm perfectly okay with it.

We show each other love in other ways; making dinner for each other when the other is working, doing a chore the other hates to do, getting gas in the vehicle the other person is going to be driving, and even sitting through a show the other hates just so the other person can enjoy it.

This is a comfortable love. A love that surpasses roses and a night out on the town. This is a love that is reliable. A love that understands. A love that has sustained the test of time and has shown up in deeper tones than the reddest rose, enduring trials and tribulations darker than the ink on a card, and more divine than any exquisite meal.

And this is also just how much God loves you, beloved. "We have known and have believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them." 1 John 4:16

No matter how far John may go on Valentine's Day, I know he loves me. And I know that even when I feel God is far away, God is nearer to me than my very own breath. God adores and delights in me...and I am deeply loved...and so are you.

-Pastor Jenn



As we enter 2025, most of us are focused on our New Year's resolutions, perhaps it's getting healthier by moving more, saving money, moving up in our job/career, expanding our education, and many other goals.

What about your spiritual resolutions? Our relationship with God should be a prioritized because it will guarantee us more meaningful lives, allowing us to experience deeper joy, love, hope, and peace.

Last year I learned about "star words" or "star gifts." This is a prayer practice that is connected to Epiphany and is meant to guide us in our faith journey throughout the year. And so, on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, during communion, individuals will be instructed to pick up a star word that is placed faced down on tables. Each word is different, and individuals do not choose their own word, but instead trust the Holy Spirit is guiding them to the word God wants them to have. The word is placed somewhere that will be seen on a regular basis and throughout the year, the individual will consistently reflect on how God is moving through, around, or in connection to the word in our lives. These words will invite us to practice a new prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful way to connect with God.

For those who cannot be present at the January 6<sup>th</sup> service, but still want to a "star word" for 2025, please go to this link <https://wheelofnames.com/y6g-9wt> and click on the wheel and it will give you your "star word" which can then be written on a paper star and placed somewhere you see it on a regular basis so you can meditate on how God is speaking to you through the word. Also, we MAY have some extra "star words" available after the service and if so, please come to the office and you can draw one randomly from a basket.

My "star word" for 2025 is generosity. I will be honest, at first, I did not like my word and thought about clicking the wheel again to get another one, but after praying about my word, I realized this is exactly the word God meant for me to have. There are many times when not only do I need to be more generous to others, but also, generous to myself.

And so, friends, I encourage you to participate in the "star word" challenge and experience what God is telling you through this word. In a year, it will be interesting to look back and see just how God used our "star words" to speak to us and draw us closer.

If you have any questions about the "star words," please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

-Pastor Jenn





### January & February Offerings & Attendance

Jan 5 - \$125.00(No Service)  
Thrift Store-\$1297.14  
Jan 12 - \$2983.00-50 people  
Thrift Store-\$1261.95  
Jan 19 - \$6431.00-43 people  
Thrift Store-\$1431.13  
Jan 26 - \$925.00-51 people  
Thrift Store-\$1239.33  
Feb 2 - \$2575.00- 67 people  
Thrift Store-\$1187.73  
Feb 9 - \$ 1539- people 51  
Thrift Store-\$1511.91  
Feb 16 - \$795 - 53 people  
Thrift Store-\$944.71  
Feb 23 - \$791 - 53 people  
Thrift Store-\$1197.38  
Thank you for supporting  
our ministry!

### PRAYER REQUEST

#### **We have been praying for:**

Haiti Christmas delivery  
Debra Blue  
Bernice Mathsen  
Sherry Skinner  
Donna Walford  
Kyle Stanley  
Brenda Longabaugh  
Mary Fenstermann  
Eddie Lockhart  
Jim Bruce  
Les Skalberg  
Cheryl Gillman  
Rebecca White

*Please let the office know if  
you would like someone  
added to our prayer list or if  
you know of any shut-ins or  
people in the hospital that  
would like a visit from  
Pastor Jenn.*



### **MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Pat Wolfe-01  
Mick Fisher-04  
Grant Vrba-09  
Marlys Fisher-22  
Kate Walker-22  
Kathy Harris-23

### **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

Kathy Harris-23  
Letty Guerra-19  
Carol Watt-20

### **MAY BIRTHDAYS**

Masen Fisher-03  
Johnny Walker-07  
Jim Bruce-09  
Brenda Vrba-10  
Megan Adams-18  
Marty Kovar-18  
Ryan Ehmke-29



The Administrative Board would like to extend their sincerest thanks to David Clark and Roger Ehmke for your dedication and invaluable contributions during your time with the board. Your expertise, leadership, and unwavering support have played a significant role in our progress, and we are deeply grateful for the time and effort you've devoted to advancing our mission. We will certainly miss your insights and guidance.

### **Meet your 2025 Administrative Board:**

Sharon Smith-Chair Person  
Bob Lewellen-Treasurer  
Bob Fenstermann  
Dave McGrew  
Holly Crowell  
Holly Paulson  
Julie Wolfe  
Kathy Walker  
Mick Fisher





## LET'S DO SOMETHING!

The Villisca UMC and Red Oak First UMC Lenten project will be collecting ingredients for Birthday Care Kits. This is an entire circuit project. Included in the circuit is Corning, Anita, Wiota, Griswold, and Stuart. We will be collecting birthday kits for each location's food pantries. We will collect these items starting **March 9th** and will stop at the end of Lent. These kits give families all the makings for a birthday cake celebration for their loved ones!

Everything is available to them, including the instructions! It's fun for all!

The church that collects the most birthday kits will get to keep the Do Something trophy.



## LET'S DO SOMETHING!

The "ingredients" for the Birthday Cake Kits are:

- 1 Foil Cake Pan with Lid
- 1 Boxed Cake Mix
- 1 Can of Soda (any flavor)
- 1 Can of Frosting
- Birthday Candles
- Happy Birthday Banner
- Birthday Napkins
- Set of Instructions for Baking



If you would like to order an Easter Lily,  
please let the office know by  
**MARCH 19th. They are \$25**



Check out our Facebook Page!

Find us by searching for

**Red Oak First United Methodist Church**

*I Hello Spring*





# EVENTS

## Mark Your Calendar



**BLESSED  
ASH  
WEDNESDAY**

March 5th  
2pm @  
Red Oak First United Methodist Church



April 13 2025 9 AM

*Sunday*

*"They took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*



AT VILLISCA UMC

**POT LUCK  
BREAKFAST  
9:00AM  
SERVICE  
10:30**

**5th**

*Sunday*

**MARCH  
30TH**

*He is not here;  
he has  
Risen!*



Potato Bar for Maundy Thursday April 17- 6pm

*Space is limited, reserve your spot early!!*

*Call the office to let us know you will be attending!*

**KEEP AN EYE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MORE  
EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS AS THEY ARE SCHEDULED!!**