

## February 2021 Newsletter



**Greetings Lake and River Parish. January went out like a lion freezing temperatures, snow and wind. Hoping February will be warmer. Spring is just around the corner and our summer people will return to us and the ships will return to the river.**

**I know you all love this church as do I so my part of the newsletter is going to be about my personal journey with this church.**

**In 1992 my husband and I were living in Owego New York and working at IBM. My husband son my stepson was in the service at Fort Bragg North Carolina and he was killed. Our whole world went crazy as we grieved for our son. We both left IBM and moved to Cape Vincent. My husband got a job as a landscaper and I as a waitress. We just worked ate and sleep, we were so numb. We just existed.**

**So after awhile I needed something. I did not know what. I never was much of a church goer. I usually worked two jobs and when off we spent with our family and each other. I knew I needed something but did not know what. When I was in the village I would hear the bells from the little white church there on Broadway. It played hymns and I loved the sounds of it. Something guided me to maybe go to this church and see if that would help with this emptiness I felt.**

**So one Sunday I went. I walked in the door and there was this little old lady dressed to the nines with hat, gloves, suit and shoes all matching handing out church bulletins. She welcomed me with this big smile, she asked where I was from and seemed so happy to see me. I went and sat in the last pew in case I needed to escape fast if I didn't like it. The service began and this young pastor spoke, and his sermon went to my heart as if he was speaking to me alone. After the service they had a coffee hour and lots of people came over and welcomed me. So, the next week I showed up again. Same lady giving out bulletin and I sat in same place back of the church, but this time one of the ladies I met at coffee hour and asked me to sit with her and her mom and her mom's friend. So, I did and joined them for coffee hour. So, I kept going and I got to know many people in the church. I attended church regularly and felt so welcome. I talked to the Pastor John Love and told him what my husband and I was going through, and he came and talked to us both at home. It helped me and I was starting to heal. Later I got a job at the border in the winter at a brokerage firm but I was worried because we only had my husband's retirement money coming in as winter there was no waitress job and no landscape job. I had mentioned this to a couple I had met in the church and all of a sudden after church I would find a twenty dollar bill in my car every Sunday. Then we got a new pastor Mark Pierce, he was as good as pastor John, but his sermons were different. He used his life experiences to get the point of the sermons across, and it still sounded like the sermons were for me.**

Soon after I got the job at the brokerage firm, I got cancer and was operated on and had to undergo Chemo and radiation, so I had to quit my job. Well Pastor Mark came to our house once a week and visited with us and prayed for us, and the choir director who I had become friends with came every Saturday to my house and bought a home-cooked meal big enough to feed us for a week along with banana bread and laundry soap, toilet paper and whatever she thought I would need. The doctor said I had to eat banana and she bought them also. That is what this church did for me. They gave me a church family and they were there for me more than my own family. Whatever my needs they were there.

So, when I got better, I became more active, I made really close friend with several of the women in this church. One friend and I walked our dogs together and told each other our problems and I think it helped us both. Another lady would pay for me to go to Women of Faith and other women gatherings to help me in my spiritual growth and choir director got me in the choir even though I can't carry a tune in bucket. I grew to love the hymns in this church, those good old ones that began so familiar that you looked forward to sing. And the choir director and I became so close. All these ladies became close, they were my church family and I love them all.

Since then, our church has had two more pastors, Nancy Stanley who looked like an Irish munchkin and played the guitar and gave great sermon and Christiane Depestre who reminds me of a southern preacher whose sermons are so good I want to get up and say hallelujah and Amen.

So, this church has been here for me and helped me to grow in faith since 1992, I love this church. It has been around for 100+ years welcoming people to come and know God and know the wonderful people who make up the congregation. To become one of the church family of this church and of God.

**So, I was wondering would you like to share how you feel about this church and what it has meant to you? If so, send the church a card and tell them how you feel about it. Thank you for listening to my story and hope you enjoyed it. Lee Page Outreach chair.**

*From Pastor Chris*

Greetings, Friends, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

This year Ash Wednesday falls on February 17, and it marks the beginning of Lent, the 40-day season (not counting Sundays) focusing the Christian's heart on repentance, fasting, moderation, reflection, and spiritual discipline. These 40 days represent Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice and resurrection.

Ash Wednesday has ancient roots which emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. Ashes are an ancient symbol. In Genesis, we read that God formed human beings out of the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). After expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the first human beings are told by God, "you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The Hebrew word translated dust, is occasionally translated ashes elsewhere. Throughout scripture, ashes are part of rituals when people seek forgiveness and mourn their sin (see Numbers 19:9, 17; Hebrews 9:13; Jonah 3:6; Matthew 11:21, and Luke 10:13, among others).

As the ashes are placed on the forehead, words such as these are spoken: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," recalling God's words to Adam in Genesis 3:19, or "Repent, and believe the gospel" recalling the message of both John the Baptist and Jesus (Mark 1:15). (information from the umc.org)

Join us on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 6:00 p.m. as we come before God recognizing our humanity, repenting of our sin, and remembering who we are and who we can be.

## **Prayer Meetings**

Our regular Prayer Meeting meets every Wednesday at 6:00-6:30 am by free conference call by dialing by dialing 1-425-436-6304, access code 639723#

## **A 40-Day Prayer Challenge**

Our Lake and River Parish will embark on a 40-Day Prayer Challenge, in Mark Batterson's book, "Draw the Circle". "In this book, through forty true, faith-building stories of God's answers to prayers, daily Scriptures, and prayer prompts, Batterson inspires you to pray and keep praying like never before." As we take on this 40-Day Prayer Challenge, it is my prayer that our prayer life will be improved, enhanced, that our faith will be strengthened and emboldened, and we will become fired up for and bear witness to our Lord.

Let me encourage you to join in this Lenten journey, by acquiring the Book online, and begin to read one chapter per day, following it carefully. You read and pray on your own every day, beginning on Ash Wednesday. Every Wednesday at 7:00 pm starting on the 24th of February, we will meet via free conference call to discuss the chapter of the day (February 24, March 2, March 9, March 16, March 23, March 30). Dial 1-425-436-6304, access code 639723#. (This is the same line used by the Wednesday morning pray-er group.)

As we continue to work in God's vineyard, we trust God for everything that lies ahead. No matter what seems to be a challenge to us, we know that we serve a God who "makes a way out of no way". We are a people of faith and we continue to hear God saying, as God said to Moses when he led a people who began to panic, "Let the people go forward!" (Exodus 14:15) And we can, because we know that God has not "brought us this far to leave us."

We count on God's faithfulness, love, caring and blessings as we support and love one another in these difficult times. May we rely on the strength, comfort, healing, and peace that only God can supply.

Thanks for your love and support as workers together with and for Christ. Christ still has many services to be done and to these we will commit ourselves for 2021. There is victory in the name of Jesus! God bless you all!

## **February is African American History Month**

The Library of Congress, National Archives, and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American Society.

As a Harvard-trained historian, Carter G. Woodson, like W. E. B. Dubois before him, believed that truth could not be denied, and reason would prevail over prejudice. His hopes to raise awareness of African American's contributions to civilization was realized when he and the organization he founded, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASSNLH), conceived and announced Negro History Week in 1925. The event was first celebrated during a week in February 1926 that encompassed the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The response was overwhelming: Black history clubs sprang up; teachers demanded materials to instruct their pupils; and progressive whites, not simply white scholars, and philanthropists, stepped forward to endorse the effort.

By the time of Woodson's death in 1950, Negro History Week had become a central part of African American life and substantial progress had been made in bringing more Americans to appreciate the celebration. A mid-century, mayors of cities nationwide issued proclamations noting Negro History Week. The Black Awakening of the 1960s dramatically expanded the consciousness of African Americans about the importance of black history, and the Civil Rights movement focused Americans of all color on the subject of the contributions of African Americans to our history and culture.

The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." That year, fifty years after the first celebration, the association held the first African American History Month. By this time, the entire nation had come to recognize the importance of Black history in the drama of the American story. Since then, each American president has issued African American History Month proclamations. And the association, now the Association for the Study of Black history all year. Excerpt from an essay by Daryl Michael Scott, Howard University, for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History)

