



# GRACE NOTES



Volume 10, Issue 3

March 2021

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## MARCH PASTOR'S PEN

“Beauty Truly Is in the Eye of the Beholder”

Beloved Members and Friends of Grace EPC,

On a cold January morning in 2007 at a Metro Station near Washington, D.C., a young man with a violin played six Bach pieces for over an hour as more than 2,000 people passed him by. After a few minutes, a middle-aged man noticed the musician, slowed his pace, stopped for a few seconds then hurried off. About five minutes later, the violinist received his first contribution, a dollar bill that a woman threw in the hat without stopping. A 3 year-old boy stopped to listen, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. This action was repeated by several children, but every parent without exception forced their children to move on quickly. After an hour of playing continuously, only 6 people stopped to listen for a short while. About 40 gave money, but continued to walk at a normal pace. The musician collected a total of \$32. After he finished playing, silence took over. There was no acknowledgement, no applause.

Nobody recognized Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world. He played some of the most intricate and difficult pieces ever written with an instrument that cost \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before, he played the same concert at a sold out theater in Boston where tickets cost \$200 each. It was actually an experiment organized by the Washington *Post* to test how people's perceptions are shaped by their environment.

I think this story has something to say to us. How many things do we miss as we rush through life? Do we stop and recognize the glory that is all around us? Most of us live in beautiful communities in which a lot of effort goes into creating a lovely landscape. How often do we stop and “smell the roses.” We have been blessed beyond any civilization in history with the resources and technology to view amazing things. I regularly receive emails that contain glorious pictures from all over the world of God's amazing creation. With each picture, I try to remember to praise Him for His creativity and His love of beauty. And then there's the church.


*Praise the  
LORD!  
Sing to the  
LORD  
a new song.*



We may not be as beautiful outwardly as we once were, but Grace is full of beautiful spirits. May we “approve what is excellent in one another, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ” (Phil. 1: 10). Find creative ways to affirm and celebrate your family and your friends. According to Paul, we are all “masterpieces in the making” (Phil 1: 6) and encouragement enables those masterpieces to blossom. There are many Joshua Bells around you. They just have different talents.

Big love in Christ,  
Pastor Dave

P.S. I announced at the end of worship February 21 that the Session has granted me a leave of absence from after Easter until September. I will be acting as temporary interim pastor of our sister congregation, First Evangelical Presbyterian of Thomasville, GA. The senior pastor there, Dr. Tim Filston, is on sabbatical and I will be filling in on a full-time basis. I would appreciate your prayers for this difficult time in the life of that church, since Tim's wife Beth is undergoing chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer. This "mini interim" would not be possible without the Session's confidence in Pastors John and Rick to steer the ship at Grace. Pray for them as well. Thanks!



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

By Elder Linda Pool

### CHANGE MY HEART, OH GOD

Change my heart, oh God; make it ever true.  
Change my heart, oh God; May I be like You.  
You are the Potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me, This is what I pray.  
—Eddie Espinosa

Only the most courageous Christians sing this wholeheartedly. Like a potter working with clay, God will mold us if we yield to His touch. The touch of His hand transforms us, changing our hearts and making us more like Him. Sometimes God uses difficulties and trials in the shaping process. But all that we face is under the sovereign hand of the Potter.

When a difficulty strikes, we may wonder how to respond, what direction to turn. We may even devise a plan and take control. But God wants to use the situation to shape our hearts. God calls us to action, but He wants our hearts right first. When we focus on Him, we will do what is right.

As we yield to God's touch, we learn the lessons He wants to teach us: how to love those who may need it most, but deserve it least; how to believe the best of others instead of jumping to negative conclusions; How to see people's hurts instead of just the wounds they inflict.

This isn't easy! But as the Potter molds us, we become more and more like Christ. And we find joy!

*Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. ISAIAH 64:8*

*PRAYER: Ask God to help you yield to his hand, molding and shaping your life. Ask Him to help you to see His sovereign hand in whatever you are facing today.*

*From "Sons 4 Worship presents Open the Eyes of My Heart" Daily Devotions  
From the Greatest Praise and Worship Songs of All Time*





Well, now it is March and the signs of spring are all around us. It seems that everything is starting to bloom and the air is full of pollen. As a result of that I spend most of my outdoor time chasing after my running nose. However, we have a budget approved by the session and you have had a chance to review and question it. Hopefully you noticed that we allocated 12% for missions. We wanted to make that 15% and still might based on your giving. But we must ensure that the mandatory expenses are met. Also, hopefully you noticed that our “Building Fund” is over \$300,000. There are many of you that have been consistently supportive of that, and rest assured that the Building Committee is actively looking at options and opportunities. Also, you can be assured that this is a growth account with a one-way door, funds go in but will not come out for any other purpose. Lastly, if you have questions on this subject please feel free to ask any member of the Stewardship & Finance Committee.

I have been praying, thinking, discussing with other members of our church, and yes even dreaming about a very important issue. That issue is our growth and how to facilitate it. Based on what seems to be the new normal we must have more space. We have had as many as 88 in our services recently and we were nearly maxed out. After all isn't being able to host a complete range of worship services important? Wouldn't being able to hold those services safely and comfortably also help us to grow? And, isn't growth, or the bringing of more people into the church, our purpose for existing? Think about this, we have two main responsibilities as a church. The first is to nurture and support each other as we try to walk the path that our Lord has laid before us, and the second and equally important is to seek out others that we can bring onto that pathway with us.

As Christians we have set ourselves on a path that was paved by the teachings of the Holy Bible, the true Word of God. By that move we admitted that as flawed humans we are not in a position to change the meaning of that book to fit our own human desires or to make an interpretation that would remove our sin. Instead, we determined that we would let the world know that we would continue to live, as best as we could, in concert with the Bible's true teachings. Since then we have progressed some as we now have a worship facility and are seeing some growth in our attendance. However, now as we come out of this pandemic period, we should be letting others know that we are here and open to them albeit safely. We need to be letting people know that we are different from many other denominations, in that we refused to allow sinful people to rewrite the rules that we are trying to live by.

So, there are things that I pray you will consider as you pray for the health and growth of our church. First is always what can each of us do to further our growth? Then ask for the wisdom to see and follow God's direction for us and finally, ask how you can encourage someone to join with us?

See you in Church!  
Dave Hoffmeyer for the  
Stewardship & Finance Team





- Bonnie Maddox - 1st
- Roger Brewer - 6th
- Molly Bod - 12th
- John Ernest - 16th
- Jim Kohler - 16th
- Lauren Preston - 17th
- Beverly Witter - 18th
- Bob Russell - 21st
- Terese Engquist - 24th
- Don Shearer - 25th
- Noah Klee - 30th

## Women's Bible Study!

### "The Ministry of Intercession"

Monday, March 1st  
1:00pm ~ Tea Room



Join us for a wonderful study delving into the power of God's love and forgiveness; and the obligation to bless in accordance with God's will.

"And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:27



The Last Friday Women's Breakfast is scheduled for **March 26th at 8:30am** at **Blooms in Leesburg**



- John Fraser
- Larry Hochhalter
- Jack Homoney
- Wally Klee, Sr.
- Kris Ogden
- Marvin Pool
- Shelby Reed
- Al Rode, Jr.
- Rick Rosenkrans
- Jim Teets



### All-Church Prayer

March 4th & 18th  
1:00PM - 2:00PM

We would love to hear all of your prayer requests. You can email them to [GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com](mailto:GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com) or call the office at (352) 552-0052.



The Widow's Luncheon is scheduled for **Thursday, March 18th** at 11:30am.

It will be at the Arlington Ridge Golf Course Restaurant

Please let Sue know if you are attending by Sunday, March 14th.

## Jim and Sandy Teets



Jim and Sandy Teets live in The Villages. Before their move to the villages, they lived in West Virginia. Jim and Sandy both grew up in West Virginia and attended small public schools, Sandy in the south and Jim in the north. They both attended West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. Jim's first degree was in Animal Science. His second came in his mid-forties in Accounting after making a bet with their daughter who was in her third year of

college as an accounting major, that he could become a CPA before she did. He succeeded. She lost the bet as she never sat for the CPA test. Sandy dropped out of college to care for two young children. As a licensed auctioneer Jim also volunteered his time and talent doing auctions for various charities and friends for 30 plus years.

They met at the state capitol when Sandy was working at the WV Legislature and Jim was serving as Minority Leader in the House of Delegates. They married on November 26, 1983. Theirs is a blended and blessed family with six children, eleven living grandchildren and one great grandchild.

After their marriage, they worked together in a small family business in Terra Alta, WV. They were distributors of auto parts, serving independent auto parts stores in sections of three states and ran two auto parts stores of their own. In addition, they distributed liquid petroleum products to mining, logging and farming operation in their area. At its peak they also served about 1200 homes with heating oil.

In the late '80's they sold the liquid distributorship and concentrated on the auto parts business and added an Ace Hardware franchise and a Christmas/Gift shop. This continued until 1997 when they sold all of their businesses and moved to Charleston to work for the newly elected Governor Cecil Underwood. Jim was the Governor's Chief of Staff and Sandy was the manager of the Worker's Compensation Appeal Board. The Governor's term ended in 2001, and Sandy retired shortly afterward. Jim went to work for a Charleston law firm as a forensic accountant, retiring at the end of 2005.

They first came to The Villages in 2004 to visit a friend, liked what they saw, rented in 2006 and purchased their first home there in March 2007. After that they "snow bired" for ten years, and moved here permanently in 2017.

Once they settled here permanently, they began to search for a Reformed church and eventually found Lakes and Hills on the internet. The first service they attended happened to be the Sunday that Lakes and Hills and Solid Rock had their first joint service. They were new and everyone they met that day assumed they were from the other body. They were delighted knowing that if they weren't comfortable with the service and chose not to come back, no one would miss them! As is apparent, they found their church home here at Grace EPC, a church with loving, caring, Bible believing individuals led by a Pastor (now 3) who are committed to exalting Christ above all else.



## Praying in God's Will

By Elder Pat Byrnes

We have been exploring the topic of prayer for that past several months and I want to continue to deal with it at least one more time. Last month we looked at the fullness of God's sovereignty and grace in terms of not only bringing about His will but calling us to ask Him to do so. What a blessing! To be complicit in God's work.

One of the most intriguing comments by Jesus about prayer is found in Matthew chapter 6, verse 8. Here Jesus is teaching on prayer as part of the Sermon on the Mount. He leads up to the Lord's Prayer with instructions to keep it simple and to keep it focused on God's omniscience and caring sovereignty... unlike the Gentiles who (verse 7) "*heap up empty phrases... for they think that they will be heard for their many words.*" Instead Jesus tells us (verse 8) "*for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*" That is, He does not need a wordy explanation of our situation... He is omniscient and already knows. What is intriguing about it to me is the purpose of asking Him if he already knows? Matthew Henry in his commentary puts it this way.

"It does not follow that therefore ye need not pray; for God requires you by prayer to own your need of Him (*my underline*). Open your case, pour out your hearts before Him, and then leave it with him. The God we pray to is our Father. Children do not make long speeches to their parents when they want anything. They need not say many words that (who) are taught by the Spirit of adoption to say that one aright, Abba Father. He is a father that knows our case and knows our wants better than we do ourselves. He knows what things we have need of. He often gives before we call and often more than we ask for. We need not be long or use many words in representing our case; God knows it better than we can tell Him, only He will know it from us (what will ye that I should do unto you?). The most powerful intercessions are those that are made with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26)".



Throughout the Psalms, but especially in Psalm 91, we learn that God is not only our Shepherd who guides and protects us but "our Champion who upholds our cause as His child and defends our highest interests" (taken from 31 Days of Praise by Ruth Myers).

The big question is what is our highest interest? Do we really know what it is? We might think so but we may be confused by desires rather than interest. And furthermore, as we saw last month, our perspective is finite while our highest interest is more appropriately in the eternal. We have some glimpses of the eternal but cannot think within that paradigm and therefore need the spirit to intercede for us as Paul describes in that verse Matthew Henry quoted (Rom. 8:26). And if we pray in God's will, it will be done for us. Recall 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:14 "*that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us*".

Praying in God's will takes some amount of practice and time. Ask yourself what God could be thinking about regarding your needs both finite and eternal. For starters, we have to think at a higher level than we normally think with our lists of here and now items. For example:

Give priority to God's name being hallowed, His kingdom coming and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Understand that He wills His called to know Him and the Son that He sent for them (John 17:3). Ask for the calling of His Holy Spirit on those who God has brought across your path.

Agree with God for the things He knows will make us closer and closer to the likeness of Christ.

Continued on next page

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Acknowledge in humility and gratitude all His blessings, knowing that trials and sifting are blessings that lead to our sanctification.

Ask for wisdom, strength and patience to endure, a spirit of forgiveness to forgive as He forgives.

Ask Him to order your steps (Prov. 16:9) and to show you how you may serve Him.

There are many more if we contemplate fully the scriptures.

And yes... our lists. They are important to us and important to God in that he desires that we seek his sovereign will over everyday things too. Our blood test, surgery, medical procedure, a family member's need for a job, travel safety, and so on. No, we can't know His will with regard to any specific outcome so it is impossible to know that we are praying in His will except in the broader sense that the day to day things add up and contribute to the higher matters... to the eternal. So, practice praying in the higher matters of God's revealed will and trust Him for the day to day stuff too.

Through Christ our great High Priest, *let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace* (Heb. 4:16)... let's keep praying!



## **March in Ecclesiastes! Living Life Backward**

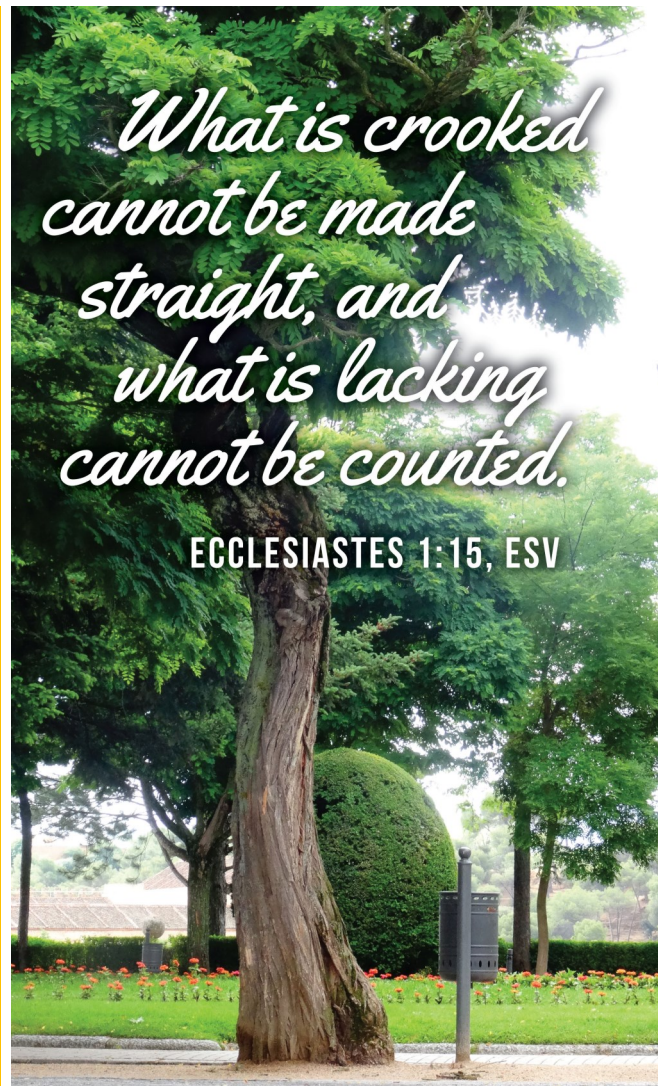
**Mar 7th** Empty Self-Indulgence

**Mar 14th** Foolish Human Wisdom


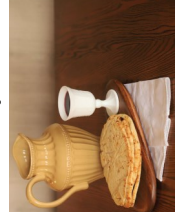

**Mar 21st** Work is Good, Not Ultimate

**Mar 28th** The Importance of Good Timing

*\*\*\*Maundy Thursday will be on April 1st @ 6:30pm*



# March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 1:00 ~ 2:30PM Women's Bible Study 6:30pm Small Group with Bob Schielke <b>Bonnie Maddox</b> Birthday	2 8:00am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast at Perkins	3 4:30pm Choir	4 1:00~2:00 All Church Prayer Meeting	5 Roger Brewer Birthday	6
7 <b>Communion Sunday</b> 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School	8 9:30am Safety Team 1:00 ~ 2:30PM Women's Bible Study 6:30pm Small Group with Bob Schielke 6:30pm Klee Monday Grp	9 8:00am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast at Perkins 6:30pm Klee Tuesday Small Group	10 4:30pm Choir	11 <b>10:00am Finance Committee Meeting</b> 10:30am Small Group Study in Plantation	12 <b>Molly Bod</b> Birthday	13
14 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School	15 1:00 ~ 2:30PM Women's Bible Study Tea Room 6:30pm Small Group with Bob Schielke	16 8:00am Men's Bible Study at Perkins <b>10:00am Session Meeting</b> <b>John Ernest</b> <b>Jim Kohler</b> Birthdays	17 4:30pm Choir <b>Lauren Preston</b> Birthday	18 <b>11:30am Widow's Luncheon</b> 1:00~2:00 All Church Prayer Meeting <b>Beverly Witter</b> Birthday	19	20
21 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School <b>Bob Russell</b> Birthday	22 1:00 ~ 2:30PM Women's Bible Study 6:30pm Small Group with Bob Schielke 6:30pm Klee Monday Small Group	23 8:00am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast at Perkins 6:30pm Klee Tuesday Small Group	24 4:30pm Choir <b>Terese Engquist</b> Birthday	25 10:30am Small Group Study in Plantation <b>Don Shearer</b> Birthday	26 <b>8:30am Last Friday Women's Breakfast</b>	27
28 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School <b>Palm Sunday</b> <b>Hosanna!</b> 	29	30 <b>Noah Klee</b> Birthday	31	1 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Service 	2 Good Friday 	



A few notes from your  
friendly neighborhood Administrator...



**The Office will be closed March 15th—19th:** Yes, y'all heard it here first! Mandy will be out on vacation that week so there will not be anyone in the office. If you need help, or have an urgent request, you can reach out to one of our fabulous pastors or elders. Their names and contact information is listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

**New Directory Available:** Copies of the new directory are in the narthex and you can pick one up on Sunday morning. We are still missing some pictures, birthdates, and anniversaries, so please be sure to get your info over to Mandy so that she can update it in our system. There are a few pictures that we should probably update as well. If you would like a new picture for the directory, please see Mandy on Sunday and she can take one for you, or if you have a nice picture you can email it to her at [GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com](mailto:GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com).

**Prayer Requests:** We would love to hear from you and pray for you! Please email or call the church office and let us know how we can pray for you and come alongside you and pray for your loved ones.

## Safety Team!

I know there are a few members here who plan to be a part of the Safety Team, but I have not heard from everyone... no worries – you can still take part! Remember, you do NOT need to have a firearm or even know how to shoot; the majority of team members will help others to safety if needed and provide aid to anyone who may need help. The Safety Team will be looking at all kinds of incidents that could happen, especially with weather, fire, structural or other unavoidable problems.

So... if you haven't called me to sign up yet – call! I am Cindy Semenik at 352-978-1057. I am a Certified Firearms Instructor with NRA, The Well-Armed Woman and USCCA. I am also Certified on Countering the Mass Shooter and recently was certified to teach how to use Sabre Pepper Spray. My husband, Bill Hall, will also be here to help us.

Please contact me as soon as possible because we are going to have our first meeting next week, Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> here at the church at 9:30a.m. Mark your calendars – and I hope to see YOU there!

In Christ's Service,  
Cindy Semenik



## Crown Him with many Crowns



Ash Wednesday was the beginning of the season of Lent. For the believer, this forty-day period before Easter is supposed to be a season of reflection and drawing nearer to God. Many people give up something they enjoy, reflecting an attitude of sacrifice, or some immerse themselves in more devotional reading to draw themselves in closer communion with the Lord. How long this lasts would depend on each individual. Perhaps it's akin to all those New Year's resolutions we make. Commitment and discipline definitely help to carry through with any promises or resolutions we make.

Jesus, our Lord, obeyed His Father's will, set His eyes toward Jerusalem and became the sacrificial lamb. Let us take time to reflect all that was done for us so we will not have to experience God's wrath.

Crown Him the Lord of life  
The lamb upon the throne  
Hark how the heav'ly anthem drowns  
All music but it's own!  
Awake, my soul and sing  
Of Him who died for thee  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Thru all eternity.



Blessings Grace Church!  
Jill Fraser

## **Clothed in Hope Family News**



2020 was a really tough year for the Zambians with a failing economy, but was a relatively easy year regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Life changed, travel bans issued, but the general population did not seem greatly affected by the virus.

But at the start of this year, everything has changed. With the mutation strand from South Africa, COVID-19 is now aggressively sweeping through Zambia, especially the capital city of Lusaka, taking many lives and infecting many more.

We may be tired of hearing about COVID-19, and I get it. But there, the pandemic is fresh and vicious and unforgiving. As of now, we do not know of any of our women who have the virus, but unfortunately it's a matter of time. We are continuing to education about prevention strategies and equip women with the knowledge of what to do if they aren't feeling well in a country where medical services are severely lacking for the population size. We are prepared to help. So for now we wait and pray that our women, mostly immunocompromised, will not have to face this beast. We will keep you updated as needs arise.

Continued on next page

We were going to send a single email highlighting this new development impacting our women in Zambia, but unfortunately that's not all of the hardship lately.

The real bulk of what we needed to share confidentiality with you, our CiH family, is this. In a country where tensions run high from economic hardship and a spiraling pandemic, some people are responding in very reckless and dangerous ways.

Last month one of the families was attacked in their home by a violent man. They have been left traumatized and injured.

What happens when one is in danger and hurt? Nope, there's no ambulance service or police response at that hour at that location. They had to find someone to drive them more than an hour to the closest medical clinic. Miraculously after being beat with logs and stones, the injuries were not as bad as they could have been. The most damage that was done was emotional in the hearts and minds of them and the children who witnessed the attack.

The family is a big help to Clothed in Hope and this has affected them all. They have come together, praying together, sitting with them in their pain and fear to sleep in their home. The home is being repaired and extra security is being taken.

**Thanks to your generous donations through the years to fill our Emergency Fund,** we have been able to help with the expensive cost of private transport from their home to the medical center. We have been able to assist with medical needs and nutrient-dense foods to gain back strength.

Our mission is to care for vulnerable women. This family is very vulnerable. They are our top priority.

All we ask for is for your thoughts and prayers for the family, for healing, for justice without corruption, for protection. Thank you for loving big!

Hoping you and your family are well.

With Chikondi (love),  
Amy Bardi

*To know more about Clothed in Hope,  
visit [ClothedInHope.org](http://ClothedInHope.org)*





**Worship: 700 S. 9th St., Leesburg, FL**

**Mailing: P. O. Box 490001**

**Leesburg, FL 34749**

**352-552-0052**

**Rev. Dr. Dave Dorst**

**Email: [graceepclesburg@gmail.com](mailto:graceepclesburg@gmail.com)**

**Website: [Graceepchurch.org](http://Graceepchurch.org)**

**Like us on Facebook: Grace EPC**

**All activities are tentative and subject to change.**

**SUNDAYS:**

- 10:00 AM ~ Worship
- 11:15 AM ~ Sunday School

**MONDAYS:**

- 1:00 PM ~ Women's Bible Study ~ Tea Room
- 6:30 PM ~ Small Group Bible Study ~ Schielke
- 6:30 PM ~ Klee Monday Small Group (3/8 & 3/22)

**TUESDAYS:**

- 8:00 AM ~ Men's Bible Study & Breakfast @ Perkins
- 10:00 AM ~ Session Meeting (3/16)
- 6:30 PM ~ Klee Tuesday Small Group (3/9 & 3/23)

**WEDNESDAYS:**

- 4:30 PM ~ Choir Practice

**THURSDAYS:**

- 10:00 AM ~ Stewardship & Finance Committee Meeting (3/11)
- 10:30 AM ~ Small Group Bible Study - Plantation (3/11 & 3/25)
- 11:30 AM ~ Widow's Luncheon (3/18) ~ Arlington Ridge Golf Course Restaurant
- 1:00 PM ~ All Church Prayer - (3/4 & 3/18)

**FRIDAYS:**

- 8:30 AM ~ Last Friday Women's Breakfast (3/26) at Blooms in Leesburg