

# Old Stone Church - February 2023



## **WORDS FROM WANG** – *Inquiring Minds Want to Know: Ash Wednesday Origins*

Did you know that this *Ash Wednesday* tradition was not always the way we understand and practice it today? In the earliest days, ashes marked on the forehead of believers were not given to everyone but were given only to the biggest sinners; a punishment for those committing the most grievous infractions. Thus, ashes were reserved for these *public penitents* as they were brought before the community for “shaming.”

Think Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorn’s *The Scarlet Letter*, who in a Puritan Boston, Massachusetts in 1642 was required to publicly wear a scarlet-colored letter "A" on her dress. This was a way of shaming her for giving birth to a baby out of wedlock. The "A" on her dress is presumed to stand for adulteress.

Thus, in the original context of wearing ashes, only the most notorious sinners were marked publicly with a sign of their disgrace. But as time went on, as if creating jealousy, the ritual got the attention of others in the church who wanted to publicly show their humility as well. “Hey, how come they get ashes on their head? I want ashes on my head too!” Thus, with a desire to outwardly show penitence, other “sinners” began asking that they, too, might be marked as sinners. In the end, the number of penitents eventually grew so large that the imposition of ashes was extended to everyone in the church. And that my friends, is how this whole Ash Wednesday thing got started.

Historically, Roman Catholic churches initiated the annual ritual of imposing ashes on their foreheads as a liturgical practice to begin the Lenten season and it has been adopted by many Protestant churches as well. However, only about half of the congregations I’ve served have actually established it as a church tradition. So, whether you choose to participate in the ash custom or not, the symbolic nature of the ritual has become a sober reminder that “from the ashes (earth) we come, and to the ashes (earth) we will return.”

February 22 (2.22.23) marks the beginning of yet another Lenten season and we will be offering two Ash Wednesday services of reflection and grace with music, liturgy, and the Word. One at 3:00 at 1<sup>st</sup> Cong. Pecatonica and the other at 7:00 at OSC Rockton.

We wish you a blessed Lenten journey as you begin the walk toward new life and the glory of the Easter event.

See ya’ in church.

*Pastor Bob*

## Worship Opportunities (February)

**February 5:** The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:13-20

**Sermon theme:** *Shine*

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*



**February 12:** The 6th Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

**Sermon Theme:** *Willing Spirits*

**February 19:** Transfiguration Sunday

**Scripture:** Matthew 17:1-9

**Sermon Theme:** *Get Up and Do Not Be Afraid*



**February 22:** Ash Wednesday

**3:00** – *Worship* at 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational, Pecatonica

**7:00** – *Worship* at Old Stone Church, Rockton  
(Official start to the season of Lent)

**February 26:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-11

**Sermon theme:** *Lenten Soup*

Note: This is a “fellowship first” Sunday and will take place in fellowship hall.



**USE YOUR MIND!**

**March 5:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** John 3:1-17

**Sermon Theme:** *Using Our God-Given Smarts*

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*



## **Crooked River Ministries - SMAC**

The shared ministry advisory committee had another meeting and is excited to announce two more coffee house/open mic nights on “the 18ths” (February 18 in Pec and March 18 in Rockton). The flier with details is included in this newsletter.

We are also happy that a new task force with reps from both churches have convened to plan joint children and youth ministries programming. We are offering a “**Family Game Night**” on **Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup>**. Any families (parents/kids, grandparents/grandkids, siblings; you get the idea) are welcome to join us at the Old Stone Church for some good old fashioned fun with board games for all ages. Munchies and beverages will be provided. We will begin at 1:30 and end in time to attend or participate in the community concert that our music staff and choir are hosting at 4:00 that same day. More information will be coming in church bulletins and the March newsletter.

**We have a new logo for our shared ministry.**



We also came up with our initial mission statement as well. It reads:

*“Crooked River Ministries is a collaboration between First Congregational Church of Pecatonica and the Old Stone Church of Rockton. Our Mission is to work together to expand ministries beyond the walls of our churches and includes forming community partnerships.”*

And if that’s not enough, we now have a “Crooked River Ministries” Facebook page and we need everyone to “like” and “follow” us on FB. It’s quite easy to do!! The Pec church council has also agreed to engage Michael and Lindsey Lancaster to build a website for them so that all our online presence can be linked together.

Another possible event is being considered that would involve a bus to transport us to Chicago to see Disney’s *Aladdin* (the musical) in the month of May. We are trying to gauge the level of interest so after you read this please let us know your thoughts.

We remain excited about the possibilities that exist as we explore and envision opportunities that our shared ministry provides. Please feel free to approach any members of the team with ideas or questions.

For 1<sup>st</sup> Cong. – Kathy Spataro McGinty, Dawn Lucas, and Sally Landin

For OSC – Jason Plessner, Chelsea Dorr, and Steve Herdklotz

And Pastor Bob, of course.

# Crooked River Coffee House and Open Mic Nights

**Saturday February 18, 2023 (Valentine themed)**

1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church of Pecatonica  
633 Reed St. Pecatonica, IL

**Saturday March 18, 2023 (Irish themed)**

The Old Stone Church  
101 E. Union St. Rockton, IL

**Admission:** gently worn, used, or new shoes to support the missions of Crooked River Ministries

The doors will open at 6:00 for open mic sign-up. Performers can plan 2-3 pieces to play, sing, recite, etc. A cash food/drink concession will be available.



Like us on FB  
Questions call 815-624-6212 or email  
[pastorboboscrockton@gmail.com](mailto:pastorboboscrockton@gmail.com)



**Bible Study for Lent** (Rockton)

There has been some interest in holding a Bible study at Old Stone Church. After some conversation, Pastor Bob has offered to conduct a Bible study for several Wednesdays around and during the 2023 season of Lent. The original discussion took place during one of the grief group meetings on a Wednesday morning, so we thought we would offer these sessions during the 10:30 hour on the weeks that the grief group does not meet. A theme or focus has not yet been determined but will include at least one "intro level" class given the varying levels of experience and understanding of the bible. Of course, anyone from any church is welcome to attend.



The following dates and sessions will be offered  
(all Wednesdays from 10:30-12:00):

February 8 and 22

March 8 and 22

(With a possible session on April 12 which is the Wednesday after Easter)

It would be helpful for planning purposes if Pastor Bob knew of peoples interest so, please let him know that you will be attending by emailing him at [pastorboboscrockton@gmail.com](mailto:pastorboboscrockton@gmail.com) or by speaking to him or Lindsey in the office.

February Birthdays



- 1st- Kenneth Rudy
- 5th- Lynn Arnsmeier
- 7th- Nicholas Herdklotz
- 10th- Ethan Butler
- 12th- Jenny Middleton
- 16th- Dana Williams
- 18th- Mike Bailor
- 19th- Laura Bode
- 22nd- Delbie Insko
- 27th- Nadine Slocum
- 28th- Grayson Bailor



February

Anniversaries

- 13th- Dean & Jenny Middleton



Hey Girl,  
I'd leave the  
99 because  
you're the  
ONE.

to:  
from:

Happy Valentines Day!

You and me,  
we're like loaves  
and fishes:  
We just might  
be a miracle.



# February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Grief Group 10:30 Choir 7pm	2 Pantry 9-11am	3	4
5 Communion	6	7 Worship 7pm	8 Bible Study 10:30 Choir 7pm	9 Pantry 9-11am	10 Girl Scouts 5:30p	11
12	13	14 Council 7pm	15 Grief Group 10:30 Choir 7pm	16 Pantry 9-11am	17	18 Coffee House Pec
19	20	21	22 Bible Study 10:30 Choir 7pm	23 Pantry 9-11am	24 Girl Scouts 5:30p	25
26 Fellowship 1st	27	28				

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Old Stone Church Staff:

**Pastor Bob Wang:** (262) 945-8475  
**Lindsey Lancaster:** Office Administrator  
**Bob Estrada:** Custodian

