

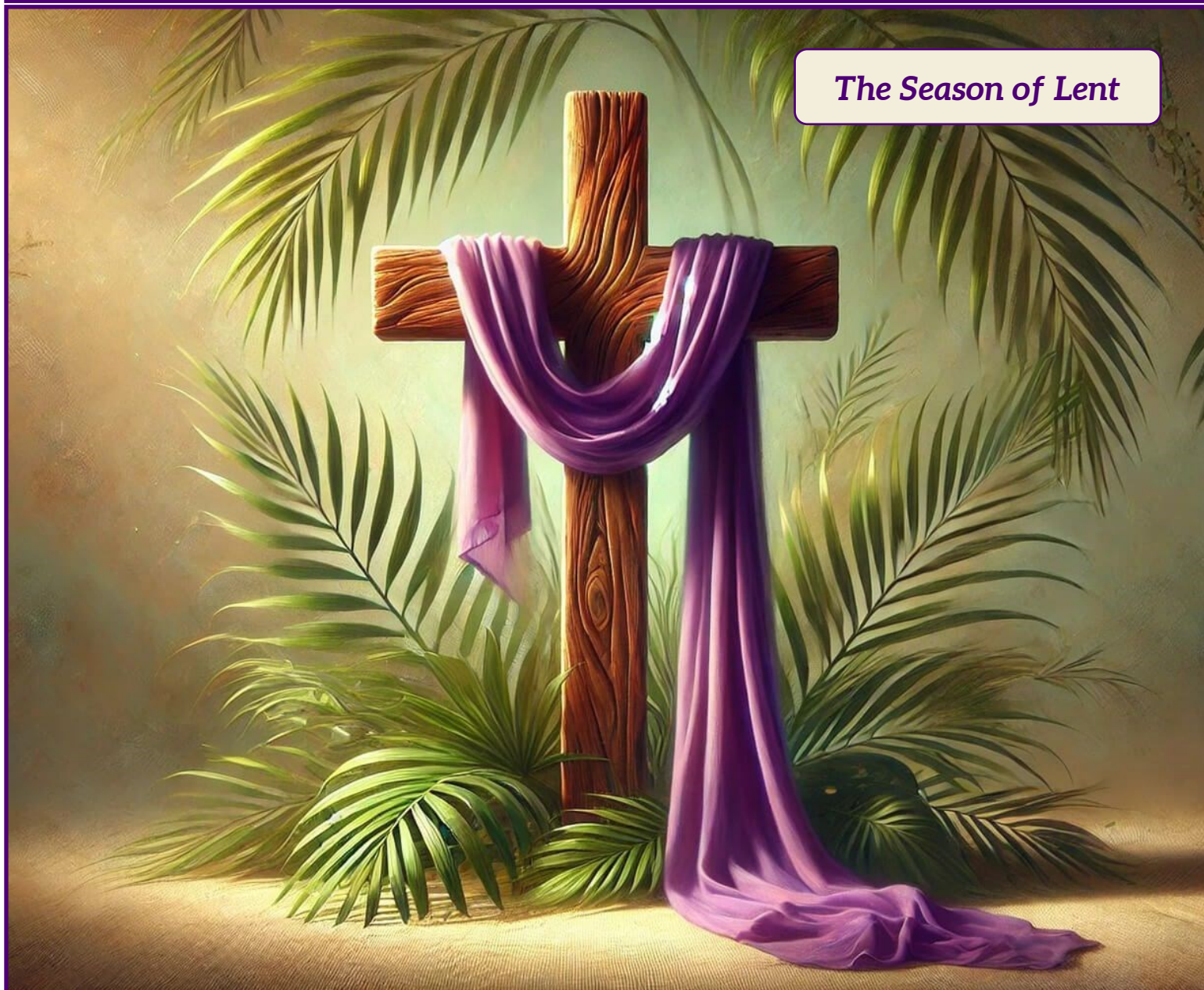
Montrose Messenger

Newsletter for Montrose United Methodist Church

March 2026

Volume 3

The Season of Lent



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***Humble yourselves, therefore,
under the mighty hand of God
so that at the proper time
he may exalt you.***

~ I Peter 5:6

Pastor's Column



The gardener didn't see a fruitless tree as a problem to be removed. He saw potential that needed nurturing. He saw a project worth investing in.



That's the "aha!" moment for me. It's so easy to adopt the owner's perspective: "Cut it down. It's taking up space and not producing." We apply this to people who frustrate us, to parts of our own lives that feel stagnant, and sometimes even to our faith when it doesn't seem to be bearing fruit. We want immediate results.

But Jesus, in this parable, paints a picture of God as the patient gardener. He sees the soil of our hearts and knows it needs to be loosened up. He knows we need some "fertilizer"—maybe it's a challenging circumstance, a kind word from a friend, or a fresh perspective from His Word—to finally put down deep roots and bear fruit. Thanks be to God for a Gardener who doesn't give up on us after one bad season, or even three. Thanks be to God for a God who digs and fertilizes, patiently waiting for the fruit that He knows is possible.



⁶ Jesus told this parable: "A man owned a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ He said to his gardener, 'Look, I've come looking for fruit on this fig tree for the past three years, and I've never found any. Cut it down! Why should it continue depleting the soil's nutrients?' ⁸ The gardener responded, 'Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer. ⁹ Maybe it will produce fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.' "

- Luke 13:6-9.

This morning, I found myself turning to the parable of the mustard seed in Luke 13, but I like to read the entire chapter for a devotional so I can better understand the context. I came upon this parable of the fig tree after this call to repentance, and it just hit me hard. Can something/someone be so irredeemable that it has to be removed? Is there no hope for this fig tree?

My home in Oklahoma didn't have any trees. For all of my teenage years, I didn't have to collect leaves or pick up stray branches from the yard. So when my world shifted from the wide-open plains to a neighborhood thick with so many types of trees, I found myself annoyed by the constant mess. The fallen leaves felt like a chore, the branches a nuisance. I saw trees as things that just were—they either provided shade or they created work.

But this morning, reading about the gardener who was willing to get his hands dirty—to dig and to fertilize—I realized I had been looking at trees, and maybe at people, all wrong.

With Love and Blessings,
Pastor Mark Schlasner

Email: am.umc.pastor@gmail.com

Phone/Text: (763) 656-3490

March Worship Theme *"God, the Patient Gardener"*

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Communion Sunday

Communion Steward: Christie Illies

Message: *"Guided By the Promise"*

Scripture: John 3:1-17

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Message: *"Companion for the Journey"*

Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Message: *"Journeying in Grace"*

Scripture: Psalm 23

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Message: *"Redemption Road"*

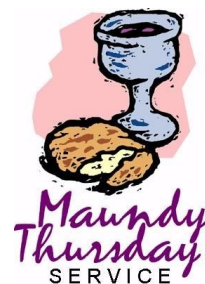
Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14

~ PALM SUNDAY ~

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Message: *"Marching Orders"*

Scripture: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

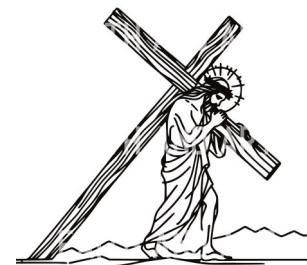


Thursday,
April 2nd at 6 pm
(Time to be confirmed)
Montrose UMC
Fellowship Hall

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 3rd at 12 pm
(Location to be confirmed)

"The Way of the Cross Procession"





PRAYER PAGE

The Joys & Concerns
Lifted in February

Grieving with Families

† **The Laurie Poach Family.** Laurie, Diane Folkestad's sister we've kept in prayer, lost her battle with cancer on Feb. 10th at 69 years old.

† **The Gene Persian Family.** Gene, owner of Persian Business Equipment in Buffalo for decades, passed away Feb. 13th at 84 years old from multiple cancers. Rose, his wife, has dementia and is a close friend of Belle Johnson's.

† **The Bryce Ramthun Family.** Bryce passed away March 1st at 46 years old.



Our Friends At Home

Gloria Adickes
John Hylland

ALWAYS
IN OUR
THOUGHTS

Lifting in our Prayers

Ricki and Allan Malerich's renter, broken water pipe caused flooding in the home.

Duane, prayers for healing from a broken bone.

People grieving.

Sandy Dmytryszyn, continues to improve with rehabilitation in FL. *UPDATE:* Sandy returned to MN 2/19 and is at Parkview for about 3 weeks continuing rehabilitation.

Erik & Kelsey Marquette. Cora, their youngest, was hospitalized for bacteria in her blood.

Judy Mumford-Torres, broke her shoulder from a fall taken while ice skating.

Mark Wagner, Mike Wagner's brother, undergoing radiation therapy at Mayo Clinic for throat cancer.

Steve Leitte Family. Steve, Russ Johnson's best friend, had a heart attack. Russ will go help take care of Steve at his home up north.

Judy Mumford-Torres, having a breast biopsy Feb. 23rd and hoping for good results. *UPDATE:* Biopsy showed no signs of cancer.

Laurie Poach, Diane Folkestad's sister, as the family continues to grieve.



Blessings and Celebrations

Skylar Chaffins, is an official Montrose Volunteer Fire Fighter after his 2 years of training and probationary period. He was pinned by his dad Jason, a former MFD Chief, on Feb. 7th!

Linda Prestidge, getting back brace removed after a serious fall in November breaking two vertebrae!

Isabella Johnson, so grateful for everyone's amazing support at her fundraiser luncheon!

Ricki & Allan Malerich, secured their 2026 health insurance!

Sherry & Tod Ovall, closing on a new one-level townhome and moving end of March!

Stephen Hayes, celebrating his 70th Birthday with a big party!



We celebrate all the special Birthdays from February!



Lenten Series
SOUP & SCRIPTURE

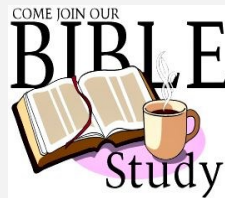
COME JOIN US

Thursdays in March (5th, 12th, 19th, 26th)
6 pm at Montrose UMC

In the Fellowship Hall

Everyone is welcome for a free meal and conversation around the Bible.

Hosted by House of Grace & Montrose UMC



The weekly Bible Study group at Montrose UMC meets each Thursday at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall.

~ ALL ARE WELCOME ~

For any questions, contact Pastor Mark at 763.656.3490
Or by Email: am.umc.pastor@gmail.com



To everyone that supported the Fundraisers for both, Isabella Johnson and Alyssa Prestidge, by donating food and contributing towards their expenses, the Church Council and Hannah Circle Thank you!

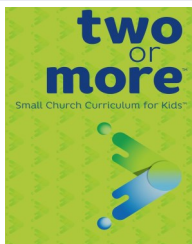
Isabella Johnson's luncheon raised almost \$1,300 towards her trip to France in March with the BHS Foreign Student Exchange program! *Merci!*



Alyssa Prestidge's breakfast raised almost \$1,000 towards her stay in Minneapolis at the 2026 Aquatennial "Best Days of Summer" Event, as former 2024-2025 Montrose Ambassador representing Minnesota!

NOTE: While the church was unable to host a fundraiser this year for Josh Illies, he is going on another Oasis Mission Trip to Tucson, AZ March 7-14. While in Tucson, the group will provide help and support to Hope City Church, the Gospel Rescue Mission, and Goshen Community Center. The cost of his trip is about \$1,100 - so if you'd like to support Josh's trip, please make checks payable to Christie Illies and give to her on behalf of Josh.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE



The Sunday School Class will continue the "Two or More" curriculum, which is working out well with our age groups. This curriculum will take us to the end of the Sunday School year (mid-May) and teaches us to Trust God, shows us Jesus' Amazing Love, and takes us to the Sermon on the Mount, following Jesus.

We hope the kids are showing you some of our games or science experiments, Or perhaps sharing our weekly **BIBLE VERSE & KEY POINTS!** Asking them what they learned "today" will help drive the point home!

There will be Sunday school on April 5th, Easter Sunday!

Angie Ferrell
Christian Education Director (763) 442-4876



MARCH NEWS!

The Youth Group will meet on the 3rd Wednesday this month, March 18th, at 5:30 pm... location pending!

We would like your suggestions of **WHERE TO MEET,** then take a vote to finalize the location!

Text your suggestion to Angie at (763) 442-4876 by March 14th!

Pastor Mark, Angie, and Kim

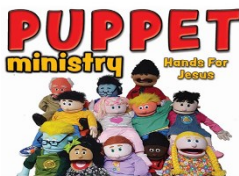
Outreach Committee Update



Look for an update next month on what the committee is planning ahead, in support of Rivers of Hope and other outreach programs.

Diane Folkestad, Meri Ault & Pastor Mark

Thank you to those who signed-up to help with our new **PUPPET MINISTRY!**



Pastor Mark will send out information soon on when we'll get started and practice for the upcoming **Easter season,** and showcase what we've learned!

We'll train together, perform together, and bring joy to our church family. **No experience needed—just bring your enthusiasm and a love for storytelling!**

Interested? It's not too late to join us! Let's make something amazing together!



Pastor Mark

FINANCE UPDATE

ANNOUNCEMENT!

Carol Becker has volunteered to be the new Finance Chair. We thank Carol for taking on this role, a role she swore she'd never do again! We thought we lost her when she saw the January utility bills and 2026 insurance premium! We operate as efficient as possible, but will continue to look at where we can cut costs. We appreciate the generous donations people make of paper products, cleaning products, stamps, office paper, etc. It does help the bottom line!

(Think RAISERIGHT when making these purchases!)

Here is February's information, but please bare with us during the transition as we catch-up on weekly giving and financial information.

February Income: Total \$6,111

General Fund giving \$4,988 (This includes Designated Giving, Apportionments \$375, and Palabra Viva rent \$550.)

Building Fund giving \$1,123

February Expenses: (Not available at time of publication.)

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Becker.

Carol Becker, Finance Chair
(763) 913-9540
Email: choppe59@gmail.com



Camp Minnesota
Minnesota Annual Conference
of the United Methodist Church
Camping & Retreats Ministries

Summer 2026 Camp Minnesota
June through September For ages 6 and up!

(2026 Camp brochures are in slot at back entryway.)

Registration is open for summer camping season at Koronis Ministries in Paynesville, Northern Pines Camp in Park Rapids, and KoWaKan Adventures in Ely.

Camps for children, Teens, Women, Men, Grandparents, and Families!
There's an Early Bird Special \$25 credit if you register by April 30th, and Bring-Friend Special \$50 credit.

Get ready for an unforgettable summer adventure with Camp Minnesota. Dive into a world of fun, learning, and adventures - making friends, building new skills, and experiencing the joy of Christ, Creation, and Community in a safe and supportive environment.

go to: www.campminnesota.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES UPDATE

Just a quick update from the Trustees on some things going on in the building! First, Mike Wagner has been doing some painting in both restrooms, including the stalls in the men's room. He's filled and painted several large cracks in some of the walls too.

On Monday, Mar. 2nd Graham Movers will deliver freezer(s) for House of Grace, which are going on the west wall of the lunchroom. Tables have been condensed to make more room and there will be more shifting around in the lunchroom, youth room and Love INC space to accommodate everything being stored by MUMC and HOG. Time to condense and organize again!

Trustees will start work in the youth room this month or next, to tear down paneling, sheetrock, etc. and see what's behind the west wall (mold). Then repairs will be made and a decision will be made how best to utilize that space. Stay tuned!

Your B.O.T. - Mike Wagner, Kim Wagner and Bob Prestidge



Produce, Bakery, Frozen Meat & Deli

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

1:30 pm
Friday, March 6th and
Friday, March 20th

Hosted by House of Grace

*****NEW LOCATION*****

Drive-thru pick-up in rear parking lot
At Montrose United Methodist Church
230 Center Ave. So.
(next door to the Montrose Community Center)



A Message From W.C.C.A. Wright County Community Action

WCCA would like to thank you for all the donations that you have collected for the food shelf. We would like to continue to use the guide of items that we go through, using a list for each month throughout the year. We hope this list helps you with planning fundraisers and frequently asked questions about what can be donated.

March: **CLEANING SUPPLIES** "Open Your Heart Campaign"

Dish soap	Laundry soap
Toilet cleaner	Dishwasher soap
Fabric softener	Sanitizing wipes

Thank you for your continued donations!
Tammy Prestidge, Food Shelf/Thrift Store Coordinator

March is Minnesota Food Share Month

Montrose UMC will reserve the (eastside) back pew for additional food donations through the month of March to support the Waverly Food Shelf!

FE+ED UPDATE



REPORT FOR THE FEBRUARY 24, 2026 FREE FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**We had 35 volunteers giving
113.5 hours of work!**

Well, what an interesting weather day to hold a food drop! Snow, sleet, rain, and most of all **ICE!** Not to mention the Second Harvest semi arrived at 10:15 am instead of 12 pm -1:00 pm as scheduled! Despite very slippery roads and our volunteers coming from Waconia, Rockford, Watertown, Howard Lake, Waverly, Buffalo, and Montrose we had the semi unloaded in record time. We paused our inside process so the Phoenix Learning Center students would be involved with the packing. It gave everyone a chance to visit and catch up while we had our lunch. It was Russ Johnson's birthday so everyone sang Happy Birthday to him. Stephen Hayes is very excited to celebrate his 70th birthday on Saturday, February 28th with a big party at the Community Center! Their birthdays are only 2 days apart.

The Phoenix Learning Center students are always a great addition when they arrive! By then the sun was shining and it was **almost** warm outside, as if they brought the sunshine with them! Maggie and Deb are the liaisons to the PLC students and once more purchased items on their own to send with the kids. We are all really becoming attached to these great kids.

We had 15 boxes of excess food, attributed to "For The Love of 4 Paws" canceling their pet food distribution and many people going there first then FE-ED, and the early morning weather. The Montrose City Council and city staff held a joint meeting at 5pm, so we were able to gift them boxes and milk that did not get distributed. We had adjusted our numbers from 175 to 150 boxes when packing. Our ending numbers will not reflect how many people benefitted from those since we were unable to recover those numbers.

We were blessed with additional food from our Community:

- 944 Lbs. of food from the Buffalo Food Shelf
- 153 Lbs. of Bakery & 175 Lbs. of meat from Grace Place.

February Statistics:

- **N/A lbs.** of food from Second Harvest Heartland
- 136 Families served (verified 150 boxes distributed)
- 375 Individuals served
- 25 Veterans served
- 5 First time visitors
- 14 Communities served

YOUR NEXT FREE FOOD DROP

March 24 2:00 PM - GONE


Respectfully submitted by,
Pam Johnson, Secretary





FE-ED FREE FOOD DROP
 Tuesday, March 24th
 2 pm until gone
 Montrose Community Center

Drive-thru pick-up on a first come-
 first serve basis while quantities last.
 ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Fellowship Hour (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 11 am House of Grace Worship (L) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	2 10:30 am FREEZER DELIVERY (K) 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (C)	3 7 pm Handbells Rehearsal (S)	4 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	5 10 am Bible Study (F) 6 pm Soup Supper & Bible Study (F)	6 12:30 pm HoG Food Drop set-up (MUMC) 1:30 Food Drop Distro (MUMC)	7 4 - 9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship (S/F)
8 SPRING AHEAD  9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Fellowship Hour (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 11 am House of Grace Worship (L) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	9 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (C)	10 7 pm Handbells Rehearsal (S)	11 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	12 10 am Bible Study (F) 6 pm Soup Supper & Bible Study (F) 6:30 pm 4H Club Franklin Friends (C)	13 RAISE-RIGHT ORDER DAY!	14 4 - 9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship (S/F)
15 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Fellowship Hour (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) *NO HOUSE OF GRACE SERVICE* 11:45 am Church Council (F) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	16 6:30 pm Hannah Circle (F) 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (C)	17 12 pm FE-ED Mtg. (MUMC) 	18 5:30 pm MUMC YOUTH GROUP (OFF)	19 10 am Bible Study (F) 4 pm FREE COMMUNITY MEAL (MCC) 6 pm Soup Supper & Bible Study (F) 6:30 pm Cub Scouts (C)	20 12:30 pm HoG Food Drop set-up (MUMC) 1:30 Food Drop Distro (MUMC)	21 4 - 9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship (S/F)
22 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Fellowship Hour (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 11 am House of Grace Worship (L) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	23 4 pm Hannah Circle Outreach (OFF) 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (C)	24 12-1:30 pm FE-ED Set-up 2 pm FE-ED Distro (MCC) 7 pm Handbells Rehearsal (S)	25 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	26 10 am Bible Study (F) 6 pm Soup Supper & Bible Study (F)	27 RAISE-RIGHT ORDER DAY!	28 4 - 9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship (S/F)
29 PALM SUNDAY 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Fellowship Hour (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 11 am House of Grace Worship (L) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	30 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (C)	31	1 April 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	2 April 10 am Bible Study (F) 6 pm Joint Maundy Thursday Service (F)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> EVENT LOCATION KEY S Sanctuary F Fellowship Hall L Library (former Chancel) C Classrooms – Lower Level O Church Office K Kitchen and Lunchroom Y Youth Room MCC Montrose Comm. Center OFF Offsite </div>	

BIRTHDAYS!
 1st-Erik Marquette
 3rd-Cole Dostal
 7th-Bonnie Ashbaugh

7th-Debbie Baker
 9th-Jan Kanduth
 13th-Don Klarstrom
 14th-Alyssa Prestidge
 16th-Hazel Marquette

17th-Hudson Lieser
 18th-Jeff Dostal
 23rd-Brandon Torres
 26th-Owen Sage
 30th-James Kuhn



ANNIVERSARIES!
 No March Anniversaries!

Montrose UMC
PO BOX 13
230 Center Avenue So.
Montrose, Minnesota 55363

www.montroseumc.com
[Facebook.com/Montrose United Methodist Church](https://www.facebook.com/MontroseUnitedMethodistChurch)



Montrose United Methodist Church
(A WCCA EMERGENCY FOOD BOX NETWORK PARTNER)



FE-ED
For Each and Every Day
(4th Tuesday of the Month)

THE NEXT FREE FOOD
DISTRIBUTION IS:
Tuesday, March 24th

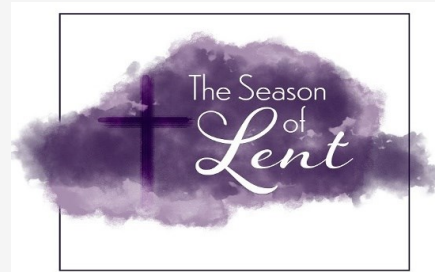
Drive-Thru Event starting at 2 pm
Montrose Community Center

Volunteers are always needed & welcome
starting at 12:30 pm to help pack food boxes!

FE-ED will have drive-thru free food distributions
every 4th Tuesday of the month, giving out pre-packed
boxes of dairy, bread, produce and food items.

For more information find us
on Facebook or go to the
FE-ED website:

www.fe-ed.org



We Invite You to Join Us
this Lenten Season

Thursdays at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall

- ◆ *Lenten Soup Supper & Bible Study*
March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

Every Sunday

- ◆ *9:30 am - 10:15 am Coffee & Fellowship*
- ◆ *9:30 am Sunday School (Pre-K - 6th Grade)*
- ◆ *10:30 am Worship Service*