

The Glovier Messenger

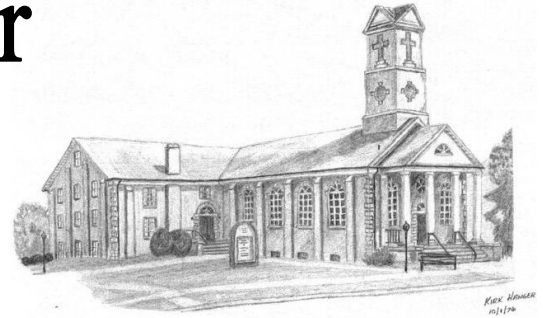
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From the Desk of Pastor Bill

A Call to 'Holy Fasting'

If I told you that I have a sure-fire, effortless plan whereby you can lose 25 pounds, with no exercise, and no money, would I have your attention? I thought so. You can't pick up a Woman's Day magazine, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Reader's Digest, or even the National Enquirer without finding at least one article on how to lose weight. It's a multi-million dollar business in America. Diet medications proliferate TV ads. If you want to lose weight to be more healthy, it's never easy, it takes a powerful lot of willpower and determination, it costs in effort, exercise, and dollars. Constantly we are urged to diet: diet to lose weight, diet to look better, diet to aid digestion, diet to build muscle, diet to control cholesterol, diet to lower blood pressure, diet to avoid heart attack. Sometimes the word that is used is not this ugly word "diet," but an even uglier one: "fasting."

A "healthy fast" is fine, but as we approach the holy season of Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday (February 18) what about a "holy fast"? Fasting for the six weeks of Lent may, or may not, result in weight loss, but I can guarantee you it can result in a real gain of spiritual depth if properly followed. Lent comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word "to lengthen." It is

nearing springtime and the days are getting longer as spring appears. But, for the Christian, for the church, Lent signals that party time is over, Mardi Gras is past, and now a whole new mood prevails. Once more we begin our annual, six-week pilgrimage to Good Friday's cross. We instinctively draw back, for words like repentance, fasting, discipline, and denial are hard words. But if we try to take shortcuts on the journey, or avoid responding to the call, we will never fully participate in the gladness and glory of Easter Day.

In one church, a pastor encouraged her congregation to a "holy fast." They could give up whatever they chose for the six weeks of Lent, and seek to know Christ himself in richer ways during the discipline. One man gave up smoking his pipe for six weeks, and never took it up again. One woman gave up crossword puzzles and used that hour a day for more Bible study and prayer. Another woman gave up her soap operas on television and used the time to pray. One gave up gossiping at the office and said she never felt so "clean" since she quit running through the daily garbage of other people's lives. And some gave up one food or another, some gave up certain meals. "It was a great joy," said the pastor, "to see how the external actions began to penetrate their hearts, their spirits, and their lives. Changes began



to take place in the church, in the families, and in the spirit of the congregation." A "holy fast" is a penetrating energy, and it gives new life and strength to all it touches where Christ is made the aim and center of it all.

During the season of Lent we hear the call of God to repent: repent of our sins, repent of our selfishness, repent of our thoughtlessness, repent of our neglect of the Word, repent of our failure to pray, repent of our neglect of God, repent of our failure to live up to the highest and best that we know. We really need to repent! Only someone hopelessly hardened could say there was no need for us to repent. A "holy fast" necessarily begins with repentance. The prophet Joel speaks for the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning... Blow the trumpet in Zion, call a solemn assembly" (Joel 2:12, 15). One of the ways we give evidence of our true repentance is by fasting. Weeping and fasting are outward signs of our genuine sorrow for sin. This "holy fasting" is to be an external expression in denying ourselves, and it is also to include a fasting and mourning of the heart. Until the heart is reached, every other act is just a meaningless formality and cold ritual. Our spiritual renewal must go far beyond just our outward activity, but at least it does begin there.

If we are to engage in a "holy fast" during Lent, we need to remember that fasting must forever center on God, and God alone. If our fasting is not unto God, we have utterly failed. Our motives for fasting must never be for health benefits, for success in getting our prayers answered, for gaining new power. There is no motive high or holy enough to replace the desire for God as the center of our fasting. Our Methodist founder John Wesley wisely said, "Let fasting be done unto the Lord with our eye

singly fixed on him. Let our intentions herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven."

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 3 (Tues)	3:00pm	Choir Practice
February 4 (Wed)	6:00pm	Bible Study
February 10 (Tues)	3:00pm	United Women
February 11 (Wed)	6:00pm	Bible Study
February 12 (Thurs)	6:00pm	UMM
February 17 (Tues)	3:00pm	Choir Practice
February 18 (Wed)	7:00pm	Ash Wednesday
February 22 (Sun)	10:45am	Return Baby Bottles
February 24 (Tues)	3:00pm	Choir Practice
February 25 (Wed))	6:00pm	Bible Study



AT HOME MEMBER FOR FEBRUARY Jean Pittman

1528 Fir Street, Waynesboro, VA 22980
540-942-1512

Jean would love to hear from you. Send her a card, text or give her a call. We appreciate our at home members as they support us each Sunday with their prayers and love.



Jan Bottemiller

Pauline & Tobi Broyles

Pete Phillips

Jean Pittman

Judy Mead

Nancy Napier

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 4th - Wanda Liskey
- 7th - Rufus Thompson
- 9th - Archie Kestner
- 9th - Ed Tutwiler
- 13th - Larry Johnson
- 16th - Sharon Rodgers
- 18th - Nancy Napier
- 19th - Victoria (Susie) Landis
- 23rd - Jacob Lam
- 24th - Jan Bottemiller
- 26th - Peggy Marshall
- 28th - Emma Roberson

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 9th - Scott & Teresa Childress
- 14th - Sonny & Wanda Easton



United Methodist Men will be meeting on February 12th at 6:00pm. Come and join the fellowship.



The United Women in Faith met January 18, 2026 for their yearly planning meeting. After a luncheon of soup, sandwiches and dessert the planning began.

The first fund raising event will be our "Souper Sunday" on February 8th. We will be selling vegetable soup, potato soup and country ham sandwiches. Each item is \$5. If you are interested, please let Karen Wright or Sheree Harlow

know by February 4th. You may pick up your order on Saturday, February 7th from 5 – 6:00pm or on Sunday February 8th from noon – 1:00pm. Our next meeting will be February 10 at 3:00pm. Thank you for supporting the United Women in Faith. We have several more events planned and will let you know as they come up.

'Into the Heart of Romans' Bible Study

Many people know that the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans is his greatest letter. It is not only a vital part of scripture in its own right, it offers guidance on reading all the rest as well. To some, Paul's letter remains a mystery. If a younger Christian, perhaps a friend from church, came and said, "I've been reading Romans, and I can't make head nor tail out of it," how many would know where to begin? Pastor Bill is leading a weekly study of Romans in the JOY classroom (6:00-7:00 PM). You are invited to attend In Person or on Zoom (To attend via Zoom, please send your email address to billjones@vaumc.org).



Please pick up a Baby Bottle to support Comfort Care Women's Health. Comfort Care is the only local health center specializing in the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of unplanned pregnancy. Put your loose change or offering in the Baby Bottle. They should be back to church on Sunday, February 22.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS IN FEBRUARY

February 1 The Christian Church

Mark 4:26-32 ²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." ³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

Ephesians 4:4-6 ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:11-15 ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

February 8 Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Matthew 3:13-17 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" ⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn

and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. ¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. ¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 28:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

February 15 The Lord's Day

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Romans 14:4-6 ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Revelation 1:10 ¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

February 22 Stewardship and Mission

Acts 1:6-8 ⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2 Corinthians 8:3-9 ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. ⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.