

“Loving God, Serving Others, Changing Lives”

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

REUBEN'S RAMBLINGS

February, 2026, Issue 2

This year Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday service on February 18 at 6 pm. I hope you will join us as we begin the forty-day period of preparation for Easter (excluding Sundays). Lent always begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. It was originally a time to prepare candidates for baptism and became a period of penitence for those who had already been baptized. Now I don't remember much about the observance of Lent when I was growing up in the rural South. But as I have grown older and become more active in the church, I recognize it as a special season in the life of the Church. To me it has become a time when I focus on what Christ has done for me, and a time when I try to grow closer in my personal relationship with my Lord and Savior.

The forty days of Lent are symbolic of several significant biblical events:

1. The 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting and being tempted. (Matthew 4:1-11)
2. Moses spending 40 days on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:28)
3. Elijah's 40-day journey to Mount Horeb. (1 Kings 19:8)
4. 40 days of rain during the Great Flood. (Genesis 7:12)
5. The Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. (Numbers 14:33)

Lent means different things to different people depending on their religious backgrounds and experiences. Some of the spiritual practices used during Lent are prayer, reading, daily quiet time, and fasting. In some cases, individuals give up something, using the extra time to spend alone with the Lord in prayer and Bible reading. Here's a list of things that people may give up this Lent: social media, sugar, alcohol, coffee, online shopping, complaining, television, video games, soda, eating out, shopping, worrying and fast food.

However, instead of giving up something, have you ever thought about giving something? For example, during Lent look for ways to volunteer on a mission project. The Pantry can always use volunteers to pack the food boxes and carry them to the cars of the clients. The Pantry is open on the first Friday of the month from 11 am to 2 pm, the third Tuesday from 9 am – 12 noon and the third Thursday from 1-4 pm. Or you could help with Feed New Mexico Kids by assembling food packages to be distributed to students at five local schools on the second Monday of the month at 10 am in the sanctuary. You can also provide financial support for our Second Mile Giving: February – Interfaith Bible Center; March – United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR); and April – St. Joseph Mission School.

But if you really want to give something special this Lent, then share the Good News of Jesus Christ with someone during these forty days, and then invite and bring them to church. What greater

gift can you give someone than the love, mercy, grace, and salvation that Jesus offers to all who come to Him. Let us all strive to grow closer to the Lord during Lent this year.

God Bless. Reuben

MUSIC MINISTRY NOTES

Choir singers
always welcome!

The choir rehearses on Wednesdays, at 5:30 pm, and sings at the 9 am worship services. Come join us!

Since there is not a choir at the 11 am service, we enjoy selections by soloists, duets, trios, and quartets. One of Drew's many gifts is encouraging new singers to provide music in the worship services. If you are willing to sing a special song at the 11 am service, please see Drew.

Bible Studies for Everyone

Do you want to grow closer to the Lord in 2026 and experience His presence in your life? One of the best ways is to participate in a weekly Bible study. Please join one of the following studies:

SUNDAY 10:00 AM: *Jeff Bair is leading a new discussion-based class entitled: "Matthew Plus."*

MONDAY 10:00 AM: *Marie Donat is leading a class on 2nd Timothy.*

WEDNESDAY 10:30 AM: *Francie Larsen will start a new class on January 7 entitled "David Jeremiah Explains Romans 8:28."*

WEDNESDAY 5:30 PM: *Pastor Reuben will begin a new class by Adam Hamilton, entitled Moses, In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet in January.*

FAIRWINDS: *Tony Smith is also leading a class at Fairwinds on Tuesdays.*

Pamilla: *Dave and Sue Duranty are leading a class at Pamilla on Wednesdays.*

WOMEN WITH PURPOSE



Be sure to attend *Women With Purpose* on Thursday, February 5, at 10 AM. This is a meeting you do not want to miss! Angel Brown, New Mexico's Elementary School Counselor of Year 2025 and lead counselor at Vista Grande Elementary in

Rio Rancho, will speak to us about the impact of our Feed New Mexico Kids ministry on her students. We are hoping other counselors will be able to join us.

We will also assemble our Bears and Blankets bags to be given to law enforcement organizations. As always, this promises to be an enjoyable time of fellowship and delicious refreshments. Come, and bring a friend!



Sue displaying items for "Baby Shower in a Bag" at our January meeting

FEBRUARY SECOND MILE GIVING

Our Second Mile Giving for February will be for the Interfaith Bible Center located at 7501 Trumbull Avenue SE in the International Zone of Albuquerque where they provide daily meals, showers, and housing for the homeless. Matthew 25:35-36 states: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Rev. Joanne Landry serves a hot meal throughout the week. You can imagine that this is quite expensive as the numbers continue to increase. Over the past few years, High Desert UMC has been purchasing approximately \$450 of food each month to support this ministry. In addition, last year we purchased a new refrigerator and a new freezer to enable them to store donated food from local restaurants and grocery stores.

During February, you may contribute to this essential ministry to ensure that no one goes hungry by noting "Interfaith Bible Center" on memo line of your check to the church. Thank you for your continued support for the outreach ministries of High Desert UMC.

CHILI COOK-OFF

SOUP-ER BOWL SUNDAY

This year, the Big Professional Football Game, the Super Bowl, is on Sunday February 8. Over the past few years, many churches have held a Soup-er Bowl Sunday on the same day as an opportunity to collect food for their local food pantries. So, between now and Sunday February 8, bring cans of soup for the High Desert Methodist Food Pantry. Think of the difference we can make if each person brought at least one can! You may place your donations in the corner of the Narthex.

Also on Sunday February 8, you are invited to wear the colors of your favorite college or pro football team. Let's have a lot of fun!

Following the 11 am worship service, we will have our second annual "Chili Cookoff." There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for those who want to enter their chili. Please join us to sample some great chili dishes and vote for your favorite. A great time of fellowship before going home to watch the game.



Military Family Prayer List

Many men and women are faithfully serving our country in the armed service all over the world to protect our country and ensure our freedom. Please pray for the safety of:

Master Sergeant Gary Carter, US Army

Prya Chino, US Navy

Sergeant Major Reginald Daniels,
United States Marine Corp, United Arab
Emirates

Second Lieutenant Darien Garcia, US Air
Force

Staff Sergeant Brock Henning, US Air
Force

Major Herbert Jockheck, 82nd Airborne
Division, Fort Bragg, NC

Major Brian Koa Yee, United States Air
Force

Lt. Devin Marshall, Ft. Novosel, AL

Gunnery Sergeant Jesse Perkins, United
States Marines, Bangkok

Captain Shelli Schimke, USAF
Intelligence

Lt. Commander Kristina Scott, US Navy

Lt. Colonel Ryan Stanfill, US Air Force,
McConnell AFB, Wichita, Kansas

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Join us on Wednesday February 25 at 5:30 pm as we begin a four-week study of *The Case for Easter, A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Resurrection* by Lee Strobel. Of the many world religions, only one claims that its founder returned from the grave. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very cornerstone of Christianity.

But a dead man coming back to life? In our sophisticated age, when myth has given way to science, who can take such a claim seriously? Some argue that Jesus never died on the cross. Conflicting accounts make the empty tomb seem suspect. How credible is the evidence for – and against – the resurrection? Focusing his award-winning skills as a legal journalist on history's most compelling enigma, Lee Stobel retraces the startling findings that led him from atheism to belief.

He examines:

1. The Medical Evidence – Was Jesus' death a sham and His resurrection a hoax?
2. The Evidence of the Missing Body – Was Jesus' body really absent from His tomb?
3. The Evidence of Appearances – Was Jesus seen alive after His death on the cross?

Written in a hard-hitting journalistic style, *The Case for Easter* probes the core issues of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead: superstitious myth or life-changing reality? The evidence is in. The verdict is up to you. Do you believe?

The Church in Mission - at Home and Abroad

More info to follow next month about the Maui and Costa Rica missions.



Linn presenting \$2235 donated by High Desert to missionaries for school uniforms



Water line installation, Costa Rica



Construction work, Costa Rica



Teaching kids in Costa Rica



Grocery delivery to homebound in Prewett, NM



Linn with 2 girls who will receive uniforms donated by High Desert



Delivery of Feed New Mexico Kids food bags in San Fidel, NM



Gallup food ministry storage, provided by High Desert UMC

FEBRUARY 2026

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MS = MorningStar Worship JAM = Jesus and Music SS= Sunday School						
1 9 AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	2 10:30 AM Bible Study	3	4 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 Bible Study 5:30 Choir Practice	5 10 AM <i>Women with Purpose</i>	6 11-2 Pantry 3:30 JAM	7
8 Soup-er Bowl Sunday 9 AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship 12:00 Chili Cook-off	9 10 AM FNMK Bagging 10:30 AM Bible Study	10 6:00 PM Ministry Team	11 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 Bible Study 5:30 Choir Practice	12	13 3:30 JAM	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>
15 9 AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	16 10:30 AM Bible Study	17 9 AM-12 noon Food Pantry	18 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service	19 1-4 PM Food Pantry	20 3:30 JAM	21
22 9AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11AM Worship	23 10:30 AM Bible Study	24	25 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 (No Bible Study this week) 5:30 Choir Practice	26	27 3:30 JAM	28

Care Ministry

You're invited to call or send cards to these of our church family, to offer words of support and encouragement.

Grover Donahoe	766 Hood Way SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	220-3839
Rod Warpole	600 First Street NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	332-9706
Lucille Few	920 Riverview Dr. SE Apt.#223, Rio Rancho 87124	
Vi Ortega	Care Free 10916 Juan Tabo Place NE Albq. 87111	288-2160
Pat McElwain	4536 Ambrose Alday SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	235-7484
Judy Ballard	Ridgmar Place, Apt. 3405, 2151 Green Oak Rd., Ft. Worth TX 76116	240-0912
Robert Wussow	The Retreat, 4075 Jackie Rd., Rio Rancho, NM 87124	350-3698



Benny & Wanda Giovengo	Feb. 14
Gordon & Wanda Golsan	Feb. 17
Dave & Sue Duranty	Feb. 20



Lucille Few	Feb. 1
Norma Skinner	Feb. 1
Catherine Lujan	Feb. 3
Earlene Price	Feb. 3
Phyllis Thunborg	Feb. 6
Don Hicks	Feb. 9
Mark Isenberger	Feb. 10
Chad Jackson	Feb. 10
Kim Finley	Feb. 12
Lisa Isenberger	Feb. 14
Wayne Walker	Feb. 14
Pat Socci	Feb. 15
Virginia Bennett	Feb. 17
Karen Brown	Feb. 17
Lydia Lawson	Feb. 17
Dylan Smothermon	Feb. 18
Lily Smothermon	Feb. 18
Vic Holtgrewe	Feb. 18
Ted Thunborg	Feb. 19
Bud Keller	Feb. 19
Charlene Brandt	Feb. 23
Jane Ferguson	Feb. 23
Barbara Morgan	Feb. 25
Kenneth Torres	Feb. 26
Sue Duranty	Feb. 28

Lenten Sermon Series

Lent, a forty-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter, excluding Sundays, is a time of self-examination, repentance, and spiritual growth for Christians. It is a time to ask the questions: "What do I believe? Who is Jesus Christ to me? What is my personal relationship with Him? What must I do to grow closer to Him?" During the Sundays of Lent, we will study the Book of James and the practical guidance it provides for living a Christian life in today's world.

**HIGH DESERT UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

1201 Golf Course Rd
P.O. Box 45378
Rio Rancho, NM 87174

Phone: 505-891-4206

Office Hours: Wednesday 9 AM - Noon

Email: highdesertumc@outlook.com

We're on the Web!
www.highdesertumc.org

February, 2026 Newsletter

HDUMC CHURCH PANTRY

Distribution dates for February, 2026 are:

Friday, February 6, at 11:00 AM

Tuesday, February 17 at 9:00 AM

Thursday, February 19, at 1:00 PM

February Collection:

Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce

Containers are in the Narthex & Fellowship Hall for these donations.

**Contact John Samford at (505) 870-0667
for more information.**
