

“Loving God, Serving Others, Changing Lives”

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

REUBEN'S RAMBLINGS

I don't know if you have ever noticed on the Christian calendar that the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent is Transfiguration Sunday. The Transfiguration is recorded in Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-9, and Luke 9:28-36. In this story, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him and goes to the top of Mount Tabor to pray. There He is transformed before His disciples. The Bible tells us that His clothes became dazzling white; whiter than anyone could bleach them. Now I'm amazed that neither Tide nor Oxy-Clean has not used this event in one of their commercials. The Gospel of Mark says that Jesus' face shone like the sun. In a sense, Jesus returned for a moment to His glorious state as the Son of God as He was before He took on the body of a human being with all its weaknesses and sinful nature. Then Moses the great lawgiver and Elijah the great prophet appeared with Jesus to give Him what I believe, based on Luke's account, was a "pep talk" as He prepared to face His destiny with the cross. This was a tremendous mountain top experience for the disciples. Hopefully, each of us has had a mountain top experience when we have felt the presence of God in our lives. One of the key points that the gospel writers want their readers to realize is that to climb the mountain top with Jesus, we must also be willing to climb onto the cross with Jesus. The same joy and

wonder experienced by Peter, James, and John is available to each of us by giving away our lives in service to the Lord.

Another key point is that we do not stay on the mountain, we have to come down sometime and return to the valley with all the problems and demands of everyday life. Are we willing to follow Jesus into the valley where the people are whom we are called to serve in Jesus' name? For many people, church on Sunday morning is their mountain top. But for how many of us is this our only contact or acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Are we ready and willing to take Jesus into the valley of everyday life in the workplace, home, and school? Are we willing to take down the barriers we have erected between us and God so that we can experience Him in a personal one-on-one relationship?

During Lent this year, let Jesus be your constant companion. Take time out each day, at least 15 minutes, to spend some quiet time with Him. Let Lent be your mountain top experience. Then on Easter, with just a small amount of time and effort on our part, we can all, like Peter, James and John come down the mountain as a different person than when we went up. Happy Easter!

God Bless. Reuben

March 2026, Issue 3

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.

Drew Ammons, Choir Director, encourages 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 Titus.*

WEDNESDAY 10:30 AM: *Francie Larsen is leading a class on "David Jeremiah Explains Romans 8:28."*

WEDNESDAY 5:30 PM: *Pastor Reuben will begin a new class by Lee Strobel, entitled The Case for Easter.*

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

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

WOMEN WITH PURPOSE

Women with Purpose will once again support some women who have been incarcerated and are now striving to step forward. We will fill laundry baskets with cleaning supplies and donate them to A Peaceful Habitation. We have a wonderful speaker ready to share and yummy refreshments will be served. Join us Thursday, March 5, 10:00 am in the sanctuary.



Feed New Mexico Kids

On Monday, February 9th, an enthusiastic group of about 30 volunteers gathered to assemble food packages for elementary school children in Rio Rancho who are in need of food on weekends and school breaks. Pictured at left are Joanna Jones, Muffy Caldes, Jan Torres, and Rita Betty hard at work and having fun too! You are welcome to join in on the next bagging day: Monday, March 9th at 10:00 AM.

MARCH SECOND MILE GIVING

UNITED METHODIST COMMITTEE ON RELIEF

Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the United Methodist Church extends loving care to suffering people throughout the world; currently working in more than 80 countries worldwide including the United States. UMCOR works in partnership with United Methodist Churches and other local partners to address immediate relief and achieve sustainable recovery. The mission of UMCOR is grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ and seeks to alleviate human suffering – whether caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people.

UMCOR programs seek to alleviate human suffering by providing:

1. Relief, response, and long-term recovery grants when disasters overwhelm a community's resources and ability to recover on their own.
2. Technical support and training for partners to address emerging and ongoing issues related to disaster relief, recovery, and long-term health and development.

UMCOR is usually one of the first relief agencies to arrive at a disaster. Almost every dollar donated goes directly to relief projects for natural disasters. If you would like to support this worthwhile ministry, please mark "UMCOR" on the memo line of your check.

SOUP-ER BOWL SUNDAY

Dave Duranty, once again, was the winner of our annual Soup-er Bowl Sunday Chili Cook-



off on Sunday afternoon, February 8th. His winning entry, *El Pecho*, was made with beef brisket and it was superb. Will he defend his title next year for three in a row? Additionally, seven other delicious chilis were enjoyed by the crowd of about 50 hungry chili tasters. Thanks to everyone who attended. Special thanks to those who made chili and to those who brought desserts.

During the weeks leading up to Souper-Bowl Sunday, 413 cans of soup were donated to our church's Food Pantry. Many thanks for your generosity.



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 March 4 at 5:30 pm as we begin a four-week study on *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 Abroad

HAWAII: ***Linn Carlson*** recently served on a Mission Team by responding to the rebuilding needs resulting from the **2023 Lahaina fires on Maui, Hawaii**. She served for 3 weeks on the island from **11/30-12/20/2025**. In 2023, wildfires ravaged Maui, causing significant damage, resulting in over **13,000 people being displaced, over 2,000 buildings destroyed, 102 people perished**. **This mission project focus: TO REBUILD!**

How do you put to words to accurately describe the devastation that this fire caused in such a beautiful place & the horrific stories that the survivors share about their losses & heroic efforts to survive & save others? The only option to survive for many was to run to the ocean, whether they could swim or not, to escape the intense fires & ping pong sized fire embers that were hailing from the sky. They had to remain in the ocean, in water that was deeper than they could stand, for more than 5 hours waiting to be rescued.

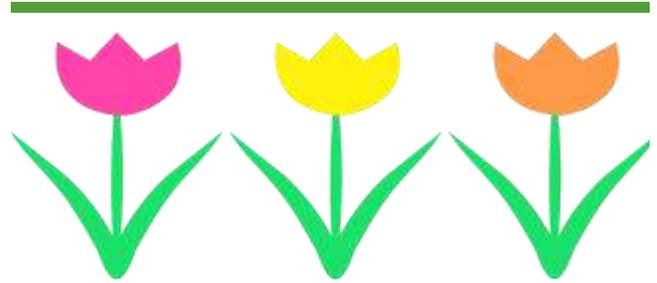
I can't! I am still processing my experience, my interactions with the locals as they openly expressed their absolute gratitude for all rebuilding efforts & for the team that God put together that had the incredible/exact skills to meet the critical needs...including building from scratch roof trusts that we needed for the 2 homes we were working on.



Lastly, one of the 2 roofs that we built & completed! A picture that represents to me the hope, perseverance, determination & spirit of the Lahaina people! **More to come in future newsletters about the Hawaii and Costa Rica Mission trips!**

MARCH 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 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 Food Pantry 3:30 JAM At Palmilla	7
8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME 9 AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	9 10 AM FNMK Bagging 10 AM Bible Study	10 6:00 PM Ministry Team	11 Office Hrs: 9-12 9:00 Mission team meeting 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 Bible Study 5:30 Choir Practice	12 10AM Emmaus Agape Group	13 3:30 JAM At MorningStar	14
15 9 AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	16 10 AM Bible Study	17 9 AM-12 noon Food Pantry	18 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 Bible Study 5:30 Choir Practice	19 1-4 PM Food Pantry	20 No JAM this week Mission trip to Gallup	21 Mission trip to Gallup
22 9AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11AM Worship	23 10 AM Bible Study	24	25 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 Bible Study 5:30 Choir Practice	26	27 3:30 JAM At the church	28
29 PALM SUNDAY 9AM Worship & Palmilla Serv. 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11AM Worship	30 10 AM Bible Study	31				

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	BeeHive Homes of Four Hills, 13450 Wenonah Ave. SE, Alb. 87123	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



Drew & Sheela Ammons	March 4
Mark & Lisa Isenberger	March 18
Paul & Shirley Rexroth	March 19
Antonio & Lucinda Trujillo	March 19

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 be studying the seven "I Am" sayings of Jesus as



Damon Bruce	March 2
Sharon Johnson	March 2
Sally Scarlott	March 3
Rusty Dils	March 3
Elaine Pratt	March 4
Dan Foley	March 5
Ashley Gibboney	March 5
Nina Brown	March 6
Nancy Perry-Sebrell	March 7
Pat McElwain	March 14
Chuck Schimke	March 17
Rita Riddle	March 19
Cynthia Gandham	March 21
Marion Sanderson	March 21
Guy Brister	March 27
Ella Mares	March 30
Melissa Bruce	March 31

**HIGH DESERT UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

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

March, 2026 Newsletter

HDUMC CHURCH PANTRY

Distribution dates for March, 2026 are:

Friday, March 6, at 11:00 AM

Tuesday, March 17 at 9:00 AM

Thursday, March 19, at 1:00 PM

March Collection: Canned Fruits

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

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