

Old Stone Church - March 2026



Welcome to March

John 3:16 may be Christianity's elevator pitch, but I have always been more drawn to the verses around it, where Jesus describes salvation in a way that is layered, mysterious, and more than a little confusing. Salvation Jesus says, is like being born. Not a quick transaction or a single decision, but a long process of becoming: gradual, uncomfortable, sometimes painful, and often complicated. But it is the only way to life. Salvation is what happens when God makes room to breathe inside the tight places that are killing us. Jesus suggests that we undergo two births in our lifetime. We are born of the flesh, and we are born from above, of the Spirit. We know physical birth transpires, but this second birth is mysterious. Salvation is not a formulaic prayer or a ticket to paradise. It is the ongoing work of God that keeps us alive every day.

In college, I recall being asked by an evangelical type of student pastor, "Tell me what is saving your life now." that was just before that student pastor launched into his well-practiced recitation of the Four Spiritual Law. Yawn. I have referenced this question often. But when I invite people to consider Christ's offer of free salvation, I usually begin one step earlier: "what is killing you now?" In my experience, naming what is killing me often leads to recognizing what is saving me. So, what is killing you today? What feels insufferable? What burden is too heavy? What pain refuses to be quiet? Is it physical pain, a body that feels like it has turned against you? Is it anxiety that shrinks your world and keeps you from reaching out to friendships, opportunities, or hope? Is it relentless worry over someone you love? Grief that lingers? Bills you cannot pay. Loneliness that hums beneath everything you do. The violence of our world? A creeping sense of meaninglessness? To be human is to know suffering, loss, and many small deaths along the way. But the good news is that salvation is here. It is in the air we breathe and the wind that moves around us. It surrounds us each day, offering life amid all that threatens us. Salvation is what happens when God makes room to breathe inside the tight places that are killing us. So, what is saving your life today? The space doesn't have to be huge—here are a few from my list: When Lucy, the Wonder Dog, finds the largest stick in the yard (more like a small tree) and parades it around looking for someone to congratulate her on her find—that joy saves me. When I take time to savor caramel and chocolate ice cream, lose myself in a great novel, laugh so hard I cry, or cry so hard that it washes a tight, heavy pain right out of me—that saves me too. What is saving you today? The good news of the gospel is not that Christians avoid pain and suffering. It is that pain and suffering do not get the final word. On our walk towards Jerusalem this Lent, we remember that our salvation story leads us to the cross, to betrayal, grief, and death. But it does not end there. It leads us to a morning when a stone is rolled away and death is told, gently but firmly, that it is not in charge. Salvation is not only what happens after death. Salvation keeps us alive. It is the steady, mysterious work of the Spirit, birthing new life in us, again.

~~ Pastor Randy ~~

Pantry News

The Old Stone Food Pantry is still active every Thursday morning from 9-11. Generous local retailers such as Schnucks grocery store, Dollar General and the faithful people in our community have kept the pantry going for over 30 years. We are very thankful and blessed to all who contribute!!



Candy Bar Sales

Our Candy Bar fundraiser took off with sales at our 3rd annual Bake Sale. In that one day we sold \$111.00 worth of Candy Bars! Great thinking Joan and Bob for setting up the Candy Bar Box!! See Bob or Joan if you would like to buy one for \$1.00—



Maundy Thursday Dinner

This years Maundy Thursday Dinner will be held on April 2nd 2026 at 6:15. Contact the church office for reservations to the dinner by March 27th 2026. Hope to see you there for this historic Last Supper!



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday will be held this year on March 29th 2026



Easter Flowers

Order Easter Lily's, Tulips, Hyacinths, Geraniums or Jonquils by March 16th at a cost of \$12.00 each. Let the church office know if you would like to order any of these beautiful Flowers!!



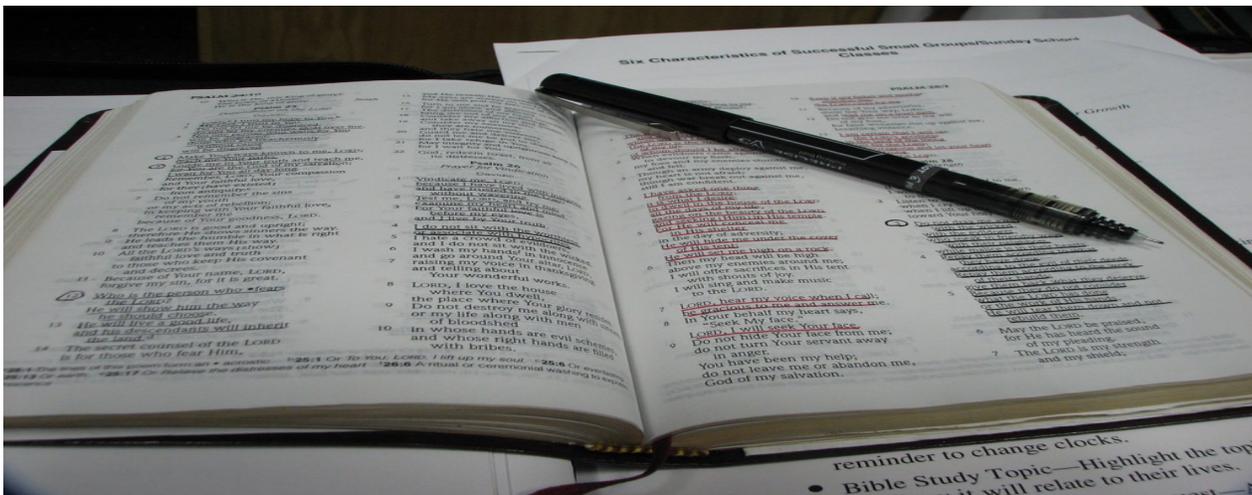
Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday Service will be held on April 5th 2026 at 9:00 am—— We hope to see you all there to celebrate the miracle of Jesus!!

Bible Study News

We are so thankful to be having two Bible studies starting in March 2026. Come join us!! All are welcome. Call the church office at 815-624-6212 to reserve a seat:

Pastor Randy Nicholas of the Old Stone church will be hosting s 6 week Bible Study, starting on **Thursday , March 19th , from 6pm –7pm.** This is a dinner Bible Study held in the Fellowship Hall and the first session will provide soup and bread. The church address is 101 E. Union St ., Rockton, IL. 61072. **Topics include: Lectionary Passages from the following: Psalms, Old Testament Readings, Gospel Readings, Epistles from Paul all with a discussion afterwards.**



Bible Study on Friday afternoons **starting March 27th at 12:30 pm**

It's Not Supposed to be This Way by Lysa Turkeust. A 6 week study on Jesus giving unexpected strength when disappointment leaves you shattered.

Come join us as we study God's word!!

Bake Sale News:

On February 7th 2026 the Old Stone Church had their 3rd Annual Winter Bake Sale in conjunction with Rockton's Yeti Festival downtown. This year we made a record setting profit of 2398.00. Wow, what a blessing! Thank you to all who baked and donated items to the bake sale—We were overwhelmed with the support that the congregation gave for this event. Thanks for joining forces to make this a huge fundraiser again this year.. A very special thank you to Bob and Joan Plessner for their many hours of work organizing this event. We couldn't have done it without both of you! Thank you Molly for wearing the Yeti costume and walking around downtown to advertise our bake sale! We are blessed!



Reminder...



Day Light Savings Time:
March 8th
Spring Forward !

Don't forget to set all of your clocks one hour ahead!



Mark's Pizza Fundraiser

615 N Blackhawk Blvd.
Rockton—815-624-1007

Call Joan Plessner to purchase a voucher to be used at Mark's Pizza at any time throughout the year. 815-624-5850

Large 1 Topping \$18.00
Large Works \$29.00

Help make this fundraiser a success!! **Thank you in advance!**



Happy Birthday ~

10th- Chris Gantz

13th- Amy Steward

15th- Cameron Newmes

19th- David Proudfoot

24th-Sheli Funk-Bright

March Anniversaries

2nd- Jeff & Heather Porter

11th-Tom and Angie Streck

27th- Shaun & Amanda Slocum



March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion	2 Bells—6:00	3	4 Grief Group— 10:30	5 Pantry 9-11 Bible Study -6	6	7
8	9 Bells—6:00	10 Council 7:00	11	12 Pantry 9-11 Bible Study—6	13 —	14
15	16 Lily Order Due Bells—6:00	17	18 Grief Group 10:30	19 Pantry 9-11 Bible Study -6	20	21
22	23 Bells—6:00	24	25	26 No Pantry Bible Study—6	27 Bible Study 12:30	28
29 Fellowship First—900	30 Bells—6:00	31				

Old Stone Church
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Old Stone Church Staff:

Pastor Randy Nicholaas
 Sheli Funk-Bright—Secretary
 Tanya Rieff—Custodian

