

St. James United Church of Christ

9008 Meisner Road, Casco, MI 48064 / www.ourstjameschurch.org/

Newsletter
February 2024
Volume 10, Issue 2

News from Pastor Ken



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Ahhhh... February, it is a funny little, short month. The Christmas and New Year celebrations are over, spring and Easter are yet to arrive. It has its challenges for some of us with too little sun and too much cold. In spite of that, I have come to appreciate this as a quite time of reflection.

Lent begins a little early this year starting on Ash Wednesday, February 14. It happens this early every few years. Last time was 2018. The wonderful part is Lent provides us a wonderful opportunity to consider and pray about how we can get closer to being the person God would have us to be and to consider what it is God would have us to do.

Unfortunately, like many church/religious (not sure if that should be a little "c" or a big "C") practices, Lent seems to have become just another church season. This is MOST unfortunate. Equally unfortunate is that many of those that do practice often consider Lent simply a time of giving up something we like for a few days. I think that just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness contemplating his ministry, we too are called during Lent to spend time considering our own ministry. Let us use this time for planning and preparing. Lent is a time of spiritual preparation. I invite you not to simply give up something but to take time to prepare your spirit for an exciting new journey. Here are a couple of suggestions. Spend an extra few minute each day in prayer and meditation. Read a book on spirituality, commit to reading the upper room every morning with your coffee (it is only a small page), read one proverb every day from the bible (there are 31), commit to a daily and intentional act of kindness, you get the idea. Prepare yourself for what God has planned for you.

However, as excited as I may sound about Lent, I am still very much enjoying this time in Epiphany. The whole idea of Epiphany keeps revealing itself to me every time I notice some trivial things like driving home from a late afternoon appointment and realizing it is staying light outside later and later.



<https://www.facebook.com/St-James-United-Church-of-Christ-10150090210425008/>

Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued

Ahhh... Epiphany. Epiphany, that moment when things are revealed to us. I love experiencing those ah-ha moments. Those are the moments when something becomes clear to me that was not clear to me before. I have been told and it has been proven to me that if we continue to maintain a working relationship with God, we WILL have spiritual experiences. This is not a maybe statement but an absolute statement. We just need to be aware enough to notice them. Isn't that what Epiphany is all about? Learning to trust God enough to let God guide us and teach us, in spite of what we think is a better way. Allowing ourselves to learn how to grow and live more spirit filled lives. Then doing so! When we do that, we allow ourselves to be present to and experience a never-ending number of miracles that occur in us and around us.

For those who are anxious about whether you are ready to do what it is that God may call you to do, remember that God does not call the prepared but prepares the called.

During this Epiphany season, it is my hope that you allow God the opportunity to shine more brightly in you and through you. May each of us bring a little more light to the world that so desperately needs it as we prepare ourselves for Lent.

Remember that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here.

Take care and be well, Peace,
Ken

Prayer List

Prayers for Wayne, Judy, Chris, Frank, Gary, Bev, Sharon, James & Family, Gina, Michael, Trudy, Rosemary, Kathy, Nancy, Melanie, Don, Families of St. John & St. James



Outreach Ministry

Helping Hands

Current Needs: Crackers, cereal, canned fruit and veggies, boxed foods like Hamburger Helper, Rice-A-Roni, Mac and Cheese

Not accepting books and furniture currently.

No expired or opened boxes of food accepted.

Kids in Distress

Current needs are as follows:

Socks and underwear – all sizes for girls and boys, hygiene items for both boys and girls and adults, adult gloves, coats for girls and boys all sizes, boys pants size 3 and up.

B-WARM

Continued prayers for the future of the mission. They are currently looking at the possibility of having some new people in place at the beginning of the New Year. Pray that all goes well!!!

Birthdays in February

2-4 John Beattie
2-5 Chris Brogan
2-13 Gordie Kulman
2-14 Chad Robbins
2-16 Kim L8ndke
2-17 Paula Beattie
2-19 Christa Beattie
2-19 Bernard Teltow
2-23 Art Wagner
2-23 Dale Bandlow
2-25 Chad Czenkus
2-26 Bill Wagner
2-29 Ronald Fisher

Anniversaries in February

2-28 Julie & Hunter Wendt

Earthly Gifts

Our monthly goal for January 15 is \$5,5587.25 until our Annual Budget Meeting which is TODAY after our lunch. There are a few envelope kits for 2024 which have not been picked up and are now available in the basement of the church. If you want envelopes, please contact Ralph at the meeting or leave a message on the church phone 586-727-1923 or send an email to the church which is OURSTJAMESCHURCH.ORG providing your name and address. If you cannot pick up these at church it will be mailed to you. The amount received last Sunday was \$1111.00 which makes the total for the month \$2615.00 with 1 more Sunday for the month.

The Discretionary Fund February 4, 2024

Did you know this fund is utilized to aid with rent, utilities, medical supplies, food, and transportation to doctors, etc.?

This is generated from the loose change collected the first Sunday of each month. Please empty your pockets and change purses that day to meet the needs of our church and community.

Spiritual Ministry

Please feel free to bring your children to church and partake in the bi-weekly Sunday School classes (2nd and 4th Sunday). Please contact Sue Tews if you are interested in helping with Sunday school.

Valentine's Day Poem

LOVE IS IMPORTANT

Love is so important
in everything we do.
Love brings out the very best
in every point of view.

It's easier to be loving
than to hold on to a grudge.
We get stuck in negativity
and our ego will not budge!

Experiences, good and bad,
will always come and go,
being able to love regardless
is how our spirits grow.

Love works in mysterious ways
to soften any concern.
Giving love away freely
reaps loving rewards in return.

How wonderful and magical
we feel when we're in love.
We truly are on top of our world -
there's nothing we can't rise above!

Let's turn all negative thinking
into positive, loving thought
by spreading love, joy and peace
as, for thousands of years, we've been taught.

Jean Kay
Poems on Request
poetrytoinspire.com

Christmas Tote Bags for Local Community Charities

Christmas Tote Bags

A new updated list is available downstairs in the church of what is needed for this year. The tote bags are for both boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 14. The items accepted anytime: hygiene items such as: toothbrush holders, toothbrushes, toothpaste, washcloths, dental floss, comb/brushes, hair accessories such as head bands, ponytails, clips, bows, and barrettes and school supplies such as: notebooks, crayons, colored pencils, colored markers, pencil sharpeners, scissors (for youngsters and older children) , rulers, large erasers. Pens, pencils and socks, hats, scarves and gloves/mittens and toys.

Please donate travel size items, we only have so much space to store the items in for the year and we need to get all items to fit in the bags.

Bottle / Can Collection

We are continuing to collect all bottle and cans at church. They can be placed in the back-room downstairs at church.

All donations should be empty and clean bottles and cans. The money will be used towards St. James Painting Project.

If you need someone to pick them up please contact Art Wagner at 586-855-2953.



Military Prayer List

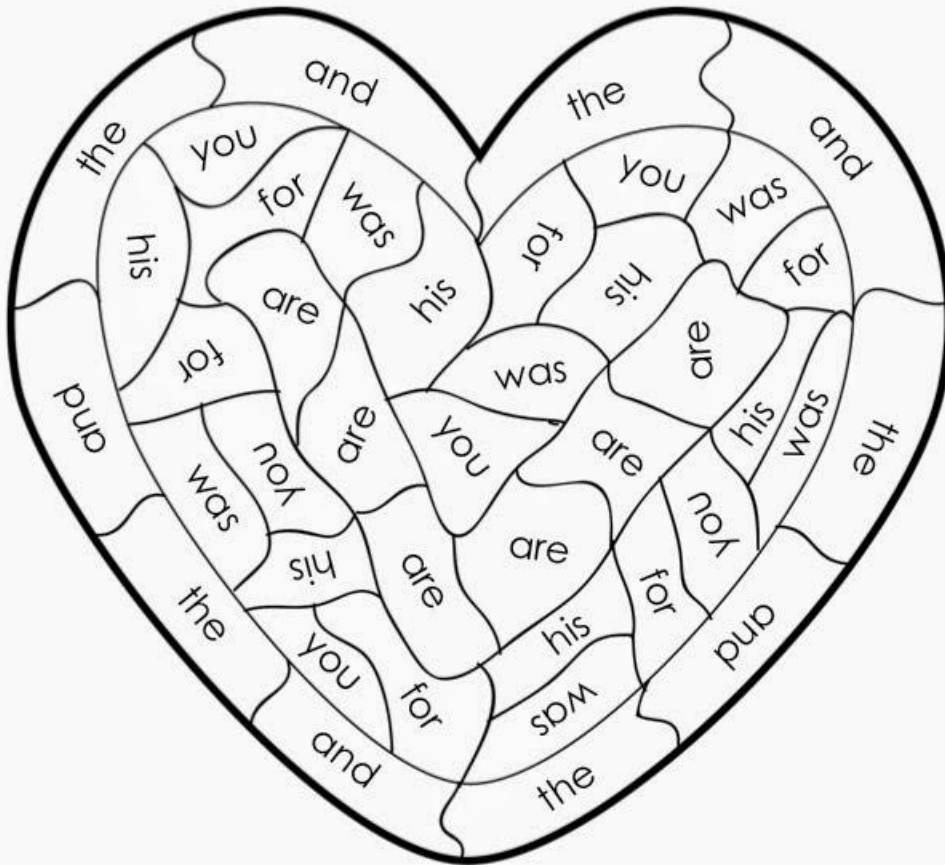
I will be including a list in the newsletter of our men and women in the military, to acknowledge those who serve and to pray for their safety. Please submit your love one's, family member or friend's name, rank and branch of service to Roberta Fisher to be placed on the list.

Ian Riley - Marines

Kid's Page

Name: _____

COLOR MY VALENTINE!



Find each word in the heart and color the space using the key below.

you: purple

for: yellow

his: green

and: light blue

was: orange

are: pink

the: dark blue

February Activities

Saturday, February 3 – Euchre – 6:30pm.

Sunday, February 4 – Sunday Service with Holy Communion - Discretionary Fund Collection – 9am

Tuesday, February 13 – Council Meeting – 6:30pm

Wednesday, February 14 – Soup and Salad dinner at St. James 6pm

Ash Wednesday Service at St. James - 7pm.

Saturday, February 147 – Euchre at St. James – 6:30pm

Sunday, February 18 – Sunday Service with Holy Communion – 9am

Wednesday, February 21 – Lenten Discussion Group – How to Live a Better Christian Life – Zoom Meeting – 7pm

Sunday, February 25 – Sunday Service at St. James – 9am

Wednesday, February 28 – Lenten Discussion Group – How to Live a Better Christian Life – Zoom Meeting – 7pm

Painting Fund

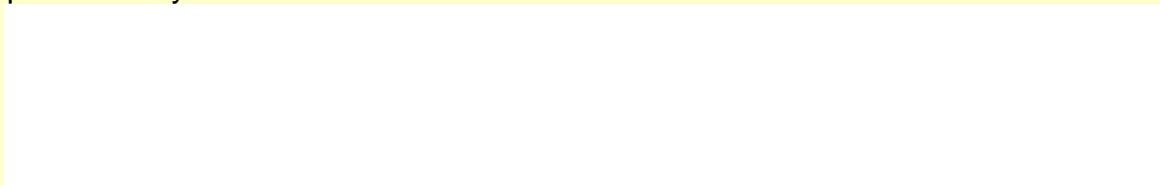
St. James has started a Painting fund to cover the future costs of paint, painting and scaffolding to repaint the inside of the church. If you would like to donate to this fund, place an envelope in the collection plate earmarked “Paint Project” or mail your donation to church at 9008 Meiner Road, Casco, MI 48064

Thank you Box

For all the things that get done in the background of church that no one receives a thank you for. A box with paper has been set up in the front vestibule for you to leave a “Word of Thanks” for anyone for whatever reason. This box will allow members to voice a thank you for that exact reason. The box will be checked for any Thank Yous and will be read in church along with the announcements each week.

Council Members

St. James is looking for members to become Church Council Members for the new year 2024. If you are interested in serving on the board for 1 to 3 years, please notify a current member of council or Pastor Ken.



Scripture Readings for February

Sunday, February 4
Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

Isa 40: 21-31
Ps 147: 1-11, 20c
1 Cor 0: 16-23
Mark 1: 29-39

Source of Strength

Sunday, February 18
First Sunday in Lent

Gen 9; 8-17
Ps 25 : 1-10
1 Peter 3: 18-22
Mark 1: 9-15

God's Loving Paths

Sunday, February 11
Transfiguration

2 Kings 2: 1-12
Ps 50: 1-6
2 Cor46: 3-6
Mark 9: 2-9

Compassionate Community

Sunday, February 25
Second Sunday in Lent

Gen 17 : 1-7, 15-16
Ps 22 : 23-31
Rom 4 : 13-25
Mark 8: 31-38 or Mark 9: 2-9

Always Close



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FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER