Ash Wednesday is one of my favorite days of the year. I realize this may sound odd, as I usually prefer feast days to fast days (feel free to insert joke about Baptist preachers and fried chicken here). The beauty of a “moveable fast” is that Hallmark Cards and mainstream American culture have yet to exploit Ash Wednesday (Lent or Good Friday). While feast days like Christmas and Easter are leveraged for profits, no one has managed to capitalize on these penitential holy days. Forty days in the wilderness is apparently not lucrative.

But according to God’s economy, losing one’s life is the only way to gain true life. Perhaps paradox doesn’t communicate well in a greeting card. Or maybe the hard work of repentance is lost on those desiring cheap grace. Richard Rohr explains it this way, “The human ego prefers just about anything, to falling or changing or dying. The ego is that part of you that loves the status quo, even when it is not working. It attaches to past and present, and fears the future.”

The rose-colored glasses of ego prevent us from seeing ourselves as we really are. We divide the world into “good guys” and “bad guys.” And, of course, we are always the good guys. Because we are good, and because there is plenty of bad out in the world, the work of good guys is mainly external. The problems to be addressed and solved are always “out there” instead of “in here.”

Ashes on the forehead, however, confront you with the possibility that the real problems to be addressed and solved are located within us. Dividing the world into good guys and bad guys is too simplistic. Instead, each one of us is a human being capable of great goodness and horrendous evil.

“You are dust and to dust you shall return,” reminds us of our frailty, and our culpability in the brokenness of this world. While such poignancy does not make for commercialized holidays or greeting cards, it does offer the hope of transformation. Barbara Brown Taylor explains, “Sin is our only hope, because the recognition that something is wrong is the first step toward setting it right again. There is no help for those who admit no need of help. There is no repair for those who insist that nothing is broken, and there is no hope of transformation for a world whose inhabitants accept that it is sadly but irreversibly wrecked.”

The tone of Ash Wednesday (and Lent) can seem archaic and puritanical, but it’s not. Transformation is the goal, not asceticism. Don’t be afraid to look into the mirror and see the truth about yourself, because the truth is, we are all in the same boat. No one is beyond redemption, or above it.

This season of repentance and reflection is a gracious gift. In the midst of our busyness, here is an opportunity to revaluate our lives and the world around us, to take stock of what matters and what doesn’t. Here is a chance to be transformed. Don’t let it slip away.

Grace and Peace, Jeff
A NOTE FROM JIM

Most of us wouldn’t have a problem answering the question, "What happens at First Baptist between 11:00 and 12:00 on Sunday Morning?"

Of course we would say, unequivocally, Worship happens! In fact we have said it so many times for so many years that it rolls off our tongues without hesitation. Why, all we really have to do is deposit ourselves on our favorite pews and Worship just automatically happens. So simple, so easy. We don't have to listen to the beautiful renditions from the piano, organ and choir, to sing the hymns or participate in the scripture readings or listen to Jeff's sermon. We don't have to search our inmost hearts (that can really be uncomfortable) and listen for the small voice that gives encouragement, hope, understanding and the meaning of our existence. And when that plate is passed we don't have to put anything in it. God understands that we have over-committed our income on other more tangible things. We could just converse with our friends the whole hour or even catch up on some needed sleep we didn't get the night before. Or better still, we could make a list of all the things we need to get done during the coming week. At least I was in Church; that's what's really important anyway. You get the point! I am often guilty of wasting my sacred time of worship and have ended up cheating myself out of a richer relationship with God that comes only through worship. Our church does a pretty good job providing Opportunities for Worship. Let's make these Opportunities into Realities. See you in Worship Sunday! -Jim Hawkins

LENTEN SERMON SERIES


OUTDOOR WORK DAY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 3

The House and Grounds Committee would like your help! Winter has come (and is almost gone), and the Committee is in need of folks to come help spruce up the outside of the church property. Anyone is welcome. Bring a few yard tools and meet at the church at 8:30am. The cleanup will be finished by noon (and maybe sooner, with many hands).

YOUTH PIZZA AND MOVIE NIGHT. MARCH 10

All youth in grades 6 to 12 are invited to partake in a “Pizza and Movie Night” in the Activity Building, March 10, from 6pm-11pm. We’ll watch a movie, eat together, play games, and have a great Friday night. We hope to see you there!
MARCH MISSION—DRESS A KID AT TRYON ELEMENTARY

During the month of March, we’re collecting funds (no clothing, please) for children at Tryon Elementary School. The offering will help purchase coats, jackets, socks, and shoes for those in need, and to help make ‘fill-in’ purchases for the Clothing Closet as supplies dwindle. You may find envelopes for this at the entrances to the sanctuary, or write “Dress-A-Kid” on the memo line of your check. Thanks for your generosity!

ALUMINUM CAN MINISTRY

Don’t forget your cans! We’ve been presented an opportunity to help with missions for children in Guatemala. All you have to do is bring aluminum cans (in bags, please) to church, and put your bag in the back of Dr. Bob Lair’s pickup truck. The money collected for the scrap aluminum goes to provide resources for Guatemalan children.

ONGOING CHURCH OUTREACH MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

We do quite a bit of collecting around here! You can help in many small ways, too. We have an ongoing collection of personal toiletries and amenities, located in the church kitchen. You can bring small bottles of lotion, shampoo and conditioner, toothpaste, etc. Sisterhood sees that these items are distributed to Steps of Hope women’s shelter, and the Polk County prison.

We’re also doing some collecting for Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry. They’re in great need of plastic grocery bags and empty (12-count, please, although 18-count is fine, too) egg cartons for their Food Pantry.

HOSTAS NEEDED!

The House and Grounds Committee has a request for you—if you’re getting ready to dig and divide hosta plants this Spring, how about donating a few to the church? We’ll need some to fill in the spaces between new shrubs that are being planted. You can either bring them to the church office, or contact Cathy Johnson to let her know that you have them. We’re excited about the landscaping that’s being done around the church, and we’re thankful for your extra sprouts.
KID’S NIGHT OUT, JANUARY 27

"Let it Snow" was our theme for January 27th’s Kid’s Night Out. The night started with making snowflake name tags. Of course, no two were alike, and we learned in group time that no two snowflakes or people are exactly the same!

There was one book that had actual pictures of snowflakes which seemed to be the hit book of the night, and it generated lots of discussions. There were hilarious "snow" jokes, the making of a snowman-light for each to take home, and our snack! Ahh...the snowman made from marshmallows, pretzel sticks and candy were YUMMY! (Of course they were eaten before they melted!)

We used our globe and map to discuss where it snows and why, and for our science project we made SNOW! We had a great time playing and making snowballs and we discussed doing it again in the summer (so we can actually throw some snowballs). Everyone got some "snow" to take home (however, I kept the recipe safe with me for a later time!) Miss Di gave us the materials to make our snowman and snow woman lights. Each were individualized by the artist making them and they were all great! To conclude our night, we had popcorn (of course), and our DVD was all about large machines moving snow in places where they must deal with lots of snow every year. The machines were truly amazing, as were the men and women who were responsible for making sure the roads are kept safe. What a job -BRRR!

It was a great night as we learned about snowflakes, snow, and that each of us are "wonderfully made." Our verse was "I praise you because I am wonderfully made, your works are wonderful" (Psalm 139:13). As we teach our precious kids, may they come to know how wonderful, unique & special they are!

Submitted by Carol Batts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Pick a team and choose a prayer partner for the semester, and have some fun!</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>How did the Bible become the Bible?</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Why does the Old Testament matter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td><strong>No Refuge</strong> enjoy the Super bowl with your family</td>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Skiing or tubing at Wolf Ridge meet at 7:00am at Food Lion</td>
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<td>February 12</td>
<td>Creation and Chaos: The first five books of The Bible</td>
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<td>February 19</td>
<td>Character Sketch: who are the Kings and Judges?</td>
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<td>February 26</td>
<td>From Sadness to Celebration: what we can learn from the Psalms</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>The Story: Jesus’ and Ours</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Pizza and Movie Night 6:00pm-11:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>The Story: Jesus’ and Ours</td>
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<td>April 2</td>
<td>The Story: Jesus’ and Ours</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>The Story: Jesus’ and Ours</td>
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<td>April 16</td>
<td>Easter <strong>No Refuge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Mystery Lunch and fun 11:00am-5:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>What does the New Testament have to say about Church?</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Who is this Paul guy and why did he write so many letters?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>So What? Why does the New Testament matter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 12-13</td>
<td>Spring Retreat <em>possibility for a date change</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Mother’s Day <strong>No Refuge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Whiffle Ball Game and Dinner last regular Refuge until the Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 18-23</td>
<td>PASSPORT Missions at Averett University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Regularly Scheduled Weekly Activities (unless otherwise noted) include:

Sundays
- Sunday School, 10am
- Worship, 11am
- Refuge (grades 6-12), 5pm

Wednesdays
- Bible Study, 10am
- Women's Bible Study, Rock House, 6pm
- Handbell Rehearsal, 6pm
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

Regularly Scheduled Monthly Activities (unless otherwise noted) include:

1st Monday of each month: Mission Team, 5:30pm
1st Tuesday of each month: WMU, 10am
2nd Tuesday of each month: Sisterhood, 7pm
3rd Monday of each month: Brotherhood, 6:30pm
3rd Tuesday of each month: Deacons, 6pm
2nd Saturday of each month: Firewood Ministry, Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, 9am

This is the current schedule for the year. Please note some things may be re-scheduled, added, or changed as needed. If changes occur, you will be notified by email, worship bulletin, newsletter, or announcement in worship. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. Thank you.

MARCH MISSION EMPHASIS—“Dress a Kid” for Tryon Elementary School

Wed, Mar 1
- Ash Wednesday Service 6pm, Annual Meeting and meal 6:30pm
- No Women's Bible Study, Bell Choir, or Chancel Choir

Sun, Mar 12
- SEE, 5pm, Children’s Choir 5pm

Sat, Mar 18
- Super Saturday

Sun, Mar 19
- SEE, 5pm, Children’s Choir 5pm

Fri, Mar 31-Apr 1
- CBFNC Annual Gathering, First Baptist Church of Hickory

APRIL MISSION EMPHASIS—Easter Missions Offering (CBF Global Missions/Annie Armstrong)

Sun, Apr 2
- Celebration of The Lord’s Supper

Sun, Apr 9
- Palm Sunday, SEE 5pm, Children’s Choir 5pm

Mon, Apr 10
- Noonday Prayer

Tue, Apr 11
- Noonday Prayer

Wed, Apr 12
- Noonday Prayer

Thur, Apr 13
- Maundy Thursday Service, 6pm

Fri, Apr 14
- Good Friday Community Service at First Baptist Church of Tryon, 12pm

Sun, Apr 16
- Easter Sunrise Service at TFAC Amphitheatre, 7am
- Easter Worship, 11am

Sun, Apr 23
- Quarterly Church Conference
- I Love My Church Offering
- SEE 5pm (Final SEE of the semester)

Sun, Apr 30
- Hooked! Fishing Event, 2pm-5pm

MAY MISSION EMPHASIS—Baptist Retirement Home Offering

Sun, May 21
- Youth Sunday (Youth lead in worship)
- SEE Annual Wiffleball Game and Cookout, 4pm (Last SEE until Fall)

Sun, May 28
- Hooked! Fishing Event, 2pm-5pm
- Refuge “End of Semester” party, 5pm
**2017 Schedule for First Baptist Church, Tryon, NC (con’t)**

**JUNE MISSION EMPHASIS — Stop Hunger Now**
- Sun, Jun 4: Graduate Sunday, 11am
- Sun, Jun 11: Celebration of The Lord’s Supper, 11am
- Sun-Fri, Jun 18-23: Passport Youth Camp, Averett University, Danville VA
- Sun, Jun 25: Hooked! Fishing Event, 2pm-5pm
- Th-Sat, Jun 28-30: CBF General Assembly, Atlanta GA
- TBD: Rafting Trip

**JULY MISSION EMPHASIS — Christmas in July Mission Offering (CBF Global Missions/Lottie Moon)**
- Mon-Thurs Jul 3-6: PassportKids! Camp, Montreat, NC
- Sun, July 30: I Love My Church Offering
- Quarterly Church Conference
- TBD: Carowinds Trip

**AUGUST MISSION EMPHASIS — Back to School (School Supplies)**
- Sun, Aug 6: Celebration of The Lord’s Supper, 11am
- Mon-Th, Aug 7-10: Vacation Bible School

**SEPTEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS — Commit to #GraceItForward Mission Day**
- Sun, Sep 10: SEE, Children’s Choir 5pm
- Sun, Sep 17: Hooked! Fishing Event, 2pm-5pm
- Sun, Sep 24: SEE, Children’s Choir 5pm

**OCTOBER MISSION EMPHASIS — Operation Christmas Child,**
- Sun, Oct 8: SEE, Children’s Choir 5pm
- Sat, Oct 14: #GraceItForward Mission Day
- Sun, Oct 15: Hooked! Fishing Event, 2pm-5pm
- Sun, Oct 22: SEE, Children’s Choir 5pm
- Sun, Oct 29: I Love My Church Offering
- Quarterly Church Conference

**NOVEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS — Warm Coats & Blankets for Polk County Residents**
- Sun, Nov 5: All Saints Sunday
- Sun, Nov 12: SEE, Children’s Choir, 5pm
- Sun, Nov 19: Celebration of the Lord’s Supper
  Community Thanksgiving Service

**DECEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS — Kathy’s Kids, Angel Tre**
- Sun, Dec 3: Annual Christmas Dinner
- Sun, Dec 17: Caroling, 3pm
- Sun, Dec 24: Christmas Eve Worship, 4pm
- Sun, Dec 31: I Love My Church Offering
March Sunday Schedules

Deacons for March
*Ellis Fincher Jr.
Sue Thompson
JT Johnson
Danny Fox
Ed Justice

Ushers for March
Lane and Merry Price—Front
Ashlyn Green—Hall
Franklin Williams—Side

Acolytes for March
Mar 5  StorieLane Whiteside, Oliviah Miller
Mar 12 Katie Cothran, Luke Walker
Mar 19 Wilson Edwards, Malik Miller
Mar 26 Harper Harris, Luke Miller

Children’s Church Workers for March
Mar 5  Cindy Dusenbury
Mar 12 Dan and Erin Fox
Mar 19 Cathy and JT Johnson
Mar 26 Anthony and Emily Pereira

Our Christian Love and Sympathy are extended to the family of Howard Greene, who died February 13, 2017; the family of Ruth Taylor, who died February 14, 2017; and the family of Annette Stafford, who died February 16, 2017.

REMINDER

Daylight Savings Time begins at 3am, March 12. Don’t forget to set your clocks an hour ahead!

March Milestones

ANNIVERSARIES
1  Phil & Marian Corn
7  Kevin & Christy McCall

BIRTHDAYS
1  Stephen Morris
2  Leah McKaig, Damon Johnson
5  Ronnie Pack, Keith Constance
6  Sandy Frady, Malik Miller (‘99)
8  Dean Kimbrell
9  JT Johnson
10  Billy McFarland, Grayson Jones (‘02)
11  Gigi Covil, Finley Jean Lay (‘12), Kaya Bishop (02)
12  Howard Greene, Darryl Maxwell
13  Nancy Brady, Matthew Baker, Sadie McKaig, Teresa Rossi
14  Charles Stafford, Wilson Edwards (‘01)

College Student Birthdays
22  Wes Brady
28  Emily Miller Raines

Military Personnel Birthdays
1  Francisco “Paquito” Dona
8  Ladd Shepard

Military Personnel Anniversary
15  Major & Mrs. Randall Stillinger