



## The Masthead

The Newsletter of Mayflower United Church of Christ

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Office Hours: 9:00-1:00 Monday-Friday

March 2025

### The Lenten desert



During the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year), Christians figuratively follow Jesus into the desert. Just as our Savior spent 40 days fasting and facing temptation, we focus on self-reflection and contrition.

In an 1873 hymn, Claudia Hernaman wrote, "O Lord, throughout these forty days, you prayed and kept the fast. Inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past."

The desert experience of Lent serves a clear purpose, filling us up rather than depleting us. "This is what Lent is meant to be," writes theologian Ron Rolheiser.

"Time in the desert to courageously face the chaos and the demons within us and to let God do battle with them through us. The result is that we are purified, made ready, so the intoxicating joy of Easter might then bind us more closely to God and each other."

### Amid life's storms

The hurricanes that battered the East Coast in fall 2024 also battered my soul. I was over the rain and humidity. I was tired of lugging my two preschoolers through the downpours and driving through flash floods at night. Yet I had no reason to complain. Our house was still standing, with no damage.

The news around us was worrying and heartbreaking. "What if that was us?" I wondered. "Would I be strong enough?"

Then the kids asked to play outside. Even though I knew they'd get wet and muddy, I gave in. When a rainbow appeared, I'd never been more humbled as I remembered: I don't need to be anxious. I don't need to be strong enough. God watches over us all. He knows the hurt and sorrow. And he promises to be "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ESV).

Lord, forgive my unbelief. "Hear my cry, O God ... when my heart is faint. Lead

me to the rock that is higher than I”  
(Psalm 61:1-2, ESV).

—Kristen Greene

## Resting in Jesus



An old hymn declares:

I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Come  
unto me and rest.

Lay down, O weary one, lay down your  
head upon my breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was, so weary,  
worn and sad.

I found in him a resting-place, and he  
has made me glad. (Horatius Bonar,  
1846)

Many people these days feel exhausted  
by division, the news, hatred that seems

louder than love. More than ever, we  
who are “weary, worn, and sad” need to  
hear Jesus say, “Come unto me and  
rest.”

Jesus wants to be our resting place —  
but not so we can hide forever from  
reality. Instead, he offers a place of  
refreshment where we can relax long  
enough to remember that not everything  
is bad; there is gospel to share. Not  
everything is hatred; God’s love is  
stronger.

Resting in Jesus, we focus on God’s  
goodness. We are reminded of love  
shown by kind people to those in  
trouble, bold voices speaking for justice,  
warm friendships that brighten our days.  
Gladdened by rest, we rise again. Jesus  
walks with us, as always. We can lean  
on him every step of the way.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

## Special dates

Transfiguration Sunday, *March 2, 2025*

Ash Wednesday, *March 5, 2025*

World Day of Prayer, *March 7, 2025*

Daylight saving time begins, *March 9,  
2025*

First day of spring, *March 20, 2025*

## Fasting and feasting

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

Fast from fear, and feast on faith.  
Fast from pride, and feast on humility.  
Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.  
Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.  
Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.  
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.  
Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.  
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.

## Jesus, the model of salt and light

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus tells his followers, “You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world.” Through his example, our Savior showed us what that means. “The remarkable thing is that Jesus brought it all into reality in his own person,” writes Bible scholar N.T. Wright in *Matthew for Everyone*. “He was the salt of the earth. He was the light of the world: set up on a hilltop, crucified for all the world to see, becoming a beacon of hope and new life for everybody, drawing people to worship his [F]ather, embodying the way of self-giving love which is the deepest [fulfillment] of the law and the prophets.”



**ANKH, OR ANSATE CROSS** — Originating in Egyptian hieroglyphics, this symbol represented life and regeneration. The shape and meaning made perfect sense to ancient Christians, who appropriated it as a sign of eternal life.

## Bible Quiz



Complete this sentence which introduces a well-known Bible story: “The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of \_\_\_\_\_.”

- A. flowers
- B. sheep
- C. rocks
- D. bones




Answer: D (See Ezekiel 37:1, NIV.)

## Puzzle!


Fill in the blanks with the tiny creatures mentioned in each verse (all NIV). Then search for those words in the puzzle below.

# Puzzle!

Fill in the blanks with the tiny creatures mentioned in each verse (all NIV). Then search for those words in the puzzle below.

|                  |       |  |
|------------------|-------|--|
| Proverbs 6:6     | _____ |  |
| Psalm 78:45      | _____ |  |
| Matthew 23:24    | _____ |   |
| Judges 14:8b     | _____ |  |
| Acts 12:23       | _____ |  |
| Leviticus 11:22  | _____ |  |
| Leviticus 11:22  | _____ |  |
| Deuteronomy 7:20 | _____ |  |
| Exodus 16:20     | _____ |  |
| 1 Samuel 24:14   | _____ |   |
| Isaiah 50:9      | _____ |  |
| Isaiah 59:5      | _____ |  |
| Leviticus 11:22  | _____ |  |
| Leviticus 11:22  | _____ |  |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | O | T | H | S | Q | N | A | T | R | H |
| A | N | T | A | L | L | C | H | P | E | O |
| G | R | A | S | S | H | O | P | P | E | R |
| G | F | C | R | I | C | K | E | T | S | N |
| O | L | S | P | I | D | E | R | S | B | E |
| T | E | C | L | O | C | U | S | T | O | T |
| S | A | E | F | K | A | T | Y | O | I | D |
| G | F | L | I | E | S | W | O | R | M | S |



Answers: ant, flies, gnat, bees, worms, locust, grasshopper, hornet, maggots, flea, moths, spider, katydid, cricket

## Two-way benefits

“When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless,” observed Connecticut politician Pauline Keezer. “But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.” Indeed, it’s impossible to shine light in someone else’s life without lighting up your own. We might think being generous toward another with our time or possessions leaves us with less. But as Jesus said, “Whoever loses their life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39, NIV). How common it is that when we minister to others in Christ’s name, we find we have also — or perhaps even more so — received ministry. This is the miracle of God’s love at work.

## FLOWERS


We are indebted to Bob Ribinski for all the flowers that he brings to church. Perhaps however you might like to donate flowers in memory of someone or to celebrate an anniversary, a birthday or maybe just because. The easiest way to do this is to email Judy with a date you can bring the arrangement and the dedication or a phone call, She has a list which she can fill in.




## VOLUNTEER

We have a tour of the Grace Place Campus planned for 2/26, Wednesday at 10am. This tour was organized following the wonderful presentation we received from Stacey Vaughn about all the programs that Grace Place provides for the children and families enrolled. Now we get a chance to see the classrooms with children and teachers in action. We will also have an opportunity to see where the Friday Food Pantry is set up and where all our church food donations go to help this community. Please continue to help with Food Donations that help support over 300 needy families. There are many ways we can show support and help our Grace Place for Children and Families Mission.

Sixty “Hearts of Grace” were distributed at our recent Night Train Concert Event. This was a wonderful chance to share with many people from a variety of communities the important information about the Grace Place programs.

Just like you, these Hearts of Grace will leave a lasting impression, spreading warmth, inspiration, and connection throughout our communities. There are still some available in our fellowship hall  to spread the love.

Thank you 



Sixteen more “welcome baskets” are being filled with the essential personal items to help the Women and Children living at the shelter. Stop by the table in the narthex on Sunday and learn more about this project and how we can help support the Shelter families. Following our Church Sale in February, we were able to donate all the women and children's clothing to the Options Thrift Store where 100% of sales benefits the Shelter.

Please help us complete these much needed baskets for the Women and Children with the items they still need. Lists of “essential items” can be picked up in the Narthex



**St Matthews House:** Following our Church Sale we donated many of the remaining items to the St Matthews House Thrift Stores. Thank you to everyone for your generous donations, and for helping to pack up the leftover sales to prepare for the St Matthew's House truck pick up. We also raised \$410 dollars from our “Souper-Bowl” soup and bread sales that will help support this important mission.

Thank you to everyone for all your help with cooking, baking, and purchasing the delicious soups made with love to serve those in need.



## **Fun-Raiser!**

Mark your calendar! Save the date of Saturday, March 22 at 5:30 for our first annual Italian dinner! Mayflower's family wants to gather for one more meal with our northern cousins. We know that many of them will be heading back for the summer so we're planning this just to see them, their friends and neighbors!

The menu will include many favorites—Garden Salad, Caesar Salad, Lasagna (also available as GF), Pasta (also GF available) with Bolognese sauce and/or meatballs, or meatless. There will be Italian/garlic bread, iced tea, several desserts, including Tiramisu and pizzelles, Pina Colada Mocktails, or BYOB.

Our price is \$30 or \$50 for two! Tickets will be available online, after church on Sundays, or through the church office M-F between 9-12.

Online tickets: [www.MayflowerNaples.com](http://www.MayflowerNaples.com)



## **March 2025**

From Retirement Income and Estate Planning to Tax Efficient Investing and, yes, even Baseball!

Thrivent invites you to join us for the following March Events:

MARCH 05, 2025 | 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM ET OR 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM ET

MARCH 06, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM ET

### [Golden Strategies with Eric Bilger](#)

Join us to learn from special guest speaker, Eric W. Bilger, FIC Financial Advisor for Thrivent, as he shares strategies around managing your retirement income and assets, estate planning and tax efficient investing. This webinar is designed for anyone who will be retiring soon, has recently retired, or is well into their retirement.

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/Golden2025>

*No products will be sold at our events. For additional disclosures, see [Thrivent.com/social](https://www.thrivent.com/social).*

We help Christians find financial clarity, enabling lives full of meaning and gratitude. All are welcome to attend our free virtual events. Feel free to share these events with your friends and family.

**Want to know more about Thrivent? Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at**

**(239) 300-5139.**

MARCH 24, 2025 | buffet starts @ 11:00 AM, Game starts @ 1:00 PM ET

### [Thrivent Afternoon with the Minnesota Twins vs Pittsburgh Pirates](#)

**Lee Health Sports Complex; 14100 6 Mile Cypress Parkway, Fort Myers, FL 33912**

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon at spring training in Ft. Myers with the Minnesota Twins! You're invited to enjoy great company, delicious food, and a spirit of generosity as we watch the Twins take on the Pittsburgh Pirates. Thrivent is proud to partner with the Cathedral de Adoração Food Pantry, supporting the greater Ft. Myers community for this event. See event details on what to bring to support. Register to attend the event or indicate you'd like to receive a recording.

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/MinnTwins2025>

## Living water

In the mountains, my mom and I have a favorite riverside picnic spot. Inevitably, we end up removing our socks and shoes, dunking our feet in the icy water.

While seeing who can keep both feet submerged the longest, we distract ourselves by admiring the rushing water. Hundreds of gallons from melting snow cascade over rocks and around fallen trees.

Although we're in the same spot visit after visit, the water is always fresh. The same is true about God's presence and his Word. We can revisit the same beloved Scripture and experience the same truths in fresh ways, as "rivers of living water" flow within us (John 7:38).

In *The Attentive Life*, Leighton Ford describes enjoying solitude by a river. "I remembered that the ancient philosopher Heraclitus said it was impossible to step into the same river twice, for a river is always in flux," he writes.

Ford continues: "Yet Heraclitus left out an important truth. A river is more than a succession of millions of disparate drops of water. I can step into a river in this living moment and know it has *never* changed. For each moment of time, each part of creation, each aspect of my life is also lived under the eye of God and is gathered and held in his eternal hand."

—Janna Firestone

## Tell your story

In his *Confessio*, St. Patrick shares his fascinating biography, placing Jesus at the center. Believers should follow suit, especially in a culture that is "ignoring and forgetting the Christian story," states Father Billy Swan. At WordOnFire.org, the Irish Catholic priest writes:

"Our calling is to retell the greatest story ever told and to help people find their place within the drama in which God has created them to participate. Like St. Patrick, we retell that story not as detached bystanders but as witnesses whose lives have been changed by being drawn deeper into the dynamics of the great love story of God and his people."

Patty Breen, a lay minister in Michigan, also finds inspiration from the fifth-century saint.

"The journey and life story of St. Patrick invite us to wrestle with and consider these questions," she writes. "Who is God for me? How do I contribute to the coming of the kingdom of God? What is God's plan for my life? Where am I invited to serve?"

Writing down our own *Confessio*, or faith story, is "a way to remember and see God's presence with you at each step of your life," adds Breen, "even at times when you weren't necessarily following God."





| SUNDAY  | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY                                       | SATURDAY  |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|
|   |   |   |  |  |  | 1   |
| 2   | 3<br><b>Jim &amp; Kay<br/>Stanek Jr. -<br/>Anniversary</b>  | 4<br><b>Delilah<br/>Archibald<br/>- Birthday<br/>Book Club<br/>7 pm</b> | 5<br><b>Pot Luck<br/>5 pm<br/>Ash<br/>Wednesday<br/>Service 7 pm</b> | 6<br><b>Bible Study<br/>11 am</b>                              | 7<br><b>WORLD<br/>DAY OF<br/>PRAYER</b>      | 8<br><b>Ladies Lunch at<br/>Lely Palms 12 pm</b>                          |
| 9<br><b>DAYLIGHT<br/>SAVINGS<br/>TIME</b>   | 10  | 11  | 12<br><b>Joyce Hovey<br/>at South<br/>Regional<br/>Library 10-11</b> | 13<br><b>Bible Study<br/>11 am</b>                             | 14<br><b>Spring<br/>Cleaning<br/>8:30 am</b> | 15<br><b>Sandra<br/>Beaumont<br/>Memorial Service<br/>11 am</b>           |
| 16<br><b>Nina Ribinski<br/>- Birthday<br/>Michele<br/>Wonicker -<br/>Birthday</b> | 17<br><b>ST. PATRICK'S<br/>DAY</b><br> | 18  | 19<br><b>Council<br/>Meeting</b>                                     | 20<br><b>Bible Study<br/>11 am<br/>FIRST DAY<br/>OF SPRING</b> | 21   | 22<br><b>Michelle Falco -<br/>Birthday<br/>Italian Dinner<br/>5:30 pm</b> |
| 23  | 24<br><b>Masthead<br/>Deadline</b>  | 25  | 26   | 27   | 28   | 29  |
| 30<br><b>Bob Ribinski -<br/>Birthday</b>  |   |   |  |  |  |   |