

First Community Church

Newsletter

March 2014



Our Mission Statement

We are a community of faith believing in the power of prayer and seeking earnestly to deepen our spiritual life and share the love of God with others.

The Pastor's Message

Not too long ago I heard a story about Itzhak Perlman, the great violinist. I treasure the Deutsche Grammophon recording I have of Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" recorded from a performance in Jerusalem in 1982. At this performance, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted by Zubin Mehta. The violinists were Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zuckerman, Shlomo Mintz, and Perlman. With that lineup, even I would look like a great conductor (that is, if they just ignored me).

It reminds me of what my father told me, I believe in 1952 or 53, about the New York Yankees. The lineup, which has been imprinted and immortalized in my memory from my baseball cards (which my mother threw away), was comprised of Joe Collins, Billy Martin, Phil Rizzuto, Gil McDougald, Hank Bauer, Mickey Mantle, Gene Woodling, and Yogi Berra. The pitchers were Allie Reynolds, Eddie Lopat, Whitey Ford, Vic Raschi, and Johnny Sain. As my dad said, "You wouldn't have to be a Casey Stengel to win the pennant with that team!"

Now what was the point I was trying to make? It could be that it is easy to be the minister of this church with the lineup of Christians we have. That would be true, but that isn't my point.

According to the story, Itzhak Perlman, who moves about slowly on hand crutches because of childhood polio, was the guest violinist at some great concert hall. Following the warmup, in the silence, which preceded the beginning of the performance, a loud "pop" rang out. The conductor stopped and looked at Perlman. It soon became apparent that one of the strings on Perlman's violin had snapped.

There are four strings on a violin. Although some notes can be played on several different strings, by using all four strings the violinist can manage a more intricate and complex sequence of notes than can be played with fewer strings.

According to legend, Perlman sat in silence for a minute. Then, instead of going backstage to install another string, he motioned for the conductor to begin. Although he was using only three strings, by improvising his fingering to compensate for the missing string, Perlman performed a demanding violin concerto not only without flaw but magnificently.

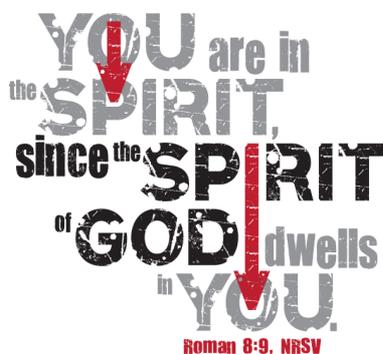
This past week I found myself thinking of the many people who were such an important part of our church in past years and decades. Many of these pillars of the church have moved to a different part of the country, have passed on, or are confined to nursing homes. We miss them. The loss of these dedicated and talented people leaves us short-handed, much as Perlman was without one of his strings. Whereas Perlman is such a musical genius that he can do with three strings what most people are unable to do with four, neither I nor our church is an ecclesiastical genius. We cannot do as much with three people as we can with four. It just won't sound the same.

And so, if you are a member of a slightly different group, the group of church members who were once very active but have gradually through the years become inactive, I invite you to return. We need you. To build on the analogy, I encourage you to think of yourself as a string on the Master's violin. The Master can probably get by without your assistance. Even our church can probably get by. But we don't want to just "get by."

We would love to see you at Sunday worship! We would love to have you attend one of our study groups. We need your input, your energy and your ideas on our boards and committees. Even if you have not been asked, consider volunteering for some task that you feel capable of offering. Whether it is serving at the coffee hour, singing in the choir, helping with the yard sale or church suppers, think of yourself as the fourth string. We can probably limp along without you, but because we are not as gifted ecclesiastically as Perlman is musically, it just won't sound the same.

Faithfully yours,
The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson

Adult Bible Study



We continue our study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Rome. This book presents the foundation for much of our Christian theology as Paul tries to understand the role of Christ in salvation. It also provides us with guidelines for living the Christian life both as individuals and as a church.

The Adult Bible Study group meets on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of every month from 9:15 – 10:30 AM in the Vestry. Bibles are provided.

United Parishes Lenten Series

For the thirteenth year in a row, the clergy of Southborough and the United Parishes of Southborough will be hosting a Lenten reflection series at each of their churches. This year's theme is "Christian Characters and Their Complex Selves."

Each of the four Tuesday evening sessions will begin at 6:00 PM with a brief worship service in the host church's sanctuary. A dinner is served at 6:15 PM. At 7:00 PM, there is a presentation by one of the town's clergy followed by small group table discussions based on three questions and concludes at 8:00 PM.

Our church will be co-hosting the dinner at Pilgrim Church on April 1. We usually have an excellent turnout at these meetings from our church. Participants especially enjoy the opportunity to worship together, to listen to the presentations, and in sharing with each other, realize how much we have in common. The meal is also excellent!

The schedule is as follows:

DATE	HOST CHURCH	SPEAKER
March 18	St. Anne Church	Rev. Julie Cedrone
March 25	St. Matthew Church	Fr. Phil LaBelle
April 1	Pilgrim Congregational Church Co-hosted by First Community Church	Chaplain Stephen Hebert
April 8	St. Mark's Episcopal Church	Rev. Barbara Talcott

Stewardship & Growth Committee Report



The Stewardship and Growth Committee has been charging full speed ahead under the fearless leadership of Cheryl Homes in the development of a tri-fold brochure for the purpose of letting people in the Southborough, Westborough, Ashland, and Hopkinton area know more about the wonderful community of faith we have here at this church. These are the first "target" towns we are aiming to reach out to. We plan to distribute the brochures to the over 55 communities, senior centers, libraries, etc. in the area. We are asking the congregation to share ideas with us in terms of which places to approach. If you have any ideas or maybe would even like to help distribute these flyers, please let any member of this committee know.

We have started to take the first half hour of each Stewardship Committee meeting and dedicate it to planning our "150 Year Anniversary" and we invite any member of this church family to join us from 6:15 PM to 6:45 PM to help plan this wonderful celebration. We usually meet the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:15 PM with the exception of March/April when we will meet on April 22. David Crane has graciously volunteered to be the "Project Manager" for planning this celebration. Anyone who would like to come to our next meeting is invited and welcomed.

Save the date for our annual yard sale – Saturday June 7. We will keep you posted on the details.

Missions Offering

Our March Mission Offerings are given to Abby's House in Worcester Mass. Abby's House, (Abby Kelley Foster House Inc.) incorporated in 1976, opened one of the first overnight emergency shelters for women with or without children in the U.S. Abby's House was formed at the beginning of the battered women's movement – there were no paradigms to follow in organizational development. Instead, the volunteers who ran the shelter listened carefully to the needs of the women and responded accordingly. The spirit of empowerment, sisterhood and mutuality embodied by the original volunteer activists continues to inform program delivery today.



Mission Statement

The mission of Abby's House is to provide emergency and long-term affordable housing, as well as advocacy and support services to homeless, battered and low-income women with or without children.

We fulfill our mission by empowering women to lead self-directed lives filled with dignity and hope.

By offering warm hospitality, we seek to be in relationships of caring and support.

In naming the oppression that exists in women's lives, we strive to create change.

Emergency Shelter

Imagine having nowhere to go; nowhere to sleep, eat or shower. Now, imagine having children to take care of under these circumstances. Where would you go?

Since 1976, one woman at a time, Abby's House has helped thousands of women and children make their way out of the chaos of homelessness. About 300 women and children each year stay in our emergency shelter. We provide our programs with the financial support of individuals, community groups, private foundations, family foundations and corporations. Eighty-nine cents of every dollar donated to Abby's House goes directly to programs for homeless and battered women and children.

The following article was written by Alex Kartheiser and printed in the April 2013 issue of *BRIGHT SPOT*, a publication of Abby's House.

Number of Homeless Exceeds Available Resources

On any given night, there are 643,067 people experiencing homelessness in the United States. In Massachusetts, 17,501 people are homeless – an increase from 2011's total of 16,664. Sadly, homelessness is not going away anytime soon. Communities are struggling with a shortage of resources to meet the increased need for emergency shelter and housing. Abby's House works

not just to provide a solution to homelessness, but also to end the cycle of homelessness in the lives of women and children who walk through our doors.

People become homeless for various and unique reasons. Factors that contribute to homelessness include abusive relationships, loss of employment, loss of stable living arrangements, lack of education, and lack of resources within their community. One of the major factors contributing to homelessness across the United States, especially in the last few years, is the lack of affordable housing. With an increase of Americans experiencing economic problems — including foreclosures and unemployment across the nation — the gap between the need and availability of affordable housing is at an all-time high. In Worcester alone, we need an additional 12,000 units of affordable housing to accommodate all eligible residents. At the Worcester Housing Authority, the waiting list is eight years long.

Many of the women who arrive at Abby's House have fallen through the cracks and are dealing with serious issues that contribute to them becoming homeless. The story of a young woman who recently entered our shelter is one example of the struggles our women face. Denise is currently unable to work due to medical issues and can no longer pay her rent. As a guest at Abby's House, she has found stability, a place to regroup, to take care of her medical problems, and when she is feeling better, find a job.

The reality is that homelessness is not going away.

Robin, who is in her late 30s, has recently fled a domestic violence situation. She has 2 school aged children. Because her husband was the source of financial support within the household, she finds herself in a position that many women find themselves in after leaving an abusive relationship; she has no employment, no health insurance and limited resources. With the encouragement of her advocate, she applies for work daily, has her name on the list for housing, and has applied for health insurance. She has been able to find comfort in the safety net that Abby's provides.

The reality is homelessness is not going away. The experiences of the women who come through Abby's doors are more complex and the needs are greater than ever. Although resources are available in our community, they are limited and the barriers can be overwhelming. Abby's House strives to offer each woman not only practical support but just as importantly encourages their individual spirits. If you are interested in making a difference in the lives of the women and children of Abby's House, there are many ways to help. It is YOU – the supporters, volunteers, donors, and friends – who continuously encourage our women by reminding them that the community stands by them and invests in their success. To learn more about volunteering or donating to Abby's House, please visit our website at www.abbyshouse.org.



Our most heartfelt sympathies reach out to George Nutting for the great loss of his grandson Timothy Nutting, who died on Sunday, January 26, 2014.

Timothy was the son of Mark Nutting and the late Darlene (Marcus) Nutting. He leaves his daughter Jaylen Nutting, his brother Mark Nutting of GA, his sister, Shannon Nutting of CT and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Our love and prayers are with George and all of his family.

A Blast From The Past

100 Years Ago

1914 – March

- ◆ It is reported that Rev. S. Carlisle Schaeffer, pastor of the Congregational Church in Southville is to leave April 1st.
- ◆ Rev. S. Carlisle Schaeffer, Pastor Congregational Church has severed his connections, having accepted a call to the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Kansas City and began his duties April 1st.
- ◆ Mr. James Stockwell, Wood Street, visited Sunday with relatives in Westboro.
- ◆ John Sparrocks is doing the carpenter work at the vestry of the M.E. Church. Considerable repairing is being done, such as sheathing, electric wiring and metalwork on the ceiling. E Wilson did the electrical work assisted by H. Lincoln. The metalwork was done by Boston Metal Co.
- ◆ The vestry of the Congregational church is being renovated and considerable painting is being done. It is said that some of the ladies of the church are looking after the work.
- ◆ An entertainment is being given at the Congregational Church Tuesday evening.

75 Years Ago

1939 -- March

- ◆ Mrs. Ida Hunt has been elected Master of the Southborough Grange.
- ◆ Cordaville: Much repair work has been done at the “Giombetti Inn” making it an up to date place for business.

50 Years Ago

1964 -- March

- ◆ The board of directors met and reported the mimeo machine was completely overhauled.
- ◆ The youth fellowship held a car wash.
- ◆ The Women’s Fellowship held a Mother-Daughter Banquet planned by Mrs. Appleby and was most interesting to both.

25 Years Ago

1989 -- March

- ◆ In 1989, the Board of Trustees installed a new foundation under the oil tank and the sanctuary chandelier was rewired.
- ◆ Dot Watkins presented a slide show on her recent trip to Germany at the home of Rowena Robertson.

10 Years Ago

2004 -- March

- ◆ Church Council met on March 25th. Bob Farmer mentioned the annual meeting suggestion of Mattie Cummings that the website should be added to our outside signs.

- ◆ The Trustees are working with the insurance company concerning recent car hitting front of Church. Also noted, a new roof is needed along with parking lot restoration. Voted to start capital fund drive for repairing roof, finish vestry renovation project, and whatever is necessary to fix “parking situation.”
 - ◆ A St. Patrick’s Day Dinner Fundraiser was held and a good time was had by all.
 - ◆ The Women’s Fellowship had their first meeting on March 18th.
-

Spring Is Here

It’s that time of year to clean out the closets, the cellar and the kitchen drawers!

The Stewardship and Growth Committee is sponsoring a Spring Yard Sale on Saturday, June 7 at our church.

Toys, clothes, shoes, household items and furniture are on the list. We will *not* be accepting TV’s, computers, VCR’s, or any “old” electronics and/or small appliances.

More information will be provided in the May Newsletter. If you have any questions please see any one of our committee members.

2014 Stewardship & Growth Committee

David Crane, Cheryl Holmes, Darlene Sanderson, David Sickles, Dianne Simmons and Sharon Willman



Women’s Fellowship

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Psalm 126:5

On February 23, the Women’s Fellowship once again planned and provided a wonderful meal of homemade soups and delicious sandwiches for all who attended the Annual Meeting Luncheon. Special thanks to everyone who made soups, sandwiches, desserts and provided crackers. A big thank you to those who stayed after the meeting to help with the clean up.

A special note for our March meeting – the date will change from our usual Tuesday evening meeting to Thursday, March 20 at 6:30 PM due to the Lenten Series meetings. Karin Farmer will be responsible for devotions and Martha Hubley will supply the refreshments.

Mattie Cummings, Secretary

Report Of The Diaconate

United Parishes of Southborough will be helping with the FIT (Families in Transition) program in Marlboro. Each of the churches will be taking turns providing one meal a month. Sharon Willman has volunteered to be our designated representative to FIT. First Community Church and Pilgrim Church will be working together, sharing the same scheduled day to provide the monthly meal.

Also sharing joint activities, we will be co-hosting the Lenten Series with Pilgrim Church on Tuesday, April 1. Beverly Lees has volunteered to be our contact person with them to see what will be needed. First Community has always done well in providing food and service for this event in the past, and we look forward to another wonderful evening of sharing with our sister churches.

This month's Mission Offering will go to support Abby's House located in Worcester MA. Gwen Forrester has used her talents to create two more beautiful silk flower arrangements for the altar on Sundays when there are no signups for Memorial Flowers. Gwen only charged us for the materials and donated her time and talent for these lovely arrangements.

The next scheduled meetings are Tuesday, March 4 and Thursday, April 3, both at 6:30 PM.

Spiritual Exploration Reading Group

Tuesday Afternoons with Rev. Sanderson

The theme of our Tuesday afternoon Spiritual Exploration Reading Group this spring will be "Rediscovering Jesus." We will read and discuss the provocative short work by the Protestant theologian Marcus Borg entitled *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*.

Marcus Borg is Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University and the author of *Jesus: a New Vision*, *The God We Never Knew*, and *The Heart of Christianity*. Borg, a former member of the Jesus Seminar, challenges us to think about the picture we have of Jesus and how that picture may be limited or inadequate or perhaps even false. He invites us to return to scripture to rediscover Jesus, to experience him anew. One of the reasons I like this book so much, and why we have chosen it for our group discussion this spring, is that it places the primary emphasis on our relationship with Jesus. It is not primarily about knowing more facts about Jesus; it is about knowing Jesus. It is about meeting him, getting to know him better, and inviting him to be a more central part of our life.

Publisher's Weekly has described this book in the following: "In this small, but eloquent and learned book, Borg directs his readers, especially those who have found no meaningful image of Jesus, away from confessed doctrines about Jesus (what the gospels and the churches say about Him) and toward a relationship with the Spirit of God."

The Tuesday afternoon study group meets every Tuesday from 2:30 – 4:00 PM in the Vestry. Everyone is welcome!

What's Your Sense Of Peace?

“Peace” can sound merely sentimental or clichéd. But deep down, it's what most of us long for. Consider the proverb: “The highest happiness is peace.”

Not a peace inside that ignores pain in oneself or others, or is acquired by shutting down. This is a durable peace, a peace you can come home to even if it's been covered over by fear, frustration, or heartache.

When you're at peace – when you are engaged with life while also feeling relatively relaxed, calm and safe – you are protected from stress, your immune system grows stronger, and you become more resilient. Your outlook brightens and you see more opportunities. In relationships, feeling at peace prevents overreactions, increases the odds of being treated well by others, and supports you in being clear and direct when you need to be.

I think there are four kinds of peace, and I'll point out where each might be found. The first two kinds are pretty straightforward, while the third and fourth take a person into the deep end of the pool. It's helped me to notice, appreciate, and (hopefully) practice each of these. It's OK to focus on just one for a while; any peace is better than none.

In particular, enjoy your peacefulness, wherever you find it. In our culture of pressure, invasive demands for attention and jostling busyness, inner peace must be protected. When you experience it, enjoy it, which will help it sink into you, weaving its way into your brain so it increasingly becomes the habit of your mind.

The Peace of Ease

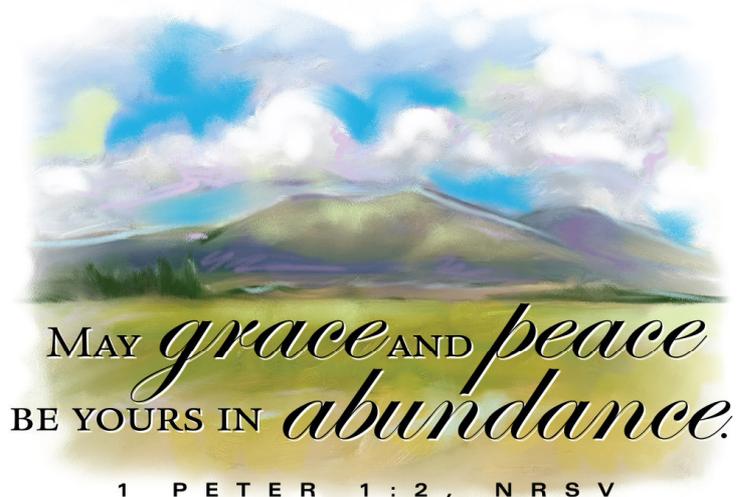
This is the peace of relaxation and relief, and it comes in many forms. You look out a window and feel calmer, talk through a problem with a friend, or finally make it to the bathroom. You exhale slowly, activating the soothing parasympathetic wing of your nervous system. You finish a batch of e-mails or dishes. You were worried about something but finally get good news. Whew. At rest. It's easy to underestimate this sort of peace but it really counts. Take it in when you feel it.

The Peace of Tranquility

This is deep quiet in mind and body. Perhaps you have felt this on first waking, before the mind kicks into gear. Or while sitting next to a mountain pond, something of its stillness seeps into your heart. At the end of a workout, meditation, or yoga, you might have felt serene.

The Peace of Awareness

This is a subtler kind of peace. Perhaps you've had the experience of being upset and your mind is racing and at the same time there is a



place inside that is simply witnessing, untroubled by what it sees. Or you may have the sense of awareness as an open space in which sights and sounds, thoughts and feelings, arise and disappear, the space itself is never ruffled or harmed by what passes through it.

I'm not speaking of anything mystical here, only what you can see directly in your own mind. As either a bare witness or the space through which the stream of consciousness flows, awareness itself is always at peace.

The Peace of What's Unchanging

First, while most things continually change, some don't; for example, the fact that things change doesn't itself change. Two plus two will always equal four. The good thing you did this morning or last year will always have happened. Things that don't change are reliable, which feels peaceful.

Second, while individual waves come and go, the ocean is always ocean. While the contents of the universe are changing, the universe as universe is not. You can get an intuition of this by recognizing that you are a local wave in a vast sea of human culture, nature, and the physical universe; yes, you are changing, but within an unchanging allness. The sense of this, even if fleeting, can really put you at peace.

Third, you could have a sense of something transcendental, something eternal, call it God, Spirit, the Unconditioned, or by no name at all. Beyond words, this offers "the peace that passeth understanding," and I include it here because it is meaningful to many people (including myself).

By Rick Hanson

May we all be at peace.

Karin Farmer
Contributing Columnist

PEACE PEACE PEACE

From The Editor

The deadline for the April 2014 Newsletter is **Monday, March 24, 2014**. Remember to include any dates for meetings or events you would like listed on the calendar. Articles may be submitted to Cheryl Holmes by:



(508) 460-0142



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Westborough, MA 01581



caholmes@charter.net

Thank You

From Our Missions

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your generous contribution to the work of Church World Service – which we appreciated more than ever in these challenging times.

Your compassionate support is helping impoverished communities develop clean, reliable water sources; teaching poor farmers sustainable ways to create food security; and providing food, water, shelter, and other necessities to families struggling to rebuild their lives and livelihoods after natural disasters and civil conflict.

I have seen both the resilience and the resolve of the women, men and children we assist. And I have been deeply moved by the generosity of people like you, who give hope and opportunity to people in need, here in the U.S. and around the world.

May God bless you for your kindness.

Rev. John L. McCullough
President and CEO
Church World Service



With Our Special Thanks To –

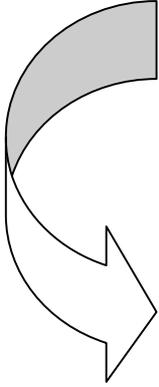
- ◆ Beverly Lees for all her efforts to collect the many reports, budgets, and other vital information needed for the Annual Reports. Many thanks to Bob L'Heureux and Beverly for their time spent in printing, collating and stapling the reports for everyone to review before our Annual Meeting.
- ◆ The Women's Fellowship for organizing and providing the homemade soups and sandwiches followed by coffee and dessert for the Annual Meeting Luncheon. Always there to serve us in any capacity, the Women's Fellowship truly is a group of people who deserve our thanks and recognition for all they do. Thanks to Lou Dundin, our moderator, for presiding over the meeting.
- ◆ Joyce Harrington and Bob Farmer (Diaconate); Cheryl Holmes and Sharon Willman (Stewardship & Growth Committee); Karin Farmer and Sandy McKeen (Trustees) and Cathy Ten Eyck (Investment) for completing their final terms on their respective boards and/or committees.
- ◆ Skip Willman, David Crane, Bob L'Heureux and Jim Holmes for plowing, shoveling, and snow blowing us out after several winter snowstorms. Let's hope they get to retire the plow & shovels for the winter.



Overflowing With Thanks

LOOKING AHEAD

“Palm Sunday” & “Easter Sunday”
April 13 & April 20



Write down these dates!!

<i>Birthdays</i>	
Lee Cummings	3 rd
Rowena Robertson	4 th
Dorothy Larson	5 th
Cathy Ten Eyck	7 th
Emily Hite	10 th
Walter Hite	11 th
Jan Norcross	12 th
Susan Elias	12 th
Marjorie Lowry	22 nd
<i>Anniversaries</i>	
Stan & Jan Norcross	30 th

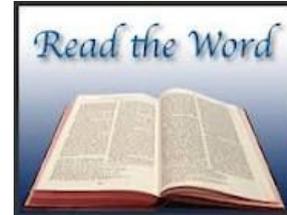


CELEBRATIONS

"then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." *Philippians 2:2*

Lay Readers

March 2 - Garcia Passley
March 9 - Barbara Crane
March 16 - Bob L'Heureux
March 23 - Sandy McKeen
March 30 - Pat Grogan



Greeters

March 2 - Dianne Simmons
March 9 -
March 16 - Sandy & Scott McKeen
March 23 -
March 30 - Beverly Lees

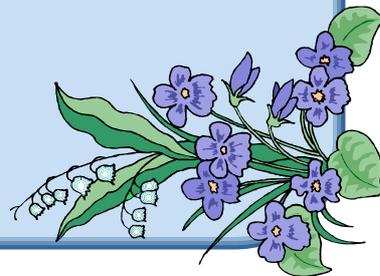
Coffee Hour Hosts

March 2 - Thelma Oakes
March 9 - Sandy McKeen
March 16 - Barbara Crane
March 23 - Marlene Joe
March 30 - Beth Hook



Memorial Flowers

March 2 - David Sickles and
Sharon & Skip Willman
March 9 - David Sickles
March 16 -
March 23 -
March 30 -



Deacons for March

Sandy McKeen and Scott McKeen

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						 6:00 PM D & D <i>Saturday Special</i>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service <i>Sacrament of Holy Communion</i> Coffee Hour following Worship Service		2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM Diaconate Meeting				 <i>Set Your Clock Ahead 1 Hour</i>
9	10	12	12	13	14	15
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 9:15 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service		2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:15 PM Trustee's Meeting				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT 9:15 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service 150 th Anniversary Planning Committee Meeting after Worship Service		2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM United Parishes Lenten Series held at St. Anne Church		6:30 PM Women's Fellowship 		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 9:15 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service	April Newsletter Deadline	2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM United Parishes Lenten Series held at St. Matthew Church				
30		<h1>Missions – Abby's House</h1>				
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service						