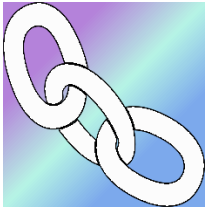


# First Presbyterian Church

321 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Burlington, IA 52601, 319-752-6626

1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



## Connections



April 2025

---

### Pastor's Thoughts

Small But Mighty. That's the name of the study just completed by the adult Sunday morning education class. They acquainted themselves with the smallest, briefest books of the Bible, such as Philemon, Titus and Jude. In some cases, the book isn't measured by chapters, but verses. Both Philemon and Jude have but 25 verses, and yet, it wasn't in the number of verses that made the study interesting, but the impact of those verses in informing and shaping faith. These are books that are seldom read, and I must admit, not frequently used for sermons. Let's face it, size matters; the bigger the better, right?

In every sport, but cross country racing, the more points a team can score the more likely they will win. Numbers matter. It is equally as sad, that the smaller things are, the less important they are treated. I live in a small town of approximately 350 souls in the second smallest county in Illinois. We never get the attention or respect of communities that are much larger. That's where the votes are, right?

It's no different in the church. We Presbyterians like to count things. Lord knows, our annual reports are full of numbers. We report worship attendance, annual giving, education participation, racial/ethnic composition as well as a host of other things. These numbers become a snapshot of a congregation's life, or, lack of same. We use it all to measure explicitly and implicitly, a congregation's viability and vitality. The bigger the better, right? The bigger, the more influential and life shaping. Which means the smaller a congregation is, the less impactful; a reason to not be expecting much. More in worship = vibrant worship. Less people attending = don't expect much. The bigger the numbers = more reason to attend. Less attendance = BORING! Smaller numbers mean, don't expect much. Smaller numbers means the congregation is on life support. How pathetically short-sighted and superficial we are!

It is time to reframe the conversation and concept related to numbers. In education, small classes are preferred over large classes. Why? Because better, more individualized learning can occur. In the church, at what point do these reports, filled with numbers, measure heart or passion? Jesus himself said,

“wherever two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them.” We never read that it was a waste of his time if crowds were less than large. Numbers do not reflect the role of a congregation in the life of its community and to the lives they are touching and changing. That steady, regular smaller attendance can be a phenomenal influence in transforming lives. We’re living in a new era where “doing” church differently is critical. We’re no longer content to preach to the people in the pews, but to reach out remotely to people we have never met and never will, and, who may not have ever chosen to personally attend a worship service, but are faithful followers through live streaming. Large or small, that requires the planning of worship just as if hundreds would be physically attending.

There are those who believe that being smaller, having smaller numbers should be construed to be equal to near death. But let me share a fact with you that for me is non-negotiable: As long as a congregation without big numbers meets and worships, as long as they study and pray, as long as they continue to push the envelope to reach out to more and more people sharing the grace and love of Jesus Christ, they are vital and need to be respected and applauded for bringing the gospel to those they are meeting.

Our congregation may be smaller than it has ever been, but that does not mean it is dying. There are no numbers that will ever mean faith and commitment, or the desire to go out into the world and preach and teach and do the work of evangelists. How do you measure heart and passion? The church is not being placed in hospice, considered terminal, any more than we should look for a hearse backed up to the door waiting to remove the corpse. Numbers don’t always tell the story. It’s more than okay to be small but mighty. Don’t forget, Jesus used 12 disciples to build a faith community that is world-wide and has existed for 21 centuries. 12 people who had passion. 12 people who would not give up. 12 people who believed in their mission.



# A Deeper Dive into Our Mission Statement

Let me refresh your memory of what our congregation's mission statement is: OUR MISSION is to: Engage with the lost ... Establish in the faith ... Equip to serve ... Empower to go. This month let's take a closer look at what it means when we say we're going to "Equip to Serve."

God never asks us to do anything without giving us the power and the equipment to do it. That is even true in serving. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others." Notice that every one of us has been given a gift with which to serve others.

Every one of us has received at least one gift. Just as a gift is to be unwrapped and used, so is our spiritual gift. We are all different. We have different interests, different passions, different skills, different abilities, and different gifts. There is a reason for that. We all have a spiritual job description and we have all been given the gifts and the abilities needed to fulfill that purpose.

One of the greatest problems that churches face today is that too many people are not using the gifts that God has given them. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "In a Christian community, everything depends on whether each individual is an indispensable link in the chain. The chain is unbreakable only when even the smallest link holds tightly with the others. A community which allows to exist within itself members who do nothing will be destroyed by them. Thus, it is a good idea that all members receive a definite task to perform for the community so that they may know in times of doubt that they, too, are not useless and incapable of doing anything. Every Christian community must know that not only do the weak need the strong, but also the strong cannot exist without the weak. The elimination of the weak is the death of the community."

The foundation of the Christian Church has always been service. Once a person comes to faith by accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they grow in their faith and knowledge of Christ, they begin to understand that everyone in the church is a servant, called to a life of service. Paul says in Ephesians 4:12-13, "... to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

That means we are to take on the role of a servant, putting others before ourselves. If our hearts desire to be the Lord's servant, we seek what Christ is doing. In Psalm 32:8 we're told, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." A servant of the Lord is guided by Christ through the Spirit because he is our Master. Jesus only did what the Father showed him and we do what Christ shows us. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus told his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Service and being a servant does not come naturally. It all emerges and begins to bear fruit when we are instructed and encouraged.

## Our Mission ...



*Engage with the lost*



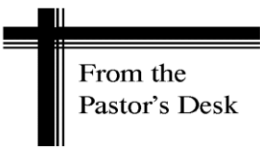
*Establish in faith*



*Equip to serve*



*Empower to go*



## April Sermon

April continues what began in March ... the season of Lent with the zenith the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter. The final Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup> will begin a 2-week theme entitled "How to be a Christian Without being Religious." This will be a prelude to a series in May on being prophetic. Piqued your interest? I hope so. Come and see, or, tune in by watching our live stream on Facebook.

April 6 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent      Communion

Text: Psalm 22:1-16

John 18:28-19:16

Title: Pontius Pilate

Video: Remember My Sacrifice

April 13 Palm Sunday

Text: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

John 12:12-19

Title: The Crowds

Video: Hosanna

April 17 Maundy Thursday      Communion & Anointing with Oil In Chapel

7:00 p.m.

Text: Isaiah 50:4-9a

Luke 23:26-31

Title: Women of Jerusalem

April 18 Good Friday      Location & Time TBD

Text: Isaiah 53:1-12

Luke 23:39-43

Title: Two Dying Men

April 20 Easter Sunday Communion

Text: Numbers 14:1-12

John 20:24-31

Title: Thomas

Video: Because He Lives

Remembrance

April 27

Text: Isaiah 29:11-21

Matthew 15:1-14

Title: "Twelve Inches From God"

Video: "That's My King"

May 4

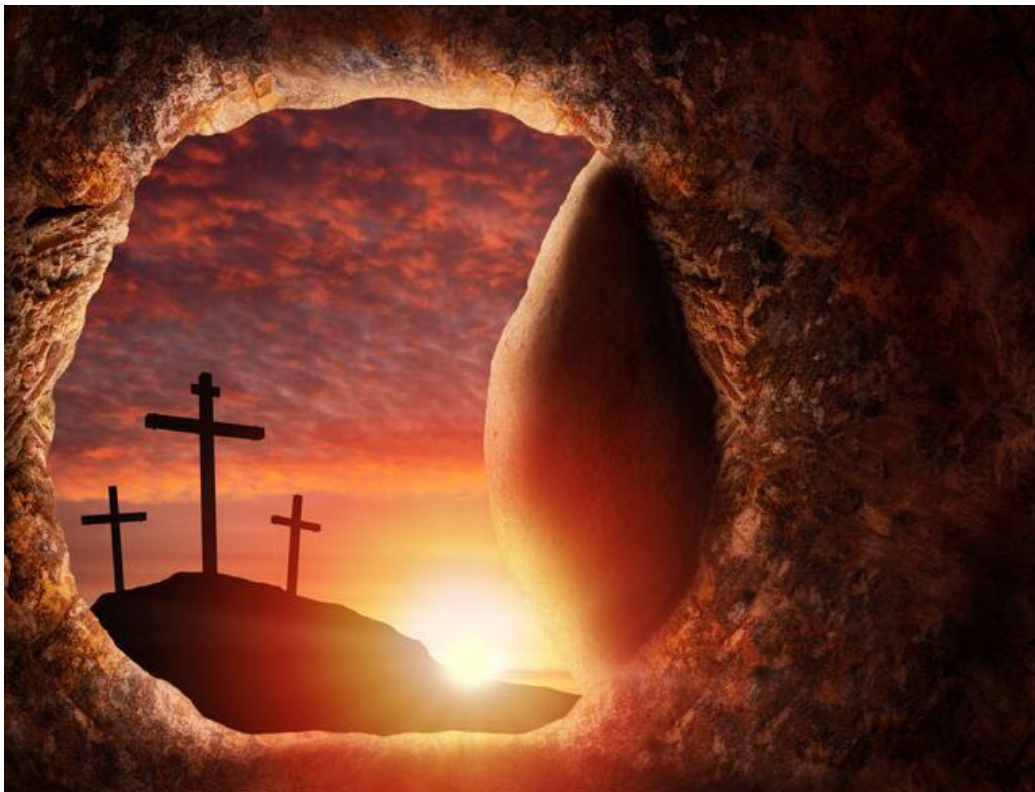
Communion

Text: Micah 6:1-8

Matthew 19:16-22

Title: "Stuff vs Soul"

Video: "In Here Out There"





# Easter Reflections



As a young organ major in undergraduate school, I remember vividly the day when my teacher explained to me how we as organists make notes receive more emphasis. Unlike playing the piano, you cannot hit the keys any harder and receive any results. While we may maneuver the instrument mechanically through the use of swell shades (those louvered doors on the front of the organ case which work much like Venetian blinds), or by the adding or subtracting of stops, the way we make one note distinct from another, or more dramatic than another has little to do with the actual playing of the note itself. In fact, no matter how you hit the keys of the organ, the sound doesn't change, unlike the piano. It has, rather, everything to do with the silence that precedes the note (and sometimes which also follows it.)

For example, if I play several notes in a row that are the same pitch, using the same pipe, how does your ear tell you that the notes are different? It is the same pipe receiving a stream of air through it. The sole way that you can tell one note from another is the amount of silence that separates one from another. In order for one note to have more emphasis than those around it, it has to have a bigger silence preceding it.

That phenomena is much like our own spiritual lives. At our major celebrations, and the upcoming Easter celebration is the best example, we cannot possibly experience the "sound" of the Easter notes without the silence that comes before it. Can you actually experience a beautiful dawn without the darkness of night that precedes it? Is a special meal really special if all of our meals are feasts? I think not.

The Church is on the threshold of the yearly journey through the darkness. I do not believe that the glorious splendor of Easter is really all that glorious if we have not also entered into the dark silence of Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. We will have services in the Chapel on both of those nights at 7 pm, Maundy Thursday will also offer Holy Communion. Each of us needs to put away some of our individual "busyness" and center ourselves in the quiet of First Presbyterian Church during this very special and important time for us as Christians.

Each of us needs to be reminded of the importance of the sacrifice that God through Jesus Christ made for each of us in the events of Holy Week.

Come and join with us as we make our journey through the darkness, that we might truly see how gentle is the Lamb, and exclaim in unbridled joy "The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia, Alleluia!"

Faithfully,

Randy+

# Easter Morning Breakfast

**Sunday, April 20, Easter Day, serving from 8:30am to 9:30am.**

Please join us for a full breakfast before church to celebrate Easter Day!



## EASTER MEMORIALS

The Easter lilies and other spring flowers that will grace our sanctuary on Easter morning have once again been graciously donated. You are invited to make gifts to the Easter Memorials which will go to the *Polish the Jewel Campaign* to finish the refurbishment our Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ.

Please fill out the form (which may be found on the table in the sanctuary or outside the office) and return it either in the offering plates or to the office no later than Wednesday, April 16 for inclusion in the Easter morning bulletin. Thank you!





## Second Sunday Lunch

Sunday, April 13, Palm Sunday, following the morning service

*"It might as well be spring!"*

*We are quickly coming to the end of the season of Lent. The word Lent itself means simply "spring." In the ancient Anglo-Saxon language from which it stems, the meaning is of the lengthening of days; the season in which flowers and trees begin to put forth new shoots. So, the menu will celebrate all things "spring." Please join us. The luncheon is free, and your generous financial gifts help to cover the cost of the luncheon.*



---

## Courageous Outreach

The Burlington Chapter of The Southeast Iowa Symphony orchestra wishes to thank the congregation of First Presbyterian Church for opening your doors on Saturday, March 8, for us to serve dinner to 107 people, members of both the Symphony and the Symphony Chorus. Your gracious kindness to us will long be remembered!



# Insurance Update

The Trustees have finally acquired Insurance coverage for the church! Hasting Insurance cancelled our insurance as of August 15, 2024 and dropped all coverage for the state of Iowa. No Insurance carrier would write coverage until our roof claim was finally closed. February 21, 2025 we acquired coverage from Church Mutual costing \$19,874.00, up from approx., \$15,000 last year.

Submitted by Doyle Ruble



## Gift Card Scam Alert!



The church has been recently made aware of a gift card scam that has Randy's name attached to it. They send as a text message asking you to get \$500 worth of gift cards in \$100 increments at any grocery store. They say it is for some women in need (or something to that effect). The scammers claim they are unable to do this right now as they are going into a meeting and can't be disturbed, so don't call, and they are not in the church office. They ask you to purchase these gift cards and want you to scratch off the back to get the code and send a picture of it to them. They are signing the messages as "Rev. Randy Lee Webster".

We want to make it clear that neither Randy, Pastor Dick, or the church office, nor anyone associated with the church, will ask you to do this. If we have a need in the community and need donations, we will ask, officially, to the congregation as a whole, as we have always done. If you get a text message like this, please delete the message and block the number if you can. If you have suspicions or questions, you may contact us at the office, if you would like. Stay safe!



# Spring House Cleaning

We need some volunteers to help out with spring cleaning!  
The more volunteers, the better as more hands, make light work!

On Monday, April 28, 2025

9:00am-1:00pm

We will be cleaning up the following rooms/areas:

Choir Room

Bell Room

Boiler Room

Kitchen

Closets

Pews

Window Sills

Sunday School Rooms

If you are interested in volunteering to help out, please see Doyle Ruble!



# A Celebration Reception!

On Sunday, March 9, we had a celebration reception following Worship service to celebrate the academic accomplishments of Corwyn & Jazz! Corwyn was named on SCC's President's List & Jazz was named on SCC's Dean's List! Both remarkable academic achievements worth celebrating! Congratulations! Keep up the great work!



# One Great Hour of Sharing

It is the time of the year when we start collecting donations for One Great Hour of Sharing! If you are unfamiliar with this special offering, One Great Hour of Sharing takes place once a year in the Lent & Easter season. It is a special offering that Presbyterians worldwide give to aid our neighbors in need around the world. There are 3 programs associated with One Great Hour of Sharing, those programs are: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

Starting on the first Sunday of April, we will have envelopes and pamphlets available to start collecting donations for One Great Hour of Sharing. We will be collecting until April 20!



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

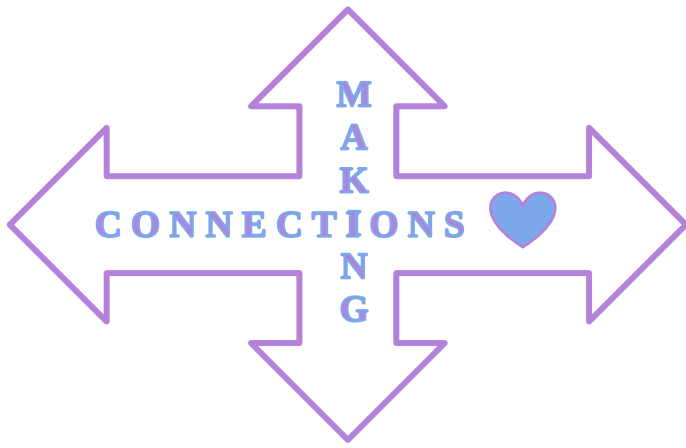


## Sunday School



After taking the Fall off, Youth Sunday School has resumed classes! We will meet at 9:00am on Sunday mornings. All classes will be held downstairs in the youth rooms! Join us for some fun and learn all about Jesus!





**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

April Birthdays

- 01 - Janice Kemp
- 03 - Kenneth Logan
- 06 - Laura Mehaffy
- 11 - Kelle Haller
- 16 - Sally Bell
- 18 - Mike Binks
- 25 - Pat Saldeen

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Luncheon**

Sunday, April 13,  
following morning service!

**"It Might As Well Be Spring"**

**Please Join Us!**

Luncheon is free and gracious donations help to defray the cost and are much appreciated.



**Table for One**

Our March event will be held Wednesday, 4/2 @ 5:30p.m. @ Marcia Stiefel's home @ 212 Crestview Dr. Burlington

**Yum-Yums**

News from Yum Yums. A group of 7 church members and friends enjoyed good food and fellowship at Green Bay Tap in Wever, IA on Thursday, March 20th. Those attending, chose to go to Caulley's Shamrock at 609 S. Main St. in Burlington, IA in April. We are trying a new night this month! We will meet on Wednesday, April 16 @ 5:30pm @ Caulley's Shamrock (609 S. Main St. Burlington, IA.) If you have any questions, call or text Sandy Russell @ 319-572-6124



*The Silver Singers and Friends present*

# It might as well be Spring!

*(A Tribute to Lawrence Welk)*



Saturday, April 12 at 4 in the afternoon  
Fellowship Hall of First Presbyterian Church  
321 North Fifth Street, Burlington

*Many of our members sing in The Silver Singers.*

*This family-friendly event is free.*

*Your generous donations are welcomed!*

# KNITWITS

Knitwits will be meeting, at the Church, April 2, from 10:00 - 11:00 A.M. The group is open to anyone who would like to have friendship while knitting and/or crocheting Prayer Shawls. If you don't know how to knit and/or crochet, we will teach you and even provide the yarn and instruments needed. Our finished product, Prayer Shawls, are available, FREE, to anyone. The prayer shawls are located in the Church Sanctuary, and we have a wide variety of choices. They are intended to bring comfort, solace, peace, joy and happiness to the recipient.

May this shawl be a sign of God's loving, healing presence.

May it warm you when you are weary,

May it encourage you when you are discouraged,

May it assure you of God's care and Comfort,

May it remind you that you are surrounded by the prayers of others.





# Missions Is Up To Doing Good

## Mission Committee Upcoming Meeting

The Mission Committee plans to have its monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. Bring a sack lunch. April 2 next meeting.

On March 9, we delivered the household items that we collected for the Ukrainian family, for a February mission project!



We also gave them a \$260 Walmart gift card from the monetary donations that were given!



A big “Thank You” to everyone who gave to this mission!  
They were truly grateful for our generosity.

Eva Ann, I appreciated you being there to introduce me to them,  
since you had already met them!

*Terri Huddleston & Mission Team*



Viktor & Natallia Babenko &  
twin daughters with Eva Ann  
Elmer.



The girls opening gifts from  
Barb Garcia



# Shepherd's Table Menu

Shepherd's Table is on the last Wednesday of the month from 4:30pm-6:00pm hosted by First Congregational Church & First Presbyterian Church at 313 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Burlington, IA. This is a free meal.

Below is the menu for April-July 2025!

Red-Presbyterians  
Blue-Congregationalists



April 30-  
Maidrites/buns  
Chips, pickles, onions  
Relish tray  
Dessert

May 28-  
Pulled Pork/buns  
Coleslaw  
Chips  
Fresh Fruit  
Dessert

June 25-  
Beans and franks  
Dessert  
Cornbread  
Pasta Salad

July 30-  
Spaghetti  
Garlic Bread  
Fresh Salad  
Dessert

# Announcements!



Silver Singers will be hosting a concert in the Fellowship Hall @ 4:00pm on Saturday, April 12!

Second Sunday Luncheon will fall on April 13! Which also happens to be Palm Sunday! Theme is "Might As Well Be Spring".

Maundy Thursday Service will be at 7:00pm on Thursday, April 17 in Edward's Chapel. Good Friday Service will be on Friday, April 18! Time & Location is yet to be determined.

Farmer's Market at the Church will be on Thursday, April 17 from 4:30pm-6:00pm! If you or someone you know, is in need of some food, please stop down for a bag of food!

Easter is on Sunday, April 20! Have a Happy Easter!

The office will be closed on Friday, April 18 for Good Friday & Monday, April 21 in observance of Easter. Normal office hours will resume on Tuesday, April 22.

Shepherd's Table will be on Wednesday, April 30 from 4:30pm-6pm at First Congregational Church! This is a free meal and open to the public!

Spring House Cleaning will be on Monday, April 28 from 9am-1pm! We need volunteers to help! If interested, please see Doyle Ruble. Please see the article for full list of rooms/areas needing to be cleaned.

Mrs. Shirley Webster has moved to OakView in Burlington! Her new address is:

1212 Indian Hills Dr. Apt. A304  
Burlington, IA 52601

A gentle reminder that we do have the Treasure Chest as an ongoing mission throughout the year, not just on special occasions (like the all congregation birthday party on March 30). Every month (or every other month), any items in the chest get sent in a 12x12 box to University of Iowa Children's Hospital to children that are receiving treatment. The Treasure Chest is located in the fellowship hall. If you need ideas, there is a list of examples of items on the table in the sanctuary. You are also welcome to give a monetary donation, just make sure to label it "Treasure Chest", and a mission member can shop for an item/items to send on your behalf.

## Live Streaming our Worship Services

Can't make it to Sunday service? No problem! Every Sunday service is live streamed on Facebook! Please join us! Just go to Facebook on your phone, tablet, or computer and navigate to our Facebook page!

If you have not yet watched a Facebook service, or don't know how, locate Facebook on your phone, tablet or computer, search for First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, Iowa, and then sit back and enjoy. The weekly bulletin is being provided via e-mail so you can follow along and take part as you wish. Comments are appreciated.





# April 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Office Hours</b> <b>M-W-F 1:30 pm-4:30pm</b> <b>T-Th 9:00am-1:00pm</b>		1	<b>2</b> 8:30 a.m. Bible Study <b>Mission Mtg @ 1pm</b> <b>KnitWits meets @ 10am</b> <b>Table 4 One meets @ 5:30pm @ Marcia Stiefel's home</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Session Meets @ 1pm</b>	4	<b>5</b> <small>APRIL 05</small> <i>National Caramel Day</i> 
<b>6 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	<b>7</b>  <small>National Coffee Cake Day   April 7   #CelebrateEveryDay</small>	8	<b>9</b> 8:30 a.m. Bible Study	10	11	<b>12</b> <b>Silver Singers Concert in Fellowship Hall @ 4pm</b>
<b>13 Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m.Worship <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Luncheon</b>	14	15	<b>16</b> 8:30 a.m. Bible Study  <b>Yum Yums! @ 5:30pm @ Caulley's Shamrock (809 S. Main St. Burlington, IA)</b>	<b>17 Maundy Thursday @ 7pm</b>  <b>Farmer's Market @ the Church 4:30-6pm</b>	<b>18</b> <b>GOOD Friday</b> <b>Office Closed</b> <b>Good Friday Service Time &amp; location TBD</b>	19
<b>20 Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter</b> <b>8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	<b>21</b> 	<b>22</b> <b>Deadline For Connections</b>	<b>23</b> 8:30 a.m. Bible Study	<b>24</b>  <small>National Pigs in a Blanket Day</small>	25	<b>26</b> Private dinner in Fellowship Hall @ 6pm
<b>27 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	<b>28</b> <b>Trustees Meet @ 10 a.m.</b>  <b>Spring House Cleaning 9:00am-1:00pm</b>	<b>29</b> 	<b>30</b> 8:30 a.m. Bible Study  <b>Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm</b>			