# The Cross & Flame <



### "Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives."

Monthly Newsletter of The United Methodist Church, Branford

#### A WELL THOUGHT OUT PLAN



"I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land." –

Exodus 23:29-30 NKJV

As the Israelites continue their Exodus, the Lord reassures them that they are not alone. The people are told that He will send His angel ahead of them to prepare the way. There are other peoples occupying the land which they will be traveling through on their journey, but if the people will trust and follow the Lord's angel, they will find a way through. Sounds like a plan!

But there's a catch! The Lord (with His angel) is not going to clear out the entire route from the get go. No, He will clear it out a little at a time. Why? Because the people will not be ready to occupy it all at the same time and so the beasts of the field will take over.

The result is that the Israelites must trust the Lord and His angel each and every step of the way. As the people move forward on their journey, as they increase in numbers and ability (demonstrating faithfulness) the Lord will clear out just enough land for them to move into. It's kind of like the whole "daily bread" image (manna & The Lord's Prayer). The Lord will give just enough, at the right time.

As I read this passage in the Chronological Bible a couple of weeks ago I received it as a word of re-assurance for us as well. Both individually and as a congregation we need to know that the Lord will continue to provide just enough and at the right time. Whatever difficulty or trial we may be facing, financial, relationships, time management, etc. if we will trust the Lord, He will provide a clearing for us to take the next few steps forward. Human nature compels us to look for the wide-open, smooth path, but the Lord knows what is best for us. By opening up just enough room, until we increase, He will prevent the wild beasts from taking over and by trusting Him we will eventually take possession of all that He has prepared for us.

In my humble estimation this is truly A WELL THOUGHT OUT PLAN!

Blessings, Pastor Kent

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## Fall/Winter Worship Schedule

Services are at 9:00 AM & 10:30 AM every Sunday morning.

#### **Church Office Hours**

The Church Office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

#### **Next Cross & Flame Deadline**

March 16 for April issue to get the Cross & Flame out on time.

#### Weekly Sermons Now On Our Website

Thanks to the technology expertise of Roger Gagné, you can go to UMC's website to see Pastor Kent's weekly sermons. Check out the videos on <a href="https://www.umcbranford.org">www.umcbranford.org</a> - follow the link.

#### **Keeping God's Time – Worship Stewards March 2016** Sanctuary Steward: Heather Mazzucco

(Early Worship Stewards Listed in Italics)

#### March 6—Fourth Sunday in Lent 9 & 10:30 am

Call to Worship: (Benjamin Mazzucco) Cyrus Kapadia Lay Readers: (William Gagné) Shanta Kapadia Communion Servers (Rosemary Luzzi)

Alice & Tom Macy

Greeters: (William Gagné) Karyn Capezzone Ushers: (Daniel Gagné) Rosemary Luzzi, Laurie Gagné

Acolyte: Alice Talbott

Prayer Partners: (Ken Schneider) Ro Robinson Flowers: In Memory of husband, William J. Busca, Jr.

Given by Virginia Busca Fellowship Hosts: (Ruby Lawrence) TBA

#### March 13-Fifth Sunday in Lent 9 & 10:30 am

Call to Worship: (Anne Jackson) Don Robinson Lay Readers: (Ken Schneider) Judy Loukides Greeters: (Laurie Gagné) Larry Appleton Ushers: (Rosemary Luzzi)

Ro & Dick Robinson Acolyte: Ellie Bowman

Prayer Partners: (Ken Schneider) M.E. Solomon

Flowers: To the Glory of God

Fellowship Hosts: (Ruby Lawrence) Mary Lou Woods

#### March 20-Palm/Passion Sunday 9 & 10:30 am

Call to Worship: (Molly Mazzucco) M.E. Solomon Lay Readers: (Laurie Gagné) Cyrus Kapadia Greeters: (Adam Jackson) Sam Appleton Ushers: (Daniel Gagné) Karyn & Pepi Capezzone Acolyte: Hannah Jackson

Prayer Partners: (Ken Schneider) Don Robinson

Flowers: To the Glory of God Fellowship Hosts: (Ruby Lawrence) Alice & Tom Macy

#### March 27-Easter Sunday 9 & 10:30 am

Call to Worship: (Ruby Lawrence) M.E. Solomon Lay Readers: (Anne Jackson) Cyrus Kapadia Greeters: (Janet Viets) Molly Mazzucco Ushers: (Laurie Gagné) Conny & Bob Umile

Acolyte: William Gagné

Prayer Partners: (Ken Schneider) Linda Beagle

Flowers: To the Glory of God

Fellowship Hosts: (Ruby Lawrence) Michelle Ritter

#### **SPECIAL DATES**

- World Day of Prayer, March 4, 2016
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 6, 2016
- Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 13, 2016
- Daylight Saving Time Begins, March 13, 2016
- Palm/Passion Sunday, March 20, 2016
- First Day of Spring, March 20, 2016
- Holy Week, March 20-March 26, 2016
- Maundy Thursday, March 24, 2016
- Good Friday, March 25, 2016
- Holy Saturday, March 26, 2016
- Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016

#### **Lectionary Readings:**

During 2016 we will not be printing the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary. Instead, you may ask for a copy of the One Year Chronological Bible. The weekly sermons will be based on these readings. We have copies available in 3 translations. Please let us know if you would prefer The New International Version, The New Living Translation or the New King James Version. A donation of \$15 per copy is appreciated.

#### The Cross & Flame <



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## MENS COMMUNION BREAKFAST

The Shoreline Men's Communion Breakfast will be held here at UMC, Branford on Sunday, March 20, at 7 am.



## JOIN YOUR CHURCH FAMILY AND INVITE OTHERS FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES.

Maundy Thursday (March 24): We will be joining our brothers and sisters at St. Stephen's AME Zion Church for dinner and worship. (Details will be provided in the bulletin.)

**Good Friday (March 25):** Please join the ecumenical service in downtown Branford. We begin with worship at St. Mary's and move (about every 25 minutes) to First Baptist, First Congregational and Trinity Episcopal, finishing up around 3 pm. Participants may join in the entire procession or just come for one of the services. We will hold an evening service in our sanctuary at 7pm as well.

**Easter Sunrise (March 27):** We will gather once again at Branford Point and worship with our brothers & sisters from the Shoreline Community Church. 6:30 am is the time that we will gather to begin our celebration of the resurrection!!!



"Prayer is the barometer of our church," says pastor Jim Cymbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Prayer is also a priority for ministry at UMC, Branford. You are invited to join together twice each month for a time of prayer. Each prayer meeting is a unique experience. Please mark your calendars in March for the second Monday (March 14) at 2 PM and the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday (March 22) at 7 PM.



Would you like to learn more about United Methodist beliefs?

Are you interested in how United Methodists are organized?

Have you thought about becoming a member of UMC, Branford?

If you answered, "Yes" to any of these questions, then the Pastor's "Inquirer's Class" is for you. I encourage our current members as well as those who have recently begun attending UMC, Branford to consider attending the upcoming Inquirer's Class.

We have a date !!! The next Inquirer's (New Members Class will be on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10am-2pm. Please contact the church office at 203-488-0549 and let us know you plan to attend.



A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE OVERSEAS MINISTRIES STUDY CENTER **SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016 4:00 P.M.**HELD AT BATTELL CHAPEL, YALE UNIVERSITY

400 College St. at the corner of Elm St., New Haven

#### FEATURING 2 YALE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL GROUPS





Afro-pella music rooted in the African experience—boticlassical and contemporary

African Diaspora music with an incredibly diverse repertoire, ranging from pop to hip-hop to gospel

No charge for tickets. A freewill offering will be taken for OMSC's African Artist-in-Residence Scholarship Fund. Sponsor advertising is available. For more information, go online to:

CONCERT.OMSC.ORG



We are initiating a monthly youth night for the purpose of fun & fellowship. All youth from our church ( $6^{th}$ - $12^{th}$  grade) are encouraged to attend and bring their friends.

We will meet in the church basement from 7-9:30 PM. Snacks will be provided. Air Hockey and Foosball will be available for the first gathering and we'll add other activities in the future.

If anyone would like to donate a large screen television, DVD player, ping pong table, etc. we would be happy to accept your donations.

For Easter, we will have two food baskets.

The sign up sheet will be in the connector hall, and the food baskets will be assembled on Palm Sunday. If you would prefer to make a cash donation, we will shop for you.

## EASTEREGGHUNT AND RESURRECTION EGG STORY SATURDAY MARCH 12 10:30 am

Mark your calendars. This year Learn & Play and UMC Branford are teaming up to host an Easter Egg Hunt and present the Resurrection Egg Story. In addition to the egg hunt, which will be divided into three age groups, a craft activity will be offered. At the conclusion of the hunt, the Resurrection Story will be presented by Pastor Kent in the sanctuary.

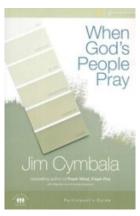
This event is open to the public, so invite your friends to have some fun and hear The Good News! Hope to see you there!

#### Lenten Study

Come discover the transforming power of prayer! Our Lenten Study began Ash Wednesday, Feb 10, and will continue on Wednesdays through March 16.

Dinner will be at 6 pm, and following at 7:00, there will be a DVD study series, When God's People Pray, which will conclude no later than 8 pm. Study guides are available for \$10 if you wish to purchase them.

Two sign up sheets are in the connector hall, one to register your intention to participate and the other to volunteer to prepare one of our meals. You are encouraged to invite friends!





Have you joined a small group yet? All members of UMC, Branford are encouraged to participate in a regular small group gathering. Small groups are an important ministry as we build Christian Community among the members of UMC, Branford and as we strive to provide a faith connection for people who are seeking fellowship and a deeper connection with Jesus Christ. We look for 4 components to exist in our small groups, meet at least monthly, share a devotional time, share prayer concerns (and communicate them to the office) **Groups** and take attendance (because we want to make sure we are staying in touch with everyone).

Below you will see a list of some of our UMC, Branford Small Groups. Please feel free to email the church office with additions to this list.

Monday Morning Quarterbacking: 10 AM every Monday. Discussion stems from the Sunday Sermon and Worship experience.

Monday Evening Small Group: 7 PM each Monday (except the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday): We are currently discussing the movie "War Room."

Prayer Shawl Ministry 10:30 AM each Wednesday: The ladies gather to knit and crochet prayer shawls, lap robes and baby blankets. Each session opens with a time of devotion & prayer.

Thursday Morning Small Group 10 AM each Thursday: We are currently discussing the movie "War Room."

Sewing for God 4 PM on second and fourth Wednesdays: This group is led by Rosemary Luzzi.

Devotional Bible Study 7:30 PM each Thursday: This group is led by John Blossom and meets at the Shoreline Café.

Men's Breakfast 8 AM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month: The men of the church gather for breakfast and fellowship. We typically view a short DVD lesson and spend time in discussion.

United Methodist Women 1 PM usually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month: The women gather for Bible study programs, fellowship and fundraisers. Summer and Winter Luncheons are held on a Monday.

#### Men's Breakfast

This month, our monthly Men's Breakfasts group will meet on March 19 at 8:00 AM. After a time of good food and fellowship we will view one of Pastor Rob Bell's **Nooma** videos.

All men of our church are encouraged to put this date on their calendars and to invite friends to join them each month.





#### **UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

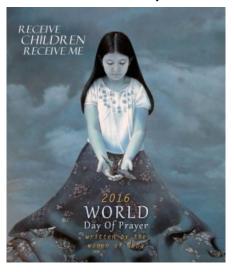
#### **UMW Announces the 2016 Programs**

March 4 <sup>th</sup>	World Day of Prayer – St. Elizabeth Church
March TBA	Fudge Fund Raiser for "Kimberly" // Postponed – new date TBA
April 20	"Days for Girls" Program
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	"Becoming a Woman of ?" – Mini Bible Study
June 6-13	Annual Summer Luncheon – La Luna
July/August	No Meeting
Sept 21 <sup>st</sup>	Pot Luck Dinner – "Becoming a Woman of?" – Mini Bible Study
October 19 <sup>th</sup>	Afternoon at the Movies
Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	"Becoming a Woman Who Loves" – Mini Bible Study
Dec 5-12 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Winter Luncheon – La Luna

Meetings will be held in the small conference room from 1pm to 3pm unless otherwise noted. January through March, we'll meet on a Sunday after services, dates to be announced.

#### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Friday at Noon, March 4<sup>th</sup> St. Elizabeth Church, Branford

Please join us as we share World Day of Prayer with the women of Cuba who invite us to consider these words: Receive Children, receive me. The women of "Cuba" share their stories of intergenerational wisdom, traditions and experience of God's profound love and acceptance. We will learn how Jesus responds to his disciples



when the little children come to him. "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Mark 10:14-15) We are invited to see Jesus with childlikeness and boldness. We are challenged and encourage to wholly receive others as Jesus calls us, into the kingdom of God.



#### **SOUPER BOWL SUPPER**

A Big Thank You to **EVERYONE** who helped make this event a success. We had 12 wonderful tasting soups. Some were complete sell outs. (Double batches next year ?) UMW will be giving Life Haven and the Guilford Women's Shelter approx. \$150 each.

Thank you for all those who helped with making soups and who served, set up and cleaned.

United Methodist Women

#### **LEARN & PLAY NEWS**



February was a busy month at Learn & Play. We had so many activities planned and had to have extra flexibility to fit them all in with the winter weather causing some difficulties.

Our "Sports Day" was a lot of fun even if it was postponed until after the Super Bowl because of a snow day. Children got to wear their favorite sport shirt and participated in lots of sport activities in Herr Hall during their gross motor time thanks to Ms Bekah. Even the infants got to play with footballs and sensory bottles that held lots of sport items. Older children played basketball, pin the football on the goal post, worked an obstacle course and jumped through hoops. All this was in conjunction with our soup collection which, at the time of this writing, had collected 85 cans of soup. A little short of our goal but still a nice response.

We have been talking about the Parables of Jesus and how they teach us about God's love. Specific parables that we have talked about were The Sower and the Seeds, The Good Samaritan, The Two Builders and The Lost Coin. Our traditional theme has been Nursery Rhymes.

Going into March we will be talking about the days leading up to Easter, spring and weather. We look forward to our joint Easter Egg hunt with our Church friends on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am. Please see a separate article with more details on this. Our faith point will be Jesus is Alive! And our memory verse will be from Luke 24:6, "He is not here. He is alive."

**Summer Camp Coming Soon!** Learn & Play will conduct summer camp for 9 weeks from June 27-August 26. for children ages 3-5 years old. Our theme this year will be The Summer Olympics. Each week we will visit a different country, highlight a different sport, explore new foods, crafts, games and of course have daily water play. Fun enhancement visitors are also planned. Limited spacing is available to the public on a first come first served basis. For specific information, availability and pricing, please contact the school at 203 488-4028.

**Fall Registration!** It's not too early to start thinking about fall registration. Some classes are actually full already! If you know of someone that may be looking for a program for their child, please have them contact us as soon as possible to arrange a tour and reserve a spot in one of our classes.

Robin Costa

#### **SEWING FOR GOD**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 4pm – 6pm \*\*



This is a sample of a simple quilt top that can be made in just a day/two. We'll provide everything that you will need including fabric & machines (if you don't have one).

Just for the winter months – look for us in the small conference room across from the kitchen. Our current goal is to provide quilts for the new center across the street when they start receiving patients.

\*\* Weather permitting. Any question please call Rosemary (203-589-1620).

# THE GREATEST MAGIC SHOW ON EARTH HOW TO MAKE GOD DISAPPEAR THE TRICK

According to a few well known physicists in the world today, our universe came into being from nothing. Is this a scientific fact or is it simply a clever magic trick? They say the universe created itself out of nothing, and God does not exist, nor is He needed. So with this great discovery, atheism must be true. There is no supernatural being; God has disappeared.

Is this really the best explanation for our existence or is it magic? What is magic all about? It is creating an illusion to make something look like something it is not. For example, a magician pulls a rabbit out of a hat that has "nothing" in it. Thus a rabbit arises (abracadabra) out of nothing. So does the same theory apply to our universe?

Believe it or not, this is almost exactly what this small group of scientists and atheists are doing! They have created an illusion that the entire cosmos (yes the entire universe) came into existence out of nothing.

Well we don't need physicists to know that being cannot come from non-being. We know that something never comes out of absolutely nothing. That would be ridiculous!

So I ask, which is the best explanation for the cause of the universe? 1. The universe sprang into existence uncaused from absolutely nothing; 2. God caused the universe to come into existence. The answer is obvious.

#### **GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE.**

Jesus truly said (John 11:25): I am the resurrection and the life.



Jesus is risen (Matthew 28:7) LET'S ALL KEEP OUR STRONG FAITH IN THE LORD.

Don Robinson

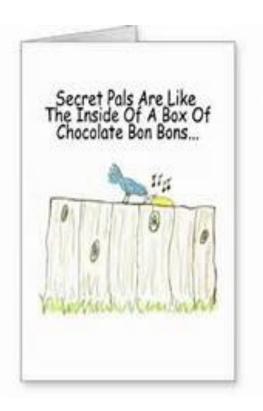


Don Robinson is dedicated to providing this important ministry. He visits a number of nursing homes and would LOVE to have others join this ministry.



He would be happy to talk with anyone interested and help them get started. Call Don at 203-488-6111 or see him in church.





#### LOOKING FOR YOUR TABS NEXT FILL UP DATE IS: March 31st.

Collecting pop tabs is a fun and easy way to support the Ronald McDonald House New Haven.

All of the money is used to support families staying in the Ronald McDonald Houses while their children are undergoing medical treatment.

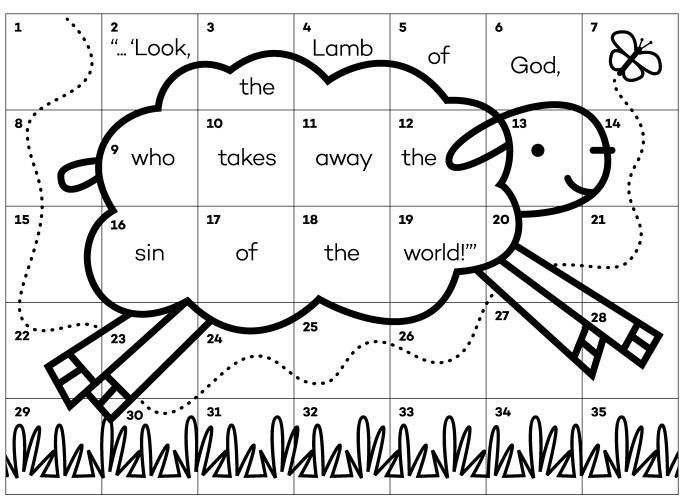


It's easy! All you need to do is remove the pop tab from each can before you put the can in your recycle bin. It's fun! You can involve community groups and your family in supporting the cause without a lot of effort.



Check all your cans for tabs, they add up quickly. Put a small jar on your counter and you will be surprised how fast is will fill up.

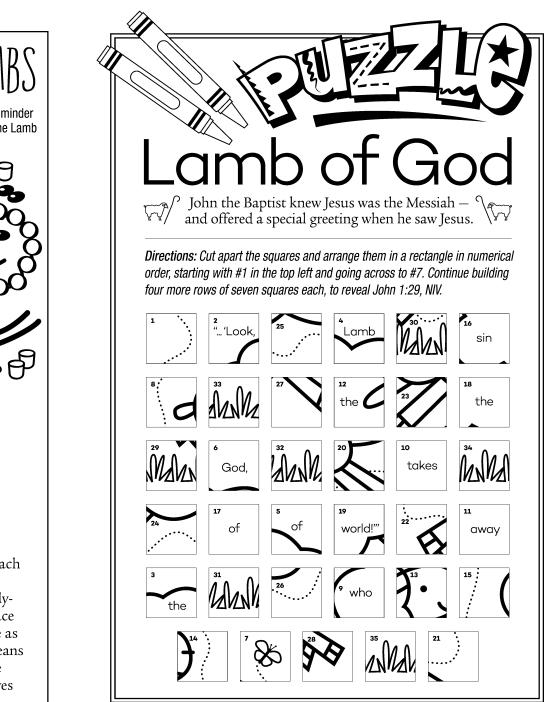
#### ANSWER KEY FROM PAGE 11





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30p AA Meeting	2 10a L&P Chapel 10:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry 6p Dinner/Lenten Study	3 10a Thurs Study Group 7p Al-Anon 7:30 Devotional Bible Study-Shoreline Cafe	World Day Prayer	5 7p AA Meeting
9a Early Worship 10:30a Worship	7 10a Monday Morning Quarterbacking 7p Monday Study Grp 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	8 5:45 L&P Staff Meeting 7p Power of Praise 7:30p AA Meeting	9 10a L&P Chapel 10:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry 4p Sewing for God 6p Dinner/Lenten Study	10 10a Thurs Study Group 7p Finance 7p Al-Anon 7:30 Devotional Bible Study-Shoreline Cafe	11 7p Jubal's Latte	12 10:30a Easter Egg Hunt 7p AA Meeting
7a Men's Communion Breakfast 9a Early Worship 10:30a Worship	14 10a Monday Morning Quarterbacking 2p Prayer Meeting 7p Monday Study Grp 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	15 7p Power of Praise 7:30p AA Meeting	16 10a L&P Chapel 10:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry 6p Dinner/Lenten Study	17 10a Thurs Study Group 7p Al-Anon 7:30 Devotional Bible Study-Shoreline Cafe	18	19 8a Men's Breakfast 7p AA Meeting
9a Early Worship 10:30a Worship	21 10a Monday Morning Quarterbacking 7p Trustees 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	22 7p Prayer Meeting 7:30p AA Meeting	23 10a L&P Chapel 10:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry 4p Sewing for God	7p Worship (At St. Stephen's) 7p Al-Anon	25 12p Ecumenical Service 6p Community Dinner 7p Worship	26 7p AA Meeting
6:30a Sunrise Serv. 9a Early Worship 10:30a Worship	28 10a Monday Morning Quarterbacking 7p Monday Study Grp 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	29 7p Faithful Stewards 7:30p AA Meeting	30 10a L&P Chapel 10:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry 7p SPRC	31 10a Thurs Study Group 5:3p L&P Board 7p Al-Anon 7:30 Devotional Bible Study-Shoreline Cafe		

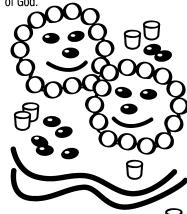
### **JUST FOR KIDS**



SEE ANSWER KEY PAGE 9

## LITTLE LAMBS

Make these cute treats as a reminder that Jesus our Savior is also the Lamb of God.



#### What you need:

- Vanilla cupcakes
- Vanilla frosting
- Butter knife
- Mini marshmallows
- Jellybeans
- Red licorice

#### What you do:

- 1. Bake and frost the cupcakes.
- 2. Place marshmallows around the edge of each cupcake.
- 3. Cut green or blue jellybeans in half and place two on each cupcake as eyes. Cut pink jellybeans in half and place one below each pair of eyes as a nose.
- 4. Cut thin strips of licorice, and place one on each cupcake as a mouth.
- 5. Enjoy!

### The Cross & Flame

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#### **Address Service Requested**

#### Upcoming Events - March

March 11	Jubal's Latte Open Mike
March 12	Easter Egg Hunt
March 13	Men's Communion Breakfast
March 25	Community Dinner

#### **Committee & Board Meetings**

March 10—Finance
March 21—Trustees
March 29—Faithful Stewards
March 30—SPRC
March 31—L&P Board

#### **Regular Groups**

Tuesdays 7:30 pm—AA
Wednesdays 10:30 am—Prayer Shawl Ministry
2nd & 4th Wednesdays 4pm—Sewing for God
Thursdays 7:30 pm – Al Anon (7:00 pm new attendees)
Saturdays 7 pm – AA