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# FIRST WORD

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## The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Lenoir, North Carolina

No. 3 of 2020, A.D.

March, 2020

### WORD FROM THE SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 19:10-13 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>10</sup>He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup>and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. <sup>13</sup>When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"



# **MATTHEW 25 CHURCH**

## **EMPHASIS**

(Each month there will be an emphasis on what it means to be a Matthew 25 Church. For more information, you may go to [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/). If you don't have access to a computer, please let us know and we will print off the pages for you)

### **About the Matthew 25 mark**

The circular shape represents unity and equality. Like God, a circle has no beginning and no end, and it symbolizes our continuing effort to help one another. The shape also suggests a globe that points to our engagement with the world.

The three interlocking figures represent the equality of all people without gender or race bias. They have their arms around each other, symbolizing friendship, protection and service. The number three suggests the three focus areas of congregational vitality, structural racism and systemic poverty, as well as the Trinity.

The color palette is bright, lively, friendly and energetic — suggestive of our active commitment.

Finally, the legend "Matthew 25" below the symbol is the literal identification of the mark. We use a handwritten font to make the point that active engagement in the world requires human effort.

### **Scriptures for study and reflection**

Matthew 25:31–46  
Genesis 1:1–31  
Psalm 104  
Acts 10:9–23  
1 John 4:7–8  
Ephesians 2:19  
Isaiah 65:17–25  
Micah 6:8  
Mark 7:27–28



MATTHEW 25



**WE HAVE BEGUN A NEW ON-GOING MISSION PROJECT.** There is a container in the kitchen where you can donate non-perishable food items to be distributed to residents of Koinonia that need this kind of assistance. You can bring your food items any time. When the container is filled it will be delivered to Koinonia to be distributed as needed.

**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** is seeking help with a mission project. They are making girls dresses to be sent to Malawi. Each dress takes one (1) yard of fabric. A cotton/polyester blend works best, but any easy-care fabric would work. If you would like to donate fabric, just bring it to the church and Lynda Renegar will deliver it to United. If you would like to be more involved with this project, there is a

group that meets at United every Monday afternoon from 3:00 to 5:00 to work on the dresses. You don't have to be able to sew, just willing to help. Sharon McFarland is the contact person at United if you have questions. Together we can make a difference!

**GATHER FOR PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP** at Fercott's on Main Street Tuesday, March 3 at 5:00 PM. Interesting conversation is guaranteed! Invite a friend! If you need transportation, call Ann Sime (828) 525-0116.

**THE FINAL SESSION OF THE SERIES, "SYMBOLS OF THE SOUTH"** will be a panel discussion at First Presbyterian Church, Morganton, Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>** the second joint worship service with the congregations from United Presbyterian, Fairview Presbyterian, Dulatown Presbyterian and First Presbyterian will be held as we join with Zion United Church of Christ in their sanctuary to worship together.

## PASTOR'S WORD

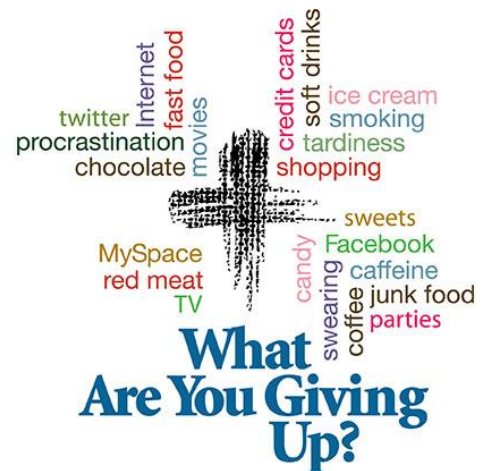
We are now in the season of Lent. Lent lasts 40 days and 6 Sundays beginning with Ash Wednesday. It is symbolic of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting and preparing himself for his ministry. Jesus went to this remote place, taking nothing with him. We don't know his reflections and prayers, we only know he was tempted while there. He was tempted to prove himself capable of doing miraculous deeds, of proving he had powers to control circumstances and to worship gods other than the One, true God.

Now is a time to reflect on our lives; to acknowledge the way we avoid God by our "necessary" obligations, recognize how prone we are to depend on the abundance of possessions for security and our tendency to avoid examining the truth about our lives. Ash Wednesday is where we begin with the confession that we are finite and we are separated from God and others by our sins of omission and commission. We repent.

Then we begin the walk with Jesus to Jerusalem. As we journey let us consider what we need to take on and what we need to let go in order to deepen our faith and commitment to the One willing to take up the cross on our behalf so that we may have the life of meaning, joy and deep love for which we all long.

Love and God's blessings,

*Beth Ann*



## CALENDAR EVENTS

- 1 – Communion
- 3 – Gathering at Fercott's
- 8 – Daylight Savings Time begins
- 17 – Panel Discussion at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, Morganton
- 29 – 5-Cents-A Meal collection
- 29 – Joint Service at Zion UCC



### WORD IN SONG Shine, Jesus, Shine

Lord, the light of you love is shining, in the midst of the darkness, shining; Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us; set us free by the truth you now bring us. Shine on me; shine on me.

[Refrain] Shine, Jesus, shine; fill this land with the Father's glory. Blaze, Spirit, blaze; set our hearts on fire. Flow, river, flow; flood the nations with grace and mercy. Send for your word, Lord, and let there be light.

Lord, I come to your awesome presence, from the shadows into your radiance; by the blood I may enter your brightness. Search me; try me; consume all my darkness. Shine on me; shine on me.

[Refrain]

As we gaze on your kingly brightness, so our faces display your likeness; ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell your story. Shine on me; shine on me.

[Refrain]

Text and music by Graham Kendrick, 1987-



### Our Prayer List

Fred and Beth Flora  
Kelly Heafner (CJ Hartsell's niece)  
Silvio Martinat  
Revs. Bill and Wanda Neely  
Leo Schmidt (Carol Ann's grandson)  
Judy Scroggs  
Nancy Stevens  
Melanie Storie (West Caldwell teacher)  
Rev. Dr. Douglas Tilley (Dianne's brother)  
Dr. Steven Tilley (Dianne's cousin)  
Anthony Uva  
Anne White (Lynda Renegar's sister)  
Joanne Triplette (Hickory Hills Rehab)

Call Joanne if you have other prayer requests (828-757-8364).

