

LENTEN MISSION OF THE MONTH-THE BLESSING TABLE

The Blessings Table has been selected for the Lenten Offering by the Serve Team. At the height of the Pandemic when everything was locked down including churches, Pastor Sam Caldwell went to visit Pastor Greg Neal. Even though Greg was not there that day, there was a Blessings Table in front of the locked church with a sign that read, "Take what you need. Leave what you can." Pastor Sam brought the concept home, and FUMC-Commerce created its own Table. At first it provided just food and beverages; however, there were a few glitches. The squirrels thought that the apples were for them and took a few nibbles out of each one! No more apples. We now have a plastic box to enclose any small squirrel-tasty treats.

The Table expanded to include non-food items like hats, gloves, socks, underwear, blankets, over-the-counter medical supplies, hygiene items including soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, and even pet food.

As happens so often, what began as an effort to bless others, turned into a blessing for us. Recipients began to show their trust in us by leaving notes expressing their gratitude and sharing milestones in their lives such as achieving sobriety or remaining sober. Some ask for prayers. Currently, we have a survey that asks people to spell out what they need. Pastor Cheryl reads each one and responds appropriately. She intends to write responses and leave them on the Table.

Plans are in the works to have an event where we could meet some of the people, perhaps an outdoor gathering later in the spring or a breakfast before Sunday services.

Your support will ensure that the Table is always well-stocked, and we can respond to emergency needs. You can support our Lenten mission in several ways.

1. Pray for those in need.
2. Drop a significant Lenten offering in the collection plate.
3. Click the appropriate button if you give online.
4. Take an egg off our Easter egg "tree," place a donation in it, and leave it in the basket at the foot of the tree.

Throughout the Bible we are tasked to care for others. Your Lenten offering will help us fulfill that mission right here at our own front door.



Souper Bowl of Caring Luncheon



Notes from Pastor Cheryl



“Yet even now,” says the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting...rend your hearts and not your clothing.” — Joel 2: 12-13

Scripture offers many images where love, grace, forgiveness, righteousness, and healing can REALLY be found. And it is not in the “usual” places. Isn’t it as true of us today as it was of the scriptural authors? Don’t we often look for wholeness and happiness in places that offer only temporary “good feelings” and satisfaction? Lent is a reflective time to reassess where we are searching for meaning and purpose. We’ll move through stories of Jesus to find out who offers the “real deal.”

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. Join us these next six weeks as we explore where to look for love -- in all the right places.

February 26: Matthew 4:1-11 Look for the Resister
Jesus Tempted

March 5: John 3:1-17 Look for the Helper Nicodemus

March 12: John 4:13-14 Look for the Thirst- Quencher
Woman at the Well

March 19 John 9:1-41 Look for the Shepherd Man
Born Blind

March 26 John 11:1-45 Look for the Liberator Lazarus

April 2 Matthew 21:1-11 Look for the Unexpected
Palm Sunday/Confirmation

April 9 John 20:1-18 Love Wins Mary in the Garden



Want to dive deeper into these topics (or other Lent-related ones)? Meet me on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. for a Lenten Pastor’s Bible Study, starting February 28. Additional 10am sessions are scheduled on the following days:

March 7, March 14, March 21,
and March 28

Location TBA

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Luke 6:38 NLT

Can you imagine the rear end of your pickup filled with groceries? That happened in downtown Commerce on the day before Super Bowl 57 when Angela Roberts’ vision of inviting community residents to donate non-perishable food items to the Texas A&M University-Commerce Lion Food Pantry came to life. Aided by Dave and Cathy Giles and an assortment of volunteers from the First United Methodist Church-Commerce and the campus, close to 300 pounds of canned food items and \$60 was collected from Commerce community members and given to the TAMU-C Lion Food Pantry.

Food insecurity is a genuine problem for a significant number of college students. The root causes of food insecurity on college campuses are complex, as many factors are interrelated. Key contributing factors include financial insecurity, housing insecurity, work or family obligations, and student loan debt.

So, how do food insecurities impact college students? Anxiety and depression: Students with low food security are 4 to 5 times more likely to experience depression than their food-secure peers. Worse overall physical health: Food-insecure students consume fewer vegetables and fruits, and their meals are usually nutrient-poor.

Research also teaches us that giving to campus Food Pantries is the NUMBER ONE way to address college student food insecurities. We are grateful for the tremendous support of this annual project.

We had a great group stay for the Souper Bowl of Caring luncheon after worship on February 12th. There was lots of good food and fellowship! A love offering of around \$350 was given for the February Mission of the Month, which benefits local food pantries. Together, we can “Take a Bite Out of Hunger” in our community. Thanks for helping to make that happen!



Prayer List 2-23-23

Recent Concerns:

- *Our world, country, & leaders*
- Family of Anna Knutson
- Family of Virginia Collier
- Priscilla McFarland (FUMC-C member)
- Emma Dean, 3rd grader fighting a serious staph infection, named by Chance Webster
- Scott Prather, named by Charles Webster
- Lynette Gill, Lee Riddle's daughter
- Randy Butler, named by Sue Massey
- Tom Bailey
- Sam Elwell
- Pete and Ann Chamberlain
- Carlos Rickman (M.D. Anderson Hospital)
- Rev. Dennis Wilkinson

Continued Prayers (long term):

- The leaders and citizens of Ukraine
- Bill Heitholt
- Janet & Jim Payne, Becky Coker's sister
- Georgia Gholston
- Manuel Henderson
- Melanie Cortea
- Judy Cortea
- Harold & Becky Coker
- Jack Gray
- Mabel and Carl Little
- Priscilla McFarland (Julia Robinson's mother)
- Robert Seay
- Dudley Shaw (Robyn Elwell's brother-in-law)

Austin:

- Ruby Vander Velde

Burleson:

- Mary Louise McMahan

Legacy Oaks (Midlothian):

- Jerry & Sandy Hutton

Oak Manor:

- Helen Cole

Those serving in our military:

- Celeste Young, (Marines) & Chandler Teague (Navy), great-grandchildren of Lee Riddle
- 2nd Lieutenant Cameron Lehr
- Lt. Dan Barton
- Daniel Chamberlain
- Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
- Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Stogner

FINANCE REPORT

Our committee is just finishing up with 2022 operating results. Even though we made significant strides in cost cutting, 2022 still came up with a loss. We are still working with the Personnel Committee and the AdCouncil to make more changes and "tweak" what we have done. One area is the office staff. In order to provide all the services you have gotten used to, we need more help. If you can spare a few hours a week, just call or come by the office. We will be more than happy to get you involved. We especially need folks with computer skills.



Thanks for your continued support.

If you are interested in giving flowers for the altar, please visit with Luann Huffman before worship on Sunday or contact her at 903-366-2899 or lhuffman01@cumbytel.com.



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- **March 2-Serve meeting** at 10:30am
- **March 2-First Thursday luncheon** at noon
- **March 7-Women's Study Group** at 5:15pm
- **March 8-Grow team meeting** at 6:00pm
- **March 13-Prayer Shawl meeting** at 9:30am
- **March 14-Trustees** at 6:30
- **March 16-Prayer Shawl crafting** at 9:30am
- **March 17-Little Ark closed** for Spring Break
- **March 20-Finance committee meets** at 6pm
- **March 21-Women's Study Group** at 5:15pm
- **March 23-Prayer Shawl Crafting** at 9:30

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT FUMC COMMERCE

- **Tuesdays-Men's Breakfast Group** at Omega's at 8am
- **Wednesdays-Choir Rehearsal** at 7pm

**Exercise class will resume in the spring.

BI-WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

- **Every other Tuesday-Women's Study Group** at 5:15pm

"Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car."— **Garrison Keillor**

Little Ark Happenings



Pre-K does a little dancing during their Valentine's Day party; Big brother helps little sister into the building; Dinosaur Week in Toddler 2.

In case of emergency pastoral care need,
please call or text Pastor Cheryl at 940-613-5375.

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