

# THE GRACE CHURCH VISITOR

VOL. 84 | March 2026 | NO. 9

## From the Pastor



Dear Friends of Grace,

My maternal grandma taught me a poem as a young boy. The poem was about the months and seasons and the weather they'd bring. I don't remember much, but I do remember, "March winds do blow." This month of March, we continue our journey through Lent, and it will culminate with the start of Holy Week. April will bring Holy (Maundy) Thursday on April 2 and Easter Sunday on April 5. Palm Sunday is March 29, and the children and youth will be leading that service.

In the meantime, we'll be doing the regular work of the Church as we love God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves. And March winds do blow. The winds of the Holy Spirit in March will be blowing. They will be blowing in worship services and Sunday School and Lenten study; in our meetings and gatherings; in our practices and our presentations; and in our hearts, minds, and souls as we pray and focus on Jesus to be made whole as we approach Easter. This month, we will be talking about how we can be a part of what God is doing through the Holy Spirit in this congregation, in our community, in our nation and world, and in our lives.

God is with us, the people who are Grace United Methodist Church of Story City. Praise be!

Sincerely in Christ,

Phil Webb, Pastor



Grace United  
Methodist Church  
PO Box 67  
624 Elm Ave.  
Story City, IA 50248



## Contact Information

Rev. Phil Webb

[RevPhil@storycitygrace.org](mailto:RevPhil@storycitygrace.org)

515-341-4666

Shannon Koppes

Administrative Assistant

[office@grace-umc.com](mailto:office@grace-umc.com)

515-733-4712

[www.storycitygrace.org](http://www.storycitygrace.org)

"Like" us on Facebook—Story City Grace

## Office Hours:

Monday — Friday  
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

*The Visitor* is a monthly publication of Grace UMC, Story City.

If you would like to:

- Add, change, or remove your name from our mailing or email list
- Correct your address
- Submit news to be published in *The Visitor*

Please contact us in one of the following ways:

 **Mail:**

Grace UMC  
624 Elm Ave.  
P.O. Box 67  
Story City, IA 50248

 **Call:**

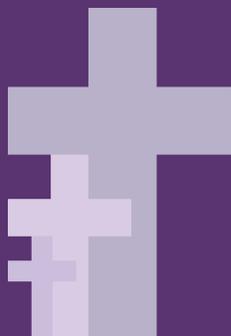
(515) 733-4712

 **Email:**

[office@storycitygrace.org](mailto:office@storycitygrace.org)

## March Birthdays

Lilyah Berry	03/02
Alex Flaspohler	03/05
Nate Warwick	03/05
Mark Hermanson	03/08
Judy Andrew	03/09
Marvin Kokemiller	03/09
Krystle Ness	03/10
Raejean Bickelhaupt	03/18
Jacob Ness	03/20
Gay Coltrain	03/21
Adam Hubert	03/25
Christine Marti	03/26
Claudia Pauk	03/28



## March Lectionary

### March 01

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121;  
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

### March 08

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95;  
Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

### March 15

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23;  
Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

### March 22

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans  
8:6-11; John 11:1-45

### March 29

Matthew 21:1-11;  
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Isa 50:4-9a;  
Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11;  
Matthew 26:14-27

## Deadline

Deadline for submitting *Visitor* information is the 20th of each month. Information for the weekly bulletin and *This Week at Grace* is due in the office by noon on Wednesdays.

## March Volunteers

### March 1

Liturgist ..... Gloria Sampson  
Tech ..... ?  
Ushers..... George Janvrin, Jane Jackson

### March 8

Liturgist ..... Cathy Hermanson  
Tech ..... Louis Reeder  
Ushers..... Doug Doolittle, Tim & Kim Tryon

### March 15

Liturgist ..... Gail Remis  
Tech ..... ?  
Ushers..... Mark, Cora & Sully Hermanson

### March 22

Liturgist ..... Kurt Carlson  
Tech ..... The Feil Family  
Ushers..... Mark & Cathy Hermanson

### March 29 (Palm Sunday)

Liturgist ..... Grace Youth  
Tech ..... ?  
Ushers..... Doug Doolittle, Rick & Grace Welke, Grace Youth

## G.R.A.C.E. Team "C"

**Mark & Cathy Hermanson - chr**, David & Marlene Doolittle, Nate & Malinda Warwick & Family, Doug Doolittle, Rhonda Hampton, Jane Jackson, Sue Jacobson, Claudia Pauk, George Janvrin, David & Mary Loupee, Andrew McQuillen, Elizabeth Rickerl & Family, Norm & Cindy Spurlock, Tim & Kim Tryon, Rick & Grace Welke, Beckey Witthuhn & Family

## Our Prayers and Thanksgivings

Hubert Bickelhaupt – recovering from knee surgery  
Raejean Bickelhaupt – recovering from a stroke  
Corinne Brown – recovering from a fractured foot  
Donyel Caruth – prayers for Moriah recovering from a heart attack  
Dave Doolittle – recovering from hip surgery  
Dave and Marlene Doolittle – prayers for their grandson who is deployed to the Middle East  
Mindy Kardell – prayers for her uncle-in-law, David, who has cancer; praise for the visit of her children for her 75th birthday  
Kevin Larson – beginning chemotherapy  
Gail Remis – prayers for health concerns affecting her grandson  
Gail Remis – from her daughter: prayers for several youth with pneumonia, a friend hospitalized following a stroke, and a friend's brother who has been taken off life support  
Taylor Family – ongoing needs  
Roland-Story Activities – celebration and praise for teams having a good season

## Our Gifts

Offering February 1 - February 22  
\$11,634.79

## Our Presence

Attendance February 1 - February 22  
Total 275/Avg. 68

## Our Service

Thank you to our February Liturgists: Gail Remis, Cathy Hermanson, Del Johnston, and Kurt Carlson

Thank you to our February tech team: The Feil Family, Louis Reeder, and the Ness family

## Chancel Choir

After what was hopefully a much-needed break, Chancel Choir will begin rehearsing again on Wednesday, March 4, at 7:00 p.m. We look forward to gathering once more and hope to see everyone there.

## Easter Lilies

Grace United Methodist Church will once again decorate the sanctuary with Easter lilies in celebration of the Resurrection. Easter lilies are a beautiful way to honor or remember loved ones while adding to the worship space during the Easter season.

You are invited to either purchase a lily through the church or bring your own Easter lily to help decorate the sanctuary. In either case, an order form is required so that memorials and honors can be properly recorded.

Lilies may be purchased through the church for \$17 each. The deadline to order a church-purchased lily is Sunday, March 8. If you prefer to bring your own lily, you are welcome to do so. Lilies brought from home may be delivered to the church on Friday, April 3, or on Easter Sunday, April 5. The deadline to submit information for lilies you are bringing is Wednesday, April 1.

Order forms are available in the church office. Please return completed forms to the office by the appropriate deadline.

Help beautify the sanctuary this Easter as we celebrate the joy of the Resurrection and remember those who are special to us.

## Lenten Study: The Lord's Prayer

This Lent, Pastor Phil is leading a study on *The Lord's Prayer* by Adam Hamilton, inviting us to reflect deeply on one of the most familiar and meaningful prayers of our faith. Together, we are exploring the rich meaning behind each line of the prayer Jesus taught, discovering not only what we ask of God, but also what God asks of us.

The study has already begun, but it's not too late to join! You are welcome to participate even if you were unable to attend the first session.

Sessions are offered on Sunday evenings at 6:00 p.m. and Monday mornings at 10:00 a.m., concluding March 29 (Sunday) and March 30 (Monday). Both sessions cover the same material, allowing you to choose the time that best fits your schedule.

Books are available for purchase in the narthex or church office. The cost is \$17 per book.

Join us as we continue preparing our hearts for Easter, deepen our understanding of prayer, and grow together in faith during this Lenten season.

## Mission Brunch

On Sunday, February 22, Grace gathered for our February Mission Brunch in support of the United Methodist Camps. It was a wonderful morning of food and fellowship, and your generosity was evident—over \$60 was collected in quarters alone! Thank you for your faithful support of United Methodist camping ministries and the life-changing experiences they provide for children and youth.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 22, when we will host our March Mission Brunch. In March, we will be supporting Heifer International (often known as the Heifer Project). Heifer works to end hunger and poverty around the world by providing livestock, seeds, and training to small-scale farmers, empowering families to build sustainable futures. This is a meaningful mission that Grace has supported for many years.

Brunch in March will feature biscuits and gravy—so come hungry! Plan to join us that morning, and let's see if we can fill the quarter tube even higher during the service.

## Second Saturday at Six



Mark your calendars for our next Second Saturday at Six on March 14 at 6:00 p.m.! Even if you've never joined us before, we

warmly encourage you to come for a fun and relaxed evening of fellowship.

There is always plenty of food, lots of laughter, and great conversation—and new faces are always welcome. If you're able, please bring a snack to share. You're also invited to bring a favorite board game to enjoy with others—we love to try new games as well as play some favorites each month.

Plan to join us for a joyful night of laughter, connection, and community. We'd love to see you there!

## Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone who has helped support the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry so far this year. Your willingness to step forward and serve is truly noticed and deeply appreciated.

Our scheduled dates in March to help unload the food pantry truck are **March 6 and March 20**. If you are available to help unload on either of those mornings, please contact **Jan Feil** or **Louis Reeder**.

If you would like to help through a donation, the pantry could use the following items:

- Ketchup
- Salt and pepper
- Tuna and Hamburger Helper
- Cans of frosting
- Cake mixes
- Paper products

Thank you for helping us care for our community through this important ministry.



## YOU ARE INVITED



Please join us in celebrating

### Mason Schnurstein's Eagle Scout Ceremony

**Sunday, March 22 at 2:00 p.m.**

Grace United Methodist Church  
Story City

Lunch to follow in the fellowship hall.



## Scout Sunday



On February 8, Grace United Methodist Church celebrated Scout Sunday,

honoring the role of scouting in shaping young people's character, leadership, and faith.

During the service, three scouts were recognized for their achievements and commitment to scouting.

- **Lena Feil** – Cub Scout, Webelos  
Parents: Chris and Kate Feil
- **Alexandra Franco** – Junior Girl Scout  
Parents: Alex and Amy Franco
- **Amelia Franco** – Daisy Girl Scout  
Parents: Alex and Amy Franco

# Holy Week

## at Grace United Methodist Church

Let's come together to remember the journey of Jesus Christ from His triumphal entry into Jerusalem through the Last Supper, crucifixion, and resurrection.

### SERVICE SCHEDULE

<b>Psalm Sunday</b> March 29 - 9:15 a.m.	<b>Holy (Maundy) Thursday</b> April 2 - 6:30 p.m.	<b>Easter Sunday</b> April 5 - 9:15 a.m.
---	--	---

### YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

Please join us as we worship, reflect, and celebrate the hope of the resurrection.



## Pictures Wanted



As Shannon updates our church website, she's looking for photos that show **Grace in Action**—real, candid moments from everyday life at Grace. This could include committee meetings, fellowship and conversations, Sunday School, or youth activities.

Feel free to take photos throughout the year and share them when a moment catches your eye. Please email photos to **office@storycitygrace.org**.

We are grateful for these scouts and their families, and we celebrate the values of service, responsibility, and community that scouting helps foster.

**GOD NEVER TIRES OF FORGIVING US; WE ARE THE ONES WHO TIRE OF SEEKING HIS MERCY.**

- POPE FRANCIS -

LIBQUOTES.COM

## New Email

As part of ongoing updates at Grace, we now have **new church email addresses**. During a transition period, both the old and new addresses will be monitored, but emails ending in **@grace-umc.com** will be phased out in **May**.

Please begin using our new addresses:

### Church Office:

office@storycitygrace.org

### Pastor Phil:

revphil@storycitygrace.org

We encourage you to update your contact lists. If you need help, feel free to reach out—we're happy to assist.

## We Have a New Website!



We're excited to share that **storycitygrace.org** is our new church website! It is our hope that this site will help you stay connected and up to date with all that's happening at Grace.

To help you navigate your way around, here are a few helpful highlights:

**News:** Under the menu, you'll find a News section. If there is ever a change in worship services or an important update, this is where you'll find the latest information.

**Calendar:** Looking for times and dates for upcoming activities and events? The Calendar section keeps everything in one easy-to-find place.

**Sermons & Newsletter:** You can watch recent sermons online and read our latest newsletter right from the website.

**Stay Connected:** If you're not currently receiving our weekly email, you can sign up directly on the website to stay informed.

We invite you to explore the new site and hope it becomes a helpful resource for staying connected with the life of Grace.

## UWF January Update

The Grace United Women in Faith met on February 11, 2026, with 13 members, along with Miss Lena, Pastor Phil Webb, and Marvin Kokemiller in attendance.

Patsy opened the meeting with a reading of Galatians 6:9, followed by music as Erma played the piano while the group sang *Kumbaya*. The members also recited the United Women of Faith Purpose, reminding everyone of the mission they share together.

During the Mission Moment, Terri Gustason spoke about the many ways the group serves both as a ministry and as individuals. Their outreach includes delivering Christmas cookies to homebound members, hosting Sunday brunches to support various mission efforts, preparing school kits and birthing kits, creating crocheted or knitted blankets for those who are hospitalized or recovering at home, and helping fund summer camp experiences for children in the congregation.

Terri also shared an inspiring quote from John Wesley:

*“Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as you can.”*

The Treasurer’s Report was shared by Sharla, and there was no new or old business discussed.

The Worship Committee is preparing a soup supper for Ash Wednesday.

During the program, Gloria Sampson introduced Shannon Bardole-Foley, Camp Registrar and Development Coordinator for the Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center. A check was presented to support the camp’s ministry and programs.

Respectfully submitted by Tepricia Reeder.

## Thor’s Men



On Sunday, February 15, we had the privilege of having the high school group Thor's Men join us and sing during the worship service. They shared three songs throughout the service, and we were blessed by their beautiful singing.

A special offering was taken while they were with us. The group recently recorded a CD of their music during Norse Term Week, and the offering will help cover licensing fees for the songs they recorded. More information will be shared about the CD once it is available.

Thank you to Thor's Men for sharing their musical gifts with our congregation!

## A Lenten Reflection...



- Give up complaining; focus on gratitude
- Give up harsh judgments; think kindly thoughts
- Give up worry; trust divine Providence
- Give up discouragement; be full of hope
- Give up bitterness; turn to forgiveness
- Give up hatred; return good for evil
- Give up negativism; be positive
- Give up pettiness; become mature
- Give up jealousy; pray for trust

## Building Update

The bathroom floors in the downstairs bathroom were redone this week. The old linoleum was removed, and the remaining adhesive was ground off to prepare the surface. A waterproof layer was then installed, followed by a poured epoxy floor—matching the look of the epoxy flooring in the downstairs youth room.

Thank you to the Trustees for overseeing and completing this much-needed update to our building.



## Lent and the Olympics

If you enjoyed watching the Olympics recently, you know how inspiring it is to see athletes give their all — maybe even imagining what it would be like to stand on the podium yourself. (You might have even spotted a few familiar Grace faces in their own “Olympic” moments!)

But behind every competition is years of preparation, discipline, and support. Athletes don’t simply show up ready — they train with purpose.

As we enter Lent, we step into our own kind of training season. These forty days invite us into intentional spiritual practices — prayer, generosity, self-examination — not because God needs it, but because we grow stronger through faithful discipline.

And just as Olympians don’t train alone, we journey through Lent together — encouraging and supporting one another along the way.

Athletes fix their eyes on the finish line. We fix our eyes on the cross... and the hope of Easter morning.

May this Lenten season be a time of faithful training — together.

### A Prayer for Lenten Grace

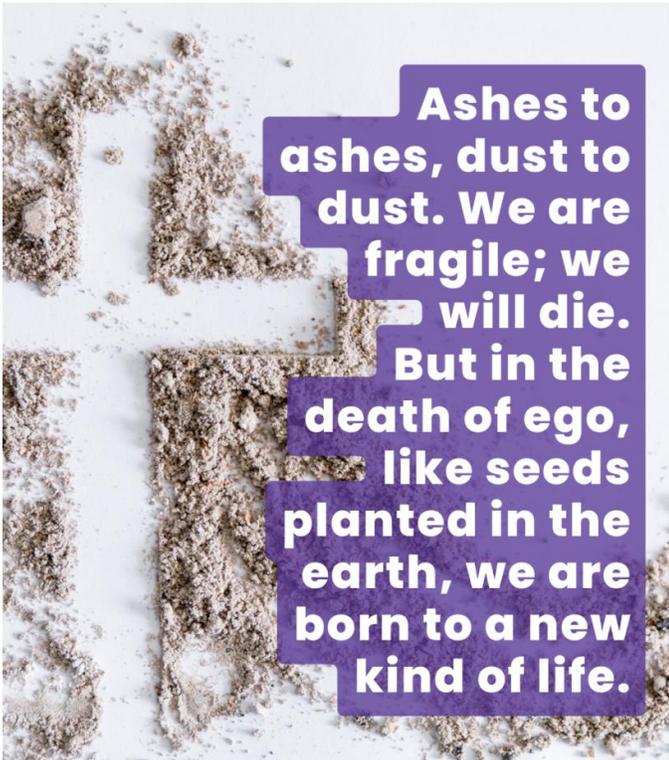
Loving God,  
During the sacred season of Lent, bring me closer to you.  
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.  
Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul and remind me of the grace of simplicity.  
Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.  
May this season be a grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.  
Amen.



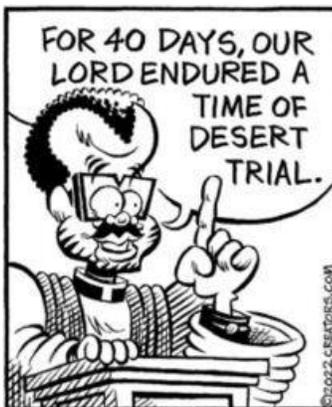
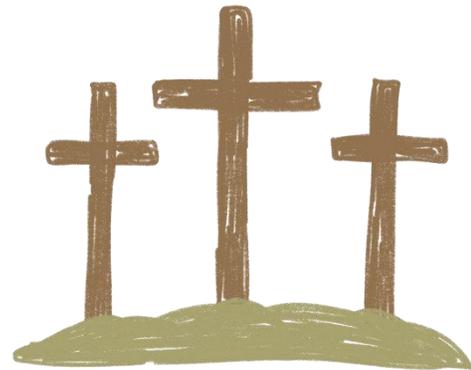
## Ash Wednesday

On February 18, approximately 24 people gathered at Grace United Methodist Church for our Ash Wednesday service. It was a beautiful and meaningful time of worship as we were reminded of our mortality and invited to repent, reflect, and prepare our hearts for the season of Lent. The quiet reverence of the service set the tone for this sacred journey toward Easter.

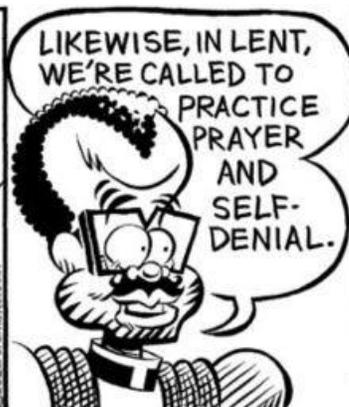
Before worship, 19 people gathered for a soup supper hosted by the Worship Committee. The meal was warm, welcoming, and absolutely delicious—filling both body and spirit. The evening of fellowship and worship made for a special beginning to Lent, and who knows—perhaps a new Grace tradition has begun.



**Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. We are fragile; we will die. But in the death of ego, like seeds planted in the earth, we are born to a new kind of life.**



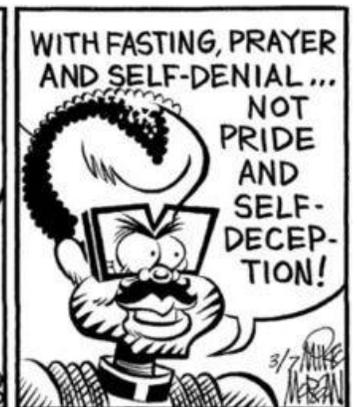
FOR 40 DAYS, OUR LORD ENDURED A TIME OF DESERT TRIAL.



LIKewise, IN LENT, WE'RE CALLED TO PRACTICE PRAYER AND SELF-DENIAL.



SO IN THESE DAYS, LET'S CHANGE OUR WAYS AND HEED DIVINE DIRECTION...



WITH FASTING, PRAYER AND SELF-DENIAL... NOT PRIDE AND SELF-DECEPTION!

# Grace UMC Council

Unofficial Minutes Monday February 23, 2026, 6:30 pm.

**Present:** Gloria Sampson (Chair), Pastor Phil Webb, Mindy Kardell (Education), Gail Remis (Education), Jim Hassbrock, Cathy Hermanson (Worship/rec. secretary)

**Pastor Phil offered prayer and Gloria opened the meeting.**

**Minutes: Jim/(Mindy) moved the January minutes to be approved. Motion carried.**

**Finance:** Jim reported we have money in the bank and our second 2026 apportionment payment was approved. Candi Holm completed the 2025 Audit and commended our committees on accurate and timely paperwork on bills submissions this past year.

## Committee Reports: Ministry Areas

**Worship** - Cathy reported Worship committee quickly planned a soup supper for Ash Wednesday to help boost attendance for the worship service. 19 people enjoyed three different soups and accompaniments. 26 people attended the Ash Wednesday service. The group finalized plans for the February 15<sup>th</sup> appearance of Thor's Men at our worship service. The young men performed songs at three different times during the worship service. ~\$430 was received in the special offering plate for their Norse Term CD project with more money received by their director after the service. Early plans for Holy Week were discussed including ordering palms for Palm Sunday and research on where to order Easter Lilies. There are no plans to have joint weekly Wednesday Lenten services with area Lutheran churches as we have done previously.

**Education** – Mindy reported another youth lock-in is being considered during spring break (March 16-20) and teaching assignments for Sunday school (2026-27) are being considered at this time. The second year of our Confirmation class will be conducted, and Mindy will continue as high school teacher. 3 yr-1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade and middle school class teachers are exploring possibilities at this point. Gail shared there will be no Sunday school classes on Easter Sunday (April 5). Sunday, April 12 has been designated as Camping Sunday and students who have attended camps previously will be invited to share their experiences as an encouragement for other students to give camping a try. Graduation Sunday (Baccalaureate) is set for May 24<sup>th</sup> – we will have two high school graduates this year – Blake Larson and Mason Schnurstein.

**Missions** – Phil shared that over \$400 was received through the quarter tube and February brunch for Bible Camps.

**UWF:** Patsy sent a report – Wesley Woods representative, Shannon Bardole-Foley was guest speaker at their February meeting.

## Committee Reports: Administrative Area

**SPPRC:** Cathy reported the committee worked on updating two sections of the Darbonne Staff Parish guidelines with plans to tackle two more each month in 2026. Work continues as the committee works to find a new worship pianist, choir director, choir accompanist, financial secretary and bell choir director. Plans are underway to honor our retiring-from-church-leadership folks.

**Trustees:** Jim reported new flooring was completed in both lower-level church bathrooms in February. Additional funds from the Al Rau estate have been received in undesignated memorials and the church camping accounts. Trustees took care of the cold church problem on Feb. 22. They are considering replacing the second kitchen air conditioner and installing mini splits for the sanctuary this spring-summer. With the city planning to do some seal coating on nearby streets, the trustees are exploring possibilities for seal coating part of the parking lot. No commitments to any of these big projects have been made at this time. An anonymous donor has offered to pay to install an electronic door assist on the north door. Our insurance company has investigated the proposal and has okayed the project as long as the step up is painted yellow for better visibility and signage is put up to indicate this is NOT a handicap entrance. The electronic door is being installed to assist in bringing in groceries and such into the kitchen.

**Pastor's Report:** Phil will make sure each committee has their segment of the Darbonne guidelines document to update and amend.

**New Business:** Gail suggested a Code of Conduct for members be developed to help avoid the tumult and troubles the church family experienced from July 2024 to July 2025. Phil suggested it be done as a part of the Darbonne document update. He will bring ideas and recommendations to our March Council meeting and Gail will bring the Youth Code of Conduct to use as a reference/inspiration. Council will devise a preliminary plan and then send it to the committees for further refinement before ultimately being presented to the congregation to vote on in a charge conference setting.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:19.**

Next meeting will be **MONDAY, March 23, 2026 at 6:30.**

**Respectfully submitted,** Cathy Hermanson, Rec Sec.

# March 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:15 Worship 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 6:00 Lenten Study	2 10:00 Lenten Study	3 10:00-12:00 Mat Weaving	4 5:00 Children's Bells 7:00 Choir	5	6 Food Pantry Delivery	7
8 9:15 Worship 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 6:00 Lenten Study	9 10:00 Lenten Study 5:30 Worship Comm. 6:30 SPRC	10 10:00-12:00 Mat Weaving	11 1:30 UWF 5:00 Children's Bells 7:00 Choir	12	13	14 6:00 Second Saturday at Six
15 8:15 Trustees 9:15 Worship 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 6:00 Lenten Study	16 10:00 Lenten Study	17 10:00-12:00 Mat Weaving	18 7:00 Choir	19	20 Food Pantry Delivery	21
22 8:30 Missions 9:15 Worship 10:15 Mission Brunch 10:30 Sunday School 6:00 Lenten Study	23 10:00 Lenten Study 5:45 Finance 6:30 Council	24 10:00-12:00 Mat Weaving	25 7:00 Choir	26	27	28
29 9:15 Worship 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 6:00 Lenten Study	30 10:00 Lenten Study	31 10:00-12:00 Mat Weaving				