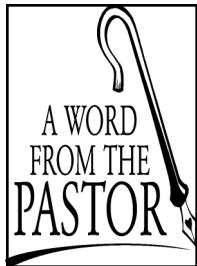


THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

“Serve, Teach, and Love As We Grow In Faith”

MARCH 2017



“Questions and Answers About Lent”

Lent: *In Christianity the forty weekdays of fasting and penitence from Ash Wednesday to Easter.*
(Webster's New World Dictionary)

The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, atonement, and self-denial. In Lent, many Christians commit to fasting or giving up certain types of luxuries as a form of penance. Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional, or praying through a Lenten calendar, to draw themselves near to God. (Wikipedia)

Every year I am asked a variety of questions about the season of Lent. In this article I will be sharing with you some of the questions I have been asked, in the hope that it will help you have a better understanding of what we do during Lent and why.

Why are there 40 days in Lent? Before Jesus began his ministry he spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting, facing and responding to temptation, and communicating with God in prayer. This experience helped Jesus to see the vision of God's plan for his future. This was a time of preparation for Jesus as he accepted God's call upon his life.

So, what are Christians preparing for during Lent? In the early church the 40 days were spent preparing the minds and hearts of those who desired to be baptized on Easter Sunday. They would fast, pray, worship, and study God's Word during this time. It was a time to *focus* on the religious practices that can lead to God's vision for one's future.

What if I am already baptized? Lent is still a time of preparation. Remember, Jesus was baptized before he went into the wilderness for 40 days. During Lent we who are baptized spend the time preparing our hearts and souls for the celebration of Jesus' presence in our lives and in our world. As we practice the Lenten disciplines of fasting, prayer, study, worship, and giving more time and energy to God's work in our lives we are able to intentionally grow in relationship to God.

Why aren't Sundays included in the forty days of Lent? The early Catholic church decided that every Sunday is a "little Easter" as each Sunday celebrates the "new life" the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes possible.

What is penance? Penance is intentionally seeking God's forgiveness for sins through confession and/or reconciliation. Penance could be admitting we wronged someone and asking for forgiveness from that person or admitting to God that we did or said something God would not approve of and asking God's forgiveness.

I hope these questions and answers help you get closer to God through this Lenten season. If you still have questions, please let me know and I will do what I can to answer them.

May You Be Blessed in God's Abiding Presence,

Pastor Kathy





MAR 2	Dan Berger Shirlie Nimmo
MAR 5	Jeff Woodward
MAR 8	Rosalie Hermanson
MAR 9	Dave Smetana
MAR 13	Diann Will
MAR 14	Nancy Iuliano Dave Olson Sharon Seely
MAR 15	Megan Finch
MAR 17	Kathy Perry
MAR 18	Olivia Lee
MAR 19	Carol Anderson Selena Casper LuAnn Gaede John Paul
MAR 20	Mathew Brauner Freddie Dolsey John Gates
MAR 21	Vonnie Greene Carol Hornby Leota Simonson
MAR 23	Andy Epps Char Onstad Ann Smetana
MAR 26	Ed Brauner Chris Stewart
MAR 28	Patty Harelson Keith Odeen
MAR 30	Harley Boehm
MAR 31	Nathan Hagenbrock

MAR 18 Mike & LuAnn Gaede
 MAR 24 Barry & Freda Goldsmith
 MAR 30 Jim & Andrea Hoffman

Lenten
Worship
Schedule

Lenten Worship Café Services will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings, March 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 6:00 p.m. The theme of this years Lenten worship will be “John—the Gospel of Light” by Adam Hamilton.

Worship will be casual. A light supper will be available from 4:30-6:00 p.m. You are welcome to eat during worship.

YOUR UMC NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ONLINE.

You can view it on our website at brfumc.org, or we can email it to you each month. Let us know if you prefer this way of reading your monthly newsletter.



United Methodist Women — A Call to Community

From response:

The February 2017 issue of *response* focuses on the **United Methodist Charter for Racial Justice**, adopted by the United Methodist Church in 1980 and again in 2016, which was originally written by United Methodist Women as early as 1950. Following are some excerpts from the article by UMW General Secretary Harriett Jane Olson.

We have engaged in this work (racial justice) since our founding because of who we are, who God is and what God expects of us, we need to call on this long commitment to counter new expressions of an old enmity.

When the charter was written, white supremacy, Jim Crow and lynching of African Americans was a scourge affecting communities throughout the nation. Over the past 60 years the work of justice advocates, persons of goodwill, lawmakers and law enforcement changed these norms of expression and helped end some of the most heinous actions. **However, persons with eyes to see and ears to hear know that the attitudes and prejudices that underlaid the violent expression of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia have remained.**

In this century something has changed as the United States squandered international goodwill by launching ill-conceived and nebulous wars on terror and doubled down on a domestic "war on drugs" criminalizing diverse populations in urban areas while treating drug abuse in suburbs and wealthy enclaves as a health crisis. Economic changes have led to the loss of unionized jobs in manufacturing and production, **and white nationalism has rebuilt a network of connections outside the public view.**

Practices and policies in our systems of government have played on a **fear of the "other" that does not recognize our common humanity.**

...We need look no further than the hate crimes reported in the past few months to see the rise in expression of the vilest attitudes.

...As the charter reminds us: "**racism robs all human beings of their wholeness.**" The majority culture in the United States is daily revealing this lack of wholeness. It is critical that we renounce the fear of the "other" We must **reaffirm that "all women and men are made in God's image and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God"** and "our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships."

...We are also instructed by "Speaking Out for Compassion: Transforming the Context of Hate in the United States: (#3422, Book of Resolutions, 2016) which calls us to interrupt hateful and demeaning speech and action, to listen to one another and to encourage law enforcement to track and prosecute hate crimes. **As United Methodist Women, as Christians, we are called to act at such a time as this (Esther 4:14).** (response, Feb. 2017, p. 5)

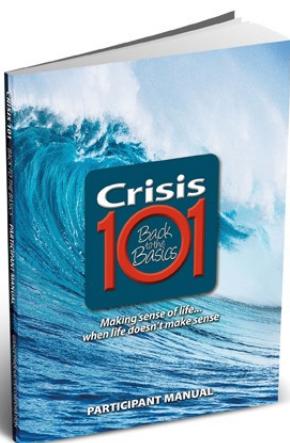
Also check out the article "Practices for White People for the Journey of Racial Justice" on page 36 of the February 2017 issue of *response*. It gives us places to start change.

On the UMW book shelf...Fully Awake and Truly Alive by Rev. Jane E. Vennard: Spiritual seeker, retreat leader and teacher, Rev. Vennard offers insights from various religious traditions as she illustrates the joys and frustrations of spiritual practice. Offering guidance for the journey with step-by-step exercises and mediations to practice caring for the body, rest, silence and community, she invites you to experience being alive and awake. (Spiritual Growth)

Dates to Remember:

- March 10: Registrations due for WI Conference UMW Social Action Day at Columbus UMC, April 1
April 12: Registrations due for Spring Spiritual Growth Retreat at Pine Lake Camp, \$15, on April 29





C R I S I S 101

Crisis 101 offers ten basic strategies to help us through the stormy and troubled times in our lives. Jesus worked through crisis with words of hope, peace, joy and love, and we can do the same.

Pastor Kathy's Sunday messages will be based on the *Ten Red Sea Rules*, written by Robert Morgan. In addition you will have the opportunity to join in a weekly small group that will help guide us through the ten Red Sea rules and how they apply to our life and faith. The groups will be offered at the following times.

- Sundays, 10:20am, beginning March 5 - Leader: Pastor Kathy**
- Thursdays, 5:30pm, beginning March 9 - Leader: Theresa Paul**
- Leader: Tom Epps (the group will determine the meeting day and time)**

Participant books (\$15 each) will be available at the first meeting of each group. If the cost is an issue for you, please let your leader know. Sign-up sheets are located at the Information Station. Even if you forget to sign-up, you are welcome to show up at any or all of the groups.



CAMP SCHOLARSHIP THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped support the camp scholarships this year by attending the Pancake Breakfast on February 19. With these donations we can help financially support members of our congregation who would like to attend camp. Thank you to everyone who helped in the kitchen. It could not have been done without all of your help. If you would like a camp book and/or scholarship form, please contact Beth 715-896-0823 or Suzanne 715-896-0224.

Summit Spirits' Production of "THE STORY OF RUTH"

The uplifting biblical story of Ruth's portrait of love and devotion reveals the poignant path to her marriage—a union granting her a special place in the family lineage leading to Jesus. "Where you will go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." (Ruth 1, 16).

Performances are March 9, 10 and 11 at 7 p.m. and March 12 at 1:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 210 N. Court St., Sparta. (use the handicap accessible 'K' Street entrance). This show is dedicated to the loving memory of Joanne Dexter.



**MUSIC FUND****In Memory Of:**

Alyssa Rave from Judy Sheppard and Marlene Taylor.

Shelley Holt Melde from Judy Sheppard

Lucile White (mother of Carol Hornby) from Donna Overlien.

UNDESIGNATED FUND**In Memory Of:**

Ione Dana from Gene & Janet Krohn, Roxie Hostrawser, and Mary Ann Koeller.

Shelley Holt Melde from Roxie Hostrawser, Todd & Lisa Perry, and Chuck & Ruth Buswell.

Lucile White from Marlene Taylor.

CHURCH LIBRARY**In Memory Of:**

Ione Dana from Family and Friends.

Please take time to check out our beautiful

Prayer Room

The Prayer Room is located just off the Fellowship Hall adjacent to the Church Library.

Many memorial gifts have been given to furnish this room since the project began last year.

New to the Prayer Room is a corner electric fireplace that has been given in memory of Ione Dana by her family and friends.

All are welcome to spend quiet time in this serene room for prayer or one on one conversation.



Our Annual Women's Retreat will be held on Saturday, April 1, from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Brochures with registration information are now available in the Gathering Area and In the Church Office.

This year's theme:

"Learning to Live With Less"

Keynote Speaker: Barb Tako

Break-Out Sessions:

**Painting (Limited to 22)
Jewelry and Recycling**

Get your registrations in soon to reserve your spot for this fun day!!



If you know of someone who is in the hospital or who is working through medical issues at home, please call the church office so that the Pastor is aware of the need and can respond accordingly.



If you know of an individual or family that is working through health issues, hospitalization, or some other crisis and could benefit from the gift of a meal, please call the church office and Jill will pass the information to the Caring Meals Crew.



**FAMILY SUNDAY:**

Thank you for participating in our song, "Allelu". It definitely keeps you on your feet! Sunday, March 19, will be the next Family Sunday. The children will be singing at the 9:00 a.m. Worship Service. Families and children are encouraged to attend this special Sunday and remain in church for the full service.

ROTATION MODEL:

The Sunday School classes will be doing the "Symbols of Holy Week" Rotation Model in March and April. In this Rotation the children will read stories related to the Holy Week and will learn the events of the Holy Week. You as a family can continue this learning at home during the Lent Season. You can teach your child about this special time with stories, prayer, and even fun activities. Here are a few ideas I found online:

- Take a Nature Scavenger hunt and collect items that remind you of the life of Jesus. Two sticks could be used to form a cross, a stone could represent the stone across the tomb, a thorn could represent the crown on Jesus' head, an acorn shell to represent the cup at the Last Supper, long branch to represent a whip, something black (for sin), something red (blood), something white (a clean heart), something green (growing in Christ).
- Older children can go on a digital scavenger hunt, taking photographs of items that remind them of Easter.
- Make a "He Is Risen" or "Our Redeemer Lives" poster and hang in a prominent place in your home on Easter morning.
- Collect purple things from around your home, discuss how purple is the color of Lent. Purple symbolizes the pain and suffering leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus. It is also the color of royalty and symbolizes the kingship of Jesus in our lives. Wear something purple for the day. The internet is full of resources, check them out!

MISSION PROJECT:

We will be going to the Atrium Care Center to sing for the residents on Sunday, March 12. We will leave the church at 10:00 a.m. to arrive at the Care Center by 10:15 a.m. We will return to the church around 10:30 a.m. for you to pick up your child. If you are willing to volunteer to drive or be an extra adult, please contact Beth Bue.

Like our Facebook page Black River Falls Sunday School to see photos of our activities. You can also go to the church's website, www.brfumc.org for photos and other information.

REMINDER: Sunday School begins at 9:20 a.m. and ends at 10:15 a.m. (Children are encouraged to attend church with their families at 9:00 a.m. They will be dismissed to go to Sunday School following the Children's Message). The Sunday School classrooms are unsupervised until 9:20 a.m. Please remain with your child until an adult arrives.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!!!

- **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL EASTER SUNDAY, April 16**
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM,
Sunday, MAY 21 at 9:00 a.m.**
- **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
August 14-17**

RECYCLING:

Thank you to everyone who has brought in ink cartridges and cell phones for recycling. This fundraiser is used to purchase Vacation Bible School supplies. Please continue bringing in your ink cartridges and old cell phones. There are boxes in the front entryway, by the Church Office, and by the Youth Rooms for the ink cartridges and cell phones.

YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

MAR 4	McKenna Jarrett
MAR 20	Macie Goldsmith
MAR 28	Ava Gilberg Hanna Goldsmith





Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime.

March 1	Lent Worship/Youth Group
March 8	Lent Worship/Youth Group
March 15	Lent Worship/Youth Group
March 22	Lent Worship/Youth Group
March 29	Lent Worship/Youth Group

Youth Group will attend worship each Wednesday during Lent starting at 6:00 pm. After, we will gather down in the youth group rooms for some games and fun until 7:30 pm.

The youth will have an opportunity to participate in the Crisis 101 Back to the Basics (Making sense of life....when life doesn't make sense) Bible Study. We will be meeting on Mondays at 5:15 pm in the Keefe Room beginning March 6th. Supper will be included and Pre-Con students will earn extra credit with Pastor Kathy for attending. Parents are welcome to join with if interested in this Bible Study.

Youth: bring in the answers to these 3 questions to youth group to redeem for a prize.

1. What did the soldiers put on Jesus' head when they were mocking him?
2. How many times did Peter deny Christ after the abandoned the Lord?
3. On what day after Jesus was crucified did he rise?

Suzanne Goldsmith

715-896-0224

suziegoldsmith@hotmail.com

www.brftumc.org

facebook page: Black River Falls UMC Youth Group



PRAYER FAMILIES FOR MARCH

MAR 5	Gerry Rudkin Dave, Ann, Sophia & Julia Smetana Randy & Pam Bjerke Loretta Charneski
MAR 12	Rosemary Dvorak Dorothy Gearing Steve, Dina, Samantha & Kyle Hansen, Boston Gilberg Mark, Amy, Alex & Kristian Hoffman
MAR 19	Dan & Mary Jelinek Jean Lovlien Dick & Bernice Moldenhauer Donna Overlien
MAR 26	Sandy, Abby, Jacob & Benjamin Ross Jonas & Jessica Whitegull Chuck & Ruth Buswell Verland, Selena & Cole Casper

Published: 16 February 2017

New Eyes

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known." (I Corinthians 13:12)



You are cordially invited to join me on a breathtaking adventure. It will be to a place that we have never been before. I cannot guarantee safety or comfort. In fact, I am absolutely sure that some will not enjoy this adventure at all. It demands risk. It demands courage. It demands humility and surrender. I am inviting you to join me in the present moment – right here, right now, in the world that IS, rather than in the world as we think it is or should be.

What is the difference between the world that IS, and all the worlds that we make up in our minds and hearts? Well, this world is neither good nor bad, and people are not good or evil. What is, simply IS – just as God created it. We strip away our filters and lenses, and look at the world through new eyes, eyes unclouded by prejudice or predispositions, eyes open to new possibilities and to the very mind of Christ.

The false world, the world of our own creation, is a world of fear and anxiety and phony certainty pretending to be faith. The false view of our world looks for what is wrong, what is dirty, what is foul, what is corrupt. This false view is not from God. It is what we see in the mirror, dimly. It is a denial of all things Godly. It is our giving more power to the darkness than we give to the light. It happens when people think that the devil is more powerful than God.

We are living in a time when people are not very kind to others. There is despair and anger and hopelessness. This comes when we look through old, tired eyes. But we, people of faith in Jesus Christ, do not – cannot – look through old, tired eyes any longer. We walk by faith, not by sight. We know that there is a truth greater than what we perceive through our old eyes.

Where others see oppression, let us see the possibility of freedom. Where others see destruction, let us see the truth of renewal and resurrection. Where others see corruption and greed, let us see the fertile soil for redemption and justice. There is nothing wrong in the world that cannot be fixed, for nothing is greater than the power of God's transforming Holy Spirit.

But let us not fool ourselves. Simply seeing what God intends is not enough. New eyes that reveal new potential and new opportunity open us to a new reality that God will unfold through the gifts and passions of faithful people. Who are these faithful people, you ask? You and me.

From this day forward, I invite you to view this world through the very eyes of Christ. See the good. See the beauty. See the truth of God's blessed creation. And where you do not see it, work to make it so. Our God is a BIG GOD. Our faith must be a BIG FAITH. No more petty squabbles. No wasting time looking for things to be upset about. We have an enormous job to do. We need to help others see God's vision for a transformed world; and there is simply no time to waste.

Take time, brothers and sisters, to pray deeply for new eyes. Ask God to grant you wisdom, the wisdom that heals and unites and empowers and creates. Seek first the true realm of God, on earth as it is in heaven, and be amazed at all you will see.

Grace and Peace,
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung



Celebrate the Luck of the Irish



CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE DINNER

Friday, March 17 — 4:30-6:00 p.m.

**BRF United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
100 N. 4th Street**

Adults — \$10.00 Children Under 12 — \$5.00

Meatballs with gravy and potatoes will also be served.

Carry outs available — call 715-284-4114

Sign Up for E-Giving!!

Electronic Giving (E-Giving) is a way for you to give contributions to the church without having to write a check. In E-Giving, you specify a set amount that you wish to give to the church monthly. This amount will automatically transfer from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account on a specified date each month. If you would like to sign up for this method of giving to the church, please contact Jill in the Church Office.

Good Samaritan Fund

The Good Samaritan Fund is in place to help members of our church family who are experiencing unexpected financial need. The fund may be used to help pay for needed medications, utilities, or to help with Christmas expenses for children. The fund has also helped travelers in need of fuel or a meal. The Good Samaritan Fund is funded by the generous donations of the church family. If you would like to help financially support the GSF, your donation can be dropped off at the church office and Jill will see that it is deposited to the right account.



Van Etta Library

Book Review

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry
by Rachel Joyce

Harold Fry is recently retired and lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does. He lives in complete boredom and lack of adventure. The one morning he gets a letter from a woman he used to work with and considered a friend, saying that she is in hospice and is writing to say goodbye. Starting to send a reply letter to this friend he hasn't seen for 20 years, he decides he must deliver his message to Queenie in person. Determined to walk the 600 miles to the hospice, he starts off with just a light coat, yachting shoes and a map. Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. This is a story of all the wonderful everyday things Harold discovers through the process of putting one foot in front of the other.

I hope you will enjoy this charming, thought-provoking and humorous story.

The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy
by Rachel Joyce

This is the sequel to The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, reviewed above. In this book the author brings us Harold's friend, Queenie. Queenie is on a journey herself and one that is even larger than Harold's. She wants to confess long-buried truths-about her modest childhood, her studies at Oxford, the heartbreak that brought her to the small English village and her friendship with Harold. She has kept a devastating secret from Harold for 20 years and it involves his son.

This book is guaranteed to make you laugh and cry, uplift your spirit, and surprise you with the unexpected ending.

Donated to the Van Etta Library by Gil Homstad, in memory of Alice Homstad.

Rhoda Gulso



Finance Update

Thank you so much to all who continue to make regular contributions to the General Fund of the church. With your help we have been able pay all of our bills and have made one apportionment payment so far this year, and we are hoping to be able to make a second payment soon. THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! YOU ARE ALL APPRECIATED!!!

BRF UMC Calendar of Events—March 2017



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

- 9:00 a.m.—Prayer Group
4:30-6:00 p.m.—Church Family Night Meal
6:00 p.m.—Youth Group
6:15 p.m.—Ash Wednesday Worship Service

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

- 8:30 a.m.—UM Men's Group Meeting

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

- 9:00 a.m.—Worship Service
9:20 a.m.—Sunday School
10:15 a.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

MONDAY, MARCH 6

- Pastor Kathy Day Off
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9:00 a.m.—Martha Circle Meeting
1:30 p.m.—Circle of Hope Meeting
5:15 p.m.—Youth Crisis 101 Study

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

- 5:30 p.m.—Worship Committee Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

- 9:00 a.m.—Prayer Group
10:10 a.m.—Book Club
4:30-6:00 p.m.—Church Family Night Meal
6:00 p.m.—Youth Group
6:00 p.m.—Bell Choir Practice
6:00 p.m.—Lenten Worship Café
7:00 p.m.—Spirit! Practice

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

- 5:30 p.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

- 3:00 p.m.—Mission Outreach Meeting

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

- 9:00 a.m.—Worship Service
9:20 a.m.—Sunday School
10:15 a.m.—UMC Choir Practice
10:20 a.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

MONDAY, MARCH 13

- Pastor Kathy Day Off
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
5:15 p.m.—Youth Crisis 101 Study

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

- 5:30 p.m.—Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m.—Finance Committee Meeting
6:30 p.m.—Administrative Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

- 9:00 a.m.—Prayer Group
4:30-6:00 p.m.—Church Family Night Meal
6:00 p.m.—Youth Group
6:00 p.m.—Bell Choir Practice
6:00 p.m.—Lenten Worship Café
7:00 p.m.—Spirit! Practice

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

- 5:30 p.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

- 4:30-6:00 p.m.—Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

- 9:00 a.m.—Worship Service—Family Sunday
10:15 a.m.—UMC Choir Practice
10:20 a.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

MONDAY, MARCH 20

- Pastor Kathy Day Off
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
5:15 p.m.—Youth Crisis 101 Study

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

- 5:30 p.m.—Women's Retreat Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

- 9:00 a.m.—Prayer Group
4:30-6:00 p.m.—Church Family Night Meal
6:00 p.m.—Youth Group
6:00 p.m.—Bell Choir Practice
6:00 p.m.—Lenten Worship Café
7:00 p.m.—Spirit! Practice

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

- 5:30 p.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

- 9:00 a.m.—Worship Service
9:20 a.m.—Sunday School
10:15 a.m.—UMC Choir Practice
10:20 a.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

MONDAY, MARCH 27

- Pastor Kathy Day Off
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
5:15 p.m.—Youth Crisis 101 Study

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

- 9:00 a.m.—Prayer Group
4:30-6:00 p.m.—Church Family Night Meal
6:00 p.m.—Youth Group
6:00 p.m.—Bell Choir Practice
6:00 p.m.—Lenten Worship Café
7:00 p.m.—Spirit! Practice

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

- 5:30 p.m.—Crisis 101 Small Group

