

The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church,
Kewanee

MARCH 2025

Elmira United Presbyterian
Church, Toulon

Upcoming Scripture:

- **March 9**
 - Deuteronomy 26:1-1 First Fruits
 - Luke 4:1-13 Jesus Temptation
- **March 16**
 - Philippians 3:17-4:1 Enemies of the Cross
 - Luke 13:31-35 On the Third Day I Finish My Work
- **March 23**
 - 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Do not put Christ to the test.
 - Luke 13:1-9 Parable of the Fig Tree
- **March 30**
 - 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 The New Creation
 - Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 This fellow welcomes Sinners.

Rev. Art Blegen Wife: Annabell

Phone: (910) 354-8540

Email: art.blegen@gmail.com

First Presbyterian Church Kewanee

(309) 852-2564

307 S Tremont Street

Kewanee, IL 61443

Email frontpress307@frontier.com

website: fpckewanee.org

Elmira United Presbyterian

(309) 896-3481

7874 State Rte. 93

Toulon, IL 61483

Pastor Art's Office Hours are as follows:

Tuesday and Wednesday - Kewanee church office 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Thursday – Elmira church office 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Administrative Assistant office hours in Kewanee

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.



From the Pastors Desk:

What is Lent?

On Ash Wednesday, the fifth of March, we enter the season of Lent. This season bears much similarity to Advent, including the color purple. While Advent is a time of preparation before we celebrate Christ's birth, Lent is the time of preparation before the celebration of Christ's resurrection.

We say the season lasts for forty days, but if you look at the calendar, you will see it actually lasts 46 days. The reason for this is that we don't count sabbath days. In scripture, forty days often points to times of testing and renewal. Jesus spent forty days being tempted in the wilderness. Moses spent forty days on Mt Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments. Elijah spent forty days journeying to Mt. Horeb to meet God. It rained on Noah's ark for forty days, and the Hebrews spent forty years wandering in the wilderness.

There are several traditional components of our Lenten celebration: Repentance, Prayer, Fasting/Sacrifice and Charity. All these help us prepare our hearts for Easter.

To appreciate the amazing gift of Easter, we need to look hard at the truth of our lives. Where are we falling short of God's standard? Where do we struggle with recurring sin? What parts of our lives are preventing us from coming fully into God's presence? Remember that repentance is more than feeling sorry for our sins. To be truly repentant, we need to turn away from our sinfulness and turn towards God's will for our lives. The ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday remind us of the Israelites repenting in sackcloth and ashes.

During lent, we seek to deepen our relationship with God by refocusing on our prayer life. Name the specific sins we want Jesus to remove from us and earnestly pray for him to transform our lives to meet his standards. Finding a quiet and peaceful place allows us to listen to the Holy Spirit and discern God's answers to our prayer. No matter how He answers our prayers, this time spent with God serves to fill us with joy and thanksgiving.

Much is said about fasting during lent. We are called to reflect Jesus' sacrifice by sacrificing something of our own. We may participate in a literal fast, giving up one meal a day, or a certain type of food, but we may decide to sacrifice something else, such as social media. The purpose of fasting is to remove worldly distractions and acknowledge our dependance on God. Whatever we sacrifice, it should be an act of devotion, not a religious duty.



An often-overlooked component of Lenten worship is tending to those in need. We can write checks to charities, but I always recommend tending to needs in a more active and personal way. Volunteer at soup kitchens, help neighbors with home repairs, visit those in nursing homes. Combining this with our fasting, we can take the time and resources we normally would use for our personal pleasures and use it instead to help others. This giving helps us to remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

These Lenten practices can help us grow closer to God, and closer to a deep belief that we need Him every minute of every day. None of these things will earn our salvation or make us deserve the great gift that Jesus has brought us. We remain sinners, totally undeserving of God's love. Yet scripture tells us over and over that Jesus has the power and the willingness to rescue us from ourselves. A great gift born out of the greatest love.

Grace & Peace!
Rev Art Blegen

Memory Verse: Luke 15: 29-32

- ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.
- ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!
- ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.
- ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Memorization of Scripture should never be seen as a burden, but as a way to grow closer to God. Psalm 1 tells us that our "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law [we] meditate day and night." With that in mind, try to memorize one verse of the following passage each week. If you struggle with memorization, don't worry about it. Spend some time reading and thinking about each verse. When we get to this passage at the end of the month, God's words will already be alive in your heart.

Prayer Prompt:

Father in heaven, I tend to be proud and insist on my own way, help me to love others who are different from me...

At First Presbyterian Church of Kewanee, we commit ourselves to worshipping God, growing spiritually together, and reflecting Christ in our daily lives.

KEWANEE SESSION NEWS

Approval of Pastor Blegen's vacation March 10-17th.
Paster Blegen and Elder Bill Scott attended February Presbytery meeting via zoom.

January's Mission collected \$220 for the Ministerial Association.

Annual Spring garage and bake sale will be held Saturday May 10.



LENT SERVICE SCHEDULE

March 5th, Ash Wednesday in Kewanee beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday night Lent services will all be at 6:30 p.m. at the following churches:

March 12	Elmira
March 19	Kewanee
March 26	Elmira
April 2	Kewanee
April 9	Elmira
Maundy Thursday	Kewanee
Good Friday	Elmira



MISSION FOR MARCH IS ABILITIES PLUS

Abilities Plus strives to promote opportunities that result in independence and active decision making for people with disabilities and their families. Abilities Plus provides assistance to people in the community who care for an individual with a disability. Respite services give caregivers an opportunity to leave their loved ones in the care of trained professionals while they tend to other matters. Ability Plus also facilitates home-based support, which provides assistance to those who act as the primary caregiver for an individual with a disability.



ST PATRICK'S DAY ADULT FELLOWSHIP

Since we had to cancel our Valentine's Day, adult fellowship get together because of the cold weather, we will be doing a St. Partick Day fellowship on Sunday, March 16th in the West Minister Hall **following the church service. (Please note change of time.)** We will be having soup, sandwiches and dessert for supper. We ask that you bring whatever you signed up for the February fellowship. So far we have four different kinds of soup, three desserts, cheese and crackers. If you would like to bring something for the supper, or if you would just like to join in, please call or email the office.



50+ YEAR MEMBER RECOGNITION

We will be recognizing our 50+ members during church on March 16th. Roger & Melanie will be hosting a coffee

hour after the service in the John Calvin Room following the service. These members are as follows:

Janet Huber – 72 years
Kathy Crowell – 60 years
Niles Reamer – 68 years
Dianne Lindstrom – 66 years
Kent Vigor – 65 years
Ida Meyer – 60 years
Janie Metscaviz – 60 years
Judy Hankins – 58 years
Chuck Orwig – 58 years
Fran Newman – 55 years
Sheila Reamer – 55 years
Frank Marselle – 54 years
Janet Verstraete – 54 years
Mike Marselle – 54 years
Michele Wentworth – 53 years
Roger & Melanie Johnston – 52 years
Terri Wolfe – 50 years



YARD SALE INFORMATION

It's time to start getting your spring cleaning done!! We will be having our yard/bake sale this year on Saturday, May 10th. We have decided to just have one yard sale a year instead of two. You can bring your items anytime you want as we have plenty of room in the bazaar room and the closet off the stage. For the bake sale, you can bring whatever you like from cookies to popcorn balls. All donations are very much appreciated and will help with the finances of the church. If you have any questions, you can contact any of the committee members.

Fund Raising Committee
Lanny Anderson, Chair
Janie, Terri and Lisa



USHERS FOR MARCH

Thank you to everyone that has signed up to usher. We have a full sign-up sheet for March. They are as follows:

March 2, Roger & Melanie (Communion)
March 9, Donna & Fran
March 16, Janie & Mary Janie
March 23, Donna & Fran
March 30, Niles & Sheila

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 – Gretchen Hull
10 – Cindy Martin
18 – Lanny Anderson
22 – Roger Bates
23 – Carolyn Anderson

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

21 – Pastors Art & Annabell

PRAYER CONCERNS

Baker, Lisandra – stroke
Behnke, Tommie Jane – health problems

Bennett, Cody – car accident, grandson of Vicki Bennett
Bock, Lauren – 14-year-old diagnosed with leukemia,
Wendy Smith's, friend's daughter
Bornstein, Jaimee – stage 4 cancer – cancer is in remission
Bowman, Jeff, and Peg – cancer
Butler, Rich – health problems
Bridgewater, Kari – seizure disorder
Brown, Jeff – health problems friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Craig, Clifford – recovering from heart surgery
Cruse, Lynette – leukemia
Diane – health issues
Don & Jan – health problems, Bill & Ruth Anne's friend
Donavon, Kevin - cancer – friend of Chris & Curt Reeves
Duncan – health issues
Edelman, Dave – health problems and Sharon for his care
Evans, Dan – health problems
Faber, Peggy – MS and dementia
Ferkel, Randy – recurrence of cancer
Feldner, Hannah – recovering from eye surgery
Fryer, Alvah – breast cancer, friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Gasaway, Larry – health problems, friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Good, Billie – Health issues
Harding, Jack, Robert, Richard & Susan – health problems
Heane, Jeremy – tumor and angina
Huber, Denny – recovering from hip replacement Janet Huber's son
Huber Karessa _ - health problems, Janet Huber's daughter-in-law
Huber, Mallery – needs extra prayers for her lupus
Huggins, Cindy – health problems
Jackson, Estavan – health problems, Annabell's grandson
Johnson, Clay – many health problems
Johnson, Jerri – health problems
Johnston, Don – recovering from brain surgery, Roger's brother
Johnston, Melanie – broken right arm and Roger for Melanie's care
Larson, Ken – health problems,, friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Lindstrom, Madeline – health issues
Lloyd, Carla – recovering heart surgery, Pastor Annabell's cousin
Martin, Anna – daughter of Freddie Martin, Jr. has MS
Marselle, Frank – health problems
McCullough, Kathryn – health problems
Miller, Bob – recovering from 3rd surgery Mary Jane's brother
Naslund, Ron – health problems, friend Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Newell, Nylan – 7-year-old has Lorenzo's Oil Disease (ALD)
Olson, Rusty – inoperable tumor
O'Neill, Kay – her family
Pease, Mark - infection
Perrin, Steve & Debby – health problems
Reeves, Curt – knee surgery
Scott, Gene – has MS- wife Rowann – health issues

Scott, Ruth Anne – health problems
Skinner, Dave – health problems
Smith, Wendy – good, on-going test results
Stacie – pancreatic cancer, Mary Jane’s friend
Stead, Tim – heart problems, Chris & Lisa’s cousin
Thompson, Michael – stamina
Thron, Butch – serious health problems
Thurston, Elmer – health problems
Wade, Lori (Scott) – MS & diabetes
Ward, Debi – congestive heart failure, Lanny & Carolyn’s niece
Ward, Dona – Parkinson
Welgat, Nick – stage 4 lung cancer Abby Hamilton’s brother
Wentworth, Al – health problems
Wentworth, Michele – continuing health problems
Winter, Debbie – health problems
Williams, Alan – many health problems, Annabelle’s brother
Wood, Chris – cancer
Wolf, Jackie – health problems

– **Elmira United Presbyterian Church, we will continue to be a thriving faith community reaching out to our community and the world.**

OUR MISSION OUTREACH in February was taking a special collection for a family that lost their home in the San Francisco area fires; the family is related to Dorothy Reed from the Elmira, Osceola area. A check for \$1,000 was sent to the family to help them start to rebuild. Not a lot of money when you are starting over, but it is a beginning and our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and their journey ahead.

SESSION NEWS: Permission asked by Sydney and Addison Ryan to have Hudson Ryan baptized soon. Sunday, February 16 Linda Grant was installed and Caitlyn Ryan was ordained as new Deacons. during morning worship. Laurie Steger will be ordained as an Elder at a later date. Carissa Currier will be starting a new Young Women's Bible Study/Friendship Circle at the EUPC> First meeting will be Thursday March 6 at 6:30 pm. There is a playroom available for children. This is a non-denominational group; come join us for scripture, knowledge, fellowship and support. Everyone is welcome.

To be prepared for a medical emergency at church we will be receiving an AED. A training session for learning to use this piece of equipment will take place on Thursday, February 27 at 6:30 pm at the EUPC. Please join us in training!

Vacation time was granted Pastor Art from March 10-17, including Sunday, March 16.

We are preparing for an Easter treat for each family in our congregation.

Deacon's news:

We are preparing for an Easter treat for each family in our congregation. The reorganizational meeting of the EUPC Deacons took place after worship service on Sunday, February 23. Dawn Milburn was elected to continue as

Chairman. Betty Oliver will be secretary and Session liaison. Kay Grieve will serve on the nominating committee. Cindy Milburn will collect for People in Need Sunday. Sydney Ryan will be our card sender. Discussion was held and with the Session's recommendation Deacons will work on forming a visitation committee. Committee will be composed of 1 Deacon, 1 Elder and 2 members from the congregation. The purpose of the committee is to visit the sick and shut-ins of our congregation; if this is something you have an interest in, please contact one of the Deacons. Kay Grieve volunteered to fill the Deacons spot.



Stark Co 2025 LENTEN SERVICE schedule: All services at 5:30. Light meal before service.

3/5/25 Ash Wednesday meet at Congregational Church-Wyoming
 3/9/25 Lenten Service First Baptist Toulon Rev. Art Blegen
 3/16/25 Lenten Service Toulon Methodist John Sipf
 3/23/25 Lenten Service Leet Methodist Bradford Shawna
 3/30/25 Lenten Service Toulon Congregational Dan
 4/06/25 Lenten Service Elmira at Toulon Congregational speaker will be provided
 4/13/25 Lenten Service Nazarene Church Rebecca
 4/17/25 Maundy Thursday Wyoming Methodist none
 4/18/25 Good Friday Elmira Tenebrae
 4/20/25 Paramount Theatre-Wyoming Al

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4 – Sally (Currier) Corrigan
 5 – Shelby (Steger) Alexander
 12 – Hudson Ryan
 22 – Carl Ryan
 24 – Alex Horinka
 31 – Jameison Wright

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

21 – Pastor Art & Annabell Blegen

SEND CARDS TO:

Donald Oliver	Lois Seger
860 Sunset Drive	3121 Macineery Dr. #110
Box 112	Council Bluff IA 51501
Kewanee IL 61443	

Barb Shambaugh
 203 Willow Street
 LaFayette IL 61449







PRAYER CONCERNS

Abbineti, Dave & Lisa
Barnhold, Debbie
Bayer, Peggy Grant
Bean, Cecelia

Beck, Lia
Bennett, Cody
Bennet, Matt & Chris
Bishop, Jeremy
Bishop, Sonna
Bickhauser, Angie
Brady, Dean
Brattie, Nancy
Bimmerle, Mike & Annette
Campbell, Nich & Jenny
Carlson, Mike
Campbell, Jennie
Chapman, Frank
Clark, Gloria
Cline, Kaitlyn
Cook, Dave
Collette, Brian
Currier, Ron
Daniels, Eunice & Tom
Dennis, Chrystal
Dienst, Rodney
Donavan, Kevn
Doran, Amanda
Dybdal, Maryann
Dykeman, Carla
Ehnle, Dean
Eddy, Jack
Elliott, Debbie
Emily, Ellie
Foglesong, Carolyn
Fogelsonger, Pat
Fry, Matthew
German, Brenda
Gjeramo, Luann
Goodall, Pat
Grant, Austin
Grant, Dave
Green, Allison
Greene, Samantha
Green, Ken
Grieve, Kay
Heminger, Jeff
Hotchkiss-Kucukas, Diane
Hulslander, Donna
Jackson, Estevan
Jackson, Lisa & David
Jacobson, Del
Johnson, Alex
Jones, Noah
Kemmerer, Bob
King, Judy
Klieft, Wanda
Klien, Kaitlyn
Lindstrom, Diane
Maher, Jack
Maddie, Joyce
Marshall, Maggie

May, Scott
McGill, Mary
McGinnis, Debby
Milburn, Dave & Family
Milburn, Cindy
Miller, Bob
Miller, Carol
Minton, Tom
Mirocha, Marty
Montooth, Tim
Nelson, Dan
Nelson, Paul
Parish, Brandon
Parish, Jim
Parker, Jim & Arlene
Perkins, Kathleen Grant
Peters, Julie
Pope Francis
Pullen, Whitney
Rose, Sue
Russell, Melissa
Sandy & Beth
Schaeffer, Bob
Scott, Gene
Seckman, Marilyn
Seeger, Lois
Sellnow, Celina
Sinkovich, Cindy
Smallee, Kaylee
Smith, Charlie
Sovey, Angela
Shanklin, Sophia
Shipp, Matthew & Matt
Steward, Karen
Talbot, Ben
Thurston, "Sy" & Gary
Tolley, Joe & Jenna
VanVoren, Rev Patrick & Pat
Verbout, Nancy
Welgat, Nick
Wentworth, Al & Michelle
West, Emily
Williamson, Larry
Whittaker, Rob
Wilkinson, Katheryn
Wilkinson, Patty
Williams, Alan
Wilson, David
Wilson, Nancy
Woods, Chris
Joe, Jenna, Kathy, Olivia, Katie, Emily, Cassia,
Kypton, Jessica, Josalyn Hailey & Sophia

MARCH 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
<p>2 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m. Communion for both churches</p>	3	4	<p>5 Ash Wednesday service Kewanee 6:30 p.m.</p> 	6	7	8
<p>9 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m. Daylight Saving time begins.</p>	10	11	<p>12 Lent Service Elmira 6:30 p.m.</p> 	13		15
<p>16 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>St Patrick's Day</p>	18	<p>19 Lent Service Kewanee 6:30 p.m.</p> 	<p>20 Kewanee Session Meeting 6:00 p.m.</p>  <p>First day of Spring</p>	21	22
<p>23 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	24	25	<p>26 Lent Service Elmira 6:30 p.m.</p> 	27	28	29
<p>30 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Elmira Session meeting Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Service 11:00 a.m.</p>						