

## *A Word from Pastor Shayne...*

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

(Isaiah 58: 5-9, 12)

We're now entering the season of Lent. Most Christians think of fasting, abstaining from food or something else, as a means of preparing our hearts for Easter. Ultimately, the goal during Lent is the same as it is during all the year; coming to know God better and serve our Savior with joy. The above text is a lectionary text for Ash Wednesday. Verse 8 seems to suggest that mission work is the key to our spiritual development and healing.

My own experience bears this out. I think my first mission experience was visiting lonely seniors in a nursing home with my first grade Sunday School class. I don't remember anything Mrs. Bowman might have told us, but I do know that those seniors were smiling after we visited. Giving other people joy can be transformative and an essential part of our faith life. I experienced this more fully when I went on a mission trip to El Salvador. There I helped dig ditches for a new church's water supply. I also got to distribute food and pray with people who were truly living on the edge. Seeing how grateful folks were for my simple acts changed my heart. In his new book, *Reckless Love*, Tom Berlin says committing to loving our neighbor [through mission] helps us "learn what it means to fully love God. The reason is that nothing reveals what keeps us from fully loving God and growing in the likeness of Christ like attempting to love our neighbor." This Lent, I encourage you to love your neighbor through mission. Hopefully we'll have some opportunities to do this as we welcome our new mission partner, The Math & Science Center. I also encourage you to pursue other opportunities in our neighborhood.

*Pastor Shayne*



## *Ash Wednesday*

Start Lent off well with an  
In-person Ash  
Wednesday Service  
@ Central UMC  
Wed, March 2nd, noon

## *Lenten Bible Study*

Tuesdays, starting March 8th  
at 6:30 p.m.  
Please contact Pastor Shayne if  
you're interested.

You can access the studies  
via Zoom @:

[www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)  
Meeting ID: 822 4288 3401  
Passcode: 049295  
Phone Access: +1 301 715 8592

## **Easter Offering**

It's time for our annual Easter Offering! Our goal this year is \$12,000. We invite you to consider God's many blessings this year and make a faithful gift to support Central as a landmark of God's love in Manchester and beyond.

## **Food Pantry**

Every 1st Sunday we collect non-perishable food items to support the local food pantry ministry of our neighbor Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Perry St. If you wish to send a monetary donation, you may send it to the church office.

## **March & April Birthdays**

Bill Duncan 3/11  
Jean Grizzard 3/13  
Clem Pollok 3/18  
Lisa Nuchols 3/25  
(our missionary)

*We're sending birthday hugs your way!*

If we missed you or don't have your birthday,  
please let us know!

