

# First Light Newsletter

A Monthly Publication

February 2024



## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 11 (immediately after worship service). Annual Reports Booklets are located outside the sanctuary.

## HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7



## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 14

7pm

Church Sanctuary

In Recognition of The President's Holiday,  
the Front Office Will Be Closed on Monday, February 19



The First Light Newsletter is published monthly by the Fairbanks First Presbyterian Church. To submit an article, please email to Marta by the 25th of the month.

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*Happy*

1 *Sarah Morris*

2 *Danny Sheets*

4 *Chloe Albert*

7 *Russ Vander Lugt*

7 *Hayden Masterson*

7 *Esmeralda Sheets*

8 *Henry Hull*

8 *Diane Henry*

9 *Austin Foster*

12 *Samuel Craft*

13 *David Jones*

15 *Autumn Vander Lugt*

15 *Lily Sunderland*

17 *Christina Repasky*

19 *Ellucia Boswell*

20 *Lonny Marney*

24 *Dale Feist*

26 *Merle Fortune ))*

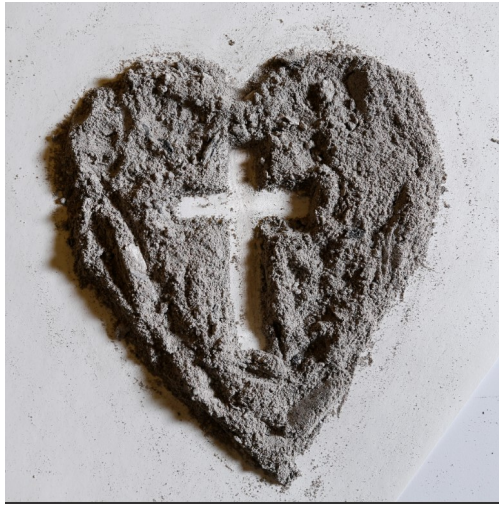
*Birthday!!*

## Altar Flowers

It's a wonderful way to get to know one another as we celebrate, grieve, or remember special dates together with our friends? If you would like to make a flower request, please place your request on the Flower Altar Log on the bulletin board (in the lobby), or contact Sarah Albert or Marta Conner (front desk) for assistance.

## Ash Wednesday, Valentine's Day, and Lent

Calendars are strange, and they only get stranger as more and more cultures merge or contribute and share with one another. The calendar that we use borrows from ancient Jewish, Roman, Norse, Germanic, and other cultures. Our date for Easter is determined by finding the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. We are merging the solar and lunar calendars, and the process is influenced by the original Jewish calendar for determining the dates of the Passover Festival (which you will recall was happening during Jesus' Last Supper, arrest, crucifixion, and Resurrection).



But this month we have another strange clash in our calendar. Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday are both February 14<sup>th</sup>. Valentine the saint, for whom the holiday draws its name, has little bearing on our culture's celebration of the day. Valentinus lived over 1800 years ago and was a martyr who cared for persecuted Christians in central Italy before himself being martyred. Today, Valentine's Day at its best is a celebration of both friendly and romantic love and an opportunity for giving gifts and sharing notes that express love, affection, and appreciation for the people who love us while Valentine's Day at its worst is a celebration of everything broken in our culture's views of sexuality: lust, insincerity, commercialism, and unwarranted obligation.

Ash Wednesday stands in stark contrast. Ash Wednesday is a foretaste of the death to come: both the humiliating and scandalous death of Jesus Christ on the cross, but also the death that each and every one of us must face at the end of

our mortal lives. It is an echo of the humble cry of Abraham before God Himself when Abraham declares "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes (Genesis 18:27)." It is a reminder that for all the glory and eternal goodness that awaits those who are in Christ when we have joined Him in the Resurrection, there is still much pain, suffering, and yes, death in each day of our life on earth.

We do not apply ashes to the foreheads of only the oldest or most sickly members of our congregation. We apply them to each and every brother and sister in Christ; I still remember my first time leading an Ash Wednesday service and marking the forehead of my dear friend's newborn son and saying the words "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

As somber as Ash Wednesday is, it is not meant to be a day devoid of hope or love. Quite the opposite, in fact! The full truth of Ash Wednesday is that we are sinners doomed to die, yes. But we are sinners with a savior: a Savior who enters into the very core of our life, the ashy pit of our soul. Christ became fully human so that we might have a Savior, a God who fully knows us at our best, and especially at our worst. Jesus Christ loves us enough to sit in the ashes with us, to suffer with us, to weep with us, and finally to die for us. The full truth of Ash Wednesday is that we are but dust, and to dust we shall return. But dust is what God started with (Genesis 1:26-2:7), and we know that God makes *wonderful* things from dust!

**Pastor David ~~~**





# CHILDREN'S ministry



Dear First Pres Folks,  
Praise God for the safety of the Hulls: Ben and Lynn, Ellie and Nathanael, Silas and Henry, Baby Isaiah. There is no bigger news in our ministry than this. We are so happy to have them back in our midst on Sundays.

We've been studying the fruit of the spirit in the Sunday School since November. Each week we hold up another person in scripture: Ruth shows love, Joseph shows goodness, Isaiah gives us a picture of true joy. It is good to teach this way and these stories from scripture are precious.

This month however, this rotten January of fire and funerals and Covid and sewer water, I got to discover the fruits in a whole new way: I have seen all the fruits come to life in my friends and neighbors. The Holy Spirit is putting on a living pageant of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. God has been glorified over and over as those fruits show themselves in those who love Him.

I made a list today and began to note where I'd seen each fruit (I've been crying a lot today). There were a lot of beautiful memories, and I hope I get to share some more with you, but I'll share the one that hits me hardest: faithfulness. My best definition of faithfulness is: actions that come from the gift of faith, of believing God and trusting in His goodness.

I was privileged to see Lynn Hull the day after the fire. At one point, while she recalled quiet evenings in her beautiful home, she stopped suddenly, looked across the counter we shared, and said with wonder and love on her face: "I prayed every night for my children to be safe, and He answered my prayer." That is faith: God's power in her, bearing beautiful fruit.

Thank you to Lynn, for sharing that, and thank you church, for sticking close to Jesus and letting him grow those fruits in you. I encourage you to sit down and make your own list. God is good, and in the midst of real life which is sometimes drenched in tears, children are being shown the glory of God.



*Carrie*

# O COME TO THE ALTAR

## Genesis 35:3

FPC Youth and Young Adult Ministry

### NOTES FROM NICOLE

First Pres,

Wow - you continue to blow me away. Your warm welcome will mark my heart forever. When I look at you I see the hands and feet of Jesus! I can't imagine living anywhere else or serving alongside another body.

In my first 31 days living in Alaska:

- my kids' flight was delayed three times
- a church member found her heavenly home
- two earthquakes
- multiple -40 days
- a church family lost their home to a fire
- the building experienced water and pipe damage
- I got VERY stuck in snow

I'm sure I'm missing something but it was a very eventful start to the New Year. Each of these events only further solidified my belief we're in exactly the right place because you guys didn't blink - instead you rose to action. You all are testimony of what it means to demonstrate the work of God.

The verse for the Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the next eighteen months is Genesis 35:3. The word for God in this text is Elohim. Elohim means: God, great, judge, mighty. These are all reflections I see in you. When tragedy or misfortune strikes you all rise up in MIGHT to care for the members of this body and our community. I hope as time continues you find these reflections made evident within our Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

If you have any questions about upcoming changes or would like to volunteer to mentor with us please give me a call (205) 914 - 6281, send me an e-mail [nicolefirstpresfbx@gmail.com](mailto:nicolefirstpresfbx@gmail.com), or visit in office Monday - Thursday 9:15 - 3:15. Thank you for the opportunity to serve alongside you; it's the privilege of a lifetime.

For the good and God,  
-Nicole

### FEBRUARY EVENTS

Sunday Mornings @ 9:00 a.m. - Meet in Youth Room for Prayer (all Young Adult Members)

Sunday, February 11 @ 6:30 p.m. - Worship Night (all Young Adult Members) \*\*\*WE WILL NOT MEET DIRECTLY AFTER CHURCH. WE have Congregational meeting. Come back after the Super Bowl for Worship.

Thursday Nights @ 6:30 - Career meet for dinner and bible study at Nicole's House

Tuesday, February 13th @ 5:30 - Fellowship Hall, Fat Tuesday Fellowship Dinner (all Young Adult Members)

Monday, February 19th @ 10:00 a.m. - Game Day in the Youth Room (High School and College)

Tuesday, February 20th @ 10:00 a.m. - Youth Room Clean Up Day (High School and College)

Wednesday, February 21st @ 5:30 - 7:00, The WELL in the Fellowship Hall (all Young Adult Members)

### DONATIONS + VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Lanterns or candelabras
- Metal storage baskets
- Brown, Grey, White fleece blankets
- Battery Operated Pillar Candles & Tea Lights
- Snacks for Sunday
- Mentors for Highschool and College programs





**DATE CHANGE!**



## THE FPC TALENT SHOW IS COMING!

*ARE YOU READY?*

COMEDY, SKITS, MUSIC, POETRY ~ WE WANT IT ALL!  
Many famous entertainers got their start at the  
FPC Talent Show...or not

New Date: Friday, March 8, 7:00pm in the  
Sanctuary

Contact Jerry Cleworth at: 907-452-6461 (days) or  
907-452-5551 (evenings/weekends) to sign up your act.



Could you help out at The Well on February 21? Because a group that intended to volunteer that evening had to drop out, we need three or four volunteers to help serve and clean up. The time commitment would be approximately from 5:45 until 7:45. If you have been wondering whether The Well is a place where you could live out Jesus' command to love others, this is a great opportunity to try it out.

If you are interested or are willing to commit, text or call Paul Reichardt (907-347-3214).

## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

The group meets for lunch on Monday's at 11:45 in the Narthex at FPC. Come and enjoy a time to fellowship, to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon and to discuss upcoming events. Bring a lunch! For more information, contact Jim Aldrich 907-378-2582 or [jwaldrich@gmail.com](mailto:jwaldrich@gmail.com).

### Prayer and Support Time

All are welcome for a time to intercede for our world, nation, community, church family and friends, each Tuesday, beginning at 12:15p

### Life Study Group

Lead by Paul and Terry Reichardt, each Thursday from 6:30-8:30p, a light dinner is provided.

### Food Boxes Distribution

Food Boxes are distributed each Wednesday. To make a request, please call the church's front office on Wednesdays mornings, 10am-12pm. Pickup is from 1:30-4pm

### Al-Anon Meetings

FPC Library, Mondays and Fridays, 12:15-2pm

### Ways To Give

In Person	worship service, office visit
Mail	547 7th Avenue Fairbanks, AK 99701
Online	<a href="http://fairbanksfirstpres.com">fairbanksfirstpres.com</a>

Our *VISION* is to see the world transformed to love, worship and serve Christ.

We do this through our *MISSION*, which is to welcome all people, equip them for a deep and living faith in Jesus Christ, and send them into the world to share God's love.

