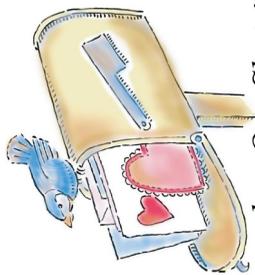


Pastor
Rev. Kerra English

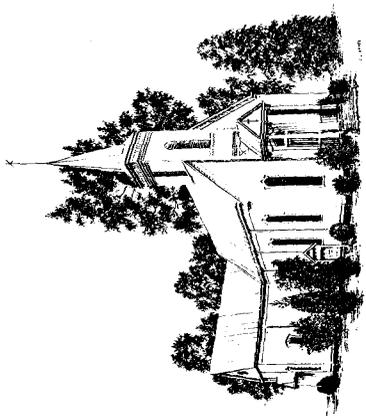
Secretary
Susan Vitale

Director of Music
Karla Bloom

Organist
Elizabeth Hargrove



*Remember Our Shut-ins
on Valentine's Day*



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ASHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

401 Virginia Street
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Ashland Presbyterian Church

APC Connections

Volume 8, Issue 5

February 2016

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 7—Souper Bowl of Caring Offering; Circles of Ashland 12:15 PM
- Feb. 9—11 AM PW Circle/Links of Love Offering
- Feb. 10—Service for the Imposition of Ashes 6 PM
- Feb. 14—Lenten Series begins 9:30
- Feb. 20—Edwards/Tkac wedding 3:30
- Feb. 21—12:15 PM Triple “S” Lunch
- Feb. 27— Black History Celebration at UBC 3 PM
- Feb. 28—12:15 PM Session mtg.

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Pastor’s Page

The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of all shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

Friends,

Not long ago, I was asked as a “small church pastor” by a “big church pastor” what I was doing to help “grow” the church. I may have been reading into it, but the subtext seemed to be that small churches that aren’t gaining in numbers and finances must be dying and a real drag to serve as a pastor. This idea is perpetuated in almost all shrinking mainline denominations, and now also in declining evangelical denominations who are all getting more and more anxious about losing their market share of Christian contributors. Seeing “the numbers” seems to be such a big concern.

And yet, it’s funny to me that Jesus, who is talking about something as important as the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, is willing to compare God’s whole kingdom to things like a mustard seed and a bit of yeast. The Kingdom of Heaven is wrapped up in something small, something seemingly insignificant, and yet he tells us that the impact of these tiny things can be tremendous.

I wish I had thought to make such a comparison as “big church pastor” was expecting an answer from me, but thinking

“What does it mean for a church that knows how to be the yeast in the loaf to add rise, and flavor, and texture to our whole community?”

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about it now, I am grateful and humbled to serve a church that is more like the yeast kneaded into the dough. What I find fascinating about serving in the small, vibrant church is that a very few people CAN make a very large difference in the community. That's not "church growth" stuff; that's "kingdom of heaven" stuff. The Kingdom is present whenever and wherever God's work is being done. It doesn't have to be all big and flashy. It may be in something small, a well-timed phone call, a warm pot of chili for Caritas, a sidewalk shoveled in time for AA to meet. It may bring new people to worship with us, it may not, but the growth of God's Kingdom does NOT depend upon how many people are counted as present on Sunday morning. Imagine that!

Over the next year (2016), I'd like for us as a church to do some thinking and praying about how it is that we share the good news. How do we offer the Kingdom of Heaven to our neighbors? Yes, that means I want to talk about evangelism. What does it mean for a church that knows how to be the yeast in the loaf to add rise, and flavor, and texture to our whole community?

I plan to use the newsletter as a way of reflecting on what it means to be evangelists, good news tellers who represent Jesus to others who may or may not have heard anything about him.

Jesus himself taught in parables and stories. I think we do that too. So I hope we will begin to tell and share our story, the story of God's love that has come to us through this particular family of faith. This won't be a church growth program, at least not a typical one, but it may be a way for us to grow together by imagining how God is using us to make a nest for those without a spiritual home, or to inspire people to use their gifts three times greater than they ever would have thought before.

God's peace, and blessing, and inspiration to you all, Pastor Kerra



February 7, 2016

Your canned goods and monetary donations go towards alleviating hunger! Please give generously!



**Service for the Imposition of Ashes
Ash Wednesday,
February 10 at 6:00 p.m.**

Usher and Greeter Schedule

	GREETERS	USHERS	COMMUNION ELDERS	COMMUNION PREP & CLEANUP	LITURGIST	FLOWERS	
2/07/16	J. Glazebrook	B. Mathes, T. Blair	S. & M. Carneal, L. Herring, E. Shea	K. Basilio, S. Henderson	M. Miller	Allison	
2/14/16	S. Henderson	C. Sthreshley, M. Summerson	<i>REMEMBER, If you cannot serve, please find a replacement and leave a message on the office phone, 798-5543.</i>				Huff
2/21/16	L. Herring	R. Cole, J. Tate				K. English	
2/28/16	S. Huff	R. English, S. & D. Moncol, C. Phillips					Coddington
3/06/16	F. Hughes	B. Mathes, V. Neeley	T. Blair, B. Shea, C. & F. Sthreshley	S. Carneal, J. Glazebrook		E. Simpson, D. Coddington	



Happy Birthday to:

February

- 3 Drew Moncol
- 6 Karen Cole
- 8 Jamie Doyle
Clara Shea Totten
- 9 Terry Blair
- 12 Melissa Miller
- 15 Judy Aderhold
- 29 Doreen Coddington



On Wednesday, December 23 during the "Eve of Christmas Eve Deluge", choir members visited Betty Carswell at Alpha House for some cheery Christmas caroling! What a special treat! Thanks choir!

(Continued from page 3)

Food on the Rails

Don't forget to bring canned or boxed goods the first Sunday of every month and place on the rail. Our pantry is looking good but our Easter food basket distribution is just around the corner. Don't want to lug those heavy cans to church? We will be glad to take gift cards which we will use to buy canned meat and some perishable items for our baskets. — Delores Dunn, Outreach Committee Chair



Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, **February 9 at 11:00 a.m.** at the home of Emily Pepper, 157 Arlington Square, Ashland for study (Lesson 5) and lunch. Bring a sandwich. Beverages and dessert are provided.. An offering for Links of Love will be received. This offering goes to help residents of the Sunnyside community.

Triple "S" Luncheon, Sunday, February 21



The Congregational Care Committee is sponsoring a Soup, Salad, and Speaker Luncheon on Sunday, **February 21 at 12:15 p.m.** in Lancaster Hall. Join us as guest speaker Woody Tucker presents "Ashland During the Civil War: Interesting Facts You May Not Know."



Black History Month Celebration

3:00 p.m. Saturday, February 27

Union Baptist Church, 310 N. Snead Street

Union Baptist Church, worshipping home of Shelby and Sylvester Coleman, is holding a celebration of Black History Month on Saturday, February 27 at 3:00 p.m. The celebration will feature singing groups The Soul Seekers and The Walker Family. In addition, the Rev. Mallory will recite Dr. King's "I Have a Dream . . ." speech. A dinner will be served following the program. All are invited to join them in celebration and fellowship!

"I Have
a Dream..."



"Life in the Lord's Prayer" Lead by Melissa Miller Sunday, January 31 and February 7

On January 31 and February 7, our intern Melissa Miller will be leading a study on "Life in the Lord's Prayer". Printed items will be available in the Narthex (or by request) for anyone attending class or interested in the material.

Lenten Lecture Series Lead by Sandi Goehring Sunday, February 14 — Sunday, March 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Why do Christian beliefs and practices vary so among churches and denominations, as well as among individual Christians? During this year's Lenten Lecture Series we will explore several religious activities that we as Christians practice to express our relationship with God and our experience with divine power, such as worship times and spaces, religious symbols and myths, sacred rituals and sacraments, scripture and sacred writings, and Christian community and diversity.

Each of these activities forms the foundation for certain Christian beliefs, so we will consider these activities as we have observed or experienced them. And finally, we will ponder how they have been applied at various times and places, as well as how, and if, we can apply them as we go forward in our faith journey, together.

Outreach Committee Report: Circles Ashland—February 7

Dave Cooper, the director of Circles Ashland, will be speaking at a special program after church on Sunday, February 7, in Lancaster Hall. Circles Ashland is an organization whose goal is to work with people living in poverty in our area who want to work to move up to a sustainable income and provide better conditions for themselves and their families.

The group is looking for individuals and organizations to serve on a number of strategic teams as the logistics of how best to serve the needs of Ashland are determined. Volunteers are also needed to work one-on-one with individuals to provide emotional support and encouragement. Training will be provided for those who wish to take on that role.

Come to hear more details. Refreshments will be provided.

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