

# Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD

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## A MESSAGE FOR MARCH

Rev. Calvin T. Jones  
Matthew 3: 13 - 17

Let the words of my mouth, the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, my rock and my redeemer. For the few minutes that I have with you, I promise you I won't keep you long, I would like to place a tag upon the text that you have heard for it constitutes the context from which we will attempt to teach and preach. It's time to tell God yes. It's time to respond with yes to God.

Beloved, there is a special assignment for each of you. God has anointed and called each of you. In a world where there are over 7 billion people, you, yes, you have been called with purpose, called to change the world, called to transform society, called to make an impact, called with a unique and distinct calling. Called with an assignment from God, called with a great mission. Yes, you and

you and you and you and you and you have been called. And if you do not answer that calling, if you do not fulfill your God-given task, if you do not say yes to God, you will go a lifetime attempting to fill the voids of your heart. You will go a lifetime attempting to live in the shadows of others. You will go a lifetime attempting to be drunken by the pleasures of false gratifications of this world. Will you say yes to God?

Beloved, there is a task that only you can do. And I know that may sound like a cliché, but I can hear God saying to you that there is a task that only you can do. God is calling you and you and you. God is inviting you during this season of Lent to search the chambers of your heart and say, "God, what is it that you would have me to do? What is my divine purpose?" In the words of Howard Thurman, "There is in every one of you that waits, listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself, and if you cannot hear it, you will find whatever it is for what you are searching for and if you hear it and then do not follow it, it was better that you were never born. The sound of the genuine is flowing through each of you."

Do not ignore the call. Do not be deceived and thrown off by all the noises that are around you. Do you hear that pull this morning? Do you hear the pull? Do you feel the pull, that gut-wrenching uneasiness that you have been feeling, the troubling of your soul, the yearning, that wanting more? Am I talking to anybody here today? God is calling you higher. Maybe God is just waiting on you to say, "Yes, I will do it." No matter who you are, no matter where you are from, no matter how young you are, no matter how old you are, no matter where you are in life, God is calling for you to say yes. When we say yes to God, there is fear of the unknown. There is fear of the journey ahead. There is fear of the warfare that may come with it. There is fear of the trials that may come.

Will people like me if I say yes? Will I lose friends if people say yes? I'm sure that some of you all in here know that it is difficult sometimes to say yes to God. You may say, "Maybe I'm going to wait until another year." Y'all don't want to be real. Maybe I will wait until another time. Maybe I've said the other day, "I'm going to wait until the weather is clear. No one will hear me. No one will accept me. I do not have the money or the accolades or the accomplishments of others," but God is calling on you and he's saying you are the right one for the job.

And as we are in this season of Lent, a time of repentance, prayer, fasting, reflection, and inward changing,

God is calling us to say yes. Yes to some things we don't want to say yes to, yes to some actions that we don't want to perform, but God is calling you now to a great place. And as we journey with Jesus to Jerusalem, we look to Jesus who was in the midst of uncertainty, but he says yes to God's mission and assignment.

But how many of y'all know that sometimes when you say yes to God, there are going to be challenges in your life that you never asked for. When you stand up for who God has called you to be, there's going to be hell in your life. Well, I wish I had a talk back church this morning. When you say yes to God, sometimes it's going to be lonely. When you say yes to God, sometimes it's going to feel like you are all by yourself. Y'all don't want to hear me preach.

However, maybe, just maybe God is calling you to walk a lonely walk. However, in this text, we find the exemplar of what it means to say yes. This week we find a Jesus who after 30 years of preparation in ministry arrives at his ordination service. Yes, he has a new robe. Y'all want to talk back. Jesus is excited. He has reached the greatest day of his life. This is the official beginning of his public ministry. Jesus' cousin is baptizing him. And the balcony of heaven responds and says, "Behold, beloved, this is my beloved son who I am well pleased." And in the Greek it says the heavens literally were ripped upon, hallelujah, and heaven, it made an announcement that this is the Son of God.

But however, as I try to wrap this thing up, as Jesus begins, hallelujah, to be baptized, immediately the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness. Now, this is one reason why sometimes I have a conversation, a heated conversation with God. You mean to tell me after I say yes, after I stand for justice, after I try to love folks who don't like me, after I try to hug people in the church and you know they talking about you, after I try to stand up for those who are on the margins, you are going to send me in the wilderness? Yet Jesus is led, hallelujah, by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested, tested by the enemy, brought into the wilderness by the Spirit. But sometimes, don't get it twisted, the enemy and the forces of life are coming to tempt you, but Jesus is not going to tempt you. Jesus may lead you in the wilderness, but remember, if Jesus, hallelujah, is led by God into the wilderness, God will take you through.

Saying yes to God requires three things. One, a hunger that goes beyond the tangible. In the words of William Sloane Coffin, "We have to make false material wellbeing not our own, but we have to have a hunger for love, peace, justice, and transformation." The enemy comes and says, "I know you're hungry, but if you would just turn these stones into bread." But Jesus responds and says, "I'm not hungry for that type of bread. For man shall not live by bread alone, but I'm hungry for justice. I'm hungry for a church that one day will look like heaven. I'm hungry for love. I'm hungry for peace. I'm hungry for the Holy Spirit." Is there anybody here that says, "I long for a day when we all can stand together as one people." When you say yes to God, it requires a different kind of hunger.

Number two is when you say yes to God, you have to make up in your mind that you're not going to die in your wilderness. Yes, the tempter comes and says, "Throw yourself off of this high temple." But Jesus responds and says, "I'm not going to die here. I may be going through, I may be facing some trials and some tests, but I'm not going to die in the wilderness."

Number three is that you must not surrender your identity in the wilderness. The enemy says, "If you would just worship me, bow down and worship me." But Jesus did not bow down because if Jesus would have bowed down to the enemy, that means he would've surrendered his identity. But I talk to you today, do not surrender your identity. When you say yes to God, you have to know who you are and who you've been called to. In the wilderness Jesus holds fast to his yes. Like the children of Israel who went through the wilderness, like Hagar, who went through the wilderness, like Moses, who went through the wilderness, like Elijah, who went through the wilderness, like Joshua, who went through the wilderness, like Esther, who went through the wilderness, like Jesus, who went through the wilderness, I have a word for you today. You will not die in your wilderness. You will be able to say yes to God.

God will be able to use you. And if it's preaching, say yes. If it's writing that song, say yes. If it's loving your neighbor, say yes. If it's God restoring that marriage, say yes. If it's standing up for justice, say yes. If it's loving those who are on the margins, say yes. If it's writing that book, say yes. If it's saying a kind word, say yes. If it's chasing your dreams, answering your call, going back to school, changing your life, whatever it is, I prophesy to everybody in this room that God in this season is going to give you the power to say yes!

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 48.00	\$ 125.00	38%
R22—Pledges	\$ 838.00	\$ 1,583.33	53%
R23—Contributions	\$ 100.00	\$ 437.50	23%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 164.53	\$ 866.67	19%
Capital Campaign	\$ 173.00	\$ 250.00	69%

Thru January 31

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Council Report for February.

- Treasurer report; Bills are being paid, balance in checkbook \$3021.29.
- Trustee Report; Discussed the water incident we experienced as the pump in the well ceased to function. Banner Water worked on the issue for multiple days and installed a new pump but with all the labor of excavating and materials the bill came to \$5,000.00. Water was back on Dec. 29th. Still planning to repair driveway this year, as well as doing some necessary tree work and painting around the church as needed.
- Nominating Committee; Reports that Michele Sedor will be the new Chair of Missions, thank you Michele.
- New Business; Dates to keep in mind. March 16th St. Patrick's Day breakfast at church. Watch for more info soon. We will be represented at Earth Day again this year. More info to follow. The Flea Markets and Duck Race will again be happening this year as well as the Holly Bazaar which will be Nov.15 th with more info forthcoming.
- Pastoral Search; Still looking for a few more members, this committee should be representative of the church so we need some women and men, some younger some older. We have 4 women already signed up so we really need some gentlemen. Please consider joining this extremely important committee.
- Rest Stop Fundraiser; This item made up most of our meeting. There are many moving parts to make this fundraiser possible and successful. The first being having enough people volunteering to participate the multiple days that the fundraiser runs. We have met that goal thank you for signing up. Secondly, we have to ensure we have the necessary equipment and State permits needed to proceed with the fundraiser. Members of council have volunteered to secure these items. The fact that many people don't carry cash was raised so council will look into signing up for a Venmo account to be used at the rest stop and other events. We have set June 26, 27, 28 and 29 as the days for this fund raiser to be held. As soon as we have secured the equipment and permits, we will start the prep work of getting the necessary supplies and setting up the schedules for you all to participate in this fun and profitable event.

These were the items discussed and acted on at our Council meeting February 24,2025

Bruce Ladr  
Moderator

## IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers for Heather's mom, Eric's father and for Carrie — all in need of healing from illness ... prayers for my students ... prayers for Linda Dailey, Shirley K. and Bob Campbell ... continued prayers for Lucy, Donna, Sarah and Linda. Prayers for Andy ... prayers for good health and happiness to all family and friends ... prayers for Grampy after his surgery ... prayers for every family to be healthy ... prayers for my grandson Vader who turns 6 tomorrow ... prayers of health and happiness for my family ... prayers for the Milikowski Farm family in the loss of Karl ... prayers for Bertrand and Claire ... prayers for Louise ... prayers for Linda ... prayers for Brian Baeder as he continues to heal at Evergreen from a torn quadriceps ... prayers for the Hoefles, DelBenes and Sprague family ... prayers for the ice to melt so people can be safe ... prayers for every family to be healthy ... prayers for Emilie's brother to feel better ... prayers for safe travel for Aiden ... prayers of comfort for the Richer family ... prayers for the Kennedy family on the loss of their mother/grandmother ... prayers for Jackson and his medical issues ... prayers for my sister who broke her foot ... prayers for my sisters managing care of elderly parents ... prayers for our US Democracy ... prayers for all going through health concerns, emotional and financial worries and those struggling with addiction.

Celebrations: joy our grandson Ethan celebrates his 8th birthday ... joy for seven years of Rosie today.

## A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .

So two Irishmen are traveling to Australia. Before they leave home, one of their dads gives them both a bit of advice: "You watch them Aussie cab drivers. They'll rob you blind. Don't you go paying them what they ask. You haggle." At the Sydney airport, the Irishmen catch a cab to their hotel. When they reach their destination, the cabbie says, "That'll be twenty dollars, lads." "Oh no you don't! My dad warned me about you. You'll only be getting fifteen dollars from me," says one of the men. "And you'll only be getting fifteen from me too," adds the other.

\* \* \* \*

Two little boys were known troublemakers, stealing everything they could get their hands, even from the church. One day a priest stopped one of the boys and asked, "Where is God?" The boy shrugged and the priest repeated, "Where is God?" The boy ran out of the cathedral crying to his home where he hid in a closet. Eventually his brother found him and asked, "What's wrong?" The crying boy replied, "We're in trouble now! God is missing and they think we took him!"

\* \* \* \*

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi want to see who's best at his job. So they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together. The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the Catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week is his first communion." "I found a bear by the stream," says the minister, "and preached God's holy word. The bear was so mesmerized that he let me baptize him." They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a gurney in a body cast. "Looking back," he says, "maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### March Birthdays

March	2	Kara Heofle
	4	Mettie Ostrowski
	7	Ellen Lancaster
	9	Lisa Banach
	9	Rebecca Nash
	18	Debbie Perko

### March Anniversaries

None

## **PULPIT SUPPLY FOR MARCH**

March 2nd - Reverend Greg Dawson  
March 9th - Reverend Greg Dawson  
March 16th - Reverend Nina Schmid  
March 23rd - Reverend Greg Dawson  
March 30th - Reverend Greg Dawson

## **LINDA SPRAGUE**

It is with sadness that I pass along the following: All attempts to fight Linda's cancer have not been successful and Linda has entered a hospice program to make her remaining days as comfortable as possible. She has expressed her gratitude for all the prayers and best wishes that have been offered during this period of illness.

## **SAVE THESE DATES**

Spring Flea Market — May 9 & 10  
Duck Race — July 12  
Fall Flea Market — September 18 & 19  
November 15 — Holly Bazaar



# March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Worship Service 9:30 AM	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Worship Service 9:30 AM	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Worship Service - 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday St. Patrick's Day Breakfast	17	18 Church Council 6:30 PM	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Worship Service 9:30 Safe-Net Sunday	31					