



Hohenwald First United Methodist Church

Community Bible Newsletter

March 2021

Sharing

New Beginnings

Sukkot, the feast of booths



When the Israelites finally settled in the Promised Land, God wanted Israel to observe this festival by living in temporary shelters for seven days as a reminder that when their ancestors were crossing a wilderness, God provided them booths to dwell in.

We have reached the first anniversary of the storms that devastated a swath of our state from the TN River, just north of us, all the way across to the Cumberland Plateau around Cookeville. Nashville was hit very hard. Now I am beginning to see stories in

the news about rebuilding efforts; seriously hampered by the pandemic, businesses are now being allowed to reopen their doors. Vaccines are flooding into clinics and hospitals quicker than expected as well, hastening the rate at which some measure of normal life may return in the foreseeable future. We might be coming out of the wilderness soon. But probably not as soon, or as fully as we'd like to.

A year ago, we thought the virus would be a short-lived nuisance to church life. We were going to close a couple of weeks to "flatten the curve" and then things would be better. Weeks became months, attendance and giving both plummeted, meetings were postponed, ministries curtailed. As we held our breath & waited, a whole year slipped by. We can't let another one be eaten up in "maybe next week, or month." We need to get things going. And we may need to...

Mark your Calendar

Weekly *Sunday Worship/
Sunday school*

3-28 *Palm Sunday*

4-2 *Good Friday service TBA*

4-4 *Easter Sunday*

Reminder

*Thanks to the Kellie Spitzer family:
Sunday Worship can be seen on
Facebook (link can also be found on
our website)*

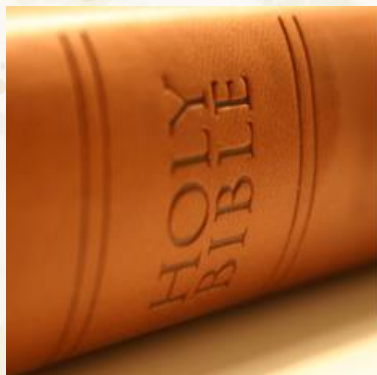
**Bible Study Wed. Nights— 6:00
p.m.**

Contact Us

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New Beginnings continued...



go outside to do so.

Instead of waiting until we can get back to church, we need to start asking all the places we can be a church. Let's turn from our feeling "banished from the building" and moping, to eagerly seeking how to worship and serve GOD, "released into the world. We need to think about "feasting in booths," as a reminder that God has always been, and still is, with us wherever we travel, until we get where we are going. Let us show to the community a lively congregation, involved in: praising God; nurturing through fellowship; and serving the hurting, poor, and lonely folks we encounter, in the sacred and holy name of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Could we organize an outdoor Vacation Bible School in the fresh air of the City Park, with games in the fields and lessons and crafts in picnic shelters? What if, instead of finding a whole week everyone could participate, we stretched it out over a succession of Saturday mornings, through the Summer? Could we start a community garden somewhere, or at least plant some flowers on Mothers' Day, as a service project?

A number of members have beautiful properties. Why not regular (monthly?) gatherings for fellowship with a campfire type environment and maybe some singing and sharing of stories, with hotdogs, or S'mores? It would tie us more closely together with friends, and the creator of this wonderful world we have been given. Help us as a church to meet in and with the world, as God's messengers of Love and Peace and Hope

Pastor Tom Gibson

Refresh Your Mind

Growing Longer in Lent

The word Lent comes from an old Germanic language word. It was used to describe Spring in general, and was once used as the name of the month we now call March.

The meaning of Lent had to do with lengthening, as the days do in springtime. To Christians, this season of lengthening days became a time to prepare ourselves for the high holy day of Easter. This is when God, through Christ, transformed our lives from short and mortal to eternal and immortal. Through the saving Grace of Christ Jesus, darkness and death were undone, and we were reclaimed to the Kingdom of the Son.

It seems fitting to use Lent to expand our spirituality, and ...



Refresh Your Mind continued...

extend our reach, both toward God and the people He has given us to live among. The focus in Lent is too often, and too much only, "What are you giving up for Lent?" If we do voluntarily make our lives a little simpler and smaller, it should specifically be so that we can be grander and wider and higher in our worship and service.

Only fast from what consumes the time, attention, and resources you focus on your own comfort, entertainment and satisfaction, thus interfering with your worship of God, your service to the world, and fellowship with others.

GIVE UP self, TAKE UP good works, LIFT UP others, and
LOOK UP to GOD

Refresh Your Heart

Bible Study during Lent, "Finding Faith when Facing Fear", will look at six stories of the Bible where people are in uncomfortable or dangerous situations. How did they find faith enough to do what needed to be done? How was their world improved by their courage and faith? Ester, Samuel, Elisha, Abraham and Jesus did it! How do we find that faith & courage and faithfully serve God?

In spite of all the turmoil and death that has surrounded us this past year, there are still so many things for which God deserves our praise. A Memorial gift was received from Emily Waterman to remember her Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles who were longtime members of our church: Nadine & Ordie Cothran; Frances & Woodrow Floyd; Dorothy & Wilson Sharpe

Community Outreach

Hohenwald First United Methodist Church has received several "Thank You" notes following the year end for its continued support in our community.

The Lewis County Food and Clothing Bank is currently our biggest recipient, with donations of non-perishable food and cash contributions from our members

The Women's Group is not currently meeting but at year-end was donating to The Shelter both clothing/household items and money. They have also received thank you notes from "Cops for Kids"

Youth in Action

Pastor Tom and Ms. Vickie Gibson have worked hard during the Covid era to keep in focus and support our youth. Remembering that all youth are in need of the word of Christ and in supporting our community, they have packed and distributed snack and scripture bags on Wednesday afternoons to any youth who stop by.

The bags include at least one page of scripture related activities and a snack usually consisting of fruit and chips. By February, we had an average of 48 bags per week being handed out.

Very few young people are attending our church at this time but our mission of planting seeds for Christ is going strong.

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Missionary Update



Due to the current reduction in activities because of the Covid-19 virus pandemic, we have very little to communicate at this time

We are still helping local families in need through our Benevolence Fund, collected each First Sunday of each month.

UMCOR SUNDAY is coming soon (March 14th). A Special offering will be collected to help fund operating expenses for all UMCOR programs the second Sunday in March. Please Mark your extra giving that week for umcor.

Our church donated honey bees, a sheep and a flock of chickens through Heifer International using the funds from "Change for the World"

