

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 39, Issue 2

February 2022

LENTEN SERMON SERIES CULTIVATING AND LETTING GO

During Lent 2022, we are using several resources from *A Sanctified Art*. This group was founded by a team of artists in ministry who dreamed of filling Christ's church with more art, inspiration, creativity, and God-breathed mystery. Their stated mission is to provide spiritual nourishment for church leaders and the communities they serve. As a team of artists in ministry they create multimedia resources for worshipping communities of all shapes and sizes. They work collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through visual art, poetry, liturgy, curriculum, worship installation art, coloring pages, graphic design, and more.

This resource, Reformed in nature, uses the Common Lectionary Texts for its inspiration and presentation. Be looking for more information concerning other Lenten possibilities, such as a Service of Wholeness and Healing and Lenten workshops that inspire our faith through creativity.

On Sunday, March 6, we will begin our Lenten Sermon Series focusing on cultivating and letting go. The verb **cultivate** means to prepare and use for the raising of crops; to foster the growth of; to improve by labor, care, or study; to refine; to further; to encourage. In **letting go** one relinquishes one's grip on someone or something. During our Lenten worship services we will be reminded that Lent is a season of spiritual gardening, of inviting God to unearth in us what lies fallow, what needs to be tended, and what needs to die for new life to emerge. It is our hope that, in worship, as with other Lenten activities, we provide both literal and spiritual practices that move us toward cultivating our growth in faith and encouraging others to do so as we let go of all that seeks to distance us from a full and joyful relationship with our Lord.

You are invited to prepare your hearts for this season by reading, studying, and praying, using the lectionary texts as guidance.

First Sunday of Lent	March 6	Luke 4: 1-13
Second Sunday of Lent	March 13	Luke 13: 31-35
Third Sunday of Lent	March 20	Luke 13: 1-9
Fourth Sunday of Lent	March 27	Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32
Fifth Sunday of Lent	April 3	John 12: 1-8
Palm Sunday	April 10	Luke 19, 22, 23 (selected verses)
Easter Sunday	April 17	Luke 24: 1-12

2021 Saturday Morning Neighborhood Breakfast

Saturday Morning Neighborhood Breakfast was alive and well in 2021. Despite shutting breakfast down because of COVID and the freeze damage in 2020 and part of 2021, we were able to start serving breakfast again in August of 2021. The repaired and remodeled Fellowship Hall and kitchen is a testimonial to Blair, Bruce, and Jim's hard work, tireless hours, and blessed vision. We started breakfast with little fanfare just to see how we'd do. We did great! Jim is in charge and Helen, Christine, Darlene, Blair, and Reggie do all the hard work (shopping, prep, cooking, serving, and clean up). I sit around and talk to our guests.

The menu stayed the same: pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice, milk, and coffee. We've worked hard at trying to adhere to the Church's COVID requirements and have been mostly successful. There has been no push-back from any of our guests. It is difficult to adequately describe how meaningful this ministry has become to me. During COVID, even more than before, people are isolated and lonely with little or no human interaction or conversation. It is humbling and gratifying to be able to listen and interact with people who thirst for simple human contact. We treat everyone as beloved children of God and work to let our guests know that we are there to serve them.

From an operations standpoint, the breakfast service has been flawless. If you are going to serve 25 to 50 people breakfast every week, you want Jim, Darlene, Christine, Helen, and Blair doing all the work. We've also had 4 to 8 volunteers from Christian Stronghold helping. They've been coming in 2 to 3 Saturdays a month. They have become close friends and we are so blessed to have them. Dick and Phyllis came and helped one Saturday when we were shorthanded and did a great job.

Our numbers have been consistently solid, especially when you realized we've been serving through 2 COVID surges: Delta and now Omicron and had a 2-week holiday hiatus. Once Omicron subsides (in 2 to 3 weeks), we will start picking up neighborhood noticing and church member recruitment. More on that in next month's newsletter.

DATE	GUESTS	SERVERS	PLATES
December 4	21	11	46
December 11	14	7	32
December 18	15	6	29
December 25	-	-	-
January 1	-	-	-
January 8	15	7	32
January 15	12	10	28

We start cooking and prep Saturday mornings at 7:00 and welcome guests from 8:00 to 10:00. Clean up is usually over and lights are off by 10:40.

Breakfast is lots of fun and very rewarding. The regular staff have the work perfected so if you show up you can help cook, serve, or just listen, but you will have a great time and feel God's smile.

Tom Pappas, Outreach



Things have gone well with our committee so far this winter. No major cold weather snaps and no power failures. Praise the Lord!

House & Property **A few updates from the month of January:**

- ◆ Replaced the kitchen water heater by contractor Cousins Remodeling - \$1,206.20
- ◆ Replaced the office water heater by contractor Cousins Remodeling - \$1,036.20
- ◆ Repaired leak in supply irrigation line for Section 7. Invoice pending
- ◆ Poured root killer down sanctuary drain (This is monthly maintenance to avoid sewer back-up)
- ◆ Replaced filters to AC/Heating systems

Planned work for February:

- ◆ Replace rotten wood with Hardy board and paint, caulk the entire playground entrance and repair doors as needed. Contractor – Cousins Remodeling bid \$2,245.89. (Similar work was done to the entrance to the sanctuary).
- ◆ Put two shelves in the Choir room closet – No estimate at this time
- ◆ Put door stop in Fred's old classroom – less than \$5.00

2022 plans

- ◆ Replace AC/Heating Unit #5 - Estimate of \$7,000
- ◆ Overhead Ceiling light conversion to LED system Includes 148 bulbs, 70 fixtures - Estimate \$4,568.88 - Heldreth Electric
- ◆ Replace west facing sanctuary window – Estimate \$5,500 Pella Windows

Insurance Premium Alert:

Our insurance annual premium has increased from \$25,433 to \$34,335. That is a 32% increase. That is a statewide increase due to all of the storms that hit Texas in 2021. The Session passed the insurance premium for 2022 in the December Session meeting. Our deductible is \$2,500 per claim. To summarize our claims for last year:

<i>Claims 2021</i>	<i>Roof</i>	<i>Flood</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total Loss of Claim	\$101,472.95	\$336,741.44	\$438,214.39
Deductible	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00
Net Paid by Insurance	\$98,972.95	\$334,241.44	\$433,214.39

We received estimates for deductibles varying the church's annual premiums to try and lower our annual outlay for property insurance but the lower deductible of \$2,500 made the most sense due to the age of our buildings and the number of claims (4) that we have had over the past 8 years. All four claims were in excess of \$10,000.

You Can Help! Pick up trash that you see in and around the building. Turn off lights if you know you are the last to leave a room. Let the House and Property Committee know if you see something that doesn't look right or is not working properly. Let's all share in the stewardship of God's house.

Blessings,

Blair Garrett, Chairman, House and Property Committee
Bruce Turner and Jo Byrd, Members



A very special thanks to the Choir, Melody, Sean and Bruce for all their work during the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Sunday. Lessons

and Carols was a little different this time with the addition of more instruments. Thanks to all of you who took time to tell me and choir members how much the services meant to you. The additional instruments are made possible by special gifts from you in the past and present and we hope to be able to use more instruments beyond Easter and Lessons and Carols in the coming year.

A few weeks ago on January 2nd, we celebrated Epiphany Sunday and the beginning of the Epiphany season. Our tradition is to celebrate the high holy days on the closest Sunday either before the actual day or after. Epiphany day is January 6th. It originated very early in the Eastern branch of the church and by the 4th century the Western (Roman) branch started celebrating it on January 6.

Epiphany ends the 12 days of Christmas Celebration. Epiphany Sunday as many of you know, is the recognition of the visit of the Magi and of Jesus as the "Light of the World" that shines though the "darkness of winter." It also starts the season of Epiphany which includes several important themes leading us toward Lent. Epiphany means "to reveal" and focuses on all the ways God is revealed to us through Jesus.

Epiphany is celebrated with special pastries in many countries, and children often receive small gifts in their shoes in honor of the Magi's gifts to the infant Jesus. The holiday also has several traditions involving water as a reflection of Jesus' baptism, including the blessing of houses with holy water

The Sunday after Epiphany is the Baptism of Jesus, a time for us to reflect on our own

baptism and its meaning to each of us as individuals, and as a community of believers.

The 2nd Sunday of Epiphany is the Miracle of the water into wine. Jesus will not only fill our cups with wine but will reveal God's plan for us to live better lives in His service.

The 3rd and 4th Sundays of Epiphany Jesus goes to Nazareth his home town and to the synagogue as is his usual custom and he is asked to read. He picks a passage from Isaiah that reveals him as the fulfillment of the Old Testament idea of Messiah, albeit different from that idea and angers his neighbors.

The last Sunday of Epiphany is Transfiguration Sunday where Jesus is seen as the Light of the world and the eternal glory of Jesus. When this celebration started is not known. But it was being celebrated in Jerusalem in the 7th Century. This Sunday marks the end of the Season of Epiphany and is followed by Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of the Season of Lent.

All the Scriptures, Sermons, hymns and anthems during the Season of Epiphany are to help us understand some of the nature of God and Jesus. They lead us from Jesus' birth and the start of Jesus' ministry.

I realize that by the time you read this, the Season will be half over but some reflection on what we have just experienced can't hurt and hopefully helps us to understand ourselves and our personal and community relationship with God through Jesus.



In *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*, Christian author Sheila Walsh looks at the all-encompassing love that Jesus expects of his followers.

He commands us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27, ESV).

But we can't love that way without faith, Walsh writes. “I'm not living by faith if I have an answer to everything. If I understand everything God does or doesn't do, then all I need to love him with is my mind. We're called to love him with more.” That “more,” she explains, involves these paradoxes: “We love with all our heart, even when it's broken. We love with our soul, even when our humanity wrestles against our situation. We love with our strength, even when it's almost gone. We love with our mind, even when we don't understand.”

Even if God's purposes and plans don't make sense here on earth, we can heed this advice from the great preacher Charles Spurgeon: “When we cannot trace [God's] hand, we must trust his heart.”

God of love — for, with and in us

An ancient heresy — that the God of the Old Testament was a God of judgment and wrath, while the God of the New Testament is a God of grace and love — still persists a bit. Yet God is the same God, with the same characteristics, throughout time. Way back in Genesis 3, God graciously sewed garments to clothe humans, although they had disobeyed him. And even in the Gospels, God's anger was evident through Jesus' response to temple moneychangers cheating the poor.

God always works for life and goodness in all things. Sometimes people misunderstand God's ways; sometimes God, like a human parent, uses “tough love.” Mick Brooks writes: “The Old Testament is God for us, the time of Christ is God with us, and the age of the Holy Spirit is God in us” (Every Day With Jesus, Sept/Oct 2020). That may be a bit simplistic, but it's a good reminder that while God's ways of interacting with us vary, he — the God of Love — does not.

No regrets!

If you've ever regretted a big purchase and wondered if you could return it, you're familiar with the nagging feeling of buyer's remorse. Thankfully, our Redeemer never experienced that. As a church sign proclaims, “When Jesus bought you, he never had buyer's remorse. And he never will!” To Jesus, the payment of suffering and death was well worth the payoff. “For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2, NIV).

Pleasant Grove Food Pantry

	Families	Adults	Children	Persons	Pounds
Dec. 6	33	82	47	144	1,426
Dec. 7	165	407	313	785	11,199
Dec. 13	23	55	33	132	803
Dec. 14	165	522	786	1,490	12,404
Dec. 20	22	59	39	107	1,302
Dec. 21	165	389	321	808	9,761
Totals	573	1,514	1,539	3,466	36,895
Nov. 1	8	18	11	34	245
Nov. 2	124	324	246	698	6,580
Nov. 8	10	24	25	51	457
Nov. 9	173	397	243	807	8,051
Nov. 15	28	67	62	137	1,047
Nov. 16	177	406	368	857	9,146
Nov. 22	34	67	65	151	1,328
Nov. 23	173	394	361	828	9,795
Nov. 29	25	65	41	117	1,118
Nov. 30	159	384	351	795	10,758
Totals	911	2,146	1,773	4,475	48,525

The gift of animals

When God made the animals and gave them to the first human being in the Garden of Eden, though they weren't precisely the companion Adam needed, not all was lost. According to Genesis 2, God gave Adam the privilege of naming them all, and when you name something or someone, you bond with that being in a special way. Ever since creation, humans and animals have been connected — often for good purposes, though sometimes not; as the saying goes, "It's complicated."

But on the positive side, Trisha McCagh, a renowned animal communicator, writes: "Animals are the bridge between us and the beauty of all that is natural. They show us what's missing in our lives, and how to love ourselves more completely and unconditionally. They connect us back to who we

are and to the purpose of why we're here."

I would say animals also show us how to love other people, nonhuman beings and the earth more completely and unconditionally. And they call our attention to God's creativity. Praise God for the gift of the vast variety of animals with whom we share this planet!
—Heidi Hyland Mann





Beyond candy hearts and roses

The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as “Dr. Love” for writing about the topic, said, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine’s Day is as good a reminder as any.

Honor thy teachers

When President Eisenhower invited James Michener to a White House dinner, the bestselling author replied: “Dear Mr. President, I received your invitation three days after I had agreed to speak a few words at a dinner honoring the wonderful high school teacher who taught me how to write. I know you will not miss me at your dinner, but she might at hers.” Instead of taking offense, Eisenhower answered: “In his lifetime, a man lives under 15 or 16 presidents. But a really fine teacher comes into his life but rarely.”

Fine teachers are indeed worth cherishing, whether they hold classes in churches or public schools, on Sundays or on weekdays. Let us honor and appreciate all teachers, all year long. Thank you for preparing lessons with care, for going above and beyond to meet each student’s needs, and for sparking curiosity about God and everything he created. You’re a blessing!



Dear Eastminster Congregation,

We are so happy to have had Piper Rose Bennett baptized at the Church on January 6th. It was very special for us and our families to be able to do this at Eastminster, and introduce her to a community that we know will help guide, nourish, and love her. Piper is looking forward to meeting more and more people as she gets older! She's already built quite the relationship with Betty, and LOVES the new nursery. If you have a baby/toddler in the family, Piper would love to play with them in the nursery on Sundays!

Thank you to the congregation for all the love and well wishes that have come our way since Piper was born. And a special thank you to Pastor Sherry for the beautiful message and baptism for Piper. It was truly an awesome experience and memory!

- Matthew, Brittney, and Piper Bennett

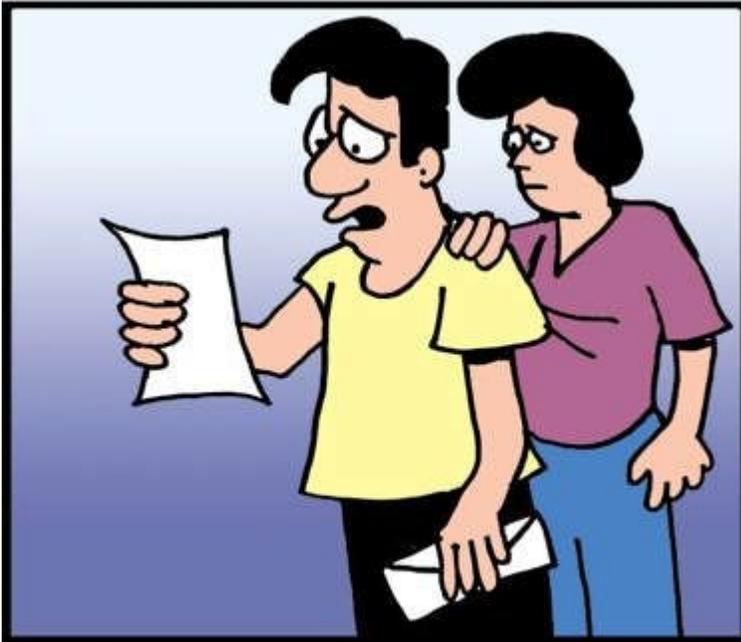


In the book of Revelation, who or what is “prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband”?

- A. The church
- B. The Spirit
- C. Mary Magdalene
- D. The new Jerusalem

Answer: D (See Revelation 21:2.)

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



“Its from our church... we’ve been called up for active duty.”

"And the answer is?"

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied: "They couldn't get a babysitter."

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her Mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Scripture Readings for February

1 Gen. 21:1–21	10 Gen. 27:30–45	20 Prov. 1:20–33
2 Gen. 22:1–18	11 Gen. 27:46–28:4, 10–22	21 Prov. 3:11–20
3 Gen. 23:1–20	12 Gen. 29:1–20	22 Prov. 4:1–27
4 Gen. 24:1–27	13 Gen. 29:20–35	23 Prov. 6:1–19
5 Gen. 24:28–38, 49–51	14 Gen. 30:1–24	24 Prov. 7:1–27
6 Gen. 24:50–67 2 Tim. 2:14–21	15 Gen. 31:1–24	25 Prov. 8:1–21
7 Gen. 25:19–34	16 Gen. 31:25–50	26 Prov. 8:22–36
8 Gen. 26:1–6, 12–33	17 Gen. 32:3–21	27 Mal. 4:1–6
9 Gen. 27:1–29	18 Gen. 32:22–33:17	28 Prov. 27:1–6, 10–12
	19 Gen. 35:1–20	

Puzzle!

Answer each statement (based on Matthew’s gospel) True or False by circling the letter in the correct column. Then write each circled letter on the appropriately numbered line below to discover why Jesus died.

“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?” —John Wesley

“We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another, until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices.” —Richard Nixon

“Light trumps darkness, every time. You stick a candle into the dark, but you can’t stick the dark into the light.” —Jodi Picoult

“Always be kinder than you feel.” —Unknown

“If the earth is forgiveness school, family is your postdoctoral fellowship.” —Anne Lamott

The goal of authentic Christianity is a love [that] escapes from a closed circle of spiritual self-indulgence, or even self-improvement, to become absorbed in the love of God and other [people]. —Richard Lovelace

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Jesus healed Peter’s wife <i>(Matthew 8:14).</i>	E	(N)
2. Jesus fed the 5,000 with two loaves and five fish <i>(14:17).</i>	R	A
3. At Jesus’ Transfiguration, Peter saw Jonah and Elijah <i>(17:3).</i>	M	S
4. The rich, young ruler decided not to follow Jesus <i>(19:22).</i>	T	C
5. Jesus said the temple had become a “den of robbers” <i>(21:13).</i>	I	G
6. Famines and earthquakes are signs of the end of the age <i>(24:7).</i>	V	D
7. Jesus tells a story of the six wise and six foolish maidens <i>(25:1-13).</i>	F	A
8. Judas betrayed Jesus with a secret handshake <i>(26:48).</i>	P	L
9. The Roman governor Polonius interrogated Jesus <i>(27:11-14).</i>	W	O
		N
_____	_____	_____
3	2	8
6	7	4
5	9	1

Answer: N, A, S, T, I, V, A, L, O; salvation

The right words for victory in Jesus

My mom tells a story of me as a preschooler, swinging in our backyard and singing loudly (and off key, I'm sure): "Oh victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He socked me and bopped me with his redeeming blood." Though that isn't an example of how to effectively share Jesus with your neighbors, the mistaken words might contain a nugget of truth.

In 1939, a stroke partially paralyzed hymnwriter Eugene Bartlett. Bedridden and unable to perform anymore, he penned his final, most beloved song, "Victory in Jesus." The actual lyrics read: "O victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood."

It's beautiful to realize that Jesus did indeed seek me out and pay the ultimate price for me. But sometimes I forget — and that's when he "socks me" and "bops me." Jesus loves me too much to let life's chaos and struggles distract me from him and what he's done. Let's all remember to celebrate our victory in Jesus!

—Janna Firestone

Biblical love notes

The following compliments from the Song of Solomon may not go over well on Valentine's Day: "I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots" (1:9). "Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead" (4:1).



"Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing" (4:2). "Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses"

(4:4). "[Your] eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set" (5:12). "Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat" (7:2).

On the other hand, how about this one: "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (4:7).

Hope-filled hearts

When Bowen Hammitt was born with essentially half a heart, the odds were stacked against him. But after three surgeries and numerous setbacks, Bowen is now an active 11-year-old who raises awareness about congenital heart disease. He's also a budding Christian musician, following in the footsteps of his dad, Matt (formerly with Sanctus Real). The Hammitts use Bowen's story to offer hope amid adversity — "a message the world really needs right now." The documentary *Bowen's Heart* features this tagline: "Is it worth giving your heart to something that can break it?" Absolutely, say his loved ones, who describe Bowen and his life as incredible blessings from God.



For Matt Hammitt, Proverbs 13:12 is now a favorite Bible verse. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick," it reads, "but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (NIV).



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Jennifer Gailey	2/1
Jacob Whitley	2/1
Betty Crabtree	2/3
Rhonda Kraft	2/4
Matthew Bennett	2/7
Taylor Kraft	2/9
Michael Veloz	2/13
Ryan Blair	2/13
Oscar Veloz	2/14
Susie Fielding	2/23
Tony Bennett	2/24
Kellie Karlen	2/25
Javed Almas	2/25
Wayne Maples	2/27
John Sill	2/27



Eastminster Session

Betty Crabtree, Congregational Care
 Kayla Dixon, Christian Education
 Blair Garrett, H&P
 Kathy Kreger, Christian Education
 Jim Lee, Stewardship
 Tom Pappas, Outreach
 Sean Turner, Worship
 Vicki Thiebaud, Congregational Care
 Charlotte Turner, Outreach
 Fred Watkins, Worship



Pastor	Sherry Holloman
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree



HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

January 16, 2021

- ◆ Enjoyed a meal provided by Bruce Turner.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer that while we operated at a small loss in December, 2021, overall we ended 2021 with a positive balance.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer that identifiable pledges will cover 79% of the 2022 budget.
- ◆ Approved a request from the Pastor to have Rev. Kenny Rigoulot and Rev. Polly Williams fill pulpit supply for 20 February and 27 February 2022, respectively.
- ◆ Heard a report from the CYMT Resident regarding the status of Youth programming.
- ◆ Approved a request from the Worship Committee to allow A+ Academy to rent handbells for February, March, and April 2022, with rental monies allocated to the Guest Musicians fund.
- ◆ Approved the following appointments for 2022: Treasurer – Cindy Garrett, Assistant Treasurer – Evelyn Parker, Financial Secretary – Chandra Anderson (by-laws set aside), Assistant Financial Secretary – Tony Bennett.
- ◆ Elected Betty Crabtree (Class of 2023) and Sean Turner (Class of 2024) to serve on the Nominating Committee, with the third Session member to be determined later.
- ◆ Approved the proposed Annual Calendar in accordance with Book of Order requirements.
- ◆ Approved the removal of Bobbe Brown and Naomi Davis from the roll, with thanksgiving for their lives.
- ◆ Approved 14 February 2022 as the date for the Celebration of Life service for Naomi Davis.
- ◆ Approved new working hours for the Administrative Assistant, to be 8:45 – 4:45.
- ◆ Heard a report from House and Property concerning progress on repairs to the playground door.



Special dates

- ◆ African American History Month
- ◆ Valentine's Day, 2/14
- ◆ Presidents Day, 2/21
- ◆ Transfiguration of Our Lord, 2/27