

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 42, Issue 3

March 2025



My friends,

In last month's article I shared with you that my friend and I share a blessing for each other at the end of our conversations: Enjoy God and Prosper! In that article I focused on what it means to enjoy God. Are you learning to enjoy God? Good. Because when we enjoy God and God's life, we are in our best position to prosper.

Usually when we think of prospering, we think of financial success, but the word includes more than money. The root of the Hebrew word translated as prosper means to move forward. We all want to move forward financially, but what about spiritually?

God wants us to prosper in our mission as followers of Jesus. He wants us to move forward in our faith, in our ability to love, in our proclamation of the Good News. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things will be given to you." When we are seeking to move forward with God's plans, he prospers us in other ways that matter to us.

Jesus says not to worry about material things. Seek God's will and you will have what you need. You will prosper. I recognize how hard it is to focus on God when you have a stack of unpaid bills on your desk.

An elder at my first church had just been elected as treasurer. She said she went to the office to pay the bills and realized that the sum of the bills was greater than the banking account balance. At the same time, we were in the midst of a campaign to pay off the mortgage. It wasn't looking good from a material perspective. So, she began to pray.

Then a series of things happened. We got a call from a small Hispanic congregation that was looking to lease worship space. They signed a lease for \$1200/mo. A nearby karate studio lost their space and needed a gym to hold their classes. One of our member's grandsons was in one of the classes and she said to call the church. They signed a lease for \$1800/mo. Then our Sunday designated to finalize our debt campaign came. We had enough gifts to pay the whole thing off. A \$3000/mo debt payment was gone. Finally, we had our annual pledge campaign, and we received 25% more pledges than the previous year. All in all, a \$100,000 swing in the church's finances. God prospered the church.

But that wasn't the end. The next February a tornado blew down the old sanctuary. A curse?? No! A blessing. No one was harmed and we received enough money from the insurance claim to build a new and much better equipped and more beautiful sanctuary.

With the burden of the financial worries removed—thanks be to God—it opened up the vision of the congregation to seek the kingdom of God. We began a youth



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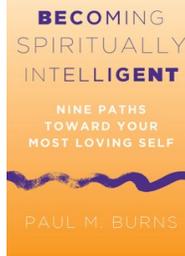
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basketball program, a Sunday night supper for the neighborhood, a food pantry, and a Christmas and Easter meal delivery ministry. The congregation was bursting with prosperity! It all began with a desperate prayer from the treasurer.

When we learn to seek God, not only will we prosper, we will enjoy God all the more. Knowing God and fulfilling his will is greater than all the money in the world—it's true prosperity. God wants us to move forward into his world!

Enjoy God and Prosper, my brothers and sisters!

Pastor Paul



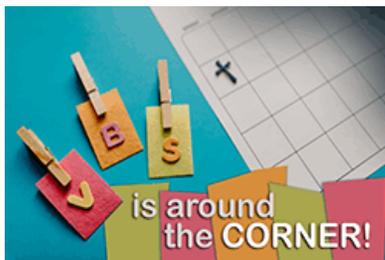
Lenten to Pentecost Study

Come and join us for our Lenten into Pentecost Study, beginning in March. Pastor Paul Burns will lead us through his book, *Becoming Spiritually Intelligent: Nine Paths Toward Your Most Loving Self*.

Books will be available for purchase on the first night of class at a cost of \$20. The entire congregation will receive a link to take the *GPS Spiritual Inventory*. Just click on this link: [GPS Spiritual Inventory](http://app.agolix.com/assessment/7762). You may also go to <http://app.agolix.com/assessment/7762>. If you are attending this study, please complete this assessment prior to the first class on March 12th. *Even if you are not attending, everyone is encouraged to take the GPS Spiritual Inventory.*

The study will be on Wednesday evenings: March 12th & 26th, April 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 30th, May 7th, 21st, & 28th and the last session will be June 4th.

A Potluck dinner will be served from 5:15—5:55 p.m. The study begins at 6:00 p.m.



Vacation Bible School

Eastminster will have Vacation

Bible School for all ages this summer during the week of June 16th-19th. This will be an evening event so everyone can attend: Individuals; parents, kids, friends, aunts and uncles! So, y'all come!

Put this Eastminster Vacation Bible School from June 16th—19th on you calendar

Watch for more information about times.

Spring Fling

Eastminster will host a Spring Fling on Saturday, April 5th for our community and church. Come and enjoy hot dogs with all the fixin's, and nachos with all the fixins. We'll meet in the back parking lot.

There will be a bounce house, prayer station, face painting and games of all kinds. We will end the party with a raffle for some prizes.

Please mark your calendar now to join us for this fun community/church event.



MY FAVORITE HYMN

God of Grace and God of Glory, Glory to God #307, was written in 1930 by Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) for the dedication of the Riverside Church in New York City.

Fosdick served as a chaplain during World War I and then was pastor of First Presbyterian Church in New York City. From this congregation, he was called to pastor Park Avenue Baptist Church which became the Riverside Church.

As we sing this hymn, it may be helpful to reflect on the events that shaped the "hour" and the "days" providing context for this powerful song. *God of Grace and God of Glory* was written during the Great Depression, a time when the United States was grappling with significant social and economic challenges between the two World Wars. The author, Harry Emerson Fosdick, was a strong advocate for the social gospel movement, which aimed to address the struggles of the poor,

United Methodist Hymnal editor Carlton Young has observed that "Fosdick's powerful radio sermons, books, and public statements established Riverside Church as a place for critiquing the very wealth and privilege that made the church's construction possible. Under his leadership, Riverside Church became interdenominational, interracial, and free of a specific creed. Remarkably for Baptists, it did not require a particular mode of baptism. At the heart of Fosdick's ministry was a focus on urban social ministry." Fosdick as a strong vocal proponent of the social gospel of his time a position that brought him both wide acclaim and broad disdain.

The congregation moved to a \$5 million edifice made possible by a gift from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The new building overlooked the Hudson River in what Fosdick called "a less swank district" than Park Avenue, where the congregation had been located near Harlem.

The hymn was written in the summer of 1930. It took shape as he reflected on the construction of the new building and was first sung as the processional hymn at the opening service on October 5, 1930, and again at the dedication on February 8, 1931.

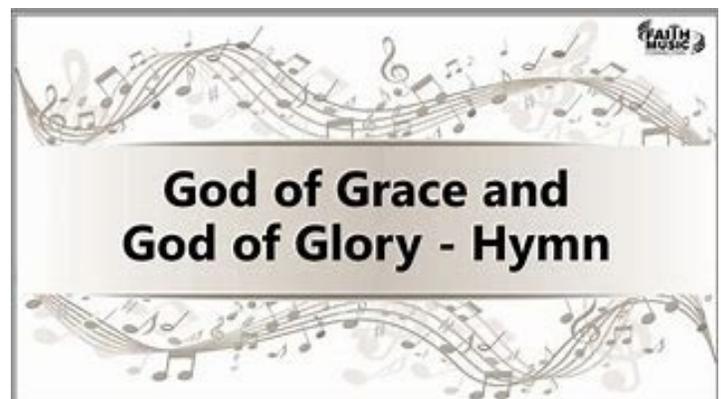
The language of the hymn is ultimately that of petition. "Grant us wisdom, grant us courage"

concludes each stanza with the effect of a refrain. A petition begins stanza three with "Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control." The final stanza, equally prophetic, begins with "Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore." Fosdick wrote the text to be sung to the stately REGENT SQUARE (*Angels, from the Realms of Glory* is generally sung to this tune). Methodist hymnologist and hymnal editor Robert G. McCuthan, however, first paired it with the Welsh tune CWM RHONDDA for the 1935 Methodist Hymnal. It was an immediate success and the new coupling has been almost universally adopted.

Baptist Hymnologist William Reynolds says Fosdick disapproved strongly of the new pairing. When Dr. Young asked the poet why he continued to oppose the use of CWM RHONDDA with his text, Fosdick replied, "My views are well known—you Methodists have always been a bunch of wise guys."

Dr. H. Hawn, Professor Emeritus of Sacred Music at Perkins/SMU says, "That discussion notwithstanding, I object to the tempo played by many organists who take the hymn much too fast at the beginning, forcing the congregation to race through the prophetic petitions that conclude each stanza. The Welsh tune demands an appropriately stately tempo (think "processional," not "horse race") that gives the congregation time to absorb the challenges offered by the poet."

This is a favorite hymn of Denise Bennett's. She says, "I love so many hymns as I was flipping through the hymnal, I saw this one! Holy Spirit?"





Lent is an interesting time that is both rich and scary. The season is rich because we are invited to dig deep into our individual and congregational faith practices and determine whether we are on the right path as disciples of Jesus Christ. We are encouraged to look at our whole lives and Eastminster's ministry and missions and to lay them next to the life of Jesus and see how, as an individual follower and a congregation of followers, we measure up. That is where it might be a little scary.

It is a very difficult exercise to be honest with ourselves. Perhaps that's part of why we need forty days to do it. We need tons of grace, diligence, and discipline to see ourselves as we truly are. In fact, it might be argued that we are incapable of doing this Lenten thing on our own. It is simply beyond our capabilities and certainly beyond our inclinations. The only hope we have is to be gathered up in Jesus as individuals and as a congregation.

Rev. Dr. Derek Weber, Director of Preaching Ministries for the United Methodist Church says: "The season of Lent is essential for those who truly seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Because a part of what we learn in this time of self-examination is that we are what might be most in need of transformation. We might find that what might need to grow in faith and discipleship in the church and that the transformation of the world and helping others begins with building bridges and gathering up rather than with condemnation."

What about "the time of rich"? In Luke 4:1-13, the gospel text for the First Sunday in

Lent March 9th, Jesus goes into the wilderness. Jesus was there to meditate on his coming ministry and examine his purpose in this life. Lent can be where we find our individual purpose as a member of this community and as a Christian. Some find purpose in working the Saturday Morning Breakfast, some in leading worship through the choir, or liturgist, the food pantry, or the Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, helping keep the church's grounds clean and trimmed, and many other ways members of our community have discovered their purpose and enriched theirs and others' lives.

Join us in person at Eastminster during this season and beyond as we seek to worship God, strengthen our faith, be encouraged by each other and the Spirit, be gathered up in Jesus, and find your purpose.

Join us on the Journey of Lent, singing the hymns and songs, paying attention to the words, internalizing them and the anthem texts, and discovering God's purpose for Your life.



OUTREACH



COMMITTEE

What's happening with the Outreach Committee?

With the start of the new year and new committee opportunities, the Outreach Committee got started on looking out at what is possible for the year and beyond. A good place to start was a review of the mission statement for the committee. It says:

The mission of the OUTREACH COMMITTEE is to lead the witness to the Gospel in practical ways beyond the doors of this congregation. The congregation shall be educated about the needs of communities both near and far. The committee will organize and implement missional activities to address these needs.

The next order of business was to come to an agreement on what scripture(s) to use as a guide in all we do. Every aspect of everything we do should be God-centered and based upon the Word of God. We collaborated and chose two passages, and they are:

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (James 1:22)

“... And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matthew 28:20b)

What will we be doing this year? What can the congregation look forward to in the not too distant future?

Outreach will be working with the standing committees to help them in their efforts by getting the word out.

We will continue updating the current website and will be looking at the possibility

of upgrading to a newer, more robust website.

We will continue to reach out to the St. Mark congregation in an effort to share activities and worship opportunities.

Skyline High School will continue to be a part of our mission commitment.

Buckner Terrace, with over 1,000 homes, will get its share of attention, whenever possible.

And, of course, the Saturday Morning Neighborhood Breakfast will continue to get our full support and encouragement.

There's more to come.

Important dates to remember:

March 4, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, benefiting the Guest Musicians Fund

March 20, Fred Rogers' birthday - Won't You Be My Neighbor Day

May 18, Eastfield Early Brass Concert

Committee members: Charlotte Turner, Jan Walters, Reggie Major, Tom Pappas, Sean Turner, Bruce Turner



Living water

In the mountains, my mom and I have a favorite riverside picnic spot. Inevitably, we end up removing our socks and shoes, dunking our feet in the icy water. While seeing who can keep both feet submerged the longest, we distract ourselves by admiring the rushing water. Hundreds of gallons from melting snow cascade over rocks and around fallen trees.

Although we're in the same spot visit after visit, the water is always fresh. The same is true about God's presence and his Word. We can revisit the same beloved Scripture and experience the same truths in fresh ways, as "rivers of living water" flow within us (John 7:38).

In *The Attentive Life*, Leighton Ford describes enjoying solitude by a river. "I remembered that the ancient philosopher Heraclitus said it was impossible to step into the same river twice, for a river is always in flux," he writes.

Ford continues: "Yet Heraclitus left out an important truth. A river is more than a succession of millions of disparate drops of water. I can step into a river in this living moment and know it has never changed. For each moment of time, each part of creation, each aspect of my life is also lived under the eye of God and is gathered and held in his eternal hand."
—Janna Firestone



Goals for 2025

- ◆ Investigate grant opportunities from the Grace Presbytery to help with costs
- ◆ HVAC replacements
- ◆ Rear sanctuary window replacement
- ◆ Replace 4 trees at the front of the sanctuary
- ◆ Remove and replace or remediate photinias shrubs along the east parking lot sidewalk
- ◆ Install additional drainage line along eastside of education building
- ◆ Request grant from Grace Presbytery for ADA issues, wheelchair ramp to sanctuary, chair lift to staircase to choir loft, wheelchair lift in cloister.

Fasting and feasting

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

- ◆ Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.
- ◆ Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.
- ◆ Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.
- ◆ Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.
- ◆ Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.
- ◆ Fast from pride, and feast on humility.
- ◆ Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.
- ◆ Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

Jesus, the model of salt and light

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus tells his followers, “You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world.” Through his example, our Savior showed us what that means.

“The remarkable thing is that Jesus brought it all into reality in his own person,” writes Bible scholar N.T. Wright in *Matthew for Everyone*. “He was the salt of the earth. He was the light of the world: set up on a hilltop, crucified for all the world to see, becoming a beacon of hope and new life for everybody, drawing people to worship his [F]ather, embodying the way of self-giving love which is the deepest [fulfillment] of the law and the prophets.”

On the path to victory

After moving to a college town, Pastor Kendra Thompson learned about the athletic phenomenon known as March Madness. And after a nondenominational upbringing, as a young adult she learned about Lenten traditions.

Lent and the NCAA college basketball tournament, which usually coincide, both point to the divine, Thompson argues. “In Lent, with each day we are drawn closer to the crushing reality that we’ve crucified our God. And yet

we are also faced with an impossible victory: that death did not win, that our God is raised in Jesus Christ,” she writes. “Likewise, watching college basketball invites us into a season of hoping in unlikely possibilities, marveling at upsets, and giving thanks to God for the connection we find as his people.”

Like fans swept up in high-stakes games, Jesus’ disciples abandon everything to follow him. Lent might be “holy madness,” Thompson muses. It’s “an opportunity to ‘feel’ our religion, not just in our heads but with our skin, our voices, even in the anxieties of our prayers.”



The Lenten desert

During the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year), Christians figuratively follow Jesus into the desert. Just as our Savior spent 40 days fasting and facing temptation, we focus on self-reflection and contrition.

In an 1873 hymn, Claudia Hernaman wrote, “O Lord, throughout these forty days, you prayed and kept the fast. Inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past.”

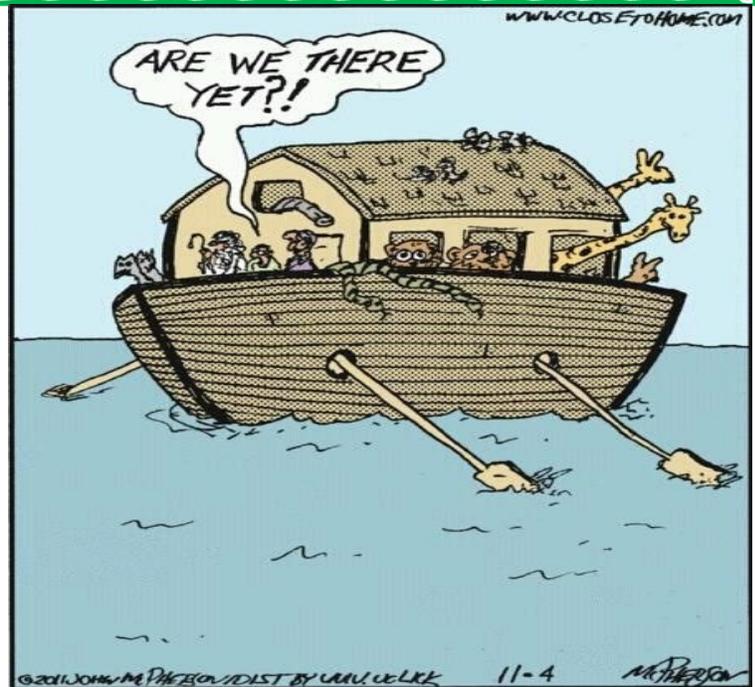
The desert experience of Lent serves a clear purpose, filling us up rather than depleting us. “This is what Lent is meant to be,” writes theologian Ron Rolheiser. “Time in the desert to courageously face the chaos and the demons within us and to let God do battle with them through us. The result is that we are purified, made ready, so the intoxicating joy of Easter might then bind us more closely to God and each other.”

Complete this sentence which introduces a well-known Bible story: “The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of _____.”

- A. flowers
- B. sheep
- C. rocks
- D. bones



(Answer: D (See Ezekiel 37:1, NIV))



The famous question is asked for the first time.

Scripture Readings for March

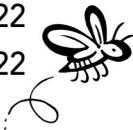
- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 2 Cor. 4:13–5:10 | 11 Heb. 3:1–11 | 22 Rom. 3:19–31 |
| 2 2 Cor. 3:1–9 | 12 Heb. 3:12–19 | 23 1 Cor. 6:12–20 |
| 3 Heb. 1:1–14 | 13 Heb. 4:1–10 | 24 Rom. 4:1–12 |
| 4 Heb. 2:1–10 | 14 Heb. 4:11–16 | 25 Rom. 4:13–25 |
| 5 Heb. 12:1–14 | 15 Heb. 5:1–10 | 26 Rom. 5:1–11 |
| 6 Titus 1:1–16 | 16 1 Cor. 3:11–23 | 27 Rom. 5:12–21 |
| 7 Titus 2:1–15 | 17 Rom. 1:1–15 | 28 Rom. 6:1–11 |
| 8 Titus 3:1–15 | 18 Rom. 1:16–25 | 29 Rom. 6:12–23 |
| 9 1 Cor. 1:18–31 | 19 Rom. 1:26–2:11 | 30 Gal. 4:21–5:1 |
| 10 Heb. 2:11–18 | 20 Rom. 2:12–24 | 31 Rom. 7:1–12 |
| | 21 Rom. 2:25–3:18 | |

Puzzle!



Fill in the blanks with the tiny creatures mentioned in each verse (all NIV). Then search for those words in the puzzle below.

- Proverbs 6:6 _____
- Psalms 78:45 _____
- Matthew 23:24 _____
- Judges 14:8b _____
- Acts 12:23 _____
- Leviticus 11:22 _____
- Leviticus 11:22 _____
- Deuteronomy 7:20 _____
- Exodus 16:20 _____
- 1 Samuel 24:14 _____
- Isaiah 50:9 _____
- Isaiah 59:5 _____
- Leviticus 11:22 _____
- Leviticus 11:22 _____



M	O	T	H	S	G	N	A	T	B	H
A	N	T	A	L	L	C	H	P	E	O
G	R	A	S	S	H	O	P	P	E	R
G	F	C	R	I	C	K	E	T	S	N
O	L	S	P	I	D	E	R	S	B	E
T	E	C	L	O	C	U	S	T	D	T
S	A	E	F	K	A	T	Y	D	I	D
G	F	L	I	E	S	W	O	R	M	S



“Of one thing I am perfectly sure: God’s story never ends with ashes.” —Elisabeth Elliot

“Run to the Lord and be comforted.” —Julian of Norwich

“The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it.” —Henri J.M. Nouwen

“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.” —Chinese proverb

“If your ship doesn’t come in, swim out to it!” —Jonathan Winters



Answers: ant, flies, gnat, bees, worms, locust, grasshopper, hornet, maggots, flea, moths, spider, katydid, cricket

Amid life's storms

The hurricanes that battered the East Coast in fall 2024 also battered my soul. I was over the rain and humidity. I was tired of lugging my two preschoolers through the downpours and driving through flash floods at night. Yet I had no reason to complain. Our house was still standing, with no damage.

The news around us was worrying and heartbreaking. "What if that was us?" I wondered. "Would I be strong enough?"

Then the kids asked to play outside. Even though I knew they'd get wet and muddy, I gave in. When a rainbow appeared, I'd never been more humbled as I remembered: I don't need to be anxious. I don't need to be strong enough. God watches over us all. He knows the hurt and sorrow. And he promises to be "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ESV).



Lord, forgive my unbelief. "Hear my cry, O God ... when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:1-2, ESV).
—Kristen Greene



3/2: Exodus 34:29-35, Luke 9:28-36;
Power to Become: God's Glory

3/9: Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Luke 4:1-11;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Survival Instincts

3/16: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18, Luke 13:31-35;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Ways

3/23: Isaiah 55:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Idols

3/30: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Point of View

4/6: Isaiah 43:16-21, Philippians 3:4b-14;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Past

4/13: Philippians 2:5-11, Luke 22:39-54;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Will

4/20: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26, Luke 24:1-12;
Dying to Live: The Death of Your Death

Pleasant Grove Food Pantry for month of February, 2025

<i>Date</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Adults</i>	<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Total Persons</i>	<i>Pounds</i>
6	70	114	50	52	216	2880
7	180	349	96	239	684	11302
8	51	51	48	43	142	3315
13	150	267	92	179	538	6510
14	233	4485	130	330	908	10272
15	12	32	0	0	32	325
20	59	89	29	51	169	3048
21	203	418	102	251	771	13319
22	65	83	48	47	178	2320
27	158	297	90	178	565	7788
28	226	413	122	290	825	11621
29	75	98	53	49	200	2550
	1482	2659	860	1709	5228	75250





Thom Falcon	3/1
Evola Griffin	3/6
Jacqueline Robert	3/9
Sylvia Falcon	3/10
Jake Davis	3/13
Philis Knox	3/22
Jim Bender	3/31



Susan & Kevin Karlen	3/2
Michele & Tom Pappas	3/21

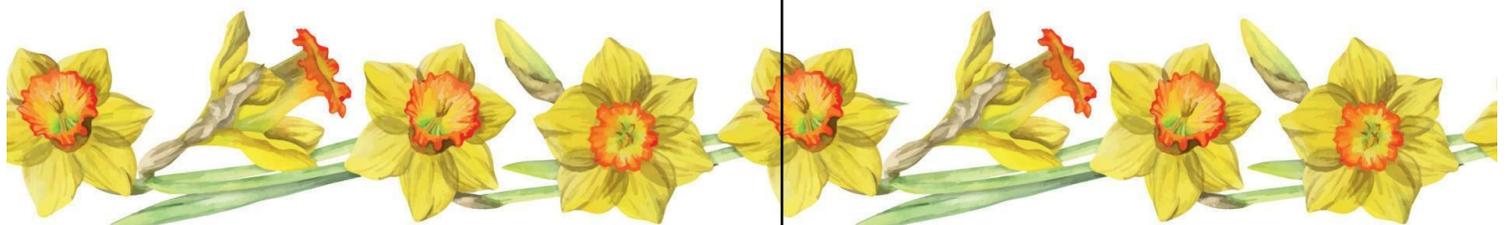


Eastminster Session

Chandra Anderson
 Melody Davis
 Philis Knox
 Dick Knox
 Kathy Kreger
 Michele Pappas
 Bruce Turner
 Patience Uche
 Darlene West



Pastor	Rev. Dr. Paul Burns
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree
Audio/Visual Technician	Sean Turner



HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

February 16, 2025

At the February 16 Stated Meeting, the Session

- ◆ Enjoyed a meal provided by Katie Karlen.
- ◆ Set aside by-laws to elect Charlotte Turner to be Clerk of Session for 2025.
- ◆ Discussed a challenge by the Pastor/Moderator: “How can we fulfil the Great Commission as Eastminster Presbyterian Church?”
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer regarding January receipts and expenditures.
- ◆ Elected Michele Pappas and Patience Uche to serve as Commissioners to the March 1 Presbytery meeting in Longview.
- ◆ Approved a request from the Christian Education Committee to hold a “Spring Fling” on Saturday, April 5.
- ◆ Approved a request from the Stewardship Committee to accept the following Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and Christmas Joy and approved their respective recipients.
- ◆ Noted the need to find a replacement for the Treasurer.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Moderator concerning the Ash Wednesday/Holy Week services agreed upon by the Covenant Committee (St. Mark and Eastminster.) Ash Wednesday will be hosted by the Journey Church on the St. Mark campus. Maundy Thursday will be observed on the St. Mark campus, and Eastminster will host the Good Friday service. The times will be determined later.



Special dates

- ◆ Transfiguration Sunday, March 2
- ◆ Ash Wednesday, March 5
- ◆ World Day of Prayer, March 7
- ◆ Daylight saving time begins, March 9
- ◆ First day of spring, March 20