

300 N. Huntersville Road | Batesville, IN 47006 | 812-934-4144

## From the Pastor



I was walking in the Sanctuary the other day and was struck by our large, Lenten cross. Obviously, I have seen it before. It is a glorious work and really adds to our Lenten and Holy Week celebrations. But I think usually, I have seen it with something around it- a candle, a piece of cloth. This time, it was totally bare, just sitting there. Beams were exposed; you could easily see the support structures. And I just marveled. It grabbed me in a new way. Something about the bareness of it, yet still powerful, sat with me. So I began to ponder why.

Of course, who can say EXACTLY why this time I was drawn to our cross. The Spirit does Spirit things after all. But as I thought about it, it occurred to me that that cross was very much like the Gospel. And not just because the cross is a part of the Gospel. But because its power did not lie in any decorations we place around it. But in the pure unadulterated power of itself. And the power of the Gospel lies not in any fancy way we present it, but in its own pure power by itself.

Please don't misunderstand; I love the decorations that we use around the cross during Lent and Easter. Cindy and her team create powerful visuals that preach in their own right. The somberness that the cross exudes during Lent is only overtaken by the joy it shows when it is decorated on Easter. I am grateful for the work that they do. They truly add to our worship each and every day during the Lenten and Easter seasons. I have been moved by their decorations on the cross more than once. In a similar way, we often decorate the Gospel in ways that are useful, appropriate, and even joyous. What is our Easter Cantata if not the Gospel dressed up in an artful way? Praise music, hymns, storybooks, and even to a certain extent my sermons all take the Gospel and try to make it easier to understand. Easier to feel. Easier to experience. These are all moments where we decorate or "dress up" the Gospel. I am grateful for these efforts. While true that sometimes we in the wider Church can overdo it, I think on the whole the Church of Jesus Christ (including those of us here at St. John's) does a pretty good job of discerning when to "dress up" the Gospel and when not to.

But just like the cross in our Sanctuary doesn't NEED the decoration to be powerful (although they help), the Gospel does not need all the work we do to be powerful. It is helpful work; powerful work; but the Gospel stands on its own. Because the good news is this. God so loved the world that he sent Jesus so that somehow- in his death, life, and resurrection- we might come to understand just how much we are loved. That somehow, we might come to understand the forgiveness and mercy God always offers. And that in understanding these things, we might feel compelled to walk with God, with Jesus, on a transformational journey of discipleship. For God loved the world, loved us enough to face the cross. And enough to gift us the empty tomb. As simple and as beautiful as that.

I invite you to come and marvel at the cross with me this Lent. Do so now when it is still bare or later when decorations start appearing. Sit and marvel at the power that these simple pieces of wood can have in our souls. And then praise God with me for the power of the Gospel. A power we feel in those moments of art we often work so hard towards... and when we just let it stand on its own. For the Gospel, the cross, is the power of God. Thanks be to God!

Shalom,

# Youth Sunday

Youth Sunday will be on March 22 this year. This service is prepared by our second year Confirmation class and led fully by our youth. Any youth that would like to be a part of it should let Pastor Joey know ASAP so you can be assigned a role. Please come and join us in worship for this special service.



## Lenten Services

Once again this year our mid-week Lenten Services will come in a variety. Here is the list of service types and tentative focus Scriptures.

**February 25, 2026**      Lenten Service with a focus on Matthew 7

This will be a “regular” service with a sermon focused on the passage about Ask, Seek, Knock.

**March 4, 2026**      Lenten Service highlighted by a skit based on Matthew 5

This will be a more or less “regular service.” But instead of a sermon, several of our youth will perform a skit.

**March 11, 2026**      Bible Study with fellowship Meal; focus on Matthew 7

Back by popular demand, the middle week of Lent will feature a meal together (Taco Bar!), followed by a short Bible Study. Come join us as we fellowship together.

**March 18, 2026**      Prayer stations with focus on the Lord’s Prayer

Also back by popular demand, this night will have several prayer station scattered around the Sanctuary and Sunday School Hall. At least a few of them will be focused on the Lord’s Prayer. Come and do all of them or just a few. This night is done on your own.

**March 25, 2026**      Lenten Service with a focus on Matthew 6

We end our Lenten series with a “regular” service focused on the invitation by Jesus to not worry.

We hope you will consider joining us for all or at least some of these Lenten activities. Please call Pastor Joey if you have any questions.

# Looking Ahead to Holy Week

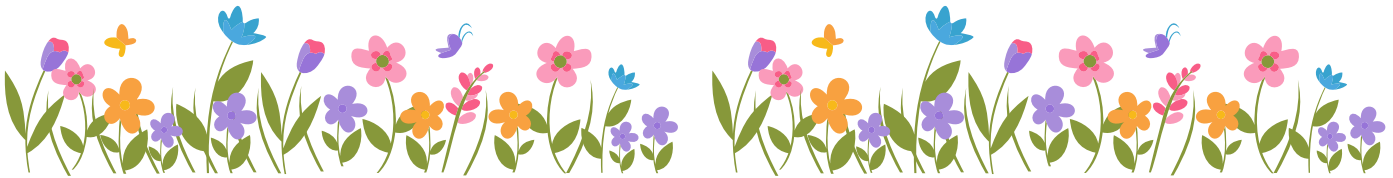
**Palm Sunday, March 29, 9:00am** – Worship with palms, including the parade of children.

**Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7:00pm** – Worship with Communion

**Good Friday, April 3, 7:00pm** – Tenebrae service ending in darkness

**Easter Cantata, April 5, 6:30am** – Celebrate the resurrection in song

**Easter Service, April 5, 9:00am** – Worship with Communion. He is Risen, indeed!



## Echoes of Easter

Easter marks St. John's 42<sup>nd</sup> Easter Ecumenical Choir Cantata. This year's cantata is Echoes of Easter. From the first note, uplifting melodies and echoes of praise proclaim the Easter celebration as varied song styles and meaningful lyrics tell the Easter story in a fun and memorable way. The choir is already hard at work. Practice is on Monday nights from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. We already have over 40 singers and more are always welcome! Pastor Joey Feldmann will be our Music Director again this year. Be sure to mark your calendar, invite your friends and family, and join us to experience this unique time of worship and fellowship on both Easter Sunrise, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30am and the following Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. For more information ask Marilyn, Dawn, or Kimberly.

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**MONDAY MORNINGS  
WITH PASTOR JOEY**

Stop in for a drink & a chat upstairs  
at Amack's Well. He'll be there a  
little after 9:00am until noon.



# A Page From the Hymnal

## BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS #255

The text of this favorite Lenten hymn was written by Elizabeth C. Clephane. Miss Clephane was born on June 18, 1830 in Edinburgh, Scotland, the third daughter of Andrew Clephane, sheriff of Fife. It was published posthumously between 1872 and 1874 in "Family Treasury" under the general title, "Breathings on the Border." In the first verse, the cross is depicted as an oasis in the desert, where we can recover from the stress of life. The second verse shows the great cost of the oasis. Jesus died a tortuous death because of His great love for us. Verse three cites Philippians 3:7-8; "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things."

The tune, ST. CHRISTOPHER, was written for this text by Frederick C. Maker in 1881. Maker, born August 6, 1844 in Bristol, England, was organist and professor of music at Clifton College. He was composer of the music for the hymn, "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind" (#470). Maker died in Bristol on January 1, 1927.

*"Beneath the cross of Jesus I gladly take my stand"*

*-David W. Hanson, Organist/Choir Director*



## Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

**Please mark your calendars for the Sunday School Board's Annual Easter Egg Hunt, being held on Saturday April 4th. We will kick off the festivities in the church basement at 9:30am with donuts! At 10am sharp the hunt will be on! Special surprises are in store for the few kids that find a "Golden Egg!". We would love to see a great turnout to this event, children of all ages are welcome to join us and are encouraged to bring a friend if they'd like. We hope to see you there on April 4th for fun and fellowship with our youth.**

# Thank you

*Dear Church Family,*

*Thank you for all of your kind words, prayers and delicious meals during my surgery and recovery. We're so blessed to be a part of this community.*

*Jena, John, Eleanor & Maxine*



*Dear St. John's UCC,*

*On behalf of the Ripley County Community Foundation staff and board, I am pleased to extend sincere appreciation for your generous donation of \$1,062.55 to the Wreaths Across Ripley County Initiative.*

*Sincerely,*

*Amy P. Streator, Executive Director*



*Dear Friends,*

*Thank you for your recent gift to Safe Passage and our mission to provide critical services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. It was a pleasure attending both your service and Kimberly's presentation! Your generosity goes such a long way for the many survivors our mission serves. Thank you!*

*Cari Kettman, Executive Director*

*St. John's UCC Congregation,*

*Thank you for your ongoing support of the Southeast Indiana Health Center. As our patient visits continue to increase, so does the cost of care. We at the clinic are forever thankful to have the support of those in the community who help us care for this vulnerable population.*

*Thank you!*

*Jena Gerriten, Manager*



*So Loved Closet in Batesville, IN would like to thank you for your donation! It has helped lots of families in the Ripley County area! It also helped with socks and underwear for our young members! It's also a great cause for foster families. We again thank you. "No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted!"*

*So Loved Closet,  
Batesville, IN*



### **Liturgist Schedule:**

March 1 - Sam Sitterding  
March 8 - Mike Vonderheide  
March 15 - Sarah Dobson  
March 22 - Peter Frye  
March 29 - Rachel Davis  
April 2 - Myron Kanning  
April 3 - Joan Westerfeld  
April 5 - Bev Schwier



Please try to stop by the Lost & Found and see if you can claim any of the items.

Thank you!



### **Comments or Suggestions?**

Talk to one of our PRC members:  
Mike Schumacher,  
Rachel Davis,  
Jena Gerritsen,  
Kimberly Hill  
or Sarah Dobson!



### **Contact Info**

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812-934-4144

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**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/sjucbatesville/](http://www.facebook.com/sjucbatesville/)

**YouTube:**

[www.youtube.com/@josephfeldmann1025](http://www.youtube.com/@josephfeldmann1025)



# MARCH

## *birthdays & anniversaries*



- 1 Lindsey Rynn
- 2 Janice Brougher  
Claire Fullenkamp  
Kyle Wirth
- 3 Bob Wilhelm
- 5 Andy Brebberman
- 7 Sarah Dobson
- 8 Linda Kanning  
Luke Sarringhaus
- 9 Josh Pohlman
- 10 Sarah Bryant  
Sandy Weberding
- 11 Willow Davis  
Derek Davidson
- 12 Irvin Harmeyer  
Sharon Wessel
- 13 Serenity Feldmann  
Greg Hellmann

- 14 Nikki Sarringhaus  
Janet Schumacher  
Mike Vonderheide
- 18 Joe Volk
- 19 Gwen Haakinson  
Kathie Pohlman
- 20 Chad Emsweller
- 22 Colt Narwold
- 24 Marla Placke  
Austin Wilhelm
- 25 Ruby Gardner  
Becky Schutte
- 30 Gabe Kuykendall
- 31 Danette Oswald  
Shari Westerfeld



- 4 Jim & Vicky Wintz
- 20 Carol & Steve McPherson
- 30 Tim & Kathie Pohlman

# Easter Flowers & Heavenly Bouquets



**We are once again offering the chance to remember or honor a loved one by providing flowers for our sanctuary for Easter.**

- If you would like to place an Easter flower in memory of/ in honor of someone on Easter Sunday, please fill out the form below and place it in the offering tray or turn it in to the office . All forms must be turned into the office no later than Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.
- If you would still like to honor/remember someone but don't want a flower, you can order a Heavenly Bouquet. These donations are used to buy decorations for the church. *Please include a minimum donation of \$5.*

Please take the flowers to church on Good Friday.  
The Columbus Ave door will be open.

You may pick up your flower after the Easter Sunday service.

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***I would like to place a Easter flower or give a monetary donation.***

**Please circle one:**     *In Loving Memory of*                      *In Honor of*

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**Given By:** \_\_\_\_\_

# MARCH 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Communion Sunday	2 Easter Cantata Practice 6:30-7:30pm	3	4 Confirmation 5:30 & 6:15p Lenten Service 7p	5 Sunday School Meeting, 6p	6	7
8 	9 Easter Cantata Practice 6:30-7:30pm	10	11 Confirmation 5:30 & 6:15p Lenten Service and Meal 6p	12 BAMA 1:30p	13	14
15	16 Easter Cantata Practice 6:30-7:30pm	17 	18 Confirmation 5:30 & 6:15p Lenten Service 7p	19	20 	21
22 Youth Sunday	23 Easter Cantata Practice 6:30-7:30pm	24	25 Quiltmakers Here 9am Lenten Service 7p	26 Messenger Deadline	27	28
29 Palm Sunday	30	31	1	2	3	4

# ECHOES OF EASTER



**ALL ARE WELCOME**

**TO ST. JOHN'S UCC 42nd EASTER ECUMENICAL CHOIR CANTATA  
OVER 40 SINGERS FROM 12 AREA CHURCHES**

**A MUSICAL WORSHIP SERVICE  
TO CELEBRATE EASTER**



**Sunday, April 5th, 6:30am**

**Sunday, April 12th, 7:00pm**

**St. John's United Church of Christ  
300 N. Huntersville Rd., Batesville, IN**