One of those family favorites from the hymnal is “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (UMH #400). Every line is beautiful and holy. The words that stand out to me as we get ready for Lent are in the first line, “Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace.” Lent is a great time to ask the Holy Spirit to tune our hearts. For those of you who may be new to the the season of Lent, it is an ancient tradition in Christian churches to spend seven weeks before Easter in spiritual preparation. Many people give up something special during that time to remember the forty days of fasting Jesus spent in the wilderness before his public ministry.
Here is what I would like to offer our church family this Lent. Let’s live in the tension between spiritual practices of devotion and kindness. Think about tuning a stringed instrument, like a guitar, cello, banjo, or piano. There are two points of contact between which the strings are drawn tightly enough to produce the desired pitch. The strings remain in tension and are adjusted as needed to stay in tune.

Now imagine that the two points of contact represent acts of devotion on one end and acts of kindness on the other. Imagine our lives stretched between these two poles. Living in the tension between acts of devotion, such as prayer, and acts of kindness, like volunteering, means our lives are tuned to sing God’s grace. We get to live in that tension as disciples of Jesus Christ. When we are stretched too much, we may come across a little sharper than intended. When we are not stretched enough, we may fall a little flatter than we want. However, when we are in tune with Jesus, the results are marvelous.

I think churches like ours are uniquely suited to help each other stay in tune with Jesus. At our best, we help each other recognize when our thoughts, words, and actions are coming across a little sharp or flat. We do it in a spirit of genuine love and humility out of a desire to collectively sing God’s grace. I hear that in our congregation today. Yes, we all get a little out of tune here and there. Nonetheless, I recognize the sound of God’s grace in this spiritual family and I know you do, too.

Everyone needs someone we trust to ask a simple question, “How are you doing, really?” It takes significant time and energy to build relationships with people we can trust with the true answer to that question. That’s what churches are for! Many of you have found that. I hope we will help more people find that in the coming weeks, if they don’t already have it.
Lent is a chance to help each other stay in tune with Jesus by asking, “How are you really doing? Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, Spiritually. How’s it going?”

The invitation I’m offering this Lent is not submitted out of an agonizing concern that we get our act together. Instead, it comes from a place of genuine gratitude and respect for the inspiring ways in which you have already been following Jesus. I just want to keep walking this journey with you from Ash Wednesday to Easter and beyond because I am quite fond of this church.

Next week, I’ll be sharing the Thalia Devotional Guide, which several of you have helped me with over the last two months. My prayer is that this personalized devotional will help you fill up on the Goodness of God on the way from Ash Wednesday to Easter this Lent.

PS I hope to see you all at the very exciting events we have planned! We are packing 10,000 meals on Sunday, eating hundreds of pancakes on Tuesday, and smearing ashes on dozens of foreheads on Wednesday.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Joe
Save the Date!

Our next meal packing event with Rise Against Hunger will be on Sunday February 11, 2024! We need your help to pack 10,000 meals.

Time: 11am - 3pm

Contact Heidi Hutter for any questions at missions@thaliaumc.org

Please use the link to sign up to volunteer!!!
Join Us For

Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper

Pancakes - Sausage - Fruit

February 13 5:30-7:00 PM

Free
All Donations will help fund
roof repairs in the Education Wing

Hosted by Thalia United Methodist Men
Crafts and Games
Choir Will Resume

Wednesday, February 7th

Choir rehearsals will resume Wednesday, February 7 at 6:30 pm in the Choir Room. We will rehearse for the eight weeks of February in March, and sing during the 10 am service during Lent, Palm Sunday, and Easter. The choir is in need of additional members! Prayerfully consider joining us on Wednesdays and Sundays as we worship the Lord through music. Contact Leah with any questions, music@thaliaumc.org.

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Ash Wednesday

Feb. 14th - 6:30 AM Morning Service

First Sunday for start of Lent

Sunday Feb. 18th
Sunday School & Bible Study February 2024

**Christian Home/Good News:**
Meets in the small hall next to the kitchen. We are studying the book of James, a Shepherd's Notes Study. James is considered one of the most practical books of the Bible. All are welcome!

**Faith Builders Class:**
Meets in Room B5, Day School hallway
We are finishing the book of Esther and will start the book, Secrets of a Prayer Warrior by Derek Prince in February. Join us!

**Searchers Class:**
Meets in the room located in the back corner of the large hall
We are embarking on a study of faith and doubt. Using scripture and an interview on the topic with Christian writer Philip Yancey as a guide, we are exploring and discussing how facing our doubts can deepen our faith. New members are always welcome.

**Seekers Class:**
Meets in Room B8, Day School hallway
Our last unit of study in God Abides focuses on faithful prayer. Prayer is a deep and profound mystery that is available to us, but we could never say all there is to know about it. More than one saint has come to the end of their life and remarked how they had just begun to learn to pray. Prayer takes a minute to learn and a lifetime to master. There is so much to learn about prayer, but as we study Paul, Jesus, and John, we will delve into ceaseless prayer, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, The Lord’s Prayer, and the Holy Trinity. Please come and join us in lively discussion.

**Women’s Bible Study:**
Meets Tuesdays 7-9PM or Wednesdays 9:30-11:30AM
Our January/February study will be What Love Is by Kelly Minter. This study is based on the letters of 1, 2, & 3 John. Come out and join this study; a time of renewal and fellowship. If you are interested, please let Lois know, text/call 757.651.6600 or email lois.grubb@gmail.com.
2024 Offering Envelopes

The 2024 Offering Envelopes are in and you can pick up your assigned envelopes from the baskets in the hall outside the sanctuary. If you do not need your envelopes because you give online or electronically, place your envelopes in the white box next to baskets. If you would like envelopes, please contact Jazming in the admin office.

Per the IRS, charitable donations over $250 require a statement from the charity. 2023 Contribution statements have been printed for those donors and are available for pickup outside the sanctuary. Those not picked up will be mailed. If you did not receive one and want one, please contact John Martin at finance@thaliaumc.org.

Financial Positions

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Our GEN FUNDS: $19,959
Our catch-up 2023 apportionment payment brought us up to 77% for 2023*

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**3 WAYS TO GIVE**

MAIL CHECK TO:  
4321 VB BLVD  
VB, VA 23452

ENROLL IN AUTOPAY WITH YOUR BANK

SCAN QR CODE TO DONATE BY CREDIT CARD

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**Birthdays**

Kimberly Dixon  
Ginger Boyer  
Timothy Learn  
Brenda Swartz  
Stephen Todd  
Alice Gillie  
Stacy Liszka  
Cynthia Martin  
Kenneth Saunders  
Victoria Martin

**Birthdays**

Ritchie Rosso  
Vivian Liszka  
Patricia Mills  
Charles Winstead  
Janet Hastings  
Kyle Whitfield  
Charlie Wright  
Oscar L. Quiambao  
Robert Shaw  
Joyce Early
Jaime Rankin
Linda Redden
Cathy Carpenter
McKenzie Beisel
Matthew Burgess
Robert Carpenter
Elaine Monn
Matthew Barnes
Jane Locke

Lisa Kohler
Robert Lorkiewicz
Cindy Molisee
Linda Overstreet
Sharon Grim
Mary Mallory
Bella Denk
Joe Bray
Lindsay Shepheard
Vickie Scott

**Anniverseraries**

Norma & Kenneth McNelly

**Prayers**

Joan Averette Family
The Lambs
The Wallaces
Dennis Shultis
Robert Alexander
Jane Lock
Mary Harryman
Bobby Comess
The Rockefeller Family
Aubry Batten