



# the Chimes

March 2026

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## A Pastoral Message

**The month of March** is in many ways a time of transition. We are encouraged by the changes in weather that signal Spring is on the way. Sports fans experience a change of seasons as well. This year the month of March involves us in almost all of the season of Lent.

In the classical structure of the Christian Calendar or Church Year, Lent is set between Epiphany, the season

in which the nature and power of Jesus is made manifest. Epiphany includes the account of his baptism and ends with the Transfiguration, where the pronouncement from God that "This is my beloved Son" is repeated from his baptism. Scripture texts include accounts of his miracles and teachings.

Traditionally it has been a time for training and instructing those newly baptized in preparation for full connection or relationship with the Church family. Lenten studies are common in churches, and we are blest to have such a study here. This is a season of preparation, spiritual preparation for the remembrance of his passion, suffering and crucifixion. Just as it was essential for Jesus and God's plan of salvation, suffering and loss are necessary before the joy of Resurrection.



Lent is the transition when Jesus begins his definite journey to the cross. In Luke's Gospel, it states that "He set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem."

The spiritual intent of the season of Lent is to prepare ourselves to accompany him on this journey and strengthen our relationship with him. It provides opportunities to reflect on the

scriptures and perhaps to see ourselves among those who criticize and verbally attack Jesus along the way. Believers and unbelievers are brought into sharper context in lectionary selections throughout the season.

We have experienced Ash Wednesday and the receiving of ashes to remind us of our mortality and need to be humble especially before God as well as before others. Whether you received ashes or not, it is the initiation of the season of transition through which each of us can find ways to draw closer to God and deepen our spiritual connections.

May our worship experiences together and our personal and private devotions be a time of transition that deepens our connection with God and one another.

Rev. Dick Bowyer



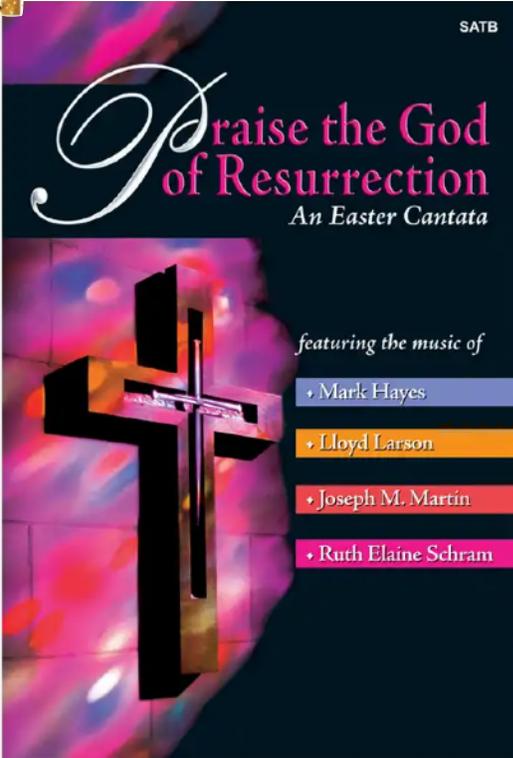
- \* 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
- \* 9 a.m. Sunday School & Handbell Choir
- \* 10 a.m. Children's Handbell Choir & Chancel Choir

Worship Service is in-person and online at [fpcfairmont.com](http://fpcfairmont.com) & Facebook





# Musical Notes from John Morrison, Director of Music & Organist



**Thank you** to the Chancel Choir for singing beautifully for the Ash Wednesday service with Amy Koon ringing the bell part with the anthem. It was a nice addition to a very meaningful service starting the season of Lent.

Looking ahead in Lent to Palm Sunday and Easter, the handbells are scheduled to ring March 8, March 22, March 29, Palm Sunday, and April 5, Easter. We will also be welcoming the WV Brass Quintet on Palm Sunday! The brass will provide special music on its own and will also play with the Chancel Choir Anthem.

This year's Easter Cantata is called, "Praise the God of Resurrection: An Easter Cantata" featuring the music of Mark Hayes, Lloyd Larson,

Joseph M. Martin, and Ruth Elaine Schram. In between narrations, the choir will sing the following selections: "In the Beginning Was the Word", "God's Holy Lamb", "You Are the Bread", "King of Tears", "Three Crosses of Shame", and "Praise the God of Resurrection!" The narrator for the cantata is Diane Boso.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

John Morrison  
Director of Music and Organist

## Celebrating Scout Sunday



# First Church's News & Notes

## Mark Your Calendars

- **Material for the APRIL 2026 issue of The Chimes is due by Friday, March 20 at noon. THANKS!**
- **Session Meeting: March 17 at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Men's Breakfast: Tuesdays at McAteer's at 8 a.m.**
- **Women's Breakfast: March 12 at 9 a.m. McAteer's**
- **March 1: Called Congregational Meeting - Annual Meeting & electing new Officer Nominating Committee**
- **March 29: Palm Sunday, Easter dinner after service**
- **April 5: Easter Cantata**
- **April 18: Date Night Event: hosted by Christian Ed.**
- **April 19: Youth Outing Marion Co. Animal Shelter**

## Winter office hours could change

Just a reminder that office hours may be affected by winter weather. On days the Marion County schools enact a 2-hour delay, the office will be open from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. School closings will likely result in a full closure of the office. Please call the office before heading in.

If you have an urgent need for pastoral care and you are not able to reach someone in the office, please contact a session member for assistance.

## Pastor Search Update

Moving forward...

As a congregation, we have adjusted, and continue to adjust, to ensure a continuity of operations in the absence of a pastor. We are grateful for the unwavering dedication of our ministry teams, members, youth, staff, volunteers, and worship leaders.

Guided by the WV Presbytery, Session members are working diligently to complete the process for calling a pastor. Recently, we asked you to complete (by 2/28) a survey as a means to conduct a self-reflection/mission study. We want to hear from you! Your perspective is invaluable, and your feedback ensures your voice is part of this crucial process.

Once the mission study is reviewed by the Presbytery, we will receive permission to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The Officer Nominating Committee has approached individuals for this team. By late spring, hopefully, a congregational meeting will be called to nominate and then elect the PNC.

We ask for your continued prayers, support, and patience as we journey forward. Session members are available to answer any questions you may have.

**Session Members:** Teri Bunner, Nancy Carnes, Eric Hauser, Deanna Kritzer, Janet Miller, Pam Nolan, Penny Roberts, Pam Stalnaker, Rob Steele, Earl Sweet.

*Submitted by Pam Nolan, Janet Miller, Nancy Carnes*

## Hospitality events for February

Once again, we had a great turnout for our annual Souper Bowl dinner. There was a large variety of delicious soups and no one left hungry. Thanks to everyone that made soup for the dinner and everyone that helped to make this a dinner a success. We look forward to Souper Bowl 2027!

Our Ash Wednesday Pot Luck Dinner did not disappoint. We had great fellowship and a nice variety of delicious food to enjoy. Thank you to everyone that came to the dinner and thank you for the wonderful food you prepared.

### Upcoming Events:

Hospitality will be providing food for the weekly Lenten studies.

**March 1** Cookies in the Social Room after church service

**March 3** Hospitality meeting at 10 a.m. in the parlor. Everyone is welcome to join us.

**March 29** Easter Dinner after church service



**Palm Sunday Celebration: March 29**  
*Easter dinner will follow the service in the Social Room.*



# CONTACT INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: 9 AM - 1 PM ON MONDAY THRU THURSDAY

Phone (304) 366-2628

Fax (304) 366-2662

Email: [office@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:office@fairmontfirst.net)

Web: [www.fpcfairmont.com](http://www.fpcfairmont.com)

## Youth & Children's Ministry

We have had a busy and exciting season in our Youth and Children's Ministry!

Recently, we took a trip to The Hive Trampoline Park, and everyone had an amazing time jumping, laughing, and enjoying fellowship together. It was a wonderful opportunity for the kids and youth to build friendships and just have fun!

Our group continues to focus on serving others. The children had a great time making Valentine's cards for our shut-ins to remind them they are loved and remembered. We also continued making colorful pipe cleaner flowers with the youth — such a creative and joyful activity! In addition, the kids collected snacks for the Burdette family as a way to show support and care.

Looking ahead, we are currently collecting donations for the local animal

shelter. We will be visiting and volunteering there on April 19. If you would like to contribute, please see us for a list of needed items. We are excited for this opportunity to serve our community together.

For communication and updates, we are now using the SportsU app. Please download it to stay connected with announcements and upcoming events.

We are also holding a special Lenten study for the kids on Wednesday nights. Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m., and the study begins at 6. We would love for more families to join us during this meaningful season as we grow together in faith.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our children and youth!



## Staff

Pastor

### Director of Music

John Morrison  
[music@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:music@fairmontfirst.net)

### Discipleship Ministry Coordinator

Jane Mead  
[discipleship@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:discipleship@fairmontfirst.net)

### Office Coordinator

Karen Mersinger  
[office@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:office@fairmontfirst.net)

### Sexton

[sexton@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:sexton@fairmontfirst.net)

### Nursery Attendants

Pam Proctor  
Abby Shuck

### Sunday School

Brigitte Gapen

### A/V Tech

Chris Ward

## Session

### CLERK OF SESSION

Kathy Snider

### ADMINISTRATION

Pam Nolan  
Earl Sweet

### OUTREACH

Terri Bunner

### PROPERTY

Eric Hauser  
Rob Steele

### WORSHIP & MUSIC

Penny Roberts  
Pam Stalnaker

### CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Nancy Carnes

### HOSPITALITY

Janet Miller  
Deanna Kritzer

## Treasurer

Roger Kritzer

# March Nurturing Faith Ideas

## SCRIPTURE

### March 1: Second Sunday in Lent - Genesis 12:1-4a

Seemingly unexpectedly, God called a man named Abram to leave his home, his family, his country and go to an unnamed place that God would show him. God promised to bless him and make him a blessing to others. What about you? If you heard God calling you to leave your home, family, and country behind to go where God was leading you, would you go? Why or why not?

### March 8: Third Sunday in Lent - Read John 4:5-42

This passage tells the story of Jesus' conversation with a woman of Samaria, which was surprising because men didn't start conversations with unknown women in that day, and Samaritans and Jews despised and avoided each other. Jesus showed her respect and kindness even though she was an outsider. After they spoke, she went back to the city and told others what Jesus had done, and many of them believed in him. What might you tell others about what Jesus has done for you?

### March 15: Fourth Sunday in Lent - Read John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been born blind. When his neighbors passed the same man, they saw only a beggar. When the Pharisees found out, they didn't believe he'd been born blind. When you walk someone in need, maybe they can't see, or hear, or walk, or maybe they lack food or money, do you see them as a person or label them and dismiss them? How might Jesus' open your eyes to see them as a child of God?

### March 22: Fifth Sunday in Lent - Read John 11:1-45

Jesus' disciples were afraid for him to go to Bethany because some of the people wanted to kill him because he challenged their beliefs and authority. But Jesus knew that his friend Lazarus was dying/dead and that Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, would be sad and grieving. Jesus comforted them with his words and then his actions as he brought Lazarus back to life. Who helps you feel better when you are sad or grieving a loss? How is God with you at such times?

### March 29: Palm/Passion Sunday - Read Matthew 21:1-11, and Matthew 26:14- 27:66

During the week, read a little each day. These passages tell the story of Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and the last events in his life before his crucifixion. If we just jump from Palm Sunday to Easter, we miss a lot of the story. Attend a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service this week if you are able to prepare for Easter.

## MARCH

### Birthdays

3/4	Peggy Twyman Charlene Walker
3/11	Mia Mersinger Amy Turluck
3/14	Sarah Armstrong
3/16	Judy Scott
3/17	David Floyd
3/18	Joan Krause-Smith
3/22	Marilyn Morgan
3/27	Austin Fatkin
3/28	Emily Starn
3/30	Linda O'Connor Debbie Sleeth

### Anniversaries

3/6	Dave & Penny Roberts
3/16	Glen & Dana Satterfield

## Prayer List

John Morgan, Jr.  
Steve Asher  
Rev. Richard & Faith Bowyer  
Cathy Woodson  
Adam Ranson  
Family of Steve Bopp, Pam Nolan's  
cousin  
Teresa Simms  
Joe Criss  
Jason Burdette  
Joseph Hutson  
Emma Keener  
Barb Starn  
Dave Yazvak  
Rev. James Morley  
Brad & Donna Dodd  
Ella Morris  
Steven Satterfield  
Judy Shaver  
Peggy Twyman

## February Pledges & Gifts

February 1	\$4,250
Shoes for Kids	\$161.50
February 8	\$25,429
For new A/C	\$10,000
February 15	\$11,362
February 22	\$495
Burdette Collection	\$3,770
Total:	\$55,467.50

Total to Date: \$67,957.50

March Ministry  
Volunteers

Liturgist: Karen Mersinger

USHERS : Earl Straight (captain), Janet Chittum, &  
Ed Cummings



*The church with a  in the heart of the city!*

*the* **Chimes**  
*March 2026*

F I R S T P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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FAIRMONT, WV 26554

