

## Loving, Learning and Serving Together

TODAY (8:30 am) Worship at New Hope  
(9 am) Sunday School at Highland  
(10 am) Worship at Highland  
(After Worship) Youth Meeting  
(5:30 pm) Community Celtic Worship at St. Peter's *1st of month*  
MONDAY (7 pm) Choir *Every Monday, except 3rd*  
SATURDAY Youth Group Trip to Snow Plex and Dinner at CB  
March 11 Day Light Savings—Spring Forward  
(9 am) Devotions and Doughnuts in FH *Every 2nd Sunday*  
(After Worship) Highland Council Meeting  
(Noon) Potato Bar at Piedmont Presbyterian Church  
March 12 Egg Making Begins!  
March 17 UMW Prayer Breakfast at Redwood UMC  
March 18 (After Worship) WHY Youth with Donna G. and Julie B.  
March 19 (7 pm) UMW *Every 3rd Monday (No meetings Jan. or Feb)*  
March 20 Newsletter Information due to Pat Webb  
March 21 (Noon) Community Lunch at Bethany COB *3rd Wed*  
March 24 (10 am) Easter Egg Hunt at Highland  
(1-3 pm) Easter Egg Hunt at Bethany COB  
March 28 Garden Club at Highland  
March 29 (6:30 pm) Love Feast at Bethany Church of the Brethren  
March 30 (7pm) Good Friday Service at Piedmont  
March 31 (6 am) Walk to the Cross  
April 1 (6:30am) Sunrise Service at Callaway Cemetery  
Snacks and Fellowship at Highland  
(8:30 a.m.) Easter Worship at New Hope  
(10:00 a.m.) Easter Worship at Highland  
April 14 Dinner Served and Offered by the Youth  
Fundraiser for Blankenship Family  
April 15 Guest Speaker Rodney Spencer  
May 19 Firehouse Ham Supper  
May 20 (After Worship) WHY Youth  
June 3-7 Vacation Bible School  
June 27 Garden Club at Highland October 24 Garden Club at H  
July 13-15 Highland Church Camping Trip at Smith Mountain Lake



## Getting Dusty with God: A Journey from Help to Hallelujah

March 4, 2018

We start the journey of Lent hearing God's words from *Genesis 3:19*: "You are dust and to dust you shall return." In Jesus' time people prayed: "May you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi.

If a student was out and about, on the road, following and learning from their teacher (rabbi) it meant they were getting dusty! For six weeks, we will sweep through scriptures about dust and we will hear "you are dust" is good news! Let's follow Jesus all the way to the cross and empty grave so our prayer of "help" will lead to a "hallelujah." Let's get dusty!

1st Sunday of Lent: *Genesis 2:7, 3:19, Psalm 103, and Luke 4:1-13*  
Prayer: "Help!" I am dust; I need God's help.

2nd Sunday of Lent: *1 Samuel 2:8, Psalm 102, Luke 14:12-14*  
Prayer: "No!" I am dust; I care.

3rd Sunday of Lent: *Deuteronomy 9:12-21, Psalm 90, and Mark 8:31-37*  
Prayer: "Goodbye" I am dust, I let go to follow.

Read *Mark 8:31-37*. What do you hear and think Jesus is saying?

**"One of the hardest lessons in life is letting go. Whether it's guilt, anger, love, loss or betrayal. Change is never easy. We fight to hold on and we fight to let go." How does God help you say goodbye to what is keeping you from following Jesus?**

## HOPEFUL HAPPENINGS

### Potato Bar at Piedmont Presbyterian Church

March 11 at Noon, Piedmont invites you to come for a Potato Bar! Fix it just you like you like it! Carry Out Orders are available! Potatoes donated by the GREAT 611 Steak Company! Donations will be accepted to support Piedmont's Youth Ministry!

### We Need Your Help!

For our Walk to the cross, we want to include you. Please tell us in a paragraph or less what the following scripture means or means to you. We will use the responses on our signs. If you do not wish for your name to be used, do not sign, but please submit something.: Matthew 16:24 "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." A box will be at the mailboxes for your responses. Thanks for your help. Terry Jamison ([terry@agjamison.net](mailto:terry@agjamison.net))

### Chocolate Covered Easter Eggs!

Order now! \$6 an egg. Peanut Butter Center, Coconut Center, Vanilla Center! Turn in by March 18 and Pick Up March 25. Questions or want to help with the fun? Call Helen Akers at 540-483-2932 or Norma Jean at 540-483-4341.

### Lent Wreath Readings

Please sign up to lead in a reading. A sign up sheet is on the Pastor's Office door with a copy of the readings. Questions? See Pastor Amy.

### Easter Egg Hunt: March 24, 2018

*Easter Egg Hunt: March 24, 2018* (10:00 am) Highland  
Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held Saturday, March 24 at 10:00. Come out for an edible craft! Don't forget to bring your basket! Questions? See Crystal Weaver. Bethany Church of the Brethren is also having their Easter Egg Hunt on March 24, but from 1 to 3 p.m. Spend the day finding joy!

### Love Feast: March 29, 2018

*March 29, 2018 (6:30 pm)* Bethany Church of the Brethren invites us for their Love Feast and Communion with Foot Washing. "Maundy" is Latin for "New Commandment." We remember Jesus gathered with his disciples, broke bread, and washed feet, giving a new commandment saying, "Love other as I have loved you." Seated at tables in the fellowship hall, we will hear readings about Jesus' sacrificial love, share in food, foot washing and communion. Sign up so Bethany can prepare.

### Good Friday: March 30, 2018

(7 pm) Good Friday Service at Piedmont Presbyterian Church invites us to experience Jesus' words from the cross.

### Walk to the Cross: March 31, 2018

(6 am) Beginning at Highland UMC Meet at Highland UMC—in the sanctuary for a short devotional at 6:00 a.m. Then, we will begin our prayer journey with God all the way to the cross at the Callaway Cemetery, where we will lay down our crosses and burdens and have a meaningful communion. A fellowship breakfast will follow at the Callaway Fire Department. Also, if you would like to participate in this spiritual journey but are unsure about doing the actual walk, there will be a ride for you. Thank you for participating and encouraging others to be there. Questions: Terry and Cindy Jamison at 420-9782.

### Easter Sunrise Service: April 1, 2018

(6:30 am) Callaway Community Cemetery for Community Sunrise Service is a very special worship service. The Rev. John Heck will be preaching and Antioch will be offering the music. Come to Highland for some snacks and fellowship. In case of rain, we will worship at Highland.

- Space enough to remember it is God’s work, not our caucus group or tribal group agendas, that we are called to.

- Space enough to remember that righteousness is exercised, not through defending what we believe, but in loving and living what we believe.

Space enough for us to change our minds to the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. This I know:

- Our revival movement was born and nurtured by a disciple whose heart and mind were changed at Aldersgate;

- Our theology is grounded in love first;

- Our passion is to reach all people with the message of Christ’s transforming grace;

- Our praxis has always been to unbind those bound up by the cultural immaturities of self-centeredness, personal preferences, hatred, sin, death, division, fear;

- Our rule of life is to welcome all in the spirit of Christ and teach them to do no harm, do good and stay in love with God;

- Our unity is to be maintained for the purpose of watching over each other in love and helping each other to work out our salvation.

We can not do this apart or in homogeneous silos.

- Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

- Our vision is that all the world would have the mind of Christ.

Friends, let’s go home. Let’s unbind our people and guide them home.

Let’s help our people empty themselves of the need to control one another. Let’s help our people empty themselves of their fear of the future and their fear of a changed church. Let’s help our people empty themselves of their obsession for security. Let’s not hinder or harm one

another. Let’s take our people off the map. Let’s be open to Christ changing our minds. Let’s show the world what unity in the Body of Christ looks like. Let’s go home! Let’s go home! I believe we know the way! Oh, may your gift to God’s people be to take our people home. Let’s go home! May it be so. Amen!

## **Commission on the Way Forward Update!**

The Council of Bishops met this week. Bishop Ough preached. A copy of his full sermon can be found by the Prayer Wall for the Commission on the Way Forward. He asks us to listen and continue praying. Here are parts of the sermon: *Philippians 2:4-8 and Acts 11:1-18*

“I greet you as we gather...in the name and spirit of Jesus, who humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Like each of you, I have been praying unceasingly for the Holy Spirit to break through and illuminate the way forward.

Have you ever changed your mind? Of course, we have all changed our minds...For most of us, we probably change our minds several times a day on insignificant matters and, perhaps, on a few very significant issues.

But, this is not the nature of changing one’s mind that Paul is writing about in Philippians. Paul is speaking about a change of mind – a change of heart – that is congruent with Jesus’ self-emptying posture. Paul is speaking about a change of mind – a change of heart – that is congruent with Jesus’ humility and downward mobility. Paul is speaking about a change of mind – a change of heart – that is congruent with Jesus’ unwavering obedience to God’s redemptive mission. Paul knew about churches and church people, including church leaders like us, and the way we tend to act, concerned for self and self-preservation, our pet ideas, our intentions and our vested interests that harm and hinder other people. And he said, do not look to your own interests. Change your minds! Paul speaks of this transformation of one’s mind in Romans 12, as well.

This meeting, this holy conference, this critical time of discernment falls in the very heart of Lent. I am bold to suggest that during these four days we practice the Lenten disciplines of unbinding, self-emptying and deep listening to the Spirit. It was Henri Nouwen who first pointed out that the Latin root for the word, “obedience,” is “audire” or “audio” – which means to hear or listen. And being found

in human form, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient – that is, listened fully, intimately to the Father, even to the point of going to the cross. I urge us to practice the Lenten discipline of unbinding – unbinding ourselves from theologies of limitation that impoverish the radical grace, inclusion and freedom of the Gospel. Let us practice the Lenten discipline of self-emptying, letting go of the positions we came here to defend and the battles we are plotting to wage in this Council or the Judicial Council or on the floor of the Special General Conference. Let us practice the Lenten discipline of listening to God and one another to the point of dying to ourselves.

The clue to changing our minds to the new mind of Christ is emptying of our need to control and our anxious passion for security. And as our minds change, we come to new freedom. We are unbound, unburdened, able to live without fear. We find ourselves with Easter liberty:

- freed to focus on the interests of our neighbor;
- freed to repent of the burdens and limitations we have placed on God's people;
- freed to love with the same outrageous abandon that God loves us;
- freed to be our true selves and allow others to be their true selves;
- freed to replicate Jesus' life of humility, surrender and sacrifice in our own lives;
- freed to stand with Jesus in self-emptying obedience;
- freed to replicate Jesus' pattern of expanding the boundaries of whom God loves and includes in the Kingdom.

The witness from *Acts*, chapter 11, of Peter recounting his vision while in Joppa to the believers in Jerusalem is particularly instructive. Talk about a change of mind! Peter gets called on the carpet for baptizing some Gentiles in Caesarea. Can't you hear them saying to Peter, "What do you think you are doing, rubbing shoulders with that crowd, eating what is prohibited and ruining our good and pure name?" Although we are more sophisticated and politically

sensitive in how we ask such questions in most of our discourse today, our messages can carry the same closed-minded and hardened-heart disdain.

Peter goes on to tell the Council at Jerusalem that when he began to address the "outsiders" in Caesarea, the Holy Spirit fell on "them" just as it did on "us" the first time. And, he recites Jesus words, "John baptized with water; you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Peter concluded with a penetrating question. A question that, quite frankly, haunts me: "If then God gave them the same gift that God gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" Who was I that I could hinder God? This is a mind-changing, heart-transforming question. This is a question that must guide our efforts to fully engage Christ's mission in the world and to maintain the unity of the Church. Who was I – who are we -- that I could hinder God?

To keep this question in the forefront of our consideration of the models that are before us at this Council meeting will be an act of humility, repentance, self-emptying, deep listening (hear obedience), courage and openness to changing our minds.

Who was I that I could hinder God? This question has the same effect that Jesus' scribbling in the dirt had on the explosive situation where the men were poised to stone the woman caught in adultery. Space is created. Holy space is created.

- Space enough for us to look again; look deeper for the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Space enough to allow the Spirit to bless us with the gift of one heart and mind.
- Space enough for the Holy Spirit-fire to inform our doctrine and our decisions.
- Space enough for the reign of God to break forth.
- Space enough for us to find unity in our fire for the Gospel and our passion for the poor and excluded.

**PRAYING FOR OTHERS**

*Please write down these names shared in worship so that together we can pray for them this week.*

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