

Faithful to God; Grounded in Love,  
responsive to the world.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
Church

8<sup>th</sup> & Holly

Our 141<sup>st</sup> year

Nurturing people in body, mind, and soul for the glory of God

The monthly newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Medford, Oregon

February 2026



## View from the Bridge *Lent or Lint?*

By Mike Hubbard

As a young evangelical protestant, I was pretty sure Lint was spelled with an “i.” Then, sometime in my mid-twenties, I was visiting my friend Joe and noticed a gray smudge on his mother’s forehead. When asked “why the smudge,” Joe explained that his mother was old-school Irish Catholic and the smudge was the remains of a cross shaped bit of oil and ashes put there by her parish priest. And being very old-school, she would wear those ashes until Easter. I didn’t pursue the subject, because, as an average evangelical layperson, I didn’t give any more thought to Catholic practices than the average Catholic layperson gave to the lives of John and Charles Wesley.

My first twelve years as a Presbyterian added little to my understanding of Ash Wednesday and Lent. For whatever reason, Eagle River Presbyterian didn’t emphasize the Lenten season. It wasn’t until Evonne and I transferred our membership to First Presbyterian, Medford that I was exposed to what would become an important part of my spiritual life.

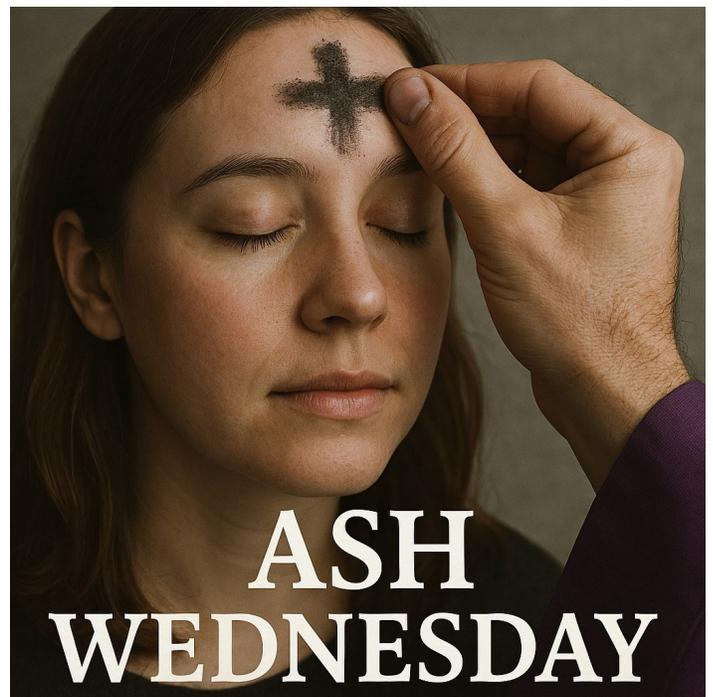
Ash Wednesday serves as a reminder; we are finite, finite creatures living finite lives in a finite creation. And, unlike our fellow creatures, we know of our finitude. As I preached last Ash Wednesday, humans are the only creatures who know they will die. Ash Wednesday reinforces that burden. That is why we depart the service quietly, taking only our thoughts and our ashes into the 40 days of Lent.

Lent isn’t a bridge spanning Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Instead, we must leave our bridge and step into the wilderness of the Exodus and of Christ’s temptations. The wild places where the Hebrew children wandered and where Jesus fasted and prayed are barren, stripped of all but the essentials. One photo snapped with a cell phone will look just like the next one hundred—empty. Empty of comfort, empty of company, and empty of distractions.

That final emptiness is why we should embrace Lent. All of us should observe a fast from distractions. Because as our Lord once noted, “we are distracted by many things.” Freed from distractions, the newly liberated Hebrews would discover new implications of what it meant to be children of Abraham. Alone among the wild beasts and with Old-You-Know-Who, Jesus prepared himself for his ministry and his destiny.

Ash Wednesday comes early this year—February 18. By then the last bite of Valentine’s Day chocolate will be gone. With that temptation out of the way, we may want to undertake our fast in the Wilderness of Uncertainty. And if we venture into that land of endless question marks, it’s likely we won’t find answers. Instead, we’ll find the blessed assurance that “Our God doth undertake to guide the future as he has the past; our hope, our confidence, let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last.”

Ash Wednesday grace and Lenten peace,  
Pastor Mike



# Here comes Lent

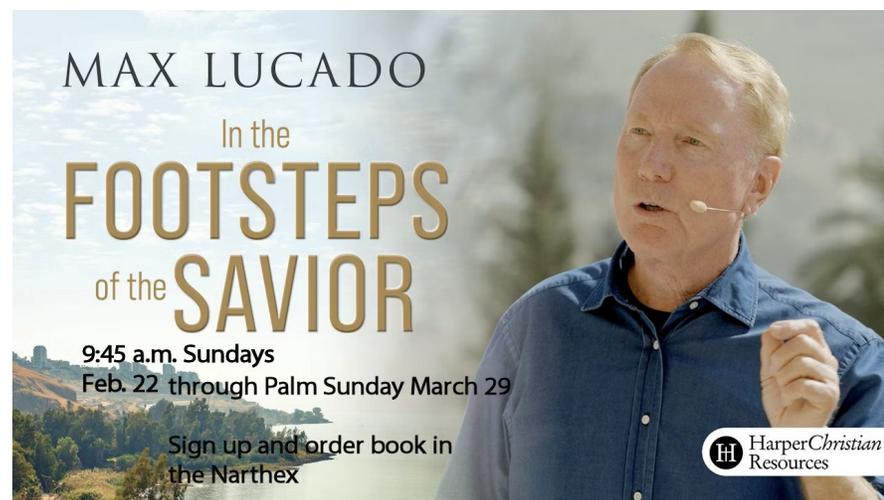
It's the 40-day season (excluding Sundays), which begins February 18 this year, from Ash Wednesday to dusk on the Saturday before Easter. We will follow the journey to Easter, through the cross, in sermons drawn primarily from Matthew and John's account of the journey.

Our journey as a congregation begins with the traditional Ash Wednesday worship service at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary of February 18.

Sunday mornings at 9:45 a.m. starting February 22, Tam Moore will facilitate a study of author Max Lucado's book *In the Footsteps of the Savior*. Lucado will lead off each class with a video, and those who buy the \$10 study guide will get access to additional video materials streamed from the Internet.

The six-week journey will visit Capernaum, Galilee, Bethany, Jerusalem, and more. Lucado will guide you walking where Jesus walked and pondering the promises Jesus made.

There's a signup in the Narthex where you can order the book, too. Or you can order it directly from Amazon.



## Elders, deacons elected

Elected at last Sunday's Annual Meeting of the congregation, new classes of elders and deacons were:

**Session**, elder class of 2029, Bob Haddon, Bob Frey, Maury Mahan

**Deacon**, class of 2029, Nikki Keating, Nancy Zitzner, Pat Mahan (one vacant)

**Deacon**, class of 2028 (filling two vacancies) Anthony Mouyios, Coleman Mouyios.

One vacancy remains in the Deacon class of 2027.

Elected to the 2026 Congregational **Nominating Committee** were Elder Patty Herkert, Deacon-elect Anthony Mouyios, and from the congregation at large, Marthanne Dedrick, Paulette Avery and Terri Johnson.

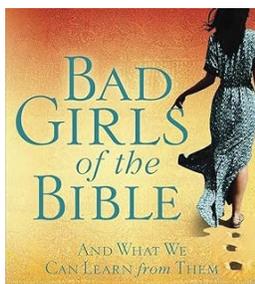
When the nominating committee has candidates for these vacancies, Session will call a special congregational meeting. If you are interested in serving on either the nominating committee or Board of Deacons contact Patty Herkert or leave a message with the church office.

## Bible women return

Josie Metz will teach a 7 p.m. Thursday class in March using material prepared by Liz Curtiss Higgs. We used her books for the "bad girls" and "slightly bad girls" studies Josie taught in 2024-25.

You can help select the next study book during the first two weeks of February.

In the Narthex, sign up if you are interested in the class, and pick your first and second choice for this spring. Selections close Monday, February 17.



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Office hours Mon. through Thurs.  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Bridge Pastor .....Mike Hubbard  
Transitional Consulting Pastor  
.....Rev. Robin Garvin  
Associate for Visitation and Pastoral Care  
.....Rev. Mary Wright Gillespie

Church Administrator.....Elizbeth Mahan

Sarah Corson Childcare & Learning Center director.....Jaime Snider

## Session Committee chairs

Building & Grounds—Bob Haddon  
1-(818) 383-4959

Christian Education—Tam Moore  
(541) 608-0171

Congregational Vitality- Dan Johnson  
(541) 621-1739

Fellowship— Sandi & Bob Frey  
1-(503) 399-7241

Finance — Cathy de Wolfe  
(541) 773-7350

Personnel—Cathy Ullrich  
(541) 261-1761

Mission— Bob Frey  
1-(503) 779-5558

Worship & Music—Andy Ullrich  
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Copy deadline: 4th Monday of the month  
prior to publication

email: [newsletter.firstpresmedford@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.firstpresmedford@gmail.com)



# SARAH CORSON CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER

February 2026 Newsletter



## **Happy Valentine's Day!**

We will celebrate Valentine's Day on **Friday, February 13** with our annual valentine exchange and class parties. Please see your child's teacher for specific party times and details. I will be sending out a valentine class list on Brightwheel at the beginning of the month.

The valentine exchange is optional. One easy way to help your child with valentines is to make the total number of cards and write your child's name on the "from" line, leaving the "to" line blank. Then teachers/staff can help your child hand out his or her valentines by placing them in friends' valentine bags. Each child will go home with a valentine goody bag on or after Friday, February 13, 2026.

Sending all our love to you and your family on Valentine's Day and always! We LOVE teaching your child/children!

## **OPEN President's Day**

A reminder we will be OPEN Monday, February 16 on President's Day.

## **Immunization Exclusion Day**

The Oregon state-wide Immunization Exclusion Day is **Wednesday, February 25**. Any child not up to date on his or her vaccinations, or without an exemption, will be excluded from care on this date and beyond until vaccinations are made current and records are received at SCC.



Two Pre-K boys work diligently to build a block tower with our cardboard blocks.

—Jaime Snider, director

## **Save the Date - Easter Egg Hunt**

Our annual Easter Egg Hunts are **Friday, April 3**. All children are welcome to attend. Those who do not normally attend school on Fridays are welcome to come for our Easter festivities as long as they are accompanied by an adult for the duration of the time they are here with us. Toddler Easter Egg Hunts will be on our playground, weather-permitting, and our Pre-school/Pre-K Easter Egg Hunt will be in the Church Sanctuary.

# An award winning chef

By PAULETTE AVERY

There are two ways to become an executive chef. Both involve working up through the hierarchy of a professional kitchen. One way is to train at a culinary school, but that can be very expensive. The other way is to achieve it through work experience. Our new member Tony Mouyios chose the work experience route, mentored by Dan Treadway at the Ashland Hills Inn through the Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena, Calif.

Tony was 19 when he started and worked countless hours over many years to become an executive chef.

Tony's achievements include being executive chef at The McCully House in Jacksonville and at Andreas of Ashland as well as owning the former Mediterranean in Jacksonville and being the chef and co-owner of The Grotto Pizzeria in Talent.

He's been featured in *Bon Appetit* and *Sunset* magazines.



Anthony "Tony" Mouyios



Tony gives a pizza skin the trademark toss at The Grotto

In cooking competitions Tony was outstanding chef in the 1995 Rogue Valley Chili Cookoff, won first place for originality in the Vintage Food and Wine Competition, also in 1995, and first place in confectioners for the chocolate competition at the Salishan Lodge in 1999.

Since he and his partner sold the Grotto Pizzeria in Talent about 18 months ago, Tony has worked for United Salad selling produce and other grocery products to restaurants, hospitals and grocery stores.

"Working in a restaurant requires a real passion for cooking because of the very long hours" he says.

This job allows more time at home with his family.

Tony was born in Portland and attended elementary school in Yuma, Ariz. As a child he went to a Nazarene church. Tony and his wife Chere have been married since 1991. Their older son Nicholas passed away in November of 2024. Their younger son Coleman and Tony were elected deacons at last Sunday's annual meeting.

When he has spare time, Tony likes to read the Bible and still enjoys cooking. Tony coached Little League in Phoenix and Talent and the junior varsity baseball team at South Medford High School.

# February at First

## 1 Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Informal Worship**, Fellowship Hall  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary

## 2 Monday

4 p.m. **Zoom book club**, email Hugh Anderson at [hughanderson2004@msn.com](mailto:hughanderson2004@msn.com) for the link  
6:30 p.m. **"Dopeless Hopechicks"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
6:30 p.m. **Fellowship committee**, workroom

## 3 Tuesday

9 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 750 N Columbus Ave.

## 4 Wednesday

4:15 p.m. **Christian Ed committee** workroom  
5:30 p.m. **Choir practice**, Choir room  
6:30 p.m. **"Men's Unloaded"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **Pastor Nominating** committee, workroom

## 6 Friday

6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out"** Narcotics Anonymous, basement room

## 7 Saturday

Noon **Women's Fellowship**, Black Bear Diner, 1150 E Barnett Rd.  
Noon **"Attitude of Gratitude"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## 8 Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Informal Worship**, Fellowship Hall  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary  
12:15 p.m. **Worship committee**, Fireside room  
4 p.m. **Jazz Vespers**, Mary Vannice quartet, Sanctuary

## 9 Monday

4 p.m. **Zoom book club**, email Hugh Anderson at [hughanderson2004@msn.com](mailto:hughanderson2004@msn.com) for the link  
5:30 p.m. **Bell practice**, bell room  
6:30 p.m. **"Dopeless Hopechicks"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
6:30 p.m. **Mission committee**, workroom

## 10 Tuesday

9 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 750 N Columbus Ave.  
6:30 p.m. **Vitality committee**, workroom

## 11 Wednesday

5:30 p.m. **Choir practice**, Choir Room  
6:30 p.m. **"Men's Unloaded"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **Pastor Nominating** committee, workroom

## 13 Friday

6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out"** Narcotics Anonymous, basement room

## 14 Saturday

Noon **"Attitude of Gratitude"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
4 p.m. Fellowship **Chocolate Potluck**, Fellowship Hall  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## 15 Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Informal Worship**, Fellowship Hall  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary  
12:15 p.m. **Deacons**, workroom

## 16 Monday

4 p.m. **Zoom book club**, email Hugh Anderson at [hughanderson2004@msn.com](mailto:hughanderson2004@msn.com) for the link  
6:30 p.m. **"Dopeless Hopechicks"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## 17 Tuesday

9 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 750 N Columbus Ave.

## 18 Wednesday

5:30 p.m. **Choir practice**, Choir Room  
6:30 p.m. **"Men's Unloaded"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **Ash Wednesday worship**, Sanctuary

## 19 Thursday

9 a.m. **Personnel** committee, pastor's study  
10 a.m. **Finance** committee, workroom  
1 p.m. Women's Fellowship **craft time**, workroom

## 20 Friday

6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out"** Narcotics Anonymous, basement room

## 21 Saturday

Noon **"Attitude of Gratitude"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## 22 Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Informal Worship**, Fellowship Hall  
9:45 a.m. **Footsteps of the Savior class**, Fireside room  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary  
4 p.m. **Classical Vespers**, Lisa True-love, Sanctuary

## 23 Monday

4 p.m. **Zoom book club**, email Hugh Anderson at [hughanderson2004@msn.com](mailto:hughanderson2004@msn.com) for the link  
5:30 p.m. **Bell practice**, bell room  
6:30 p.m. **"Dopeless Hopechicks"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## 24 Tuesday

9 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 750 N Columbus Ave.  
6:30 p.m. **Session**, Fireside room

## 25 Wednesday

5:30 p.m. **Choir practice**, Choir Room  
6:30 p.m. **"Men's Unloaded"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **Pastor Nominating** committee, workroom

## 27 Friday

6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out"** Narcotics Anonymous, basement room

## 28 Saturday

Noon **"Attitude of Gratitude"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends"** Narcotics Anonymous, Great Room

## February birthdays

2	Chunhui Billings
7	Nancy Leever
8	Suzann Harrison
9	Andy Ullrich
15	Marilyn Hultquist
17	Marg Funch
22	Mary Lynn Lucas
27	Sue Silfvast
28	Jaycee Lowe



# Connecting Forward as we worship

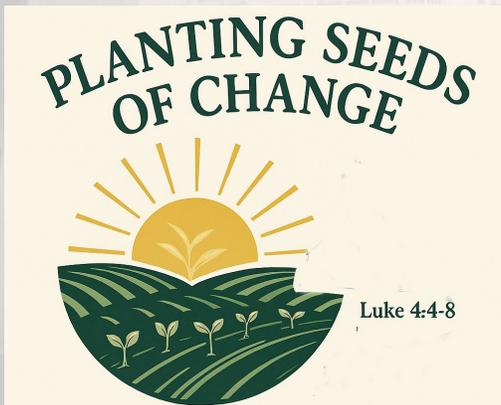
## Text for study in the week beginning:

February 1 Matthew 5:1-12, Micah 6:1-8 Sermon title "Blessed?"

February 8 Matthew 5:13-16, Psalm 112:1-9. Sermon Title "This Little Light of Mine."

February 15 Matthew 17:1-9, Exodus 24:12-18. Sermon Title "Mountains of Radiance."

February 22 Matthew 4:1-11, Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7. Sermon Title "Testing."



Connecting with God

Connecting with each other

Connecting with the community we serve

## Pastor search in high gear



Rev. Robin Garvin advises our PNC

Our Pastor Nominating committee reviewed over 50 files from potential pastors in January, with another batch arriving this past week. Chair Dan Johnson told the annual congregational meeting it's going to be a busy winter and spring.

He asked for prayer "that we find the right pastor."

The profile for our head of staff went "live" on the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection January 6. The website uses an algorithm to match potential candidates with our needs.

The committee ranks potential candidates and requests more information from those who might fit.

"God is going to lead" us to the right candidate "in God's time," Dan said.

## Bridge pastor sets June exit date

Pastor Mike Hubbard, our Bridge Pastor for the past year, says he plans to step down in mid-June, unless the Pastor Nominating Committee is actively negotiating with a candidate at that time. He told Session if a negotiation were in progress he would remain on a month-to-month basis for up to 60 days.

Pastor Mike, our congregational care associate for several years, retired from a full-time pastorate in Tulelake, Calif.

# Valentine's Day chocolate potluck



Join us on Saturday, February 14 at 4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a fun time around the theme of Valentine's Day. This is a Chocolate Potluck, so bring your favorite chocolate dish to share. There'll be fun activities, fellowship, and chocolate to eat. The Fellowship committee will provide milk, coffee, and tea to cut through any over-powering amount of chocolate.

Bring a friend, eat chocolate, enjoy activities and fellowship to celebrate this special day. The party runs until 6 p.m. or a chocolate coma sets in, whichever occurs first.

## **Soup: food of the month**

Please bring some canned, or pouched soup when you come to church. We need to augment what's available at the West Medford Food Pantry.



Volunteers are needed Tuesday mornings for several light-duty tasks, such as sorting produce and canned goods. Some tasks can be done while sitting.

Contact: Jim Foucault at  
foucaultjim@gmail.com  
or text 541 841 8345

## Jazz harp returns to Vespers February 8

Harpist Mary Vannice who last year played our Jazz Vespers service as part of an ensemble, returns at 4 p.m. Sunday, February 8 as leader of a quintet. Backing her jazz harp work will be her husband Michael on soprano sax, Don Monjure on piano, Tom Stamper on drums and Steve Fain on bass.

Mary Vannice performs locally, mostly as a solo jazz harpist. She's volunteered her musical talents at Ashland Community Hospital over the past two decades.

### *Classical Vespers features cello*

This month's Classical Vespers, also at wintertime 4 p.m. start, features the cello music of Lisa Truelove. She's a longtime member of the local musical scene, playing in both the Britt Festival Orchestra and Rogue Valley Symphony.

February Classical Vespers are at 4 p.m. Sunday, February 22.



Mary Vannice



## Black Bear Diner, New Rin Tin Tin Buffet

Our two dine-out groups are both busy again in February.

Women's Fellowship meets at noon, Saturday February 7 at the Black Bear Diner, 1250 Barnett Road.

The Lunch Bunch is heading for the New Rin Tin Tin Buffet, 2366 Poplar Drive at 12:45 p.m. Sunday, February 22.

There are sign-up sheets for both luncheons in the Narthex

