

Methodist Message

April 2025

St. Louis First United Methodist Church

What Is Love?

When a group of young children was asked, "What is love?" they gave some thoughtful answers:

"Love means everybody has a family," said four-year old Adam.

Another child replied, "When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and polish her toenails anymore. So my grandpa does it for her all the time now, even when his hands got arthritis too."

Grandpa's sweet example of sacrifice brings to mind an amazing story in the Bible of love. Jesus, knowing He wouldn't be with His disciples for much longer because of His imminent arrest and crucifixion, took a towel after dinner and wrapped it around His waist (John 13). He poured water into a large bowl and began to wash His disciples' feet. Simon Peter recoiled at the thought because it didn't seem right: The Master and Lord bending low and touching my dirty feet? That's a servant's job! Yet to teach them what it meant to serve others, Christ insisted. "Do you understand what I have done for you? He asked. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet" (vv. 12, 14). Jesus concluded by saying, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (v. 17).

Jesus, took on "the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2: 7-8). And after teaching His followers for three years, Jesus displayed the greatest act of love by giving His life on the cross for their sin and ours. Humility and sacrifice—the true nature of love. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16).

So, what about us? How do we learn to love sacrificially? We can start by presenting ourselves anew to God in prayer and asking for His direction. He's created us to be unique and has given us talents and gifts to use in serving others. If we ask, He'll lead us.

We can...

- ⇒ Keep our eyes and hearts open to the needs of those around us.
- ⇒ Listen to someone who's different from us. We may have neighbor's of varying ethnicities, ages, backgrounds, goals, and desires we can learn from.
- ⇒ Help someone with a project or need.
- ⇒ Serve our own family and church family.
- ⇒ Acknowledge the harm we've caused someone and build a bridge to that person.
- ⇒ Give time or money to a ministry that's close to our hearts.
- ⇒ Provide a meal for strangers, a friend, or a neighbor.
- ⇒ Send a note or card to uplift someone needing encouragement.
- ⇒ Pray for someone we might not get along with.

The ideas are as endless as God's heart. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23). "Follow me," Jesus said. Jesus has shown us the way by His own example and has given us His Spirit to empower us.

How will you love like Jesus and "wash" someone's feet today?

We are blessed to be a Blessing, *Pastor Billie Lou*



SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR: LENT

LENT is the fourth season of the Christian church year. Lent is 40 days long, representing the 40 years of wandering in the desert by the disobedient Old Testament Hebrews led by Moses and the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness before starting His ministry. The 40 days do not include Sundays (Sabbath.) Sundays are considered “little Easters” or mini celebrations. Lent concludes on the 6th Sunday, Palm or Passion Sunday, and the beginning of Holy Week (Holy or Maundy Thursday and Good Friday).

LITURGICAL COLORS OF LENT: The color for Lent is a dark “plum” purple. It reminds us of Jesus’ suffering for our sinfulness. Palm Sunday can be either purple or red (although the green palm branches are used.) Holy/Maundy Thursday is also purple or red. Good Friday should be devoid of color, but sometimes black and gray are used.

SYMBOLS OF LENT:

Cross or Crucifix: The Latin or Roman or Diagonal Latin Cross is usually used to remember Christ’s crucifixion. In the Protestant church an empty cross is used as we are thankful that Christ did not stay on the cross, but rose from the dead.. In the Roman Catholic church a crucifix is used to stay focused on Christ’s suffering for our sake.

Palm Branch: The Sunday before Easter is Palm Sunday as we remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem. The people laid down palm branches and cloaks to honor Jesus as King of kings shouting Alleluia or Hallelujah. They thought Jesus was coming to save them from the Roman occupation as a warrior king.

Basin & Towel: As Jesus prepared His followers for His suffering and death, He gathered with the closest of His followers and washed their feet as a sign of His servanthood. Sometimes we reenact this in a service on Holy/Maundy Thursday.

Bread & Cup: The season of Lent begins with a service of Holy Communion (Bread/Body-Cup/Blood) and the intinction of ashes on Christian forehead’s or hands. Communion is again usually served on Holy/Maundy Thursday as we remember the Last Supper (Passover Seder meal) that Jesus shared with the disciples before His betrayal and arrest.

Rooster: Jesus said we, too, would be a part of His betrayal. A rooster crowed after Simon Peter, one of the closest of the disciples, denied knowing Jesus three times during His arrest. Jesus predicted Peter would let Him down, just as we often do.

Dice: The Roman soldiers responsible for the act of crucifixion gambled for Jesus’ clothing. Those being crucified were stripped of their clothing as another insult.

Advent. The lamb symbol has the three-rayed nimbus to designate a member of the Trinity.

Scourging Whip Pontius Pilate ordered Jesus to be flogged or scourged—Pilate was trying to avoid ordering crucifixion, but the Jewish leaders would not be satisfied and demanded crucifixion. Scourging was so intense that often it would kill the person being flogged. The scourging whip was imbedded with sharp stone, pottery, glass or metal pieces intended to rip the skin open.

Nails & Hammer: Three spikes were used to nail Jesus to both arms of the Latin style cross. A large hammer would have been used by the Roman soldiers assigned to His crucifixion.

Three Crosses The symbol of three crosses reminds us of the two thief’s that were crucified with Jesus. One thief mocked Jesus, but the other acknowledged that Jesus had done no wrong and did not deserve to die with them. The repentant thief received forgiveness from Jesus.

Spear:: The Roman soldiers at the crucifixion were responsible to make sure that the person on the cross was actually dead. They would break legs to quicken the person’s suffocation and death. In Jesus’ case a soldier pierced Jesus’ side.





United
Women
in Faith

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful surprise—sunshine! The season is changing to warmer days and many of us are very happy about that.

A big thank you to everyone who participated in our recent Potato Bash. We made approximately \$700 to use toward mission projects, so the day was a success! The ladies who helped in the kitchen and donated items are very much appreciated and everyone who came were generous. Thank you again for your support.

The St. Louis ladies are invited to a spring luncheon May 6th at the Carson City United Methodist Church. This is a free will offering to raise funds towards a new church roof. Reservations are needed so contact me if you are interested and I'll make a group reservation (we can carpool).

In the meantime, enjoy the sunshine!

Sue Baker

989-574-8827



GAME NIGHT

The next game night will be held Saturday April 5th from 7pm-10pm in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a card or board game, bring a snack if you wish. Bring a friend—help us grow, bring a smile!



LENTEN MISSION

We will be collecting **PERSONAL NEEDS PRODUCTS** during the season of **Lent (March 5-April 13)** as our Lenten Mission focus chosen by the joint Worship Teams. So, if you find any deals now, please pick them up. All donations may be placed in the tote located in the Gathering Area.



We Need Your Help



April Birthdays!

- 6. Lillie Hoard
- 15. Dakota Colthorp
- 16. Sophia Bramer
- 19. Ryan Randall
- 25. Carin SanMiguel
- 26. Jeff Short
- 28. Barb Shankel

April Anniversary!

Ted and Sandy Humm
April 15, 1972



Art and Music Camp



Art and Music Camp is coming again in June! Please consider helping to make this community ministry a success again! Art guides (simple projects), snack providers, set up, help with music, games and Bible story telling will all be needed. Come, be a part of the fun!

LITURGISTS NEEDED:

We are looking for members who would like to serve as liturgists every 2-3 months. All materials will be given to you in advance. If interested please see Pastor Billie Lou or contact the office.

HELP NEEDED FOR GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Good Friday service will be held Friday, **April 18th at 1:00 pm at BUMC.** We need multiple readers for the Gospel Reading from John 18-19 and persons needed for silent drama. Please see the sign up sheet on the table in the Gathering Area if you are interested.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, April 2-UWiF Meeting SLFUMC @ 9:30 am
Lenten Adult Study 2-4pm

Saturday, April 5—Game Night 7pm-10pm

Wednesday, April 9—Dorcas Circle Meeting SLFUMC @ 1:00 pm
Lenten Adult Study 2-4 pm

Thursday, April 10— Young at Heart Always @ 12:00 noon

Sunday, April 13—Palm Sunday

Wednesday, April 16—Carrie Knause Circle Meeting @ 9:30 AM @ SL

Thursday, April 17—Holy or Maundy Thursday

Friday, April 18—Good Friday-Service at 1:00-BUMC

Sunday, April 20—Easter Sunday

Tuesday, April 22 —Free Community Soup Supper @ SLFUMC

Friday, April 25 - Food Pantry Fundraiser in the Fellowship Hall

Sunday, May 4—Special Sunday: Native American Ministries

Tuesday, May 6—Spring Luncheon –CCUMW—12:00 noon



HOLY WEEK ACTIVITIES

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 18th
1:00 pm @BUMC

Holy Saturday-April 19th

St. Louis Easter Celebration—Clapp Park from 11 am-2pm
The First Baptist Church of SL will be hosting the fun filled event. There will be games, prizes, crafts, bounce houses and much more!

Easter Sunday

9:30 AM Service @BUMC
11 Am Service @SLFUMC
Golden Egg Scavenger Hunt for kids during service at both churches.

SECRETARY OFFICE HOURS:

Nancy—Thurs. 8 am—1 pm

Email Address:

breckenridgeumc@yahoo.com

THE METHODIST MESSAGE

“SERVING ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING GOD’S LOVE”

First United Methodist Church

125 Third St.

Breckenridge, MI 48615

Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown—Pastor

Office phone: 989-842-3632

9:30 AM worship

“Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.”

****Please notify the church if you wish to be taken off the mailing list.**

United Methodist Church
125 Third St.
P.O. Box 248
Breckenridge, MI 48615
Return Service Requested

