



The Witness

Father, Forgive Them...

As Jesus hung on the Cross, the soldiers mocked Him and gambled for His clothing. The leaders and the people sneered at Him. Even one of the criminals crucified beside Him insulted Him. Even in the midst of the blood, the pain, the cruelty, the hatred and the inhumanity, Jesus prayed, *“Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:24).

Can you imagine that? Jesus prayed for the people who were killing Him. The *“them”* He prays for His Father to forgive include the religious leaders, the Roman soldiers, and the criminals hanging nearby. It also includes the disciples who deserted Him and Peter who denied Him. Do you think it also included Judas, who betrayed Him?

Do you know who else the *“them”* includes that Jesus prays for His Father to forgive? It includes you and me. We are part of that that *“them.”*

We are in the season of Lent. Lent is the 40 days before Easter (not counting Sundays). It is an excellent opportunity to reflect and renew our relationship with Jesus Christ. Were you once walking in the excitement of newness of life in Christ, but you got off track, and things have become a mess? Were you once holding Jesus’ hand, but you let go?

The good news is that we might let go of Jesus’ hand, but His hand remains outstretched and waiting for us to reach out again. Jesus never leaves us; He never forsakes us, and we can always return to Him. This is what repentance is about. The problem that gets in our way of our joy in walking with Jesus is sin. Repentance is turning from sin and re-embracing the Christ Who has embraced us.

This month we are on a journey toward the Cross. This will culminate at our Good Friday worship service as we sing our closing hymn, *“Were You there When They Crucified My Lord?”* I was, how about you?

The Bible tells us that Jesus is our high priest, offering a sacrifice to make amends for our sins. And He Himself is the sacrifice. As He suffers and dies, He pleads with the Father on our behalf. Love can go no further than this, and God is Love.

If you have not done so, will you give Jesus a chance to forgive your sins and bring you into new life with Him? If you once walked joyfully with God but have gotten off track, will you renew your relationship with Him?

I look forward to a blessed month together with you.

In Christ, Pastor Ken





The daffodils were in full bloom on Ash Wednesday.



Brandon Haynes joined the church Sunday, February 5th.



Brent Page shared some of his talents with us during worship on February 12.



We are excited to welcome Trinity Baxter as our new Children's Director.

Meet the Children's Director

Trinity Baxter



Hello RBUMC, I'm Trinity and I am so excited to be the Children's Director. I have loved being a member of RBUMC for the past nine years, and I am so excited to grow and serve the children's program in the church I love. Here are a few things about me:

I am a sophomore in college. This is my final semester at Chattanooga State Community College, and I will be transferring to University of Tennessee Chattanooga in the fall (Go Mocs!)

I started attending Red Bank UMC when I was in the fifth grade, and have been very active in the church since then.

One of my favorite memories from being in the children's department was Sunday school with Mr. Skipper and Mrs. Marion <3

Trinity at VBS in 2014



Trinity Volunteering at VBS 2018



Trinity Continued...

Trinity Baxter has been attending RBUMC since she was in the fifth grade. She has participated in the children's ministry, youth group, and started the Agape College group in the church. She is currently a sophomore in college at Chattanooga State Community College, and will be transferring to University of Tennessee Chattanooga in the fall. Trinity is so excited to be serving the sweet children of the church she grew up in and loves!



The Music and Worship Arts Department would love to have you join us in our Easter Sunday Ensemble!

Who: anyone who enjoys singing and praising the Lord with song

What: Easter Sunday Ensemble

When: Rehearsals will begin *Wednesday, March 15th at 6:00pm*; performance will be Easter Sunday, April 9th

Where: Sanctuary choir loft

Why: To make beautiful music together and lead the congregation in praising our Risen Savior

How: No need to sign up! Simply join us on *Wednesday, March 15th at 6:00pm* for dinner and fellowship with music rehearsal from 6:30pm-7:30pm

Can't wait to see you there!!

*email with more details to come!



Brackett's Rackett

Matthew 18:12-14 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

In the first sentence of the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus asks a question. What would the caretaker of the sheep do? My guess is that Jesus turned it into a question on purpose.

I think the way we answer this question reveals what we believe to be true about God. I also believe that the way we answer this question may evolve over time as our understanding of God does the same. Jesus uses this story as a way to point us toward God's true character and His desires for us.

Jesus told us the truth right here in the story. God desires to have each of us at home and wrapped safely in His love, and our absence is instantly recognizable to God. (I'm also convinced that only God could immediately tell the difference between 99 and 100 sheep!)

We've been given the ability to choose whether we wander off or come home. We know from the teachings of Jesus that sometimes the only reason we choose not to return home is because of our own misunderstandings about our Father's character. If we knew and fully understood the truth about God's love, I can't imagine that any of us would ever choose to turn away.

But there are so many obstacles that keep people at an unfamiliar distance from God, even if we desire to be at home with Him. Many, if not all, of these obstacles are borne of deception. When we look at all of the reasons that keep us from our spiritual home with God, they typically boil down to shame, pain, unbelief, foolishness, confusion, and fear. Any of these forces could be leading us to inadvertently wander off every time we leave church each weekend just after we've basked in a wonderful experience of God's love.

God is ever-present, and so if we don't feel His presence in our lives, that's our indicator that we've wandered off. As soon as we realize and overcome the forces that keep us at a distance from God's love, He rejoices. Because the only thing greater than love is mutual love. This is why God gives us our own choice. Love is exponentially more powerful when it's shared. He wants us to experience the power of love that is shared mutually.

If you desire more of His love but you can feel in your heart that you're not always mutually there, turn it into your prayer. Let these simple prayers serve as inspiration:

- God, help me with my unbelief.
- God, help me to let go of my assumptions about your judgement of me.
- God, help me navigate my pain and feelings of betrayal.
- God, I desire to experience your grace.
- God, deliver me from evil.
- God, expose the deception that I have accepted as truth.
- God, what do I do next?
- God, help me want to be close to you.

God, why did this happen?

God will never reject us. He is always simultaneously pursuing us and waiting patiently at the door for us to come knocking. Jesus is challenging us right now to examine what we believe to be true about God's love. Does it line up with the character of God as Jesus describes?

Youth (Grades 6-12):

Youth Foundation Bible Study – Sunday Nights at 5:30 p.m. – They are Treckin’ Thru the Ten (Ten Commandments) this Spring

The Rummage Sale trailer will be available again for donations beginning the first week of April!



Young at Heart (for all Senior Adults)

March 2023:

14 -	9:30 a.m. -	Medal of Honor Museum and the Puckett’s Restaurant for Lunch	
23 -	10:30 a.m.-	Program:	Hostess: Jane Smith/Sue Beebe
		Leader: David Brackett	Devotion: Sue Beebe

April 2023:

11 -	9:00 a.m. -	Outing to Buccees in Calhoun and then to Lunch	
17 -		Special Trip to Gibbs Gardens (there will be lots of walking on this outing)	
27 -	10:30 a.m. -	Program: Billie Hunt	Hostess: Drew Lowe
		Leader: Billie Hunt	Devotion:

Church-Wide Birthday Party and Lunch – Sunday March 19th!

We will be celebrating everyone’s Birthday at the same time and a spaghetti lunch will be available for the cost of a donation!

This promises to be a great time of Celebration so make plans not to attend!





- 1 Betty Owens
- 4 Billie Glasscock
- 11 Raymond Beebe
- 12 Madison DeFries
- 14 Jerry Watkins
- 18 Bob Trainor
- 22 Carol Perkins, Kathy Stanfield and Marsena Walker
- 26 Carron Trainor
- 28 Wendy Lyness and Trevor Owens
- 29 Betty Martin
- 30 Amanda Conry
- 31 Valerie Campbell

- 12 Raymond and Sue Beebe
- 20 Jack and Debra Pitkin
- 25 Jerry and Beth Watkins



Easter Lilies



Lilies will be placed in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 9.

Each lily will be \$8.50 . Order forms will be in the bulletin or you may call the office (877-2881) to place your order.

Information will be printed in the bulletin if you want to memorialize or honor someone.

Last day to place an order is March 19.



Susan Parks is now decorating our altar and making banners. She would love your help.



Journey Church, Cumberland Presbyterian (on the left), and The Bright School (on the right) all had food drives for the pantry in February.



These wonderful people got up early to cook breakfast at the Community Kitchen on February 5th. If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact Kathy



The Ladies of Lee led us in worship on February 19.

Jane Smith and Debby Brackett spent all day preparing our Ash Wednesday Meal



Pancakes on Ash Wednesday. Can't beat it.



Lent has begun.





Our Lenten Cross awaits Easter.

Donations Please

The Outreach Committee plans to hand out Peep Bags to those who attend our Eggstravaganza on April 2nd. Please consider donating Peeps



Easter Activities. . .

April 2 Palm Sunday
Eggstravaganza



April 9 Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service
Breakfast
Morning Worship

