

*❖ A Note from Rev. Toni McSorley*

When I first moved into the St. James Parsonage, I brought along the bulbs of some of my favorite flower: the Iris. I don't think I could explain why I favor the blooms so much, but they mean a lot to me and I love it when they appear in the Spring. I have had them everywhere I have lived, so it seemed only natural to bring them here.

'Double petal' blue Iris, deep Purple Iris, Golden Iris, and Black Iris are some of the bulbs I brought and planted. Last year none bloomed, but I expected that since they almost never bloom the first year after being planted. They still need loving care through that time, while they get accustomed to their new surroundings, so I took good care of them while they adjusted. This year the tips of some of them are peeking out, signaling that soon the blooms will burst forth in radiant colors.

This region of East Tennessee is so beautiful, it made me wonder at the time why I was bothering with a few more flowers. Only now do I understand why the Spirit moved me to take the time and trouble to bring the Iris here. They are a visible reminder of the work of the Lord.

We bring the Good News of Jesus to a heart that may be full of many good things (or not) but something is missing. At first, the message we bring may not immediately take root and bloom inside the people we are trying to reach. We can't make the message bloom; we cannot force it in any way to grow and change and brighten the spirit of the other person. What we can do is wait, patiently, and have faith that it will bloom in the right time. Tending those folks with love and care enables their faith to take root, grow, and eventually blossom.

We sometimes forget that the Holy Spirit has it all in hand when we think that the success of our message to others is all about us doing it 'right.' Jesus never gave us a formula; he never scolded the disciples for failure if a listener rejected the Good News. We are just to bring the message and then yield the gardening tools to the Holy Spirit. We aren't to get prideful if the person's heart blossoms, nor are we to be discouraged if that fails to happen. It may take a lot of time, but we must have faith that the best will come to pass.

I am not making the Iris bloom, that's something only the nature of the Creator can do. My job was simply to bring the bulbs, plant them, tend them patiently for a year and wait. I couldn't bully them, plead with them, or nag them to make them bloom. They needed loving care, but I know God is always in charge of the blooms. And when the blooms do happen, I get to celebrate and thank the Lord for the beauty, knowing the flowers will now spread and there will be many more of them to come!

Let us go forth this Spring to garden for the Lord, planting his message and caring for others, trusting the Holy Spirit to grow faith in the people we tend with compassion and love. What a beautiful garden we are privileged to work in. Thank you, Lord!

### ❖ *Council Highlights*

- Al Romanowski was elected to Vice-chair and Brenda Olafsen secretary.
- Log church will be opened for prayer adding sign, securing steps, replacing Flag.
- New flag pole donated by Boy Scouts in parking lot of community center
- Gravel for parsonage and parking lot at community center
- Working on setting up a corporation to take over ownership of cemetery.
- Don Strong has been instrumental in getting all the paperwork done. Don deserves a big thank you!

Thanks to all the committees that keep our activities running smoothly.

### ❖ *Jacob's Well & Appalachian Helping Hands*

Jacob's Well will be serving hot meals for sit down and carry outs on April 18th, May 4th and May 16th. Serving food starts at 10 am until 12 noon.

Second Harvest food truck distribution will be taking place in community center parking lot on April 25th and May 23rd.

Bagged food will be given out to families with children that are in the household.

Appalachian Helping Hands is open to serve the needs of the community every Thursday and Saturday morning from 9:00 a.m. until noon.



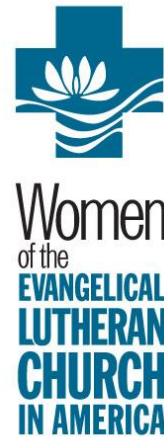
### ❖ *Young at Heart*



The Young at Heart members will meet May 8th & June 12th at 11:30 am in the Community Center Cafeteria. The group will take the months of July & August off for the Summer. YAH will return September 11th with Fall Bingo with Craig Wednesday, September 11th 11:30 am at the CC Cafeteria.

### ❖ *WELCA*

The women of our church meet for fellowship on the third Sunday of each month. We discuss how we can help our community and the surrounding area. IN February we had a bake sale which was very successful thanks to our generous members. We are looking forward to having other activities to earn money. We also invite all the women of the church to join us.



### ❖ *Church Property Committee*

The property committee has completed the following tasks during the period from Jan. 1 through April 15:

- New ice maker installed in community center cafeteria.
- Flag pole erected at community center.
- Two American Flags were donated by Tennessee State Representative David Hawk to be flown at community center and in front of log church.
- Trees trimmed in front of church and campus grounds cleaned of debris from storm.
- Sections of guttering at parsonage repaired.
- New main water line from meter to parsonage installed.
- Two new light fixtures installed in parsonage garage.
- Rock spread at community center and parsonage.
- Church heating furnace repaired.
- Church elevator repaired by replacing electrical component.

## ❖ *Worship & Music*

Our busy 2024 Lenten season began with a service in the sanctuary on Ash Wednesday, February 14. This was a regular service with the serving of Holy Communion, as well as the imposition of ashes. Our first of five Wednesday night Lenten services was held on February 21, with a short message by Pr. Toni, followed by fellowship and the enjoyment of desserts and beverages.

Additional Wednesday night services were held on 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, and 3/20. The Lenten services were followed by Palm Sunday on 3/24, and Holy Week services which included Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, a Service of Vigil on Saturday evening, and Easter Sunrise Service (7:30 a.m.), and the Easter Sunday service at 10:30. Our new pianist, Susan McKenzie, played for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, while Kendall Bowers did a fabulous job operating the sound board for the remaining services.

The flower chart is kept up to date. Thanks to all who donate! Anyone who wishes to provide flowers for a service may sign up on the chart in the Narthex.



### ***May Birthdays***

Jacob Jarnigan	2
Barbara Easterly	4
Wanda Shackelford	17
Gene Knipp	22
Walter Renner	22
Priscilla Simpkins	22

### ***June Birthdays***

Glenn Allen Shackelford II	6
Lynnice Strong	7
Vickie Ashenbrenner	14
Mildred Allen	18
<b><i>June Anniversaries</i></b>	
Isaac & Morgan Ottinger	14



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