



Saints Alive!

LENT 2025

Friends in Christ. Serving Together with Love

AVON LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Volume 23, Issue 2

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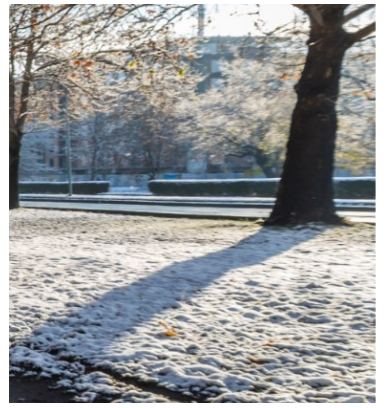
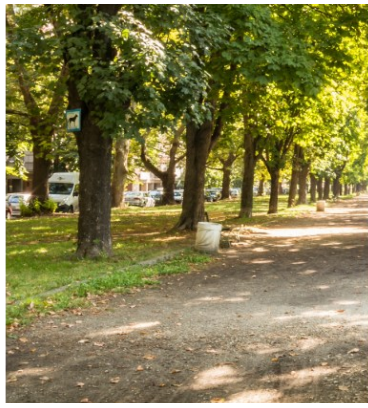
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MISSION STATEMENT

In awe, we Receive God’s Grace and Gospel.
In gratitude, we Respond with Worship and
Servanthood.

In love, we Represent Jesus Christ as we minister to



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

After my wife and I got married, we moved to the Los Angeles area to attend graduate school. Both of us had grown up in Ohio and were used to what the mid-west felt like, so there were parts of California urban life that were new to us. One of the more significant, and yet subtle, differences that surprised us the most was the near endless summer.

At first, this seemed amazing. No matter when you wanted, you could go outside and get a completely blue sky, no chance of rain and a gorgeous day. True, in the middle of summer, it was hot. But, it was also quite comfortable in the dead of winter—still blue skies and a t-shirt. But after our first year of being there, something just felt off. There were no seasons like we had growing up. The leaves never changed color or fell off the trees. Everything seemed to run into each other. The demarcation of time seemed to disappear and we felt the absence of the stark and dramatic transformation that we saw happen in nature every year living in Ohio. While we were not opposed to living in California weather, there was also something to be said about the effect of the changing seasons.

I mention this because we are changing seasons. Not only are we (slowly!) moving out of winter and into spring, but we are entering the season of Lent. Yes, we do this every year; yet, herein lies its significance. It marks the time, encouraging us to evaluate where we have come and where we are going.

But, is this what we do? Do we take the time to look at our journey, especially since Lent is truly about the journey? Jesus himself was on his own journey to the cross and we are invited to walk that road with him this season. However, do we merely mark the time, noting that it is time for the snow to melt and get the yard ready. Or, do we, this year, approach this new season with an open heart and eyes looking toward God, asking how we can take the next step in our faith growing. If we are leaning into what it means for us to be disciples of Jesus, then God may be asking something new of us. Afterall, both Lent and the changing of seasons are about transformation. Therefore, I am inviting us, both individually and as a community, to live into and embody transformation in a new way this year. May we find comfort and draw close to the heart of God as we do.

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Lent is upon us! We hope that you have considered and resolved to do a gesture of kindness each day rather than give up something as was written in last month's issue of *Saints Alive!* But you might want to shed a burden and find a way to reflect the love of Jesus.

Easter flowers for the sanctuary have already been ordered. This needs to be done well in advance. Donations to offset the cost of the flowers will be requested. Forms will be available in the narthex near the bulletins beginning March 9. At the end of worship on Easter Sunday, you are welcome to take a plant home with you.

Our committee is working on a mission statement and a description of what we do. Please look for that in the future. We've been focusing a lot on providing for worship. We also want to find ways to nurture the spiritual lives of members of the congregation. As such, you are encouraged to be in the habit of a time of daily devotions and prayer. Also, healing prayers are available after Sunday Worship in the rear of the sanctuary with members of our Healing Prayer Ministry.



Ash Wednesday is March 5.

In addition to an evening service, the sanctuary will be open for about an hour beginning at noon when people who are unable to make the evening service can come for imposition of ashes and prayer.

Information about Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Services will be forthcoming in future bulletins.

A couple teasers:

- ***Maundy Thursday service will include the Lord's Supper. Remember that our communion bread is always gluten free.***
- ***Good Friday service will be held in the evening with special music from the choir and some members of the TrueNorth Chorale.***

DEACONS

Warm up those pie recipes for the first ever Pi(e) Day celebration at ALPC on Sunday, March 16, following worship! Sign up in the Narthex to bring your favorite sweet or savory pie to share—as Kenzi so brilliantly said—anything with a crust is game. Dessert pies (Sybil’s partial to cherry) to pizza pies (yes, pineapple is a valid topping), shepherds to pot to mince and quiche – we love them all! If you’re looking for bragging rights, prizes will be awarded for the following categories: Best Use of Geometry, Et tu Fruite (fruit pie to die for), Pie with an Irrationally Long Ingredient List, Tangential Pie (best Ides of March or St. Patrick’s themed pie), Most Filling Pie, and the John 3:16 Pie (made with the most love). We’ll turn the ovens on low starting at 9:15 am to keep things warm during worship.



Don’t forget to give yoga a try this winter! Our very own Sandee Seib leads a wonderful weekly class on Thursdays at 6:30 pm. From beginners to experienced (and flexible) folks, all are welcome. And, any donations go toward the Guatemala mission work. Join the adventure!

If you ever need a ride to church, please remember to let Kenzi in the ALPC office know or contact Sybil directly at 440-453-1265 or sybilwendling@gmail.com.

Don’t let distance keep you from asking for a ride! We’re happy to figure out rides, no matter where you live!

In other news... Kathy Navarro is now serving as point-person for meals for congregants. If you ever need a meal, just let the ALPC office, Kathy (440-670-3210), or Sybil know and we will get you taken care of. If you want to help make meals, please ask any of these folks to add you to the Meal Ministry, a list of people willing to cook when needed. Thanks



SESSION *Highlights from the meeting held February 17*

- The Deacons shared their vision for their role at ALPC and researched the role of Deacons at other Presbyterian churches for comparison.
- Giving in January is always higher due to the donation of some annual required minimum distributions. Giving for the rest of the year needs to keep up to balance the budget.
- Giving toward the annual per capita payment, which is budgeted at \$4000, but actually costs over \$9000, has been good this year. Members may pay per capital ant any time of the year.
- Our insurance provider is charging 28% more this year so other providers are being researched.
- The youth group has a core membership which has been meeting successfully on a regular basis.
- Vacation Bible School and Confirmation plans are in the works.
- The Stewardship and Finance Committees want to share data all year

LIBRARY

What's the Least I Can Believe and Still be a Christian? by Martin Thielen

Clear away the underbrush and rediscover a Jesus-centered approach to the Christian faith. Navigate through the myths and faulty assumptions about our faith.

An Honest Look at a Mysterious Journey by John & Joanna Stumbo

The powerful story of an ultra-marathon runner and pastor who was bedridden for 77 days with a mysterious illness. A book for those wrestling with their faith in the midst of life's often harsh events.

They Like Jesus but Not the Church from Dan Kimball

Younger people will usually say yes when asked if they like Jesus, but they won't react the same when asked about the church. Read about positive ways churches and connect with emerging generations.

His Word in My Heart by Janet Pope

Memorize scripture to change your life by the process of thinking and meditating on specific truth. It's a way to get to know God my memorizing sequential verses in their context.

The Dream Manager by Matthew Kelly

An intriguing, secular book on recognizing that the dreams of people are relevant to the success of the organization. Reverse the belief people have of feeling used, by recognizing and enabling their dreams.

Celtic Christian Communities by Ian Bradley

There is a current hunger to revive the ancient roots of faith and practice, and to live beyond the superficial. This book can inspire churches and individuals to embrace the best of Celtic Christian practice.

The Business of the Church by John W. Wimberly, Jr.

We don't often think of "church" and "business" together. The church is an intriguing system, and there are practical strategies that promote congregational vitality and effectiveness.

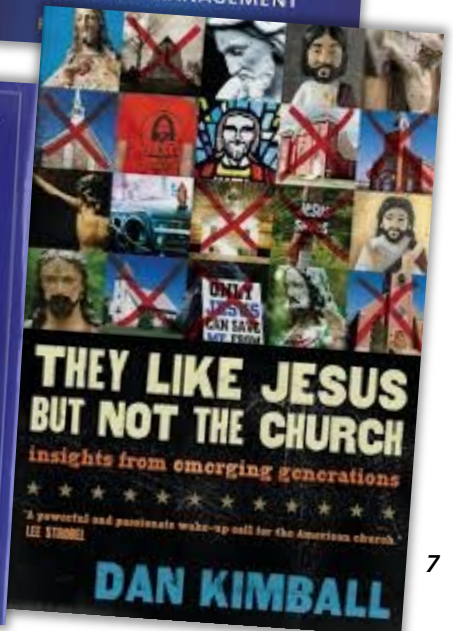
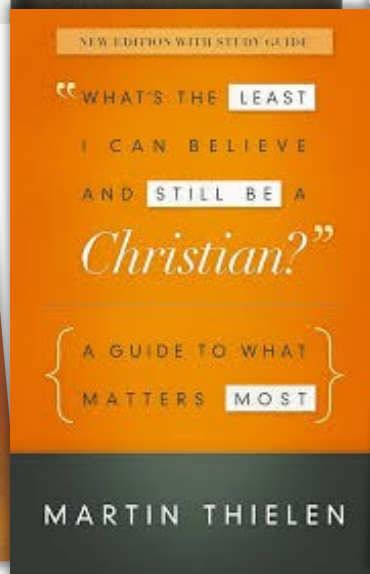
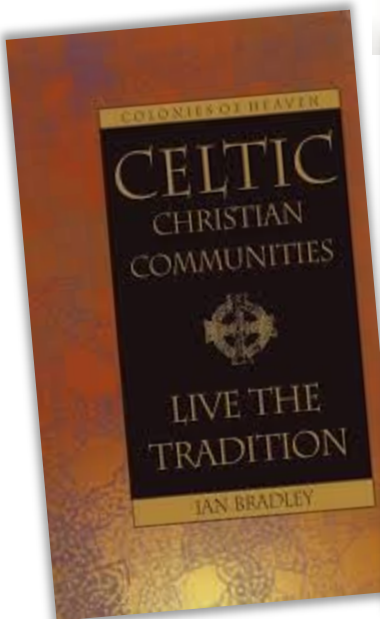
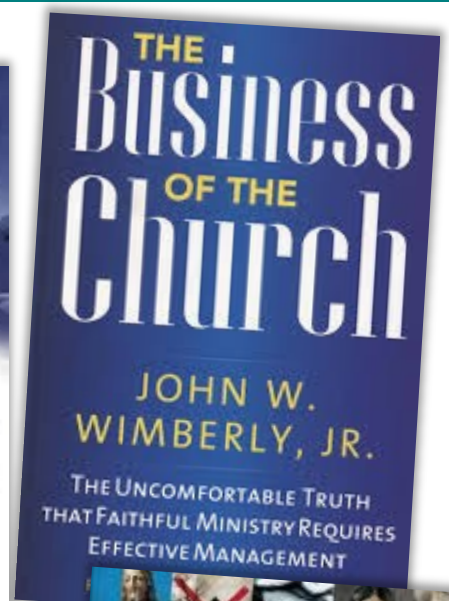
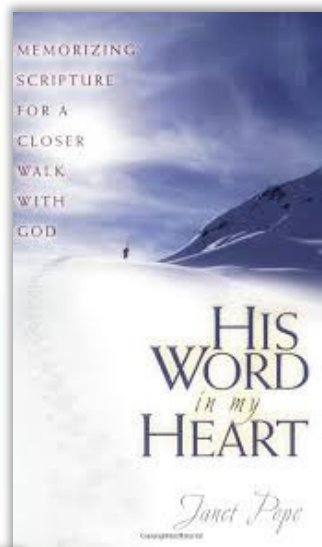
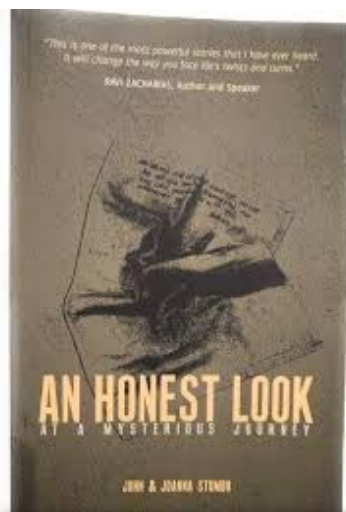
for tracking giving patterns.

- An updated version of the employee handbook, which now complies with HR law concerning exempt/non-exempt employees, was adopted.
- The Mission Committee was giving an exciting tour of the newly expanded Haven House facility.
- The 2¢-a-Meal collection this year will be called "Penny Cost" and will be held near Pentecost.
- With contracted cleaning costs going up,

a solution is being sought.

- About nine people show up for the monthly Fix-It Saturdays, which has served ALPC very well.
- Holy Week plans are formulating, with flower orders decided and sanctuary decorations being planned.
- The Healing Prayer Ministry will be under the aegis of Worship & Spiritual Life.
- Pastor Kristian shared his list of goals for 2025.

Check out these great titles, as well as the many others in our church library! Books highlighted in Saints Alive are on display in the church narthex.



MISSION

Recently, some Mission committee members toured the Haven Center. They loved the safe outdoor area created for family time and children's playtime. The kitchen is amazing for large meals and food storage. They noticed that the resident laundry area is set up to save appliances in case of water leaks and flooding. The center continues to encourage placement, education, and safety for families and single adults. If you're wondering why we're sharing this information, it's because we provide bagged lunches and a dinner for the Haven Center each month. The renovations have enabled them to host eighty people, which is twenty more than previous years. ALPC is now providing lunches and dinner for eighty people!

Special thanks to Boy Scout Liam, who helped pack lunches in February. We were glad to have other members of the church help with packing, too. Everyone is welcome!

Lorain Cooperative Ministries (LCM) is hosting a Loaded Baked Potato fundraiser (dine-in only). The Lorain American Legion has offered their hall for the event. They have also pledged to match ticket sales up to \$2000! As a member church of LCM, we are supporting the event with ticket sales and will have an ALPC raffle basket for the dinner. Look for Kathy H. after church to buy your tickets.

Mission Outreach has two annual events during Lent. We traditionally support One Great Hour of Sharing* (OGHS) on Palm Sunday, April 13, and Easter Sunday, April 20. Flyers and posters with more information will be in the foyer this Spring.

Easter Sunday's mission offering will go to the ALPC Mission Outreach fund. We use this money to support our year-long projects including Brown Bag Lunches, monthly meals, LCM projects, and things like Summer snacks for daycare, hygiene products, bedding, and Thanksgiving meals.

We meet the first Thursday each month at 4:00 pm at the church. Feel free to drop in!

*Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives, and work together to strengthen their families and communities. The Presbyterian Hunger Program receives 36%, while Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance each receive 32%.

*Opposite Page:
Members of the
Mission Committee
were granted the
opportunity to tour
the Haven Center
and see their
recent renovations.*

UPCOMING MISSION EVENTS

MARCH 9

Brown Bag Lunches

Cookie donations & packers needed.

MARCH 22

LCM Fundraiser

Desserts such as cake & bars in disposable pans are needed.

MARCH 23

Haven Center Dinner

Desserts such as cake & bars in disposable pans are needed.

APRIL 13

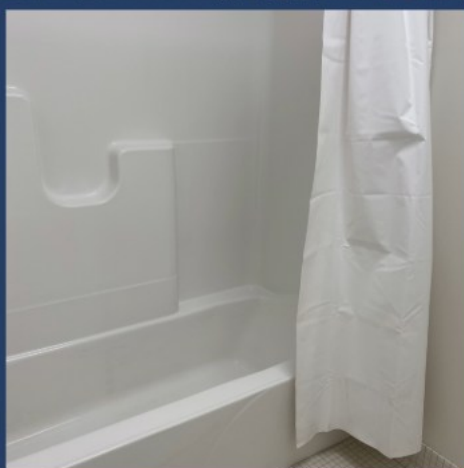
Brown Bag Lunches

Cookie donations & packers needed.

APRIL 27

Haven Center Dinner

Desserts such as cake & bars in disposable pans are needed.





CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

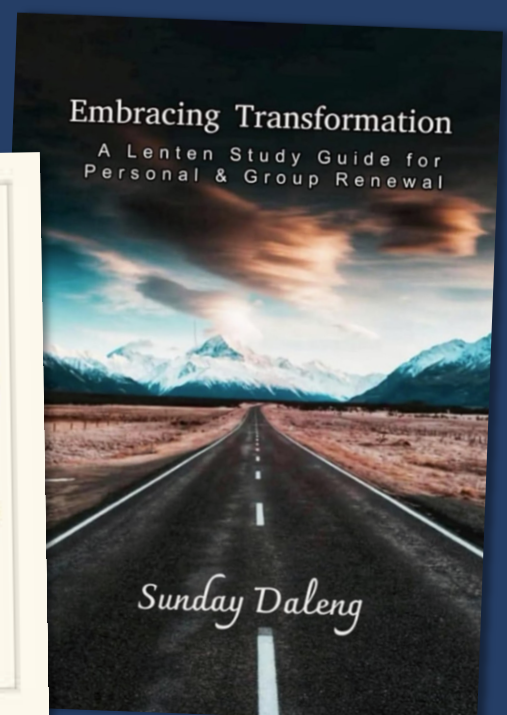
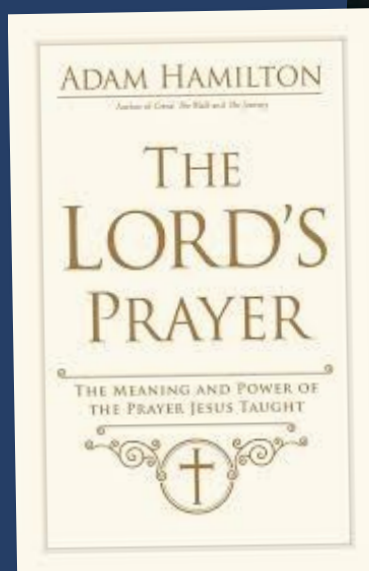
Hi, Church family! March holds great significance in Christian Education as it ushers in Lent, a time for reflection and preparation leading up to Easter. This season provides a valuable opportunity for spiritual growth and community involvement. This year, as part of the Lenten journey, small group studies have been organized around themes such as "Embracing Transformation" and "The Lord's Prayer." These sessions are designed to enhance participants' understanding of faith while promoting personal and communal development. Additionally, a Family Lent Packet has been introduced to assist families in observing Lent collectively and encourage families to build on their faith together. This packet contains activities, prayers, and reflections aimed at encouraging meaningful discussions and spiritual practices at home. We encourage anyone looking to grow to make the commitment to participate in any of these three activities during the Lenten season. Growing together creates a wonderful opportunity for faith fellowship, developing meaningful conversations during this spiritual season.

CHRIST BESIDE ME
CHRIST BEFORE ME
CHRIST BEHIND ME
CHRIST WITHIN ME
CHRIST BENEATH ME
CHRIST ABOVE ME."

St. Patrick



"Embracing Transformation" and "The Lord's Prayer" are excellent choices for group settings or personal renewal. They are available on Amazon for \$12 and can also be purchased in digital format for Kindles. If you have signed up to have a book ordered, you can collect it on Wednesday, March 5; they will be placed on the table in the Narthex and labeled with your name. The "Lord's Prayer" small group study will commence on Sunday, March 9, at 11:45AM in the Session Room located down the hall near the Coffee House.



How To Meaningfully Observe Lent

Lent is a 40-day period of reflection, repentance, and renewal leading up to Easter. Many Christians observe Lent through the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Here are some suggestions for how you can prepare for and observe Lent:

PRAYER

- Spend time each day in prayer. This can be a few minutes in the morning or evening, or longer periods of time for deeper reflection.
- Try different kinds of prayer: traditional liturgical prayers, spontaneous prayers that come from the heart, and lectio divina (a practice of slow, meditative reading and reflection on a passage of scripture).

FASTING

- It is common for people to fast during Lent by giving up a particular food or activity for the 40-day period.
- Choose a fast that is meaningful and challenging for you, but also realistic and sustainable. You can fast from activities or habits that distract you from your time with God, such as social media, or gossip.

ALMSGIVING

- This is the practice of giving to those in need, whether through donations or acts of service.
- Consider giving to organizations that support the poor, the sick, or other vulnerable populations.
- It is not just about giving money or time, but also about giving of yourself. Be open to the ways in which God may be calling you to serve others and to be a presence of love and compassion in the world.

Please remember that these practices are not about reaching for earthly perfection, but about deepening your relationship with God and growing your love and compassion for other human beings.

MUSIC

The Handbell and Chancel Choirs continue rehearsals on Wednesday evenings and serving on Sunday mornings. All are always encouraged and welcome to join our ministry. The Chancel Choir will begin preparing for our Tenebrae Good Friday service, *Song of the Shadows* by Joseph Martin, thus a great time to join us!

I am very excited to share *Song of the Shadows* with Avon Lake Presbyterian Church. This work is intended as a service of darkness as we begin the service with a dimly lit sanctuary. After each reading and song, a candle will be extinguished, leaving just one candle – the Christ Candle – lit, which then is taken out of the sanctuary, leaving us in complete darkness as we exit in quietness. For us to truly celebrate the resurrection on Easter morning, it is important to walk through Holy Week, reflect and experience the shadows. The early life of Christ began in shadows. Know, however, that where there are shadows, there is also light. Our Avon Lake Presbyterian Church Music Ministry will be joined by Grafton's Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church Choir and the TrueNorth Chorale and Chamber Orchestra. Please mark your calendars for this important and moving worship service as we journey to the cross and the celebration of Easter morning!

As we continue to expand our Music and Art Ministries, if you have experience or interest in Liturgical Dance, drama, or playing instruments, please see Rick! We would love to build an ALPC orchestra. We are also looking at adding instruments such as guitar and drums to our worship at times. Also consider joining the ALPC Media Team. We have great equipment and training available!

TRUENORTH CULTURAL ARTS

The TrueNorth Chamber Orchestra and Chorale will be sharing their Winter Concert at Avon Lake Presbyterian Church on Saturday, March 15, at 7:30PM. The Chamber Orchestra will be featuring oboists Meridith Bradley and Kim Weaver in Antonio Vivaldi's *Concerto in DO Maggiore*. The strings will also be featured, performing Vivaldi's *Concerto in D Major* featuring violinists Kathryn Bates and Jim Parry, and cellists Jordan Alegant and Joan Wojcicki Fortney. The Chamber Orchestra and Chorale will be performing Morten Lauridsen's *Lux Aeterna*. Each of the five connected movements in this choral cycle contains references to "Light," assembled from various sacred Latin texts.

SUMMER CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP

This Summer, we will be having a calligraphy workshop and display. Start thinking through what is your favorite scripture verse in the Book of Matthew; you will use this verse during the workshop in mid-June. Then, we will have a calligraphy gallery displayed in the church narthex for all to enjoy throughout the summer. Artists Deb Gantz and Janet Parker will lead us through the calligraphy experience.



Calling all Kids, Tweens, and Teens!

Music Monday resumes Monday, March 10, and continues through Monday, April 21, as we gather throughout Lent. All are invited to join us Monday afternoons, 4:15-5:30. We will be playing hand chimes and singing! We will plan on singing in church for both Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, as well as sharing the joy of the Easter season with our friends through one or two outreach events. Rehearsals will take place in the sanctuary. We plan also plan to meet for two weeks during the Summer where we will get together and sing in church. Next Fall, we hope to have Music Monday on a weekly basis for the 2025-2026 season, possibly with multiple age groups meeting at different times, based on the numbers of those interested and available to participate.



As we explore ways to compliment our worship series through the visual arts, if you have talents or experience in the visual arts, please see Rick!

Our current project involves the entire congregational family! We are encouraging each of you take a picture anytime you are reminded about what we are learning through our Book of Matthew worship series. Throughout Lent, please email Rick your pictures at rickfortney@avonlakepc.org. We will then take your photographs and create a collage to be presented on Pentecost Sunday. Artist Lora Mosier will be creating the collage as we get closer to Spring; if you would like to assist, let us know! In the meantime, start taking your photographs... snap, snap, snap!

FUN & GAMES

What has hands but cannot clap?

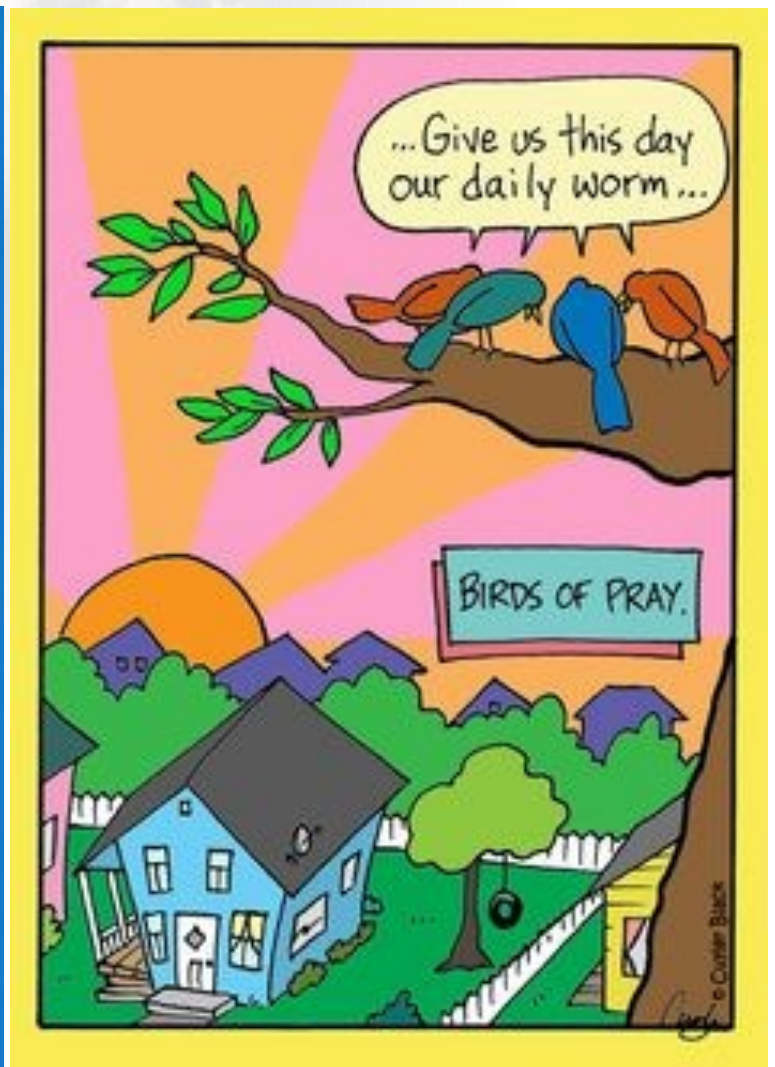
What can you hold in your right hand, but never in your left hand?

What question can you never say yes to?

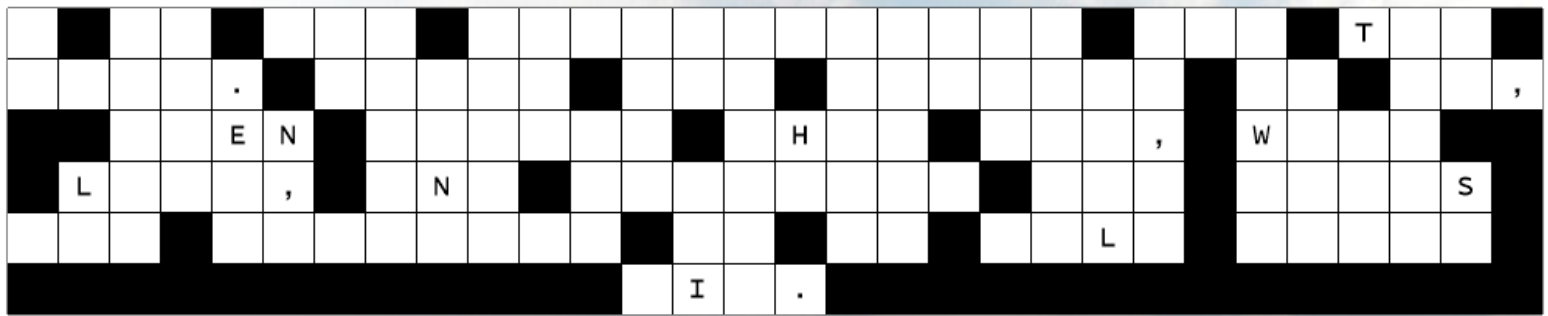
Two in a corner, one in a room, zero in a house, but one in a shelter. What am I?

What starts with a T, ends with a T, and has T in it?

Take one out and scratch my head, I am not black but once was red. What am I?



Happy Easter! Solve this fallen puzzle. The letters from each cell are below the puzzle. Try to rebuild the original message by choosing the letters for each cell.



T

I H R D E E T N E

F V T S E G U I R M E W I A L I L

L E M L A H D E E H H O O E L I W H E D I V E E

I I A E E T T I O O U S W R R E B N E O I E O I E L H E

A N D V B E H E E V E S V E N Y C Y I D E V L N N N V M R



Riddle Answers:

A clock; Your left hand; Are you asleep?; The letter R; A teapot; They were the same man, Grover Cleveland.

Comics:

"Inherit the Mirth" by Cuyler Black
cuylerblack.com/inherit-the-mirth

Fallen Puzzle Solution:

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

AVON LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our worship services begin at 10:00 am every Sunday.

Live streaming of our services is available on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/avonlakepc

Our Sunday services will air on ALC-TV beginning the following Wednesday,
and continue every day throughout the week at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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