

# Covenant Connections



COVENANT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, GASTONIA, NC

March 2025

## *A Message from Pastor Larry. . .*

In February I gave a sermon on Luke 6:27-38. Jesus tells us in verse 27 that we are to love our enemies, “But I say unto you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” It got me thinking, who exactly are our enemies? The word enemies occurs 140 times in the New Testament. Jesus here is implying that we all have enemies. In war we know who our enemies are. I am sure Ukraine thinks of Russia as an enemy. I find it hard to believe that humanity hasn't found a better word for people we don't get along with other than a word laced with negativity and militaristic connotations. When I think of enemies, the image that comes to mind is war, violence, death and destruction.

So again, I ask you, who are your enemies? Jesus tells us our enemies include anyone who oppresses, mistreats or harms us. This may include religious people and even those who may have different political and personal beliefs. Why is Jesus telling us to love these people, can't we just ignore them and pretend they're not there? Jesus tells us to love them because he wants us to remember God's love for all people. Jesus expects us, Christians, to live by a higher standard than non-believers. If we don't love, how do we show what Jesus has done in our lives?

The next question should be, “How can we love our enemies?” First, we must pray for them, pray that they will one day see the light of God the way we have. We need also to be good to those that hate us. This starts by looking at people without judging them for who they are or how they live. The best way to do this is by showing them grace just as God has shown us grace.

When I finished this newsletter message, I went back and reflected on it. The important issue here is that Jesus is not asking us, He is commanding us, yes commanding, to love our enemies. He's telling us to unconditionally love everyone. There is way too much hate in this world, it is our duty and commandment to be different, because love is the only thing that can stop hate.

*“Hate cannot drive out love, only love can do that.”* Martin Luther King, Jr.

May God Bless you today and everyday,

*Pastor Larry*



## 40 Days of Lent

You can make a "CHANGE!"

For several years, Dixie Forbes of The Promised Land Ministries has been sharing the love of Christ with many struggling families. She provides a hot meal and shares the gospel each Sunday in our fellowship hall. She has provided clothing, toiletries, and food for these families as well. Dixie gets food given to her from local food banks periodically, but often she provides it on her own. During the 40 days of Lent, we will be collecting 'change' to assist Dixie with her ministry. Take a jar, or two, home with you and drop in your change and bring back to the church by Easter Sunday. We have been so blessed, let's share our blessings!



*Worshiping Together!*  
*April 6, 10:30 am*  
*In the sanctuary*

The Promised Land Ministries and the Haitian Church will join our service on Sunday, April 6th. Each group will share music and a brief message. We look forward to this special time of worship together, we hope you will be able to join us! Hope to see you April 6th!



United  
Women  
in Faith

**March 3 at 10:30 am**

**Women in Faith General Meeting**

**Call to Prayer and Self Denial**

*We still have some pecan pieces, sliced almonds and a few bags of black walnuts! Call the church office if you would like some! Just a few left!*



*Happy Birthday!*

4 Brooklynn Merritt

6 Mildred McElveen

16 Jim Mathews

21 Robert Kayler

24 Laura McDonald

31 Katie Cochran

31 Caleb Lowe

*Happy Anniversary!*

23 Mark & Melisa Armstrong

<b>February Worship Attendance &amp; Giving</b>		
<b>February 2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$2,535</b>
<b>February 9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$1,780</b>
<b>February 16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$4,140</b>
<b>February 23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$1,395</b>

*To meet our 2025 budget, \$2,528 is needed weekly.*

# Covenant Prayer Corner

## New/Updated Prayer Concerns

**Family of Tommy Sue Atkinson** – passed away February 19 at her home, pray for Dean

**Beverly Cole** – home from rehab, very weak, needs healing prayer

**Pat Culver** – waiting on test results to determine a diagnosis

**Linda Harrison** – healing from two broken vertebrae in her neck

**Buddy Johnson** – having several tests to get an accurate diagnosis

**Laura McDonald** – recently had spent a few days in the hospital, pray for healing

**Addie McElveen** – diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, having her treatments in the Charlotte area, so she can be with her family during this time

## Ongoing Prayer for Health

**Mildred McElveen**

**Lori Culver**

**Linda Raxter**

**Carolyn Loudenslager\***

**Jeff & Lisa Casey\***

**Dean Atkinson**

*\*Friends/family of members*

*Our Christian Sympathy and love is expressed to Dean's family and friends. May memories of Tommy Sue and the love of family surround you and give you strength in the days ahead.*

*Tommy Sue Atkinson passed away peacefully at her home on February 19th at the age of 86. She has been married to Dean for 68 years. Dean & Tommy Sue joined in church membership in March 1958. She sang in the choir, was active in the women's ministries of the church, on several committees, and she and Dean were active members of the Young & Lively Group. They have served in many ways and have been faithful throughout the years. Pray for peace and comfort for Dean.*

***“ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else and He will give you everything you need.”***  
***~ Luke 12:31***





It is not wrong for men to possess riches. But the Bible warns that money cannot buy happiness! Money cannot buy true pleasure. Money cannot buy peace of heart, and money certainly cannot buy an entrance into the Kingdom of God. Often money is a hindrance to these things. Money takes our minds off God. Riches, when used selfishly rather than for the glory of God, tend to corrupt in our hands. Money cannot be a substitute for God. If God has given you more wealth than your neighbors, dedicate it to Christ. Realize that you are only a steward of that which God had given you and some day you will have to give an account of every penny you have spent. The Internal Revenue Service wants a record of how you spend your money, but that is nothing compared to the books God is keeping.

*~ Day By Day with Billy Graham*

***Don't go looking for treasure at the end of the rainbow, carry a rabbit's foot in your pocket or search for four leaf clovers for good luck. The treasures of life are found in God's Holy Word! Seek it and share its wealth with the world! ~ Rebecca Brooks***

# March



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2 Communion Sunday</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b>	<b>3</b> <b>10:30 Women in Faith General Mtg</b>	<b>4</b> <b>10:00 Praise Team</b> <b>6:00 Hand Bells</b>	<b>5 Ash Wednesday</b> <b>5:00 Pancake Supper</b> <b>6:00 Service in chapel</b>	<b>6</b> <b>4:00 Kids at Work</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9 1st Sunday in Lent</b> <b>9:15 Council Meeting</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b> <b>Spring Forward 1 hr!</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <b>10:00 Praise Team</b> <b>6:00 Hand Bells</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>4:00 Pinto Beans &amp; Cornbread Dinner</b> <b>4:00 Kids at Work</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16 2nd Sunday in Lent</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b>	<b>17</b> 	<b>18</b> <b>10:00 Praise Team</b> <b>6:00 Hand Bells</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>4:00 Kids at Work</b> 	<b>21</b>	<b>22 11:00 - 12:30</b> <b>Community Lunch</b> 
<b>23 3rd Sunday in Lent</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>10:00 Praise Team</b> <b>6:00 Hand Bells</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>4:00 Kids at Work</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30 4th Sunday in Lent</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b> <b>UMCOR Sunday</b>	<b>31</b>					



**Covenant United  
Methodist Church**

**801 W. Franklin Blvd  
Gastonia, NC 28052**

**Larry Taylor  
Pastor**

**LTaylor1@wnccumc.net  
828.413.4067**

**Church Office**

**704.865.5055**

9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
Monday - Thursday

**Administrative Assistant**

Tammy Bassett  
covenantgastonia@gmail.com

**Music Director**

Rebecca Brooks

**Church Website**

covenantumcgastonia.com

*March 2025*



**Weekly Scheduled Activities**

**Sunday**

**10:30 am Join us for worship!**

9:30 am Promised Land Worship, held in the fellowship hall

10:00 am Haitian Worship, held in the chapel

**Tuesday**

10:00 am Covenant Praise Team

6:00 pm Joyful Noise Ringers

**Thursday**

4:00 - 7:00 pm Kids at Work

**COME  
WORSHIP**  
*with us!*

**Monthly Activities**

**First Monday**

10:30 am Covenant Women in Faith Circle Meeting

**Fourth Saturday of each month**

11:00 am - 12:30 pm Community Lunch