



CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

APRIL 2025



A Message From Dewey

The yellow jonquils at our house have already bloomed. They bloomed a few weeks ago, while there was still a chill in the air.

Every year, they are the first hopeful sign that Spring is around the corner.

They are planted on either side of the steps leading up to our front door. We didn't plant them – they were already there when we bought the house – but they have returned faithfully for over thirty years, in spite of my neglect. According to the website petalrepublic.com, "In Chinese folklore, the flowers represent the new year. They may signify rebirth, renewal, and vitality."

As I thought about it in these weeks leading up to Easter, they are a perfect symbol for the perseverance of Christ. In the days leading up to his crucifixion, there were certainly ringleaders among the scribes and Pharisees who sought to have Jesus arrested and punished for his radical teachings, but there were many others who stood by and did nothing while he was nailed to a cross. Peter was the most blatant example in his repeated denials of Christ, but others simply didn't intervene, perhaps because they believed they could not make a difference or perhaps because they were waiting on someone else to act.

In the movie *Evan Almighty*, actor Morgan Freeman (as God) says, "Let me ask you something: If someone prays for patience, do you think God gives them patience or does he give them the

opportunity to be patient? If they prayed for courage, does God give them courage or does he give them opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for their family to be closer, do you think God zaps them with warm, fuzzy feelings or does he give them opportunities to love each other?"

I'm not suggesting that we not pray. On the contrary, our prayers are needed now more than ever. But keep in mind that when we pray for the hand of God to intervene, we may find it at the small of our back, gently guiding us forward.

Like the perennial jonquils, Christ continues to appear for us, in spite of our neglect, just as he did on Easter morning. God continues to provide for us opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others. The Holy Spirit continues to walk with us, each and every day, empowering us to be the body of Christ.

Our world is in turmoil. From the terrible war in Ukraine to the senseless violence against people in cities across our country, from the devastation of hurricanes and wildfires to the ongoing racism and hatred toward our fellow human beings.

As we journey through Lent on our way to the cross, let us be more open to the presence of God in our lives. Let us be mindful of the opportunities God gives to us. Let us not stand by, waiting for someone else to act.

Dewey



APRIL Calendar

Sun, 4/6

11am Communion Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

ACIM Ministry & Lunch

Sat, 4/19



Wed, 4/9

CHURCH
Clean-up
DAY



Sun, 4/20



Sun, 4/13



7am BCC Sunrise Service
Lake Holt

11am Worship Service
Dewey Cassell, Erma Hudgins

11am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

Sun, 4/27

9am Session Meeting
via Zoom

11am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Cecil Hudgins

2pm Butner Church Council Meeting
@ Community Methodist Church

Thurs, 4/17



MAUNDY
THURSDAY

'TIS THE
SEASON

'TIS THE
REASON

Fri, 4/18

GOOD
FRIDAY





Romping with the Pre-K

Spring is here! Spring break is the first week of April, and students will return to the classroom on April 7th. We will begin learning all about Easter and end the month learning about Earth Day and the Zoo. The last week of April we finish our alphabet letters and the end of the school year feels like it is just around the corner. We have a very active PRTO this year and we will be gathering on Thursday, 4/10 from 4:30-6:30 to have a playground beautification day. We plan to paint the swing sets, power wash the shelter, and sort through some items in the shed.

Graduation pictures will take place on Friday, 4/11 in the fellowship hall. Our PRTO will gather again on Mon, 4/14 to help set up and decorate the fellowship hall for our Easter parties. Families will join us for Easter parties on Wed, 4/16 and again on Thurs, 4/17. The preschool is closed Friday through Monday for Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Our final fundraiser for this year will be a little different. We are trying a run-a-thon. Students will reach out for sponsors to pay per lap or a lump sum. Students will run laps around our playground at the end of the school days on Thursday 4/24 and Friday 4/25. Our PRTO will also meet on Thursday 4/24 for our final PRTO meeting of the year to discuss graduation plans. Such a busy month!

The preschool filled the final two spots for our 2-day class next year and I already have a waitlist

started. We have one more opening in the 3-day class, but I anticipate it will fill quickly.

Our bible verse for April is "Forgive one another" Ephesians 4:32. I love when Easter actually falls during April and we can read books and talk about God's ultimate act of forgiveness, Jesus dying on the cross, so that we may be granted eternal life in heaven. Teaching this age about Easter can always be tricky as they have lots of questions and I try to have most of the answers. It's an amazing fairy tale-like story and we ask them to believe without understanding. The good news is, at this age, they do believe! The seeds are planted and we get to watch the beauty of their faith take root. Thank you God.

~ Susan



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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Church News

CHURCH CLEAN-UP DAYS ARE CHANGING

Due to folks not being available to help with church clean-up days on Saturdays once a month, we are moving our monthly cleaning schedule to a time that fits most of our calendars. We will now have our monthly cleanings on the 2nd Wednesday evening of each month, starting at 6pm.

Please put the following dates on your calendar and help us keep our church clean! April 9, May 14, (skip June), July 9, (skip Aug), Sept. 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, (skip Dec).

MAUNDY THURSDAY

We will hold an informal Maundy Thursday meal and service in the fellowship hall on Thursday, April 17th at 6pm. Look for more details soon. Mark your calendars.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

The annual Butner Church Council's Easter Sunrise Service will be held at 7am Easter Sunday at Lake Holt. The new Community Methodist Church's pastor will officiate. Casual dress.

LIGHTS ON THE CROSS

We have been seeking an electrician to do this difficult job for over a year! Those flood lights are just too far up; about 28 feet from the floor. After contacting a few other local electrical companies, Cecil Hudgins recalled that Braco Electric was the company who came out several years ago and changed the light bulbs in our sanctuary. That's pretty high off the floor too! Cecil contacted them to see if they could once again, get high off the floor and change the flood lights. It's a daunting task for Braco as well but they did come out with their tallest ladder and unfortunately, it wasn't tall enough. The job would have only cost \$300 plus the cost of the 4

bulbs. Braco contacted their lift rental company, which charges by the day, and it would cost \$1,000 for a one-day the rental. Braco let Cecil know the bad news.

Cecil then checked with a local scaffolding company to see if that would be a better option, but since scaffolding would cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000, it was not an option.

At this point, the session is rather desperate to finally have the lights on the cross, and therefore, agreed to have Braco Electric do the job and rent a scissor lift that is small enough to fit through the door and tall enough to reach the lights. The total cost of the job will be \$1,300 plus the cost of the LED lights. We are looking forward to having that cross lit up once again, just in time for Easter!

MARCH FELLOWSHIP AT TRALI'S IRISH PUB

On Sunday, March 23rd, our church had a fellowship at Trali's Irish Pub. Fun times!



Pictured left to right: Todd (Michelle's friend), Michael & Lisa McFadden, Amy Saunders, Bebe Coleman, Erma & Cecil Hudgins, and Michelle Osborne.

From the Editor

March Madness

You may recall my editorial last April about basketball, and I focused on the lesson of fouls.

Personally, I consider that editorial as one of my best, if I do say so myself. As I watch the games this year, I have been thinking about teams and offense verses defense and wonder what lessons we could learn from that.

Playing offense is when you and your team have the ball and are attempting to score. You may be dribbling the ball up the court, dodging the opposing team players, passing the ball to a teammate, or shooting the ball for the score.

Playing defense is when you and your team are trying to stop the other team from scoring. You would be blocking the opposing team from getting close to their basket, blocking a ball once it's thrown, or trying to steal the ball from the opposing team.

It's all about teamwork. No one can win by themselves. A team works together with the same goal of winning for the team. When you are on a team, you collaborate. You pass the ball to each other, assist when someone shot the ball, but missed the basket. And of course, there are rebounds when a team player fails to hit the basket, and another retrieves the ball in an effort to give the team another chance to score. Some of the best plays are when the ball is passed to a number of players, collaborating together to make a better overall play and outdoing the opposing team.



We do all this in the game of Christian life as well. Our ball is the Triune God. The team is the whole kingdom of God. The opposing team is satan and he never has the ball. Our job is to keep satan from defeating us. Since he never has the ball, the only way satan can defeat us is to just simply keep us from scoring. We must rely on teamwork and playing offense.

We are always playing offense because we always have the ball. We play offense when we actively do such things as pray, serving the church, serving others in the name of Christ, and when we play a part of winning souls for Christ.

Satan is always playing defense. He can never get the ball, but he can keep you from scoring. He tries to convince us that we are sinners and not worthy to serve God, that we can't win souls for Christ because we will be laughed at or lose friends if we try, or he can just distract us from keeping our eye on the ball. Satan is the master of distractions and convinces us that we should spend our time on what we want to do or spend our money on our own selfish desires instead of sharing, or he will keep us from being a team by convincing us that we do not need to spend time in church, with other Christians, or to become a part of a church family.

As a team (kingdom of God), we must learn to do everything we can to support the team. None of us can serve our purpose alone. We must show up, pass the ball and collaborate to make a better play, and somebody needs to shoot in order to spread the Gospel of Christ. We must remember that when we see a team player score, that it was a team effort, and we are not in competition with each other.

From the Editor,
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We work together.

Also being a team player means that we have to watch out for each other. When someone doesn't show up or drops the ball or doesn't play well, it affects the whole team. We have to be keenly aware of what's happening with the team and cover one another against attacks from satan. We must be attentive, nurturing, caring, and encouraging.

So let's remember to focus on what's important for the team: to show up, support, collaborate, nurture, encourage, and care. That is our purpose. Don't let satan tell you otherwise.

Matt 6:33 – *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.*

Peace,
Erma



Judas ate too

Hours before the death of Jesus, **Judas ate too.**

Jesus fed Judas too.

Jesus prayed for Judas too.

Jesus washed Judas' feet too.

I struggle to fathom **what kind of love this is ...**

A love that would **feed the mouth** that deceived you.

A love that would wash the feet of the traitor.

A love that could forgive even the vilest of betrayals.

Honestly, I struggle to comprehend it.

And then, suddenly, **I realize .. that I'm Judas too!**

And in that moment, *I'm so thankful & altogether overwhelmed that Judas ate too.*

The true test of **Christianity is not just about loving Jesus but loving Judas.**

Showing love to someone like Jesus is so easy.

But loving someone hard to love,

a sinner like Judas is difficult

That's what 'following Jesus' is all about.

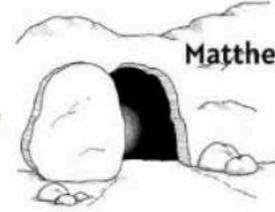
@thewomanbythewell

Holy Week

Resurrection Sunday

Jesus is Alive!

Matthew 28:1-13



Silent Saturday

Good Friday



Matthew 27:1-62

Trial, Crucifixion, Death, and Burial



Betrayal in



the Garden

Maundy Thursday



The Passover and Last Supper

Matthew 26:17-75

Wednesday 
Judas decides to betray Jesus

Tuesday



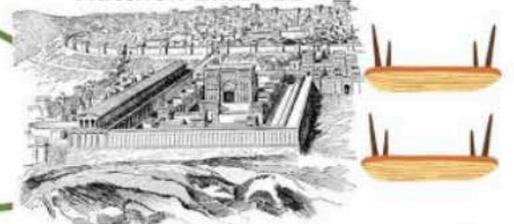
The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 21:23-24:51



Monday

Jesus clears the temple
Matthew 21:12-22



 @mrsjgarwood

Palm Sunday

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey



Zechariah 9:9
Matthew 21:1-11

