

CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

MARCH 2026



A Message From Dewey

Exactly four years ago I wrote a column for Church Chat about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the time I was incredulous. It was, as I said then, something I had never expected to see in my lifetime.

And here we are, four years later, and the war in Ukraine rages on. It is the largest ground war in Europe since World War II. The U.S. and other nations have levied sanctions against Russia and deployed troops and supplies to neighboring NATO countries, but the Ukraine military still stands largely alone and vastly outnumbered. Ukraine has managed to make Russia pay a hefty price for their arrogance, but in spite of several attempts at peace talks, there is no end in sight. The death toll continues to rise on both sides.

A reminder that according to *The Jerusalem Post*, of the country's 43 million citizens, 78% identify as members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. About 10% identify as Roman Catholics. Although we live over 5,000 miles apart, it is our fellow Christians who are engaged in this struggle against oppression.

Four years ago, I asked the question, "So, what should we do?" Today, I ask a different question, "So, what should we not do?" And the answer is simple – do not forget. After four years, what was once the headline on the news every night now

frequently doesn't even merit a mention. Time works in Russia's favor. The longer the war lasts, the more it recedes from the forefront of our minds, until eventually the only people who care are the ones in Ukraine who are suffering at their hands, and Russia is banking on wearing them down until they finally give up. Do not forget.

The best way to remember remains to bring to bear the power of prayer. We need to pray faithfully and without ceasing for an end to the conflict and restoration of peace. We need to pray for the safety and well-being of the people on both sides.

Any prayer you offer from the heart is a prayer well-made and will be heard by God. But if you find yourself at a loss for words, consider this excerpt from a Presbyterian Prayer of Intercession in a Time of War:

God of the nations, in this time of war, renew the vision you give of a world at peace. Move leaders of nations to seek ways to resolve this conflict. Let the desire for peace overpower every self-interest. Break down walls of hostility. Purge from us old suspicions and the spirit of revenge. Silence weapons and open doors to peace.

God of compassion, make your presence known to all the families whose members have been killed, whose homes are being torn apart, and whose lives are under threat. Especially we pray for innocent children who cry out in fear.

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MARCH Calendar

Sun, 3/1 11 am Communion Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

ACIM after worship



Sun, 3/8 11:00 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

2:00 pm Butner Church Council Meeting
@ Community Methodist Church

Wed, 3/11

**CHURCH
Clean-up
DAY**



Sun, 3/15 9:00 am Session Meeting
via Zoom

11:00 am Worship & Installation Service
Dewey Cassell, Erma Hudgins

St. Patrick's Fellowship at Trali's Irish Pub
After worship service



Tues, 3/17



Fri, 3/20



Mr. Rogers Day

Sun, 3/22 11:00 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Cecil Hudgins

Sat, 3/28 10:00 am Quarterly Church Kitchen Cleaning

Sun, 3/29



11 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

*Mr. Rogers Day or
"Won't You Be My Neighbor Day"*

Celebrated annually on March 20th (Fred Rogers' birthday) to honor the legacy of the beloved television host and his promotion of kindness, empathy, and community. Celebrate by wearing a cardigan, performing random acts of kindness, and supporting neighbors.

The PC(USA) Observance: The Presbyterian Church highlights this day to honor Rogers, who was an ordained minister.



Romping with the Pre-K

March is a busy month for the preschool. The first week of March is Read Across America Week. We celebrate by reading several Dr. Seuss books and having a Spirit week. Each day students can do something different to share their love of reading.

Friday is Character Day, where I allow them to dress up as any character they like, and if they can bring in a book with that character, they will earn an extra star!

We have a PRTO meeting, Monday, March 9th at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. We will discuss plans for Easter and graduation.

Our Spring class pictures are scheduled for Thursday/Friday March 19/20th.

We will focus on Spring, Transportation, and Easter this month for our themes and will be finished with letter W by the end of the month. The end of the alphabet is getting close!

The preschool Easter parties are April 1st and 2nd, and our spring break is the following week.

Thank you again for all your support. We are very appreciative of our gift cards for Christmas.

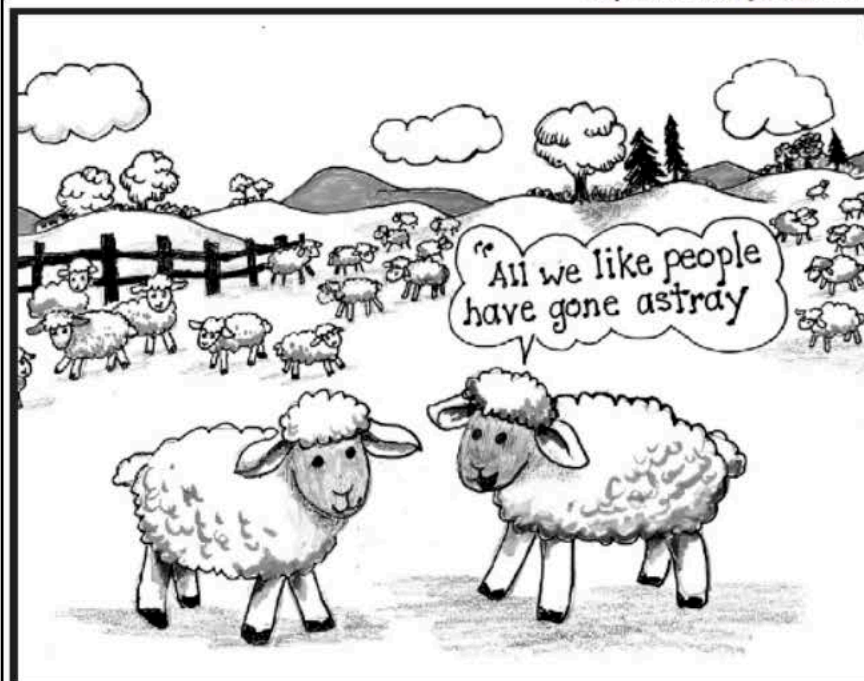
Blessings,
Susan Zink



"Eat all your greens. It's St. Patrick's Day."

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Church News

Church Cleaning

Our next scheduled church clean-up time is Wednesday evening, March 11 at 6pm. Please consider helping!

Installation Service

As part of worship on Sunday, March 15th, the congregation will be re-installing Erma Hudgins and Nancy Wilkins to the session.

St. Patrick's Day Fellowship

After worship on March 15th, the congregation will meet at Trali's Irish Pub & Restaurant at Brier Creek for lunch. If you are interested in going, please let Michelle know asap as she will be making the reservations.

Kitchen and Grounds Cleaning

In addition to our regular church cleaning days, we are also going to try to do a thorough cleaning in the kitchen on a quarterly basis. Our first quarterly kitchen cleaning will be held on Saturday, March 28 at 10:00 am.

Once the weather gets a bit warmer, we should get together and work on cleaning up the church grounds and make it beautiful.



Website and Advertising

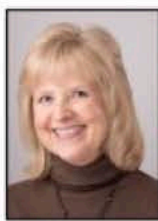
We need to let folks in the community know that we are here! If you use Facebook, you may have already seen posts advertising our church. When you see this, please share it on your feed. This will help spread the word.

Also, Cecil has updated our website. Check it out! If you have any suggestions, please share with Cecil.



From the Editor

Wanna Move Heaven?



It's March and the season of Lent is in full swing. At first, I hadn't thought about what Lenten discipline I would practice this year until I heard one of Dewey's recent messages. I don't know if it was something Dewey said or if it popped into my head while hearing his message. The thought was about the all-important discipline of daily prayer and bible reading, which I already try to do. Not that I am successful in doing it every single day, but I try. I need to try harder!

Prayer is so important for our spiritual lives and not taking the time to do it makes us ineffective Christians. Prayer is not *just* having a conversation with God. It's spiritual warfare. When we pray, it moves heaven. To do that, it can't be an emotion you feel about something or thinking empathetically about a situation. It must be the act of engaging in prayer. Engaging with God. Making the time and effort on a continual basis; not once in a while.

We must realize that if we are fully engaged in that heaven-moving prayer, our enemy, satan, starts paying attention. He starts trying to stop us. It happens to all of us. All the time. Satan will whisper things like, "Did you turn on the washer?", "You have so much to do today, so hurry!" or, "You are not praying correctly", etc. And it's funny how often our phones will ring, (sometimes spam calls) or someone will send a text (or several) while we are praying. These things interrupt our all-important time with God. Those are the simple distractions that interrupts our focus, weakens the fight, and keeps us from being effective Christians. 1 Thess 5:17 says "*Pray without ceasing.*" Every time we silence the enemy's whisper and keep

praying anyway, we are winning. And when we are disciplined, the enemy trembles.

Neglecting prayer is like neglecting exercise. If we get out of the habit of doing it regularly, it's harder to get back into that discipline. Neglecting exercise will make us weaker. Neglecting prayer will also make us weaker. Our vulnerability increases, our peace will go away, and the enemy will have more power over us. When we exercise regularly, we build muscle and get stronger, even though we don't realize it, at least not at first. It's the same with regular prayer.

We must guard our time, fight for it, protect it. If we stand our ground with our prayer life and we are confident that God hears us and answers our prayers, we will eventually see mountains move.

Another important discipline for Christians is regular bible reading. If we are not reading, it's like we are putting together a piece of furniture without reading the instructions. We cannot be strong Christians without reading the bible. We can be fooled and led astray easily. Satan may whisper to us that the bible is too boring, and we should just read our other fun book instead. The bible is not boring; don't listen to the enemy's lies.

At the beginning of this year, I started a column in this newsletter called "The Bible Book Club" and I am stressing to everyone who is reading this editorial to take the time to read each month's bible reading assignment. I am confident that you will find the bible anything but boring (except for a few little parts, I won't lie) and as you learn, you will become a stronger Christian. If you haven't yet begun, just start with this month. The good thing with the bible is that you do not have to start at the beginning as you do with other books.

I've heard it said that if you start a new discipline

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Message from Dewey, continued
from page 1

O God, you made of one blood all races and nations of earth, and you sent your Son Jesus Christ to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near. Pour out your Spirit on the whole creation, bring the nations of the world into your fellowship, and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

Dewey



From the Editor, continued from
page 5

and faithfully do it for three weeks, you can be successful in establishing a new habit. The conscious effort begins to feel comfortable and manageable. Let's use this season of Lent to get used to the Christian disciplines of prayer and bible reading so we can become stronger, move heaven, see answered prayer, and defeat the enemy.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Peace, Erma



The Story of Saint Patrick



Reprinted from Church Chat, March 2023

Born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century, Saint Patrick was kidnapped at the age of 16 and taken to Ireland as a slave. He escaped and returned home and became a priest. He then returned to convert the Irish to Christianity.

By the time of his death on March 17, 461, he had established many monasteries, churches, and schools.

Many legends grew up around him such as he drove the snakes out of Ireland and used the shamrock to explain the Trinity. It has been said that there have never been snakes in Ireland and that the snakes represented pagans.

Ireland came to celebrate his day with religious services and feasts.

Although blue was the original color associated with St. Patrick's Day, green is used now, most likely because of the shamrock. The "wearing of green" comes from leprechaun folklore where it was told that these little supernatural beings would run around pinching people on St. Patrick's Day but they could not see the color green. In order to become more invisible to these little pinching fairies, people would wear green.

The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow came from Viking folklore. There was a time when Vikings lived in Ireland, looting and plundering, and then burying their stolen treasures. When they departed Ireland, they could not find all the buried treasure and it was left behind. Folklore has it that leprechauns placed the treasures (gold) in pots and guarded it so it could not be stolen again.

Supposedly, when a rainbow appears, it ends at a spot where the treasure is located.

Immigrants to the US transformed St. Patrick's Day into a more secular holiday. It is now more of a revelry with green beer, parades, corned beef and cabbage. Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated every year on March 17.



Bible Book Club

I hope you enjoyed last month's bible readings. I had to read a little further, I couldn't stop at the end of the assignment! I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Let's read on!

MARCH READING CHALLENGE:

Old Testament: Exodus: Chapter 1-21

Read about the time of the Hebrews after Joseph had died and what happened to them. Then the beginning story of Moses and all those plagues, and of course, the parting of the sea, and the Hebrews go into the wilderness.

Psalms: Chapters 9-12

Consider these as little poems. Read one per week.

Proverbs: Chapter 3

Continue reading about wisdom.

New Testament: Matthew Chapters 14-20

Covers the fate of John the Baptist, the feeding of the five thousand and some other miracles, more parables, and the transfiguration.

HAPPY READING!



REMEMBER!

**One Great Hour
of Sharing**

**Turn in your fish on
March 29!**

PRAY

WITHOUT

CEASING

BECAUSE

SATAN IS

PREYING

WITHOUT

CEASING.

~TobyMac

Never limit your prayers because you think you're sinful or underserving.

You're not praying because of who you are, you're praying because of who HE is.