



CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

April 2026



A Message From Dewey

The jonquils at our house have bloomed. They bloomed a couple weeks ago, and they have weathered the fluctuating temperatures since. 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-five years, in spite of our neglect. According to the website petalrepublic.com, "In Chinese folklore, the flowers represent the new year. They may signify rebirth, renewal, and vitality."

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 wars in Ukraine and Iran to the senseless violence against people in cities across our country, from the devastation of tornadoes and storms 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

Thurs, 4/2



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday Dinner & Message
6pm in the Fellowship Hall
Food is provided.

Sat, 4/11

12 pm Outing to Rock of Ages Winery
Lunch first

Sun, 4/12

11:00 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

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

Fri, 4/3



Sun, 4/19

9:00 am Session Meeting
via Zoom

Sun, 4/5



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

7 am BCC Easter Sunrise Service
at Lake Holt

Wed, 4/22



11 am Communion Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

Sun, 4/26

11:00 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Cecil Hudgins

Wed, 4/8

CHURCH Clean-up DAY



He is Risen

CELEBRATE THE SAVIOR



Romping with the Pre-K

The preschool is doing wonderful. I know I write it every year, but this is the time of year where I can really see that they are learning. Not just academically, but socially as well. Their faces light up when they put two things together, they are able to use their words to talk with friends and resolve conflict, they are so excited to come to school and see their friends.

We have a lot of things coming up in April. Our Easter parties are Wednesday, 4/1 and Thursday, 4/2. We begin spring break on Good Friday. Classes will be back the week of April 13th. I will be doing individual assessments that week, to see where students are academically. Thursday, 4/16 is a Teacher workday. We will again be having a Run-a-Thon fundraiser to help support our school. Weather permitting, students will run laps on the playground Monday, 4/20, and Tuesday, 4/21. Cap and gown pictures are Wednesday, 4/22.

We have a playground beautification day set for Monday, 4/27 4:30-6pm. The preschool will provide pizza for those who help out. We are planning to get a load of fresh mulch for the playground, do a shed clean out, and some fence repairs. We will have a PRTO meeting afterwards in the fellowship hall. We have our strawberry patch field trips planned for Thursday, 4/30 and Friday, 5/1.

We will learn all about the final letters in our alphabet X-Z, Weather, Earth day, and Zoo animals.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. It's hard to believe another school year is so close to the end!

Blessings, Susan Zink

Laugh Lines

Last time I was at the airport, the attendant asked me, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?"

I just had to answer, "How would I know?"

Ancient Egyptian architect: "Do you know how to build a pyramid?"

Ancient Egyptian builder: "Well, yeah, up to a point."

I'm writing about all the things I ought to do before I die. It's called an oughtobiography.

Why do some people throw money down a wishing well when they are wishing for money they will never get?

Should you ever turn your back on a proctologist?

Can I give a penny for your thoughts without having to listen to your two-cents worth?

The owner of the tuxedo store kept hovering over me while I was browsing, so I asked him to leave me alone.

He said, "Fine, suit yourself."

I asked my wife why she married me. She said, "Because you're so funny and make me laugh so much."

I told her I thought it was because I was so charming and good looking.

She replied, "See? You're hilarious!"

You are the light of the World – so, lighten up!

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From the Editor

LESSONS FROM THE COURT



It's basketball season again so, **GO DUKE!** That means it's time for my annual basketball analogy. My first March Madness editorial, published in April 2024, was about fouls (still my favorite one), and the second one, published in April 2025, I wrote about playing offense. This year is the 3rd in the series.

College basketball has become more brutal and physical - like the NBA - which I don't like. Over the past few years referees (refs) have started overlooking fouls, traveling, and carrying the ball. They let the players bang against each other. Instead of getting college basketball back on the right track, the NCAA started changing the rules to allow some of what used to be illegal plays or unnecessary roughness. They will sometimes add stipulations such as how high an elbow can be thrown and such. They have allowed the game to erode into more roughness and physicality.

In years past, players couldn't push an opponent with their shoulder but now they can do it if it's at or below the opponent's shoulder. Previously, the players had to be dribbling the ball the whole time they are in possession of it. Now they can take up to two steps without dribbling – and their steps can be pretty big. A player, in years past, couldn't hang on the hoop after making a jump shot unless it was to avoid landing on top of someone below them. Players will now frequently go up for a dunk and then grab and hang off the hoop just to give their play an overly dramatic finale.

As the rules change, these once illegal plays are now accepted as part of the game. You've heard the term, *"No blood, no foul"*, well I think that IS the

new rule. Actually, I believe I have seen bloodshed and the refs STILL didn't call the foul! This is so frustrating to watch.

College basketball has gone too far. If the NCAA doesn't fix this trend, I feel that the basketball court could eventually become a "free-for-all" which will ruin the game.

When you think about it, our society, including us Christians, are like the refs. We have been turning our heads to what used to be considered sin or lawlessness. We've gone from turning our heads to becoming downright desensitized (thanks in part to what we watch on TV). Then like the NCAA, our elected lawmakers change laws to accommodate sinful behavior so there is little to no consequence for the action. Christians are afraid to stand up and declare what is sin for fear of persecution. We aren't allowed to even speak against some sins. So much for freedom of speech in this country.

We've gone a step further than that. We've gone from turning our heads to condoning it to sometimes applauding sinful behavior. Both society and Christians are losing sight of what is right and what is wrong and people are suffering. Our world is much more violent because there is little to no consequence for breaking the law or committing sin. This has gone too far, and I don't think we can get back to a more respectful and honorable way of life at this point. Has society become totally ruined?

Our elected officials may change the laws, but we Christians need to remember that our "Lawmaker" never changes. God is God and he and his laws (commands) remain the same no matter what sin has become more accepted or popular today in society. The Word of God is the same as it was over 2,000 years ago and it will be the same forever more. We are warned about this in Psalm 1 as it describes how a Christian can ease into accepting and eventually participating in sin.

Church News

New Facebook Ad

If you are ever on Facebook, you may see our new church ad. Please like and share!

Maundy Thursday

We will have our annual Maundy Thursday dinner and message on April 2nd at 6pm. Food will be provided.

Installation Ceremony

We are going to try again to have an installation ceremony as part of the worship service on Sunday, April 19th. This is to re-install Erma and Nancy back on the session.

Fellowship Outing

There will be a fun fellowship outing planned for Saturday, April 11 to the Rock of Ages Winery. We will have lunch first. If you haven't already signed up and you would like to go, please let either Michelle or Erma know asap.



Church Cleanings

Thanks to everyone who came out for the church cleaning on March 11th! We were in and out in less than an hour! Our next church cleaning will be on Wednesday evening, April 8th at 6pm.

We are planning to hold an outdoor grounds spruce up soon. Our grounds could use a little love.



On Sunday, March 15, we had our annual St. Patrick's Day fellowship at Trali's Irish Pub. Pictured left to right: Michael McFadden, Dewey Cassell, June Cassell, Cecil Hudgins, Michelle Osborne, Lisa McFadden, and Erma Hudgins.

From the Editor, continued from page 4



"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction." ~Psalm 1

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness. ~ Isaiah 5:20

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." ~ Romans 12:21

A LITTLE GUIDE TO THE HOLY WEEK



PALM SUNDAY

Jesus, amid the cheering crowd, rides on a donkey to Jerusalem



HOLY MONDAY

Jesus visits his friends in Bethany and Mary anoints the feet of Jesus.



HOLY TUESDAY

Jesus foretells the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter



HOLY WEDNESDAY

Judas makes a deal with the high priests; he turns Jesus over for 30 silver coins



HOLY THURSDAY

The Last Supper takes place. Jesus institutes the sacraments of the Eucharist and priesthood.



GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus is sentenced to death by crucifixion. He died on the cross, and was buried in a tomb.



HOLY SATURDAY

Jesus descends into the Abyss



EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus rises from the dead!

THE LORD PRESENTED US IN HIS PASSION WITH ALL THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE DAILY GRIND OF THIS PRESENT AGE; WHILE IN HIS RESURRECTION HE PRESENTED US WITH THE ETERNAL AND BLESSED LIFE OF THE AGE TO COME. (SAINT AUGUSTINE)

Easter Joy

Jesus came to earth,
to show us how to live,
how to put others first,
how to love and how to give.

Then He set about His work,
that God sent Him to do;
he took our punishment on
Himself;
He made us clean and new.

He could have saved Himself,
calling angels from above,
but He chose to pay our price
for sin;
He paid it out of love.

Our Lord died on Good
Friday,
but the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter
morn
that fills our hearts with joy.

Now we know our earthly
death, like His, is just a rest.
We'll be forever with Him
in heaven, where life is best.

So we live our lives for Jesus,
think of Him in all we do.
Thank you Savior; Thank you
Lord.

Help us love like you!

by Joanna Fuchs

Bible Book Club

I hope you enjoyed last month's bible readings as much as I did. Let's continue reading!

APRIL READING CHALLENGE:

Old Testament: Exodus: Chapters 22-40

Read the rest of Exodus!

Psalms: Chapters 13-16

Consider these as little poems. Read one per week.

Proverbs: Chapter 4

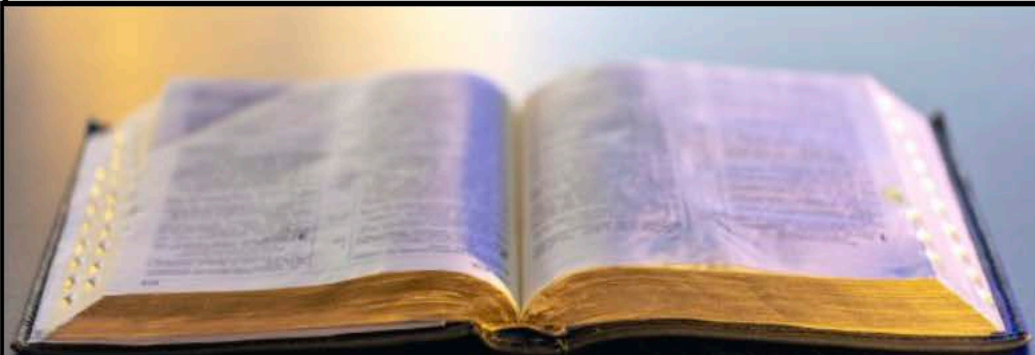
Continue reading about wisdom.

New Testament: Matthew Chapters 21-25

Perfect time to read these chapters!

Remember to stay rooted in Scripture and seek His direction today. Scripture is meant to guide every step we take. God's Word cuts through the confusion of life and gives us clear direction. We need scripture to navigate our lives. Make intentional time each day to sit down and dive into God's Word.

HAPPY READING!



"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 119:105

WHEN WE SAY,
"WELCOME THE
STRANGER"
WE'RE NOT BEING
LEFTIST.

WHEN WE SAY
"FEED THE
HUNGRY"
WE'RE NOT BEING
SOCIALISTS.

WHEN WE SAY
"LOVE YOUR
NEIGHBOR"
WE'RE NOT BEING
WOKE.

WE'RE QUOTING
JESUS.