



the INVITATION



THE LENTEN SEASON

The Season of Lent is a time of preparation for Easter and Holy Week. Lent, which was originally intended to imitate Jesus' forty days of temptation in the wilderness, began on Ash Wednesday (March 1 - this year) and runs through Maundy Thursday (April 13).

The death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ are the very heart of the Christian gospel with Good Friday and Easter recognized by many as the two most significant days of the Christian year.

As Lent concludes we focus on the fact that it is only by walking through the darkness of Holy Week that we can truly understand the light and hope of Easter morning.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Palm Sunday: April 9, 11AM
Sanctuary

Maundy Thursday April 14, 7PM
Sanctuary

Good Friday: April 14, 7PM
Sanctuary

Easter Sunday: April 16
7AM Courtyard
11AM Sanctuary

(See page 4 for more details.)

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH!

[workcamps™]

This year's annual fundraising "workcamps" dinner will be hosted at Providence on Saturday, April 8 at 6:00pm.

Get Your Ticket NOW!!!

Only \$10.00 per ticket

A great meal for a great cause!



Dinner provided by our friends from

ABERDEEN BARN STEAKHOUSE



So, which is more important? What you believe or how you behave? I mean, they both matter. What we believe shapes how we behave and how we behave demonstrates what we believe. And yet...

Over the past few weeks, the gospel readings have focused on Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount. Most people who say they believe in Christ would agree that these passages are the essential core of what Jesus taught.

The problem is that Jesus has almost nothing to say about what we believe. He focuses entirely on the peculiar way he expects his followers to behave. It's the same when you turn to Jesus' parables. Most of them are not about what we affirm as the content of our faith, but what we do and how we live. John's Gospel is the only gospel that puts a major emphasis on belief, but even it concludes with Jesus saying, "This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other." (John 13:35). Paul's epistles are the bedrock of what Christians believe, but every letter points to the way what we believe shapes the way we behave.

That's not to say that belief is unimportant. What is unimportant is belief that doesn't transform our behavior. The goal of Christian discipleship is not making sure that we get everything right in our heads, but that our hearts and lives are shaped by what we believe into the likeness of Jesus.

The problem for "so-called" Christians is that the world watches how we behave more closely than it listens to what we believe. This is particularly true of "Gen-Xers" and "Millennials" – they can smell a hypocrite a mile away.

They may not understand all the complexities of Christian theology (who does, by the way), but they know when people who say they believe in Christ behave in ways that are inconsistent with what Jesus teaches; when we manipulate the truth with self-serving exaggerations; when we close our eyes to the subtle and persistent sins of racism, sexism and hatred; when we are quick to resort to violence and slow to walk in Jesus' way of peacemaking; when we love to pray on street corners but fail to practice the disciplines of spiritual formation; when anger and old-fashioned meanness contradict the way of mercy and forgiveness; when we settle for our lives the way they are without stretching toward what they can become; when we say we believe the creed but behave in ways that don't look like Jesus.

As we close in on the end of Lent, Jesus' words come with painful and penetrating clarity: "Not everybody who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

Jesus calls us to a way of discipleship that leads us toward the complete integration of our behavior with our belief. He challenges us to face our failures and continue to grow toward Christian perfection and the completion of God's work of love in our human lives.

All of which is why some chose to get their ashes in church a month ago on Ash Wednesday. (Pardon the corny play on words!) The dirty smudge on our foreheads was a tangible reminder that we are all dust. All mortal. All imperfect people. But that smudge was also a sign of the grace that meets us wherever we are and loves us too much to leave us there. Jesus accepts us with all our contradictions between what we believe and the way we behave and draws us toward the wholeness (holiness) of a life that is fully integrated with his will.

If we will but let him into our hearts and change our behaviors.

See you in church!

PROVIDENCE WOMEN

All women are invited to join us at the PEVA PW Spring Gathering at First Presbyterian Church Portsmouth, 515 Court Street, Portsmouth, on Saturday, April 29, 2017 at 9:15 a.m. The theme for the event is mission work. Worship will be led by Rev. Steve Frazier.

During your "spring cleaning" if you find any children's books you no longer need, please consider donating them to the Providence Women's Group. The group is collecting them for the Migrant Farm Workers on the Eastern Shore. Please place your donations in the Children's Book bin located in the Information Hall.

Additionally, Providence Women's Coordinating Team (PWCT) is looking for women who want to get more involved with women's event and missions and they will soon have some available positions to fill. The PWCT helps plan future missions and events for the Women's Group. For more information how you can join this dynamic team, please contact us as ppw@provpres.org.



THIS MONTH AT PROVIDENCE

SUNDAY, April 2

- Fifth Sunday of Lent -

8:45am Merry Bells

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship & Communion

MONDAY, April 3

7:00pm Boys Scouts

7:00pm Committee Chairs Meet

7:30pm Committee Meetings

TUESDAY, April 4

7:30pm Bells of Providence

WEDNESDAY, April 5

12:00pm Gad-A-Bouts Meeting

6:00pm Soup & Rolls

7:15pm Chancel Choir

THURSDAY, April 6

6:30pm Men's Dinner Out

SATURDAY, April 8

5:00pm Aberdeen Barn- Youth

Work Camp Dinner

SUNDAY, April 9

- Palm Sunday-

8:45am Merry Bells

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship

MONDAY, April 10

7:00pm Boy Scouts

7:00pm Session Meeting

TUESDAY, April 11

10:00am Dorcas Circle

WEDNESDAY, April 12

9:45am Mary & Martha Circle

THURSDAY, April 13

~Maundy Thursday~

6:00pm Chancel Choir

7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service

FRIDAY, April 14

~Good Friday~

- Office Closed -

7:00 pm Good Friday Service

SATURDAY, April 15

- Newsletter Deadline -

8:30am Courtyard Graces

TBD Mission Matters

Youth Outing

SUNDAY, April 16

- Easter -

6:45am Chancel Choir Warm-up

7:00am Sunrise Service

8:45am Merry Bells

10:00am Chancel Choir Warm-up

11:00am Worship

MONDAY, April 17

- Office Closed -

7:00pm Boys Scouts

WEDNESDAY, April 19

6:00pm Kirk Night

6:30pm Kirkmusik

THURSDAY, April 20

7:00pm Care Team Meeting

SUNDAY, April 23

8:45am Merry Bells

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship

12:15pm PPWCT

MONDAY, April 24

7:00pm Boys Scouts

TUESDAY, April 25

7:30pm Bells of Providence

WEDNESDAY, April 26

6:00pm Kirk Night

6:30pm Kirkmusik

7:30pm Chancel Choir

SUNDAY, April 30

8:45am Merry Bells

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship

12:15pm Wendy's CASHOLA

Work Camp Fundraiser



HE CHOSE
THE
NAILS
MAX LUCADO

Sundays, March 5 - April 9,
9:45am, Fellowship Hall

BIRTHDAYS

04/03 Jean Whittaker

04/05 Harry Rogers

04/06 Frank Yurasko

04/08 Terrie Wichrowski

04/10 Joanne Anderson

04/10 Day Ferguson

04/10 Buck Bray

04/11 Pauline Stanberry

04/12 Dale Passarella

04/12 Brent Nielson

04/12 Donald Singletary

04/13 Virginia McBurney

04/16 Dennis Burford

04/18 Brittney Pursel

04/18 Tom Barrow

04/18 Jeannette Bray

04/19 Frances Stefonich

04/19 Agnes Grillo

04/20 Stuart Snell

04/21 Nathan Deck

04/23 Connie Burford

04/23 John Dixon

04/24 Jennifer Ussery

04/25 Betty Barham

04/27 Sandy Hodges

04/28 Ejnar Jorgensen

04/29 Barbara Chadwick

04/29 Byron Martin

4/30 Vicki Madden

04/30 Jim Simmons

04/30 Nick Bolton

Holy Week and Easter Worship Opportunities

April 9 Palm Sunday

This day marks the beginning of Holy Week. On this day, we observe the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It was marked by crowds, who were in Jerusalem for Passover, waving palm branches and proclaiming Him as the messianic king. We also know that the parade was short-lived. The one hailed as the Messiah would die as a criminal in less than a week. Worship, on this first day of Holy Week, begins at 11AM in the Sanctuary.



The reality is that we gather on this day knowing that the journey to the cross has begun...

April 13 Maundy Thursday

This day commemorates the last day before Jesus was arrested. Events of this day included His last meal with the Disciples; the institution of communion; the betrayal by Judas and Jesus praying in Gethsemane (as the Disciples slept). Worship begins at 7:00PM in the Sanctuary.

When we share communion on Maundy Thursday, we share the memory of the act of deliverance that unfolds on the last days of Holy Week...



April 14 Good Friday

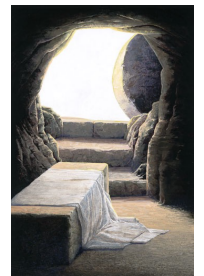
On this day of mourning, we focus on Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion and suffering, death and burial. It is on this day that the saving work that Christ set forth to do, in obedience to the Father's will, is brought to completion. The Good Friday service begins at 7:00PM in the Sanctuary.

While Jesus' enemies appear to seize control and cause His death, it is God who is in control and God's will that is being fulfilled...

April 16 Easter Sunday

The restrained tone of Lent and Holy Week gives way to the exuberant celebration of God's victory over sin and death on Easter morning. On this day we give witness to the conviction that by the power of God at work in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the way that things are is not the way that they will always be. The power of sin and death does not have the last word – God does!

Pastor Jeff Bell leads us in this day of unfettered celebration on Easter morning with a Sunrise service at 7AM (in the outdoor courtyard) and a more traditional worship service (in the Sanctuary) at 11AM.



He is risen. He is risen indeed.

LENTEN SOUP & ROLLS: USING NEW MATH

We've been using "new math" as a way of looking at the complicated season of Lent with new eyes. This year, instead of trying to identify something that we might subtract (give up) during the Lenten season to help us better prepare for and focus on Easter, we've been focused on adding something to our life of faith.

Through our Lenten Soup & Roll series, we've been encouraged to add a spiritual discipline (sabbath keeping, hospitality, fasting and grief) through a study of Lauren Winner's wonderful book *"Mudhouse Sabbath."*

The final Wednesday night of the series will have us looking at prayer. *Prayer* is a word that describes a relationship between God and ourselves. It's a relationship that we complicate by feeling badly if our words to God don't sound like they were spoken by Billy Graham. During this evening, we'll consider ways that simplify our conversations with God.

Please plan to join us in the Fellowship Hall for the final Soup & Rolls event as we prepare for Easter!

MISSION MATTERS YOUTH GROUP

On the Saturday before Easter (April 15), Mission Matters middle/high school students will build fifty easter baskets as part of their Lenten activity. The baskets will be assembled at the church and then distributed to homeless families who have short-term access to very inexpensive beach hotels.



This is something that the group did last year in cooperation with our mission partner *Blankets for the Homeless*. Mission Matters participants found this to be especially rewarding as kids who would otherwise not have anything on Easter morning received a gift - a day early! We also gave away Easter baskets to several adults who had never received a basket before in their lives.

NOT YOUR FAVORITE JEANS...

Whenever the Mission Matters middle/high School Group goes out to distribute with our mission partner, *Blankets for the Homeless*, we come back to the church knowing a little more about the people that we're serving and those who are our mission partners.

Recently, we went out on a Sunday afternoon and helped folks find clothing, toiletries, etc. It struck us that the mission of providing warm, clean blankets to those who had none had come a long way in a few years. While we still gave out blankets, the reality is that we also gave out clothing (for men, women and children), toiletries, backpacks and more. We even mentioned to *B4TH* founder, Mariah Smith, that *Blankets for the Homeless* has become a bit of a misnomer. They actually give out almost anything that homeless folks could ever need!

When we were leaving, we discussed the serious need for jeans - you know the clothing that we all have multiple pairs of but only wear our favorite ones? To help, we agreed to host a JEANS DRIVE



between now and Easter. If you'd be willing to take a look through your closet and bring in those extra jeans that you never wear (and are just taking up precious storage space), we will turn them over to *B4TH*. We've converted the *B4TH* Shoe Tree into a Shoe & Jeans tree. You can find the tree in the Fellowship Hall at the church.

2017

[workcamps]

UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS

Saturday, April 8	Aberdeen Barn Dinner
Sunday, April 30	Wendy's CASHOLA
Saturday, May 6	Yard Sale
Tuesday, May 16	MOE's CASHOLA

2017 Summer Men's Conference

Folks don't think anything of a group of women from a church attending an event together. However, many think that the possibility of a group of men from a church gathering to focus on their faith and getting to know one another better, as unusual. This year, men have a wonderful opportunity to get away to break the stereotypes and enjoy some guy and God time!

The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Presbyterian Men is sponsoring a men's conference from July 14 - 16, this year at the Massanetta Springs Conference Center (in Harrisonburg, Virginia). The conference will be based on the Micah 6: 8 text regarding the Lord's call for us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. The conference offers a Friday through Sunday opportunity to get away from the pressures of work and family, to make time to look more deeply at personal faith while enjoying activities like hiking, eating watermelon & ice cream and enjoying some good old-fashioned fellowship.

Additional information may be found at "www.midatlanticmen.org" or by contacting Tracy Gilbert (tracygilbert8@gmail.com).

Holy Land Classic

10 days - September 5-14, 2017



Join Pastor Fred McCall on this 10-day Holy Land Classic program that will expand our knowledge of the Bible and this sacred land.

Register Early & Save!

Call the church office for more details.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Please e-mail newsletter items no later than the 15th of each month for the following month's edition to:
office@provpres.org

Providence Presbyterian Church

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Church Staff

Pastor	Rev. Jeffrey S. Bell
Pastor of Family Life Ministries	Pastor Billy Ricketts
Director of Music	Valetta Fellenbaum
Organist	John Dixon
Administrative Assistant	Lisa Nixon
Nursery Supervisor	Michelle Wofford
Treasurer	Carolyn Knowles
Financial Secretary	Ted Salter
Sextons	Gus and Mary Ann Villies

The Session

Moderator: Rev. Jeffrey S. Bell • **Clerk of Session:** Gary Reese

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Property

*Riley Hensly
Tracey Gilbert

Worship

*Rich Lindgren
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