

The Connection Point

March 2023 - Vol. 1, No. 3



Roanoke Food Pantry

by Mary Jane Coolidge

Many families living in the Trophy Club, Roanoke, Alliance Corridor are not aware of The Roanoke Food Pantry. The idea of a place to donate food and clothing to help struggling families began as a dream of Mrs. Judith Turner in 1984. Seven years later, as the Pantry outgrew its original space, she was able to purchase an abandoned church building in Roanoke. Months of clean-up work and hundreds of volunteer hours later, the church was transformed into the facility you will find at 108 Pecan Street in Roanoke today. Dan Gordon has been the Executive Director of this volunteer 5031C Charity for the past 34 years. Pastor Bernie Silva recently joined Dan and helps with the day- to- day operations. Several of the volunteers who staff the Pantry have been there 20-25 years.



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Upcoming Events:



Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 2, 2023
12:00-2:00 pm



Maundy Thursday

April 6, 2023
7:00 pm - Sanctuary



Good Friday - Faure Requiem

April 7, 2023
7:00 pm - Sanctuary

A Note from the Pastor

Welcome to the season of Lent. In just a few short weeks, we will find ourselves at one of the most joyous times of the Christian year — Easter. We will join United Methodists and other Christians across the world to celebrate Easter! I can't wait!

The journey towards Easter begins with Ash Wednesday and continues through the season of Lent. What is Lent? Lent is a season of forty days, not including Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts to the church and then became a time for penance by all Christians. The First Sunday of Lent describes Jesus' temptation by Satan, and the sixth Sunday (Passion / Palm Sunday), Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent passion and death. Because Sundays are always little Easters, the penitential spirit of Lent should be tempered with joyful expectation of the Resurrection. So Sundays are feast days when we rest from our fasting.

I invite you to observe a season of Lent. Let us prepare our hearts and minds to walk along with Jesus as we journey with Jesus to Jerusalem. Let us prepare our hearts and minds to hear those who cry out to Jesus for deliverance, the tears of joy of those who experience Jesus' healing love, the schemes of those who would destroy him, the shouts of those yelling "crucify him," and the broken heart of Jesus as he said from the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Let's prepare our hearts and minds for a holy Lent. One of the spiritual practices that I love is to pray hymns just as we would pray the Psalms. I invite you to join



me in prayer as we continue the journey of Lent and meditate upon the words of the wonderful hymn "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" found in our hymnal as No. 269.

*Lord, who throughout these forty days,
for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with thee to mourn our sins
and close by thee to stay.*

*As though with Satan didst contend,
and didst the victory win,
O give us strength in thee to fight,
in thee to conquer sin.*

*As thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
so teach us, gracious Lord,
to die to self, and chiefly live
by thy most holy word.*

*And through these days of penitence,
and through thy passion tide,
yea, evermore in life and death,
Jesus with us abide.*

*Abide with us, that so,
this life of suffering over past,
An Easter of unending joy
we may attain at last.*

What a last verse! Yes, Lord Jesus, bring us to an Easter of unending joy!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bill

Music Ministry

What's So Special about Forty?

by Scott Scheetz

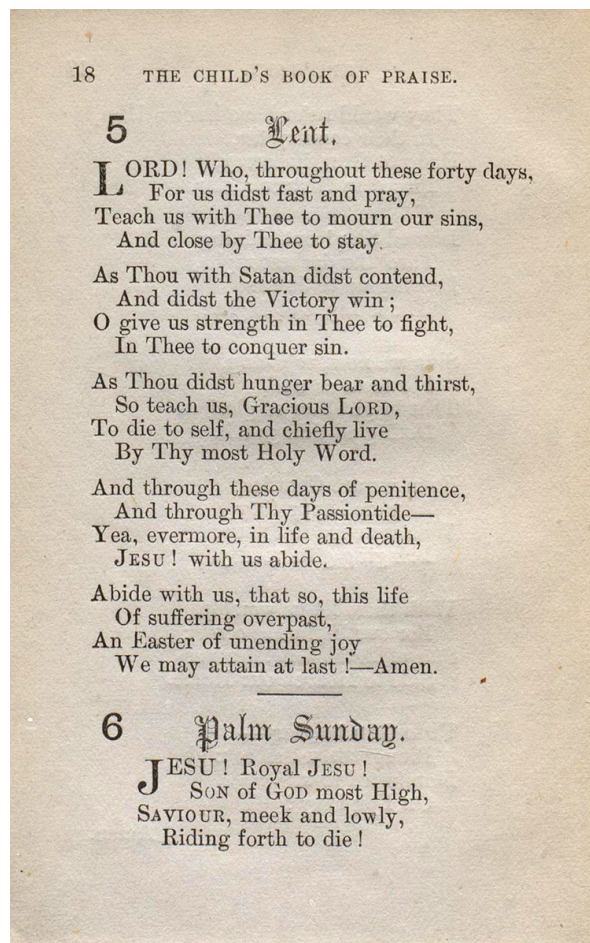
The number forty occurs several times in the Bible. First, forty was the number of days that it rained when the world was flooded. Then Noah waited another forty days for the water to recede before opening the door. The Israelites wandered in the desert for forty days, and likewise, Jesus wandered the wilderness for forty days. Finally, following the resurrection, Jesus remained on the for forty days before ascending to heaven.

The number forty holds significance in the church's liturgical year as well. Christ's forty days in the wilderness became the inspiration for the forty days of Lent. The season of Lent begins 40 days before Easter (not counting Sundays).

One of my favorite Lenten hymns that I love to start the season with is "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" which is found in our hymnal as No. 269.

This hymn was written by Claudia Hernaman. She was born in England in 1838, the daughter of an Anglican Minister, and then later married to a minister. Like many other women hymn writers, (such as Dorothy Thrupp, author of *The Solid Rock, Just As I am, Jesus Loves Me, Sweet Hour of Prayer, He Leadeth Me, and Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us.*) Claudia was devoted to the religious education of children. She wrote 150 hymns, however, this is the only one of hers commonly sung today.

This hymn was first published in 1873 in her book *Child's Book of Praise; A Manual for Devotion in Simple Verse*. However, its first inclusion in a hymnal was not until the *Irish Church Hymnal* in 1960.



The Child's Book of Praise (London: J.T. Hayes, 1873)

This hymn is an account of the Temptation of Jesus found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This hymn not only retells the account, it also teaches us and encourages us to follow Christ's example and turn away from sin, temptations, and self-desires.

We are called to reflection and penitence during the fourth verse, particularly in these days of penitence (Lent).

Finally, in verse five, we are reminded of the resurrection that will come on Easter and the promise of new life.

May we during this Lenten season focus on truly living like Christ as we meditate on his word and look forward to Easter morning.

Children's Ministry



Taco Night Success

Thanks to all of the families who donated food items and helped cook, serve, and clean up our February Wednesday Night Dinner. You truly made the event a success through your generosity and hard work.

VBS

Summer is coming and registration opens March 12, 2023, for VBS (June 5-8, 2023). Our theme is "Ready, Set, Move!" and we are seeking volunteers. Please sign up to help at:

<https://www.myvbs.org/arkkids/>
or use the QR Code to the right.



Wednesday Nights

As part of our study on virtues, we are exploring what God is doing in us to change the world around us. We created and delivered Valentines to the residents of Avalon Memory Care in Keller. We also made bird feeders for the feathered friends in our community. Ark Kids are making a difference!



Easter Egg Hunt Eggs Needed!

Our annual egg hunt is planned for Sunday, April 2, immediately following the 11 am service. We are collecting pre-stuffed eggs in the big box in the lobby. Eggs can be filled with trinkets, stickers, and candy (no nuts or chocolate please). Thank you for donating!

Sunday School Happenings:

Preschool:

This month, our theme is "Confetti Toss". We are exploring how we can love like Jesus.

- Week One: Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet (John 13:3-7, 34-35)
- Week Two: Jesus Is Gentle (Mark 5:25-34)
- Week Three: Jesus feeds over 5,000 Hungry People (John 6:1-13)
- Week Four: Jesus Loves Everyone (The Gospels)

Kindergarten-5th Grade:

This March, our theme is "Work in Progress".

- Week One: A Woman Anoints Jesus' Feet (Luke 7:36-50)
- Week Two: Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
- Week Three: The Story of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Week Four: The Story of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)

Children's Choir

We were so blessed to have the children's choir lead worship on Sunday, February 26th. They sang beautifully and set the tone for Lent with the song, "Forty Days and Nights". The choir is open to 5K-5th grade. Come join us as we prepare and learn music for Palm Sunday!



Fellowship Friends Preschool

Last month our preschoolers learned the importance of "service to others". We filled our day with making others feel special and loved as we did projects that benefit our community.

Our students participated in making:

- Dog treats for a dog rescue
- Birthday cards for seniors
- Valentine's cards for the Roanoke food pantry
- Bookmarks for the local library
- Letters to the troops
- Place mats for meals on wheels
- Helped make snack sacks for the local elementary schools.

They had a wonderful time learning that, even at their age, they can help others in need.

February is dental health month and our students got to visit with a very special lady...the Tooth Fairy. She

talked about the importance of brushing our teeth and eating healthy foods.

Registration for fall class was held and we are proud to announce that we still have spots available in our 3 and 4-year-old classes. Our 2-year-old class is completely full.

This month, we celebrate beloved children's author, Dr. Seuss, with a week-long study of his work and wacky days at school.

Spring Break is scheduled for March 13 to 17.

Our transportation speedway will be held on March 27 & 28 where we teach our children about the rules of the road and bike safety and work those large muscles while practicing balancing on their bikes.

Together we can do GREAT things.

- Barbara Rich Clark

Youth Ministry



FTC Youth has been having so much fun in fellowship together! We have been learning about what the marks of a follower of Jesus Christ are using Romans 12 and how we can apply what we learn to our daily walk with God!



We've also been doing a ton of fun activities together such as ax throwing and going to the skating rink! (don't worry everyone kept their fingers and toes haha)

If you are a 6th-12th grader we would love for you to join in on the fun! Contact Tyler at Tyler@fumtc.com or Ginger at Ginger@fumtc.com.



Missions

A Kairos Weekend in Prison

by Steve Collins

In January, I served on Kairos weekend event at the Sanders Estes Unit, located in Venus, Texas, just outside Alvarado. On behalf of the volunteers and the incarcerated men, I thank Fellowship UMC for its support of this vital, miracle-producing ministry.

Estes is a prison privately operated for the state by the (amusingly-named) Management and Training Corporation. Although privately run, the unit operates under the same rules as a state-run prison. The unit houses a little over 1000 men in minimum security. An offender's custody level depends primarily on current institutional behavior and previous institutional behavior, regardless of the nature of the offense, but also considers the current offense and sentence length. Although not technically a pre-release center, most of the men at this unit are within two years of release.

Kairos Prison Ministry International is a Christian, interdenominational program that grew out of the Catholic Cursillo movement created in Spain in 1948, which in turn gave birth to other 3-day short courses in Christianity such as Walk to Emmaus, Tres Dias, and Via de Christo. Kairos (Greek for "God's special time") began in 1976 in Florida, and now serves over 500 prisons in 37 states and 9 countries. The ministry includes three different programs: Kairos Inside serves incarcerated adult men and women; Kairos Torch serves incarcerated juvenile offenders; and Kairos Outside serves women who are significant in the lives of incarcerated men.

An offender's participation in Kairos is voluntary and begins with a 3-day program, starting Thursday afternoon and continuing through Sunday afternoon. The heart of the program, however, is the continuing ministry that allows weekend graduates to meet weekly in small accountability groups, known as

Prayer and Share. Kairos also conducts one-day retreats two times a year and monthly reunions of Kairos graduates.

The weekend program is a short course in Christianity. There are 10 talks given by a mixture of lay and clergy volunteers, each of which is followed by table discussion. There's also lots of music, special worship services, chapel and prayer time, skits, and food. Kairos volunteers bring in cookies, fruit, and meals (lunch and dinner), including burgers, pizza, tacos, barbeque, and fried chicken. Lots of participants tell us that they signed up for the food, but found Christ.

After serving on teams for seven Walk to Emmaus weekends and six Chrysalis weekends (the youth version of Walk to Emmaus), I served on my first Kairos team in 2002, at the Torres Unit in Hondo. I thought it would be my only Kairos weekend, but I was the weekend leader 13 weekends later, in 2016, and this January served on my 20th Kairos team (which also happened to be the 20th Kairos weekend at the Estes Unit).

Every Kairos weekend has its challenges, and January's weekend was no exception. Because of the COVID lockdown and staffing shortages, we had not conducted a weekend program at Estes since January of 2020. Kairos is a very detailed program, governed by and described in a 350-page manual, and even many veteran volunteers forgot many details (including me). We struggled to attract enough volunteers to conduct a full program (42 participants), which requires a minimum of 38 volunteers going inside. We were blessed that many of our volunteers were new to Kairos, but many of them joined so late in the preparation process that they were unable to complete the prescribed 34 hours of Kairos training (which is in addition to the security training conducted by the state).

We were able to serve the full slate of 42 participants, arranged in seven family groups, six participants and three volunteers in each family, seated at round tables with three pairs of participants separated by a volunteer. My specific task in the family of St. Paul was that of “clergy,” clearly identified from the beginning as not being ordained clergy. The program requires a minimum of three ordained clergy present on the weekend. Each of the volunteers at the table are there to facilitate discussion.

My other specific role on the weekend was to give a series of four meditations about forgiveness—one Friday, two Saturday, and one Sunday. The meditations include both a prepared script out of the manual and personal witness.

As is common on a Kairos weekend, during each of our two “open-mic” times in which men can share about their weekend experience, there were several men who, with unusual vulnerability outside of a Kairos weekend, tearfully shared about the love they felt during the weekend. None of them professed to lay down gang colors—a dangerous public act I’ve often witnessed—but two men professed faith in Christ. (Although a profession of faith is a blessing and a cause for celebration, Kairos is not a salvation ministry, in the sense that we do not do altar calls or baptisms or the like. We simply offer Christ.)

Two experiences stand out for me at Estes #20. First, a young man who was a Kairos graduate serving as one of our weekend servants sought me out for personal one-on-one counseling. I’ve had other, similar experiences, but it always elicits from me an emergency (!) silent prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give me the ability to deeply listen and to offer only the words that the Spirit would have me offer. It is a privilege to listen to a man in distress, but I was not at all prepared for what I heard from this young man. (Thank you, Jesus, for using me and guiding me.)

The second experience was shared by the whole community. On Friday, one of the lay team members was delivering a self-explanatory talk entitled

“Opening the Door.” The gym in which we meet has in one corner a typical set of commercial, metal double doors that open to an outside courtyard. None of us had ever seen these doors open, and the correctional officers confirmed that they’d never seen those doors unlocked, much less opened.

In mid-talk, one of the doors spontaneously and without apparent human intervention swung wide open! Almost all of us (not including the speaker, whose back was to the door) saw it. There was a stunned quiet in the room. One of the men walked over and, with difficulty, closed the door with a grinding bang. The quiet continued for the remainder of the talk. In the family of Paul, we had a conversation about this powerful image of the Holy Spirit entering the room through the open door. That evening, I came to the conclusion that I misunderstood the event.

As my tablemate Aaron, a volunteer on his first Kairos weekend, and I drove away from the unit that evening, he spoke on the phone with a friend who was praying for the weekend. Before Aaron made any mention of the big story of the day--the door opening—his friend asked, “When did the demons flee?” Somewhat taken aback, Aaron asked what he was talking about. His friend explained that during his prayer time for the weekend, he received a strong mental image—a vision if you will—of demons fleeing. “So,” he asked again, “When did the demons flee?”

As Aaron and I discussed his conversation, we came to understand that the door didn’t open for the Holy Spirit to come into the room. He was already there. The door opened for the darkness to flee.

The Roanoke Food Pantry

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The Pantry provides urgently needed help to those who are struggling in our community. While providing food to the hungry is the main goal, the Pantry also provides toiletries, clothing, shoes, baby food and diapers to our clients. The Pantry currently feeds 40

families each month. It also serves “walk ins” who may need a meal, clothing, or a warm blanket. Occasionally, the Pantry will provide a motel room with a hot shower and warm bed as was recently done for a homeless family of 5 living in their car in a parking lot.



Our service objectives increase during the winter season, as this is the time of greatest need for those on a limited income. Along with the need for food and clothing, the cold weather demands resources for helping with heating bills. Without the Pantry the last few years, hundreds of families would have endured winter months without heat, Thanksgivings without food, and Christmases without gifts for the children. The names of children on the Angel Tree at Fellowship UMC come from clients at the Pantry. Last December the Pantry provided Christmas for 65 families which included toys and gift cards for children and parents, a Christmas meal with a turkey or ham and all the trimmings.



The Pantry is sustained through generous donations from individuals, churches, and businesses. Cash contributions are gratefully accepted, as well as donations online. All monetary gifts, donations and contributions are tax deductible. The Pantry has a Garage Sale the last Friday and Saturday of each month from 9:00-1:00 pm. One way to help the Pantry is to donate items for the garage sale (gently used clothing and shoes, toys, small household appliances, etc.). It is open Monday-Wednesday from 9:00-2:00 to receive donations. You can also help by coming to the sale each month. Fellowship UMC has partnered with the Pantry for the last 15 years. We want to thank everyone who has contributed to the monthly “wish list” from the Pantry. You have filled our bins to the brim!





How you can help serve our community needs!
Purchase any of the items below:

Pancake Mix

**Pancake Syrup
(No glass please!)**

Bring them to church and place them in the labeled bins in the narthex.

Our youth will deliver the donations to the Roanoke Food Pantry.

Thank you for your generosity!

Recurring Weekly Events:

Sunday

- 9:00 am Modern Worship
- 11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm Youth Group
- 5:00 pm Adult Bible Study

Monday

- 10:00 am Creative Christian Women

Tuesday

- 6:45 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 8:30 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)

Wednesday

- 5:00 pm Wednesday Night Dinner
- 5:30 pm Children's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Adult Bible Study
- 6:15 pm Children's Choir Rehearsal
- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal