

First United Methodist Church  
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**The Methodist Messenger**  
First United Methodist Church  
Edinburg, Texas  
**March 2026**

**The Wilderness of Lent**

Dear Edinburg FUMC family,

The season of Lent is now in full swing, and I have to tell you—Lent is my favorite time in church because in Lent, we slow down. We go back to our roots. We take stock of who we are before God.

In Gospel of Luke 3:21–22, Jesus stands in the waters of the Jordan. The heavens open. The Spirit descends in bodily form. A voice speaks: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” And then, Luke tells us that Jesus, “full of the Holy Spirit,” is led into the wilderness (Luke 4:1–13). Notice the order: Jesus is reminded of his identity as God’s beloved Son. Then, the Spirit sends him into the wilderness.

Lent follows that same pattern. We often imagine the wilderness as a place of deprivation, temptation, and testing. And it is that. In the wilderness, Jesus fasts. He is tempted. He must decide what kind of Messiah he will be. But throughout Scripture, wilderness is also the place where the people of God encounter God. Israel meets God in the wilderness after liberation from Egypt. They learn who they are there. They receive manna there. They receive the Law there. The prophets are formed in lonely landscapes. Jesus himself repeatedly withdraws to deserted places to pray.

The wilderness is not simply barren. It is spacious. Lent invites us into that kind of space. Not as punishment, not as spiritual performance, but as holy spaciousness. Before Jesus resists a single temptation, he is named, “Beloved.” Before we fast, before we repent, before we do anything for God, we are held in that same belovedness.

So what is fasting for? Perhaps fasting is less about restriction and more about creating room. We create room to notice what fills our days and our minds—to hear God’s voice beneath the noise—to remember who we are.

When we fast, whether from a meal, from constant news consumption, from social media scrolling, or from whatever keeps our souls crowded, we are not proving our devotion. We are creating space for prayer, for Scripture, for love.

This Lent, I invite you to enter the wilderness with intention. We are reading through Luke together in our Wednesday evening Bible study. Everyone is invited! Whether you join us in person or not, you are welcome to walk this path with us. You can read the assigned chapters each week. Or, if a full reading feels overwhelming, you can sit with the weekly focus passage and let it dwell deeply in you. Each week also includes a spiritual practice. Some are quiet and reflective: journal prompts, moments of examen, questions to ponder in prayer. Others are embodied: simple invitations to extend God’s love in tangible ways, to forgive, to bless, to notice.

Fasting, then, is not simply about what we give up. It is about what we make room for. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness—not to abandon him, but to form him. And the same Spirit leads us.

May this season be less about striving and more about spaciousness. Less about proving and more about receiving. Less about scarcity and more about the surprising abundance of God who still meets us in the wilderness.

You are Beloved.  
Let us make room to remember it.

Caminando en el monte contigo, Walking in the wilderness with you,  
Pastor Sarah

**March Dates To Put In Your Calendar**

- March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1PM- Bag Rice and Beans, freeze chicken
- March 4<sup>th</sup>- Bible Study Begins!
- March 7<sup>th</sup> - Painting Class 9am-12pm
- March 8<sup>th</sup> - Chili Cook Off
- March 19<sup>th</sup> - at 1PM Prepare Non-Perishable Bags
- March 21<sup>st</sup> - at 8am: Food Distribution
- March 29<sup>th</sup> -Lunch at Luby’s



## Help Serve On Sundays!

We warmly invite our church family to take part in this simple act of fellowship by helping provide light snacks for our services. If you're able, bringing items such as pastries is a wonderful way to serve and bless others. This year, we will be using an online (virtual) calendar as an easy way to sign up. A QR code has been created and will be shared during morning announcements, posted near the coffee machines and snack table, and placed next to this announcement. To sign up, simply open your phone's camera, point it at the QR code, and click the link that appears. The calendar link will also be shared in our group chat as a reminder, or you may speak directly with Dora Pagel for assistance or help signing up. Donations of creamers are always welcome and truly appreciated. Thank you for your continued generosity and for the love you show our church family.



Scan Me

## Treasurer's Report:

	January 2026	February 2026
Operating Income	\$19,518.04	\$24,453.06
Operating Expenses	(\$23,007.20)	(\$24,645.01)
	(\$ 3,489.16)	(\$ 191.95)



## Server Appreciation

A special thanks to February's communion servers: Craig and Pam Bovee, and Mark and Lynn Noe. January communion servers were Ki and Tim Brush, Kim Wilke, Chris Cowan, and Maryanne Denner.

Thank you all for helping Pastor Sarah serve communion to God's people at Jesus' table.



## Our Feathered Neighbors

Mourning Doves are common but well camouflaged and easily overlooked. Whether we grew up in the Valley or in some other part of the USA, we probably all saw and heard this widespread bird. The "mournful" cooing song is heard almost year round, and the subtly attractive long-tailed dove may nest or forage in our yards. Nests are flimsy nests usually low in trees. You may not be aware, since the adult sits so tightly on the nest. When we scare them up from the ground, or from a tree, their wings make a high-pitched whistling sound. Just be aware that we have other doves here as well, so look for the long, pointed tail and lack of white in the wings of the Mourning Dove.

Regards and good birding,  
Tim Brush.



## What's up with the HUB?

March is bringing new growth and steady momentum at the Hub of Prosperity. Our tomato season has begun, and everything is coming along beautifully, we're looking forward to watching them thrive in the weeks ahead. We're also excited to announce our March 14th (10-12pm) workshop on food safety led by our very own Stephanie Kasper, join us as she shares valuable knowledge to help our community grow safely and confidently. Every Friday since the beginning of the spring semester from 10:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Dr. Racelis' Sustainable Agriculture class has been joining us at the farm, and their hard work has helped us accomplish so much. As we push through this early heat, we're grateful for the people that make this work possible and can't wait to see all that March has in store.

With love,  
Maria



## CHILI COOK OFF GET YOUR CHILI ON!

**Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>** following the 10:30AM service- There will be mouth-watering homemade chilis, desserts, prizes, and lots of fun! If you want to contribute to the feast, sign up during church or contact Linda at 607-0663! Can't bring food? Come anyway!!! You can contribute to the Food Pantry donation basket! You can also help set up Saturday morning, help with the clean-up, or be a judge!!

**Chili makers-** prepare a large pot of chili at home (10-12 servings). Label the pot with the name of the chili (not your name) and the degree of spiciness (mild, medium, hot). Bring your chili-filled pot or crockpot (even better) to church Sunday. See you there!!!



Edinburg FUMC  
presents

# BIBLE STUDY

Join us as we explore the Gospel of Luke  
during this Lenten season.

Starting February 25, 2026

At 6:30 PM  
At The Parsonage

For More Info; Call Us At (956)-381-9806

## On the Road with Jesus: A Lenten Journey through Luke

February 25: Week 1—Beloved in the Wilderness

Read: Luke 1-4

Focus Passage: Luke 4:1-13

Weekly Practice: Meditate on the question, "What does it mean for you to be God's beloved child?"

March 4: Week 2—The Great Reversal

Read: Luke 5-8

Focus Passage: Luke 6:20-26

Weekly Practice: Choose one way to embody the love of God for others this week. Write about the experience. What was life-giving? What felt challenging?

March 11: Week 3—Prayer that Makes Neighbors

Read: Luke 9-11

Focus Passage: Luke 10:25-37

Weekly Practice: Every day this week, practice this breath prayer: Inhale: "Lord Jesus Christ;" Exhale: "Have mercy." Notice what comes up in your heart and mind as you take this time to pause.

March 18: Week 4—The Searching God

Read: Luke 12-16

Focus Passage: Luke 15

Weekly Practice: Over the week, reflect on these questions: "Where was I lost? Where did I notice God searching for me?"

March 25: Week 5—Humility on the Way

Read: Luke 17-20

Focus Passage: Luke 18:9-14

Weekly Practice: Write down what you cling to (control, image, certainty, etc). Pray for its release daily.

Week 6—Holy Week: The Way of Love

Holy Week Reading Schedule:

Palm Sunday—Luke 19:28-40	Maundy Thursday: Luke 22
Holy Monday—Luke 19:41-48	Good Friday: Luke 23
Holy Tuesday—Luke 20	Holy Saturday: Luke 24:1-12
Holy Wednesday—Luke 21	Easter: Luke 24:13-35

*Holy Week Practice: Prayer Vigil at Home*

Before you begin the day's reading, light a candle. Read the passage. Where do you see the thread of love woven through each Holy Week reading? End with the Lord's Prayer.