



Jasper United Methodist Church

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February 2026



A View from the Crowe's Nest

Chocolate to Ashes to Love

February has always felt like an odd month to me. It's a mix of things that don't seem to belong together. We move from the lingering glow of Christmas into the gray stretch of winter, then suddenly we're surrounded by hearts, candy, and Valentine's cards—followed closely by Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, and Ash Wednesday.

Love, indulgence, ashes. Celebration, restraint, reflection. It's no wonder Lent can feel hard to get excited about.

For many, Lent begins with one last big celebration—as if we need a final indulgence before the sacrifices begin. And if Lent is mostly about what we are giving up, it can feel like something to endure rather than something to embrace. But what if we've been looking at Lent from the wrong angle? What if Lent is not about sacrifice first—but about love?

Lent reminds us that before we ever reached for God, God was already reaching for us. Long before we confess, repent, or “get things right,” God’s grace is already at work—pursuing us, embracing us, loving us—not because of what we have done, but because of who God is.

That’s why Lent is not about giving something up to earn God’s approval or prove our worth. Lent is not a spiritual test we pass or fail. Lent is the season when we remember and retell the story of God’s love.

We move from seeing love only as a baby in a manger to recognizing love as God-with-us—Jesus Christ, whose love went all the way to the cross. A love so deep that Christ was willing to suffer and die for us. And the primary response God asks of us in return is not perfection, but love.

When we fast, we are not punishing ourselves. We are saying to God, “I love You more than the things that usually satisfy me.” When we pray or deepen our prayer life, we are doing what lovers have always done—we make time for the one we love. The words don’t have to be perfect. What matters is the willingness to show up.

Lent, especially in our Protestant tradition, is a season of discipline and reflection—not because God is distant, but because God is near. It prepares our hearts to receive the joy of Easter by grounding us again in Christ’s sacrificial love.

And here is the good news that matters most to me: Lent reminds us that we are not defined by our sin, our failures, or our self-discipline. We are defined by God’s love and grace. The ashes we receive do not mark us as condemned—they mark us as claimed.

So maybe this February, instead of seeing Lent as a gloomy season, we can see it for what it truly is: A season where love deepens. A season where faith becomes more intentional. A season that trains our hearts to love God—and love others—more fully. Lent is not the opposite of love. Lent is love in training.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Sheila Crowe



Ash Wednesday Service-February 18, 6 PM From New and Different to Dying to Live

In January we have been began rediscovering what makes us “New and Different” as Christians. As we move toward Easter our sermon series will move from “New and Different” to “Dying to Live.” It will be rooted in the story of the grain of wheat found in John 12:20-26.

This series and worship will be designed to help us to let go of things that are holding us back from experiencing the “New and Different Life.” Ash Wednesday will be a time of physically and spiritually laying them down at the cross. The service will be held in the Sanctuary immediately following Wednesday’s dinner beginning around 6:30 pm.

I invite you to prepare for this time by considering what do you need to release in order experiencing a fuller, more joyous life. I hope, together, we will learn to trust God to bring something new out of this surrender. My prayer is that Lenten season will not feel heavy or joyless, but honest and hope-filled—as journey of love that leads us all the way to resurrection.

PRAYER LIST



Call the church office to have names put on the list.
(Names will be on the list for 2 months)

Pray for those who are in need of our Lord's Healing Touch:

Burl Chessier, Pam Edwards, Sara Fowler, Jack Green, Peggy Higgins, Maureen Huntington, Linda Judkins, Tom Judkins, Don Larson, Joyce Leist, George Montgomery, Mary Russell, Susan Sherrell, Bobbie Jean Warford

Please call the church office if you have a prayer concern, update or to notify us of any family illnesses, deaths or hospitalizations.

For any emergencies after office hours, Pastor Sheila can be reached on her cell # 770-842-3025



LOOKING FOR OLD PLATES and GREEN PLANTS!

Do you have some old mismatched plates or ones with chips in them that you need to get rid of? Dinner plates, large or small and dessert plates. Bring them to the church. There will be a table in the back of the sanctuary for them. We need lots!!! So clean out those shelves!

AND how about those green plants? We would like to invite you to participate in preparing the sanctuary for Easter by bringing your green plants only to share with us during the season. We would like you to place the plants on the stage area to adore the tomb and create the garden in anticipation of the resurrection.

We ONLY WANT TO BORROW the plants. After Easter, we hope you will take them back home. If you would like to share some clippings we would like to try and propagate some of the plants into new seedlings.

Music Ministry

Thank you to all who participated in the music program in January. February begins the liturgical season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on the 18th. We will be preparing music for Lent and Holy Week including Palm Sunday and Easter. If you have ever thought about singing in the choir or sharing your musical talents, this is the time!! The Chancel Choir is more than a choir; it's a small group and family. Even if you don't read music but enjoy singing to God, then this is the place for you! Come and try it out on Wednesdays right after the Wednesday Night Suppers.

Rehearsal schedule for February:

KOK Music: Wednesdays at 4:30 pm
Early Elementary with Ms. Amy
4th & 5th Graders - Handchimes with Ms. Cathy
Handbell Choir: Wednesdays at 5:15 pm (as needed)
Chancel Choir: Wednesdays at 6:40 pm
Interpreting Movement: Sundays immediately following worship

For more information or questions about any group in the music department, please feel free to contact me. We would love to have you join us!

Cathy Riley, Director of Music
criley@jasperumc.org
706-253-2100 or 618-384-6254



We end the month of January with donuts with Dad on the 28th. February will start our new school year registration. We will have in-person registration at the preschool on the 3-6th and online will begin February 9th. We will be closed the week of the 16-20th for winter break.

Upcoming events: Read across America March 2-6th, if you would like to come read to our classes, please let us know, and at the end of March our first Art Show.

Donna Dooley, Preschool Director
dooley@jasperumc.org
470-560-9696

Children's Ministry



February is a special month to celebrate God's love and how we can share it with others! Get ready for fun lessons, activities, and lots of reminders that

God's love for us never ends!

February meeting dates and time.

4:00 – 5:30 PM

- **February 4**
- **February 11**
- **February 25**

Each gathering will include Bible stories, music, games, crafts, snacks, and activities, along with time to build friendships in a loving, faith-filled environment.

Thank you for being part of Kids of the Kingdom and growing with us each month. We pray that what your child learns continues to shine at home, school, and everywhere they go. Remember—God loves you, and you are always part of His kingdom!

— Amy Swancey
Director of Children and Youth
amy@jasperumc.org

WELCOME

Come On In

We want to be that church... the friendly one! Do you have an easy smile and a warm personality? If so, you may be just who our hospitality team is looking for! We would love to have someone opening the door to greet our members as they arrive for Sunday School, and others to be available to greet and assist visitors. This is just another opportunity to create a warm and friendly environment. If you would be available to volunteer one or more Sundays each month, please contact Nancy or Mitchel Henson 770 893 2609.



February is all about love, but we're talking about the real kind—God's love. This month, we'll hang out, dig into real conversations, and talk about what it looks like to live out our faith in everyday life. Come as you are and be ready to grow together.

February Schedule

Elevate Youth Nights – Sundays

5:30 – 7:00 PM

- February 1
- February 8
- February 15

Elevate Youth Nights – Wednesdays

6:00 – 7:30 PM

- February 4
- February 11
- February 25

NO ELEVATE ON THE 18TH & 22ND

Thanks for showing up and being part of the crew. Remember, God's got you—no matter what this month looks like. Take what we're learning and live it out, we can't wait to see you there!

— Amy Swancey
Director of Children and Youth
amy@jasperumc.org



The United Methodist Men would like to invite the women of the church to a Valentines Day dinner on February 12th at 6pm in the sanctuary. If you plan to attend, please RSVP via call or text to Richard Lewis at 678-492-6257. We hope to see you there!

United Methodist Men meet on the second Thursday of each month. Dinner is served at 6:00pm in the sanctuary with a devotion and business following. All men of the church are invited to join UMM. For more information contact Richard Lewis.



The Dorcas Circle will meet on Thursday, Feb 12 at 6pm. We will be joining the UMM for a valentines dinner. Please RSVP to Juanita by Feb. 6th if you plan to attend.

Online Giving



Use your smart phone to Scan the QR Code to make an online donation to the church. Fill out the information and send.



Missions Matters

Sponsor a student! A whole new batch of Kenya students to sponsor in 2026 is on the bulletin board near the restrooms. Please find the one you want to support, put your info on the sign-up sheet and take the photo and info with you. Pray for him/her. Fee information is on the board or send questions to Dex at: hummerlover60@hotmail.com (470-203-9595)



The Marble Festival Road Race committee is looking for someone who is interested in being the race director for 2026. Contact Juanita Tatum for details if you are willing and able to serve in this leadership position (nitawa27@gmail.com)



Join us in the sanctuary every Sunday at 9:30 for coffee and donuts. They will be available from 9:30 to immediately following worship. If you aren't part of a Sunday School join us in the sanctuary for a time of casual conversation. And, as always, invite others to come and join us!!