



Faith United
Presbyterian
Church
in Farmers Branch

Words of Faith

February 2021

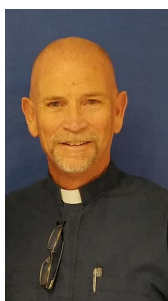
Volume XI, Issue 2

*Glorify God, grow disciples, and
meet the needs of our neighbors.*

From the Pastor

Rev. Dr. Ken Ritchie

*When was the last time Jesus
astounded and amazed you?*



Who is Jesus? This is the underlying question in the Gospel of Mark. Each of the gospel stories depict a different first ministry experience for Jesus, after the call of the initial disciples. In

Matthew, Jesus taught the crowds in what is now known as the Sermon on the Mount, a disciples' training manual. In Luke, Jesus read from Isaiah during a synagogue service, and then proclaimed the prophecy fulfilled in himself and his ministry, his mission statement. In John, Jesus turned water into wine as the first sign of several signs that pointed to the glory of Jesus. In Mark, Jesus taught in the synagogue with authority and exorcizes an unclean spirit with authority. Authority is an important aspect of understanding who Jesus is.

For Mark, the question does not lead to answers of theological precision. He doesn't devote great energy toward establishing a clear understanding of Jesus' nature, unlike for example the Gospel of John. Instead, Mark depicts Jesus as the one uniquely authorized, commissioned, and empowered to declare and institute the reign of God.

Through Jesus we glimpse characteristics of this reign. It is intrusive, breaking old boundaries that benefited another kind of rule. It is about liberating people from the powers that afflict them and keep all creation – including human bodies and human societies – from flourishing. This astounded and amazed the people in that synagogue in Mark's story.

When was the last time Jesus astounded and amazed you? Can you recall a time in the recent past when the presence of God in your life caught your attention and held it? These days of wilderness are rough, unlikely days for astonishment and amazement at the coming of the reign of God. Nearly one year into this COVID pandemic and many of us are battling deep and persistent melancholy, unease, discontent. We're weary, anxious, dejected, bored. We're too worried about the future to live attentively in the present. Time drags on in soggy shapelessness, or flies at breakneck speed as we struggle to multitask under face masks, death tolls, mutations, and quarantines. Church is still online, so our access to

spiritual community, space, ritual, and sacrament is limited.

Is it possible for us to experience astonishment and amazement as we journey in this wilderness? Where is the voice of authority, power, grace and healing that can snap us back unto full and vibrant living, now? Mark thought it possible in Jesus and Jesus is the voice of authority.

...What is this? A new teaching – with authority! He (Jesus) commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him ...

Mark 1:27

I will look forward to seeing you Sundays via Facebook or YouTube. Remember, if you need some technical help tuning in on Sunday mornings, let me know and we will find you the technical help.

Choose love, compassion, and kindness. Do justice; make peace. Be the light of Christ in this world of darkness. Persevere in prayer.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Ken

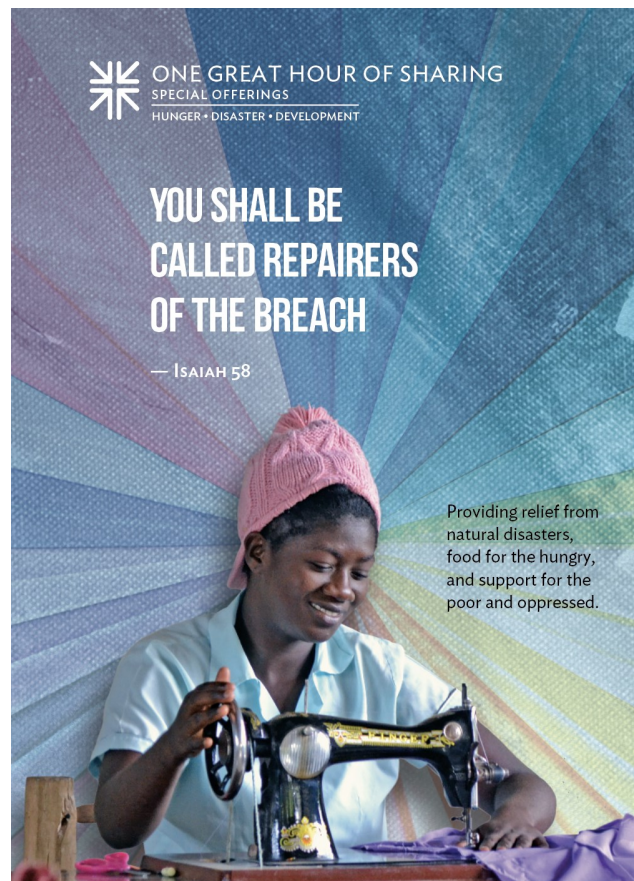
Ken@FaithUnited-pc.com

Outreach & Evangelism

Ash Wednesday (February 17) begins the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering. February 17 to Easter, April 4. Whether giving online or via check please designate your offering by noting it for “OGHS.”

For over 70 years, **One Great Hour of Sharing** has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by **One Great Hour of Sharing** - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. Thank you in advance for your gifts to **One Great Hour of Sharing**.

Debbie Rainier



Ash Wednesday Worship

Live-streamed through Facebook Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God’s saving grace. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Like so many other areas of church life, COVID will change how we mark Ash Wednesday. However, it will not prevent our time of worship. Ashes are impractical in remote worship.

Yet, we will still gather for worship to begin our Lenten journey. We will celebrate communion. So, I encourage you to prepare the elements for your use. The service will be shown live through the church’s Facebook page. If you are unable to tune in live, the video will be available on both the Facebook page and YouTube channel.



Happy Birthday!

February 5

* Lorna Acker

February 8

* Jack Walden

February 15

* Chuck Acker

* Dick Smith

February 16

* Kurt Booth

February 18

* Barbara Richie

February 28

* Hubert Laney

* John Marxer

* Jacob West



Rehab/At Home:

♥ Margaret Jones

♥ Freddie Simmons

Prayers for:

♥ Dale Durcholz

♥ Kathie Heffler

♥ Roger Jones

♥ Craig & Mary Ritchie

♥ Dennis Van Deventer

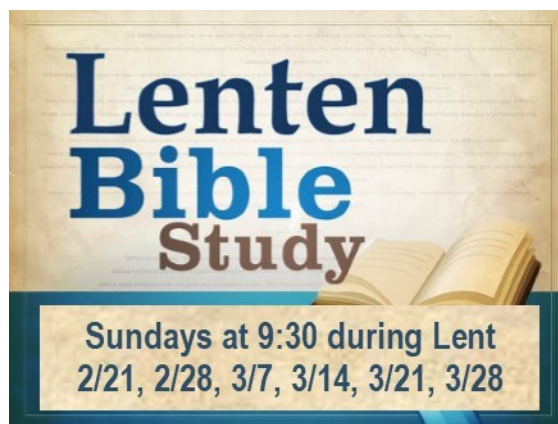
Next newsletter is March 2021. Deadline for articles, Friday, February 19.

Contact church office or Brenda Swindle via email to submit articles.

Weekly Bible Study

Weekly Bible Study led by Rich Lewis continues their study of Luke on Sundays, 2/7 & 2/14. On Sunday, 2/21 the Lenten Bible Study will begin, led by Pastor Ken.

Living the Faith in Troubling Times 2021 Lenten Bible Study, begins Sunday, 2/21. Pastor Ken will lead a study on 1 Peter, which applies the principles of Christian conduct to a specific community living out the faith in troubling times. Therefore, this letter has something important to say about our engagement with our current troubling times. The relationship between Christian and culture is an overarching theme of 1 Peter. Pastor Ken will post a video each week during Lent on the church's Facebook page and YouTube channel on Saturday mornings.



Expect updates and links to be on the website: www.FaithUnited-pc.com or the Faith United YouTube channel.

Online Worship Continues

You will find Worship Guides and resources on our website: www.FaithUnited-pc.com



You will see the logos (right) on the website and can choose which method with which you would like to worship.



Online Worship @ Faith United

Sunday, 2/7 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.
5th Sunday after Epiphany, Communion Worship at 11 a.m.

Sunday, 2/14 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.
Transfiguration of the Lord, Worship at 11 a.m.
Stated Session meeting, via Zoom at 1 p.m.



Wednesday, 2/17 **Ash Wednesday Worship** at 7 pm.

Sunday, 2/21 **Lenten Bible Study class** at 9:30 a.m.
1st Sunday in Lent, Worship at 11 a.m.

Sunday, 2/28 **Lenten Bible Study class** at 9:30 a.m.
2nd Sunday in Lent, Worship at 11 a.m.

All worship services and classes available via Facebook Live or on
Faith United's YouTube channel.
Worship resources available at www.FaithUnited-pc.com



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On the Web!
www.FaithUnited-pc.com

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