



The Cross & Flame



The United Methodist Church, Branford
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MARCH



“White As Snow” Our Daily Bread Jan. 31, 2018

*Though yours sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow.—Isaiah 1:18*

Last December, my family and I went to the mountains. We had lived in a tropical climate all our lives, so it was the first time we could see snow in all its magnificence. As we contemplated the white mantle covering the fields, my husband quoted Isaiah, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

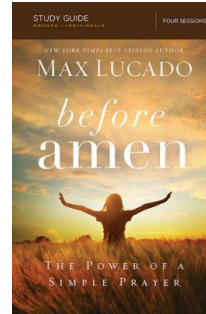
After asking about the meaning of scarlet, our three-year-old daughter asked, “Is the color red bad?” She knows sins are things God dislikes, but this verse is not talking about colors. The prophet was describing the bright red dye obtained from the eggs of a small insect. Clothes would be double-dyed in this bright red so the color became fixed. Neither rain nor washing would remove it. Sin is like that. No human effort can take it away. It’s rooted in the heart.

Only God can cleanse a heart from sin. And as we looked at the mountains, we admired the pure whiteness that scrubbing and bleaching a piece of cloth dyed in scarlet red can’t achieve. When we follow Peter’s teaching, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” (Acts 3:19), God forgives us and gives us a new life. Only through Jesus’s sacrifice can we receive what no one else can give—a pure heart. What a wonderful gift! —Keila Ochoa

*Father, thank You for forgiving our
sins and wiping them clean.*

When God forgives, He purifies us too.

Pastor’s Bible Study



Two sessions of the Pastor’s Bible Study are offered each week on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM and Thursdays at 10:00 AM. Please consider joining one of these groups!!!

Beginning the week of February 25th we will be studying Max Lucado’s “Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer”. The study will last four weeks, leading us right up to Holy Week.

In Before Amen, Max Lucado, a self-professed “recovering prayer wimp,” reveals his personal struggles with prayer. He will show you how he discovered that prayer is not a privilege for the pious or the art of a chosen few but a simple tool all believers have been given to have a conversation with God.

We anticipate engaging times of conversation, growing together in the discipline of prayer

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

HOLY THURSDAY - March 29

6 PM Dinner / 7 PM Worship (Location TBA)

GOOD FRIDAY - March 30

12 Noon - 2:30 PM (Branford Downtown Churches)

EASTER SUNDAY - April 1

6:15 AM Sunrise (Branford Point)

9:30 AM Celebration of the Resurrection

Missed a Sunday? Unable to attend worship?

You can catch the weekly sermon video at
www.umcbranford.org



A Message from Don Robinson

“No Greater Love Hath No Man”

I have said many times that Jesus teaches us that the quality of life is more important than the length of life. He was to prove this with his own life as he was eating with his disciples. At what we call “The Last Supper” he taught them many things because he knew that his time on earth was very short. John in his first chapter tells us that Jesus told them to “Love one another as I have loved you.” He then went on to give a heavy warning, “Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” John wrote this after Jesus’ ascension back to heaven and knew what Jesus meant by those words. But I am sure that when the disciples heard it that night at the table they had little insight as to the heavy meaning it really had.

Of course, that night Jesus was betrayed to the Roman soldiers, arrested, tried and condemned to death. The next day he laid down his life for “his friends” to show us the great love God has for us. This is what John knew in that famous passage, John 3:16, that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” who laid down his life for us so that by believing in him we would have everlasting life. In our Father’s house is a place Jesus has prepared for us. Remember, as you look at a Valentine’s card you may have received or purchased, that most wonderful one you will ever receive, the witness of the love of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

May His love surround you all the days of your life.

Blessings, Don Robinson

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship - 9:30 AM

Sunday School: during worship

(except 1st Sun of each month)

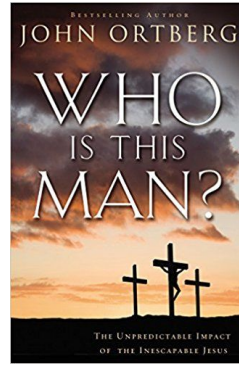
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tue. - Thu. 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

15th Day of every month

Men’s Breakfast:



Our monthly Men’s Breakfasts group will meet on **March 17th at 8:00 AM.** After a time of good food and fellowship we will view a video which will (hopefully) stimulate some energetic discussion as we reflect on its meaning for our lives and our faith.

Jesus' impact on our world is highly unlikely, widely inescapable, largely unknown, and decidedly double-edged. It is unlikely in light of the severe limitations of his earthly life; it is inescapable because of the range of impact; it is unknown because history doesn't connect dots; and it is doubled-edged because his followers have wreaked so much havoc, often in his name.

He is history's most familiar figure, yet he is the man no one knows. His impact on the world is immense and non-accidental. From the Dark Ages to Post-Modernity he is the Man who won't go away.

And yet . . .you can miss him in historical lists for many reasons, maybe the most obvious being the way he lived his life. He did not loudly and demonstrably defend his movement in the spirit of a rising political or military leader. He did not lay out a case that history would judge his brand of belief superior in all future books.

His life and teaching simply drew people to follow him. He made history by starting in a humble place, in a spirit of love and acceptance, and allowing each person space to respond.

His vision of life continues to haunt and challenge humanity. His influence has swept over history bringing inspiration to what has happened in art, science, government, medicine, and education; he has taught humans about dignity, compassion, forgiveness, and hope.

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”



Sewing for God



Monday's 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm
Weather permitting

Our quilt closet is close to having some quilts in reserve. We are currently working on making tops and quilting them. They are in the final stages of having the binding put on and then clipping the extra threads on the back.

If you are free to come to sew on the bindings or clip some threads join us for some great fellowship.

All supplies are provided. Any questions, please let me know. Rosemary

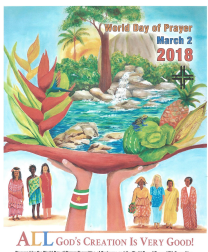
Women's St. Patrick's Day Luncheon



Monday, March 12th
12:00pm

At Allegra's in the Lakeview Plaza, Branford
Order off the menu.
Signup sheet is posted in Connector Hall

World Day of Prayer



A huge **THANK YOU** to our participating Branford, Guilford, Old Saybrook and Deep River Churches who have helped put this program together. I would like to thank

each and every one who attended and for each of those who helped with this year's celebration. Many hands make light work and this was so true with the putting together of this program.

Thank you again,
Rosemary

Looking for Your Tabs !!



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES

NEXT DELIVERY DATE IS:
May; 2018

Collecting pop tabs is a fun and easy way to support the Ronald McDonald House New Haven. All of the money is used for the Ronald McDonald Houses to support families while their children are undergoing medical treatment.

It's easy! All you need to do is remove the pop tab from each can before you put the can in your recycle bin. It's fun! You can involve community groups and your family in supporting the cause without a lot of effort.

Check all your cans for tabs, they add up quickly. Put a small jar on your counter and you will be surprised how fast it will fill up.

Rosemary & Tony



Weekly Calendar

Communion at Artis: Sun @ 11:30 AM
Monday Morning Quarterbacking: Mon @ 10 AM
Sewing for God: Mon @ 4 PM
Branford Chorale: Mon @ 7 PM
Pastor's Bible Study: Tue @ 7 PM & Thu @ 10 AM
AA: Tue @ 7:30 & Sat @ 7:00 PM
Learn & Play Chapel: Wed @ 10 AM
Prayer Shawl Ministry: Wed @ 10:30 AM
Faith Talk at Artis: Wed @ 11 AM
AI-Anon: Thu @ 7:30 PM
Devotional Bible Study: Thu @ 7 PM Shoreline Cafe

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Learn & Play

We are so happy that spring is right around the corner! We are able to get outside a little more often now, even if it is only for a short period of time. The kids really miss being outside!

During the month of March we will start preparing for Easter. Our Bible stories leading up to Easter will be about the miracles of Jesus. We will talk about Palm Sunday and have a processional during chapel time. We will also have our retelling of the Easter story with our Resurrection Eggs. Our faith point is: He is Alive and our Memory Verse is "He is not here, He has risen." Luke 24:6.

Our traditional themes will be healthy eating, St. Patrick's Day and seasons, with spring being the emphasis. We will also have a visit from Dr. Gallo to talk about Healthy Smiles.

We were happy to be able to donate over 120 cans of soup from our Soup-er Bowl collection to the food pantry. I think that may be a record collection for us!

Four year olds enjoyed another visit to our friends across the street at Artis for a few games of Valentine BINGO. The children enjoy visiting the residents and it seems like the residents really enjoy having the children visit. This has been a really nice relationship that has formed.

Time to start thinking about summer camp! Hard to believe that it is time to register for camp. This year we will have 9 weeks of Dr Seuss activities. Each week we will feature a different Seuss book with fun activities and enhancement programs. So far we have birds of prey booked for a demonstration, Mystic Aquarium, Mad Science program on Super Sticky Stuff, a cooking activity with Coolology, Christmas in July, a recycling program from Ecoworks, Turn It Up Muisic program and Sun and Shadows from The Children's Museum. If you know anyone with 3-5 year olds that are looking for a fun experience with a Christian component, please have them contact us. Very limited spaces are available.

March Calendar

Wed 7 - 7 PM	Trustees
Wed 14 - 7PM	Learn & Play Board
Sat 17 - 8 AM	Men's Breakfast
Wed 21 - 7 PM	Faithful Stewards
Wed 28 - 7 PM	Finance Committee
Fri 30 - 6 PM	Community Dinner
Fri 30 - 7PM	Youth Night

[See Pg. 1 for Holy Week Services.]

March Birthdays

Ruth Moon	1
Hannah Jackson	2
Kaylee Roberts	2
Jean Sunny	2
Gabriel Maggay	3
Helen Werns	8
Judy Loukides	9
Sean Deveau	13
Joan Gerlach	13
Erin Marszalek	14
June Ann Greeley	21
Sterwin Maggay	21
David Simon	21
Madison Ballard	25
Bob Nerkowski	26
Kylie James	28
Ginny Busca	30
Aubrey Simon	30

March Anniversary's

John & June Ann Blossom	21
John & Connie Nickou	26
John & Sue Beatty	29

Youth Night

Our monthly youth night is a time for fun & fellowship!!! All youth from our church (6th-12th grade) are encouraged to attend and bring their friends. We meet in the church basement from 7-9:30 PM. Snacks are being provided. Ping Pong, Air Hockey, Foosball and video games are all available and we'll continue to add other activities in the future.

The date of our March Youth Night will be Friday the 30th !!!

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