



# Church on the Cape Newsletter

February 2026



## SPRING CLEANING FOR THE SOUL

Ash Wednesday is February 18, 2026, and it marks the beginning of the 40 days of Lent. Lent hints of spring, a time when the earth begins to awaken from a winter's nap, and new growth bursts forth all about us.

More personally, it is an opportunity to enter into a springtime for our spirit. For centuries, Christians have used the 40 days of Lent to seek spiritual growth. Sincere repentance, a changing of heart, casting off old sinful practices, and seeking to commune with our creator help us go in the right direction. Spending serious time in silence and prayer focuses our attention. Reading spiritual literature, becoming more knowledgeable about the New Testament, and meeting in small groups with other Christians to

share personal stories of faith can all be immensely stimulating. Joining with others to serve the helpless and hopeless can strengthen our spiritual life.

Lent is a time to let God do "spring cleaning" within us. It's our opportunity to allow God to help us toss out the "stuff" that hinders us and then freshen up the "new creature" we are meant to be as followers of Christ.

Source: [NewsletterNewsletter.com](http://NewsletterNewsletter.com)

## From The Pastor's Desk

Monday, January 26, was an amazing day! We had more than a foot of fresh, powdery snow. I'm not a skier, I'm sure they were ecstatic, but I do like to snowshoe! Since we moved to Maine, I hadn't had my snowshoes out, but this snowfall was so inviting that I could not resist.

I have great snowshoes. Mine are the Tubbs brand from when they were still making them in Vermont. I bought several sizes, and for this fresh snow, I chose the 36-inch pair. These long ones have the greatest buoyancy for walking in fresh snow. I was glad I chose them because even they sank into the snow. As I set out, I clearly remembered something important. It is hard to be the first person to traverse the freshly fallen snow!

It is always hard to be the first one to chart a new path, take a new direction, or follow a different way. I imagine that is what Jesus felt when he began his ministry. The Gospels tell us that he began after John was arrested. John had charted a path, and Jesus would pick up where he left off, but Jesus would have to take a much different direction. While he might have followed in John's footsteps at first, he soon had to leave that road and forge a new trail.

Imagine, then, what it was like to be one of the first disciples. Jesus boldly asked many of them to do something they had never done before. Andrew, James, Peter, and John were all in the commercial fishing business. Jesus came along and asked them to take a radically different direction—to follow a path no one else had yet charted. Jesus would lead them, but they had no idea where.

As I set out through the woods, I could not see the trail. At least I had walked it before and had the benefit of previous experience and of being able to see the clearing between the trees. Since the leaves are gone, I could usually see the condominium buildings through the woods, so I knew I wouldn't go too far astray. Still, I had moments of uncertainty, wondering if I was going the right way. It was also tough going because it is hard work to snowshoe on

unbroken, fluffy snow. I had to stop and rest more often than I'd like to acknowledge.

About halfway through my walk, I met a couple coming from the opposite direction, also wearing snowshoes. We stopped to talk, and all realized that we would now be walking on a path that someone else had forged before us. The difference was noticeable. I no longer had to think about where I was going because the path was clear. It was also much less exertion because I was taking advantage of someone else's hard work.

It occurs to me that this is a metaphor both for our spiritual journey and the church. In the church, while we each discover our own, unique path, we can often follow a path that others have walked before us. We need not always plow through the fresh snow, and much of the time we have companions who can help us along the way. While there can be great freedom and joy in being the first ones to cross the unbroken snow, there is also great comfort in finding a path that others have walked, that others have prepared for you.

The disciples would never have walked the path without Jesus. He led. He packed down the snow for them. He showed the way. Then, one day, they found they had to do it on their own—and they could because of all that he showed them and did for them. That is why we have the church—why we need it and why it is a gift for us. There are always others who can help when we are weary or wandering. We do not walk alone.

Still, I encourage you to put on your snowshoes—both the literal ones and the metaphorical ones. Go for a walk, feel the freedom of forging a path, maybe you will even make a way for others to follow. And don't hesitate to follow gladly where others have led, for those paths are just as beautiful and, perhaps, even better because you know others have been there—and they may even join you on the journey! A blessed winter to you all!

Rev. Greg Smith

## Scripture Readings for February Sundays



Church on the Cape

# News

FEB 01 | 4th Sunday after the Epiphany  
(Green)

- Micah 6:1-8
- Psalm 15 (UMH 747)
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Matthew 5:1-12

FEB 08 | 5th Sunday after the  
Epiphany; Scouting Sunday (Green)

- Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)
- Psalm 112:1-9 (10) (UMH 833)
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
- Matthew 5:13-20

FEB 15 | Transfiguration Sunday (White  
or Gold)

- Exodus 24:12-18
- Ps 2 (UMH 739) or Ps 99 (UMH  
819)
- 2 Pet 1:16-21
- Matthew 17:1-9

FEB 18 Ash Wednesday (Purple or  
Grey)

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
- Psalm 51:1-17 (UMH 785)
- 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

FEB 22 | First Sunday in Lent (Purple)

- Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
- Psalm 32 (UMH 766)
- Romans 5:12-19
- Matthew 4:1-11

## BECOMING A MEMBER OF CHURCH ON THE CAPE

If you have been making Church on the Cape your church home and would like to take the step of becoming a member, please speak to Pastor Greg. We would like to find a Sunday to share membership vows and welcome new members!

## MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service for Carolyn Broad will be held at Church on the Cape on February 7, 2026, at 11:00 am

## STUDY GROUP FOR LENT

Our group will read and discuss "An Unlikely Lent" by Rachel Billups. This study introduces us to the overlooked characters in the Passion narrative, from Mary of Bethany to the servant girl, Barabbas, and Simon of Cyrene. Billups helps us see how these unlikely voices reveal God's surprising grace. If there is enough interest, we will offer the same times we did during Advent: Tuesdays 12-1 p.m. and Thursdays 6-7 p.m. The book will cost \$18. Sign up today!

## Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed

There are no volunteers signed up for Coffee Hour for the next several weeks. If you would like to sign up for Coffee Hour and have never done so before, please reach out to Ginny Hammar at 207-985-9189 to schedule a brief tutorial on how to host. If you have hosted Coffee Hour before, your help is needed. Thank you!

## ENTERING THE BUILDING

WE WILL NO LONGER USE THE SANCTUARY DOOR TO ENTER THE BUILDING. FOR THE REST OF THE WINTER, PLEASE ENTER THROUGH THE LOBBY DOOR.

## Newsletter Deadline

The March newsletter deadline is February 24, 2026. Please send your submissions to Charlie Benore at [sailchess@gmail.com](mailto:sailchess@gmail.com).

## Storm Closing Reminder

If the church is closed due to inclement weather, please tune in to NewsCenter Maine or go to:

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/>

## From the Cargo Shop

The Cargo Shop will reopen on February 10. The Shop is Open from 2-4 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 10-12 on Saturdays.

## Altar Flowers

With the sanctuary being so beautiful with the poinsettias at Christmas, wouldn't it be nice to have fresh flowers every week? Please consider signing up for altar flowers in celebration of, in honor of, or in memory of those you love. See the sign-up sheet outside of Bartlett Hall

## Clynk Bags

Don't forget your Clynk Bags! They can be found on the table on the way to Bartlett Hall. Clynk Receipts for 2025

1/31/25	\$ 141.90
3/31/25	\$ 119.55
6/30/25	\$ 114.65
9/30/25	\$ 164.00
Total \$540.10	

## Video Streaming Update

Because we have been experiencing serious difficulties with our Spectrum Internet service, we will reduce the quality of the worship live stream. After worship, we will upload a high-quality video to the video section of our YouTube channel.

### From The Mission's Outreach Committee

Gifts of Love Giving 2025 totaled \$4,040.00. Our thanks to all who contributed and helped others.

#### Mission Outreach Committee

##### Gifts of Love Giving 2025

Bon Appetit	\$ 395.00
Camp Mechuwana	\$ 620.00
Caring Unlimited	\$ 410.00
Community Outreach Services	\$ 350.00
Dr. Belinda Forbes	\$1375.00
Grace Street Ministries	\$ 195.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 165.00
Ronald McDonald House Maine	\$ 145.00
Seeds of Hope	<u>\$ 385.00</u>
Total	\$4040.00

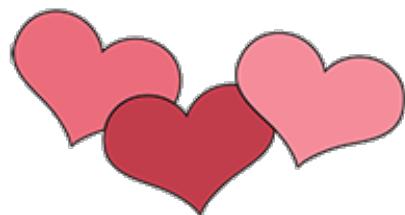
## Valentine's Day

We probably think of romance when Valentine's Day comes. That's fine, but there's more to the story than that.

St. Valentine was a Christian priest and martyr who lived about A.D. 270. The Roman emperor at the time was Claudius II. Claudius had been a successful general. He would not allow his soldiers to marry, because he wanted to make sure, they could go to battle quickly. He thought family ties would make the men reluctant to leave home. Because Valentine promoted marriage and family life, he was jailed and later convicted of going against the orders of the emperor. He was martyred on February 14, the day we remember him and our loved ones.



While he was in jail, the jailer's daughter befriended him. He wrote her a letter of appreciation and signed it "Your Valentine." The tradition of exchanging valentines grew out of that heartfelt gesture.



Source: Newsletternewsletter

## January Sunday School

On December 28<sup>th</sup>, the three Simmons' children were baptized. It was a very special day, with the children receiving blessings from many pastors. This event led nicely into the story of John the Baptist, baptizing Jesus. The children learned about the meaning of baptism and had fun making Holy Spirit doves with handprints. They had a scavenger hunt looking for pictures of the baptismal font, the dove, and Jesus being baptized by his cousin John.

The baptismal lesson continued the next week, when children blew paint onto paper, symbolizing the spreading of Jesus' light. They played follow the leader and talked about the importance of being leaders as they shared the light of God and Jesus with others. The children gave examples of being good followers of Jesus. Their examples included being kind, hugging people, helping Mom, and cleaning up. They are on the right track. The last Sunday of the month focused on working together and being together as a church family. The children made clay figures representing each of them, and together they created the flame and the cross.

A heartfelt thank you to every adult, teacher, or teacher's helper who is choosing to be upstairs with the children. These people are giving up the chance to hear Pastor Greg's inspiring sermon and to enjoy the beautiful music, among other things. When asked, these adults will tell you they enjoy this chance to get to know the youngest disciples of the church. We are grateful for their service. If anyone would like to work with the children, see Pastor Greg to be vetted, and Sharon Miesel to be put on the schedule.

Sometimes we may wonder what is sinking in, as we prepare for Sunday School each week. Here is a lovely example of what one little boy is learning. His mom shared this: "At the end of the Patriots / Texans football game, a group of players gathered on the field to kneel and pray together. Jake asked me what they were doing. I told them they were praying. Later, as Jake was getting ready for

bed, he said, "Oh, they were praying because they have the love of God in their hearts, Mom." Yes, Jake, you are exactly right!



Article and photos by Carol Nason  
(parental approval for children's photos)

## The Love God Desires



God's love is never meant to stop with us; it's meant to flow through us. When we love others, we reflect his very heart. As 1 John 4:12 (NIV) reminds us, "If we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us."

This is the true mark of a Christian — love that reaches beyond comfort zones, opinions, and differences. Jesus said in John 13:35 (NIV), "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The world is watching, not to see how loudly we profess our faith but how deeply we practice it. Every act of compassion, every gentle word, and every moment of grace reveals something divine — God's love at work in us. The more we give that love away, the more it grows within us, mirroring the heart of Christ, who gave Himself for all.

Source: Newsletternewsletter

## Church on the Cape A United Methodist Church

We of The Church on the Cape represent various religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. We are young, old, middle-aged, single, married, widowed, divorced, parents, grandparents, and members of extended families.

Above all, we are people who take risks, make mistakes, confess, repent, and try again.

At the center of our community is Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection are the reasons we are together. The life and hope in this community have more to do with Christ's faithfulness to us than ours to Christ.

Whether you are searching for a faith community or just passing through, we want you to feel at home. Whoever you are, whatever your history, your scars, your gifts; You are among persons like yourself.

Join us from wherever you call home. If you like what you see here, we post our virtual Hymn Sing and Sunday Worship Service on our website, [www.churchonthecape.org](http://www.churchonthecape.org).

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