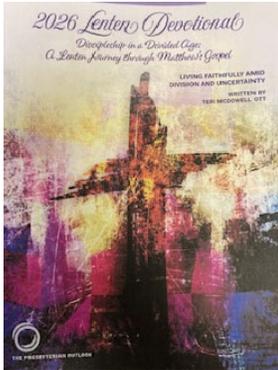




The Center Chronicles

February 2026



Wednesday, February 18 marks the beginning of the Lent Season for Center Presbyterian Church. On Ash Wednesday, we will join with millions of believers across the world as we make time to spend in a Spiritual wilderness to reflect on where we are at with God and with one another as walk together in our faith journeys. For some us us, life has been fragile and hard. For others of us, life has become anxious and worrisome. For still others, it has been discouraging and heartbreaking to witness so much anger, brokenness and divisiveness warring between nations and peoples. Cultural battles continue to break up and disrupt how people relate to one another.

What I learn from the Scriptures is that this is nothing new. Tensions between people date back to as far as Genesis. Jesus brought the tension to light during his life and ministry which ended in his death. **BUT GOD**, on the third day, raised him from the grave and Christ's Spirit instilled in the those like the Disciples, Paul, and Godly men and women before us who equipped us with the experiences, skills and tools necessary to live out our faith in this conflicted world. Guided by the God's Word, counseled by the Holy Spirit, and supported by this community of faith, we are learning to live out our faith and how God is calling us to make a difference in this world.

As we did during Advent, I invite you to join me as we learn from the Israelites when God sent them on a 40 year journey in the wilderness to rediscover who God is, what God can do, and where God wants to take us in our wilderness journey. I invite you to join me in being reminded of the faith journey the disciples took when they left their nets to follow Jesus for the next three years of their lives and beyond as they committed their lives the faith journeys God had set for them. I am reminded of the mission journeys of Paul and the challenges he faced sharing the Good News of God's grace with a selfish and suspicious Gentiles who lived only for themselves.

This Lent season, I will be sending out a Lent devotion as I did for the Advent season. Written by Teri McDowell Ott, who also wrote the Advent devotion series, this Lent study will focus on Matthew's Gospel and what Matthew revealed about the challenges Jesus and the disciples faced from those who saw Jesus' ministry and teachings as a threat to what they believed about God and how they lived for God.

The devotions will be sent out on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and hard copies of the devotion will be made available as you enter church that Sunday and the Sunday's to follow. Join with me during this Lent Season to wander in a Spiritual wilderness with God and rediscover what God can do through you in your faith journey.

Blessings,
Jon



Celebration of the Lord's Supper will be Sunday, February 1

We will be breaking bread and sharing the cup as we remember God's love for us through the atoning sacrifice of God's only Son.



Installation and Ordination Service set for February 1

We welcome Sue Sharp and Philip Bivens returning to serve as Deacons and Lucas Pilkey who will be ordained for the first time as an Elder. He will be joining Keri Dickson who will serve a second term as Elder.



PRESBYTERY
OF EAST TENNESSEE

The Presbytery of East Tennessee will have its first meeting of the year on **Saturday, February 14 at 10am** at the First Presbyterian Church of Sweetwater. Volunteers (volunteers have to be there by 9am) from our church will be assisting and participating to make this meeting a success.



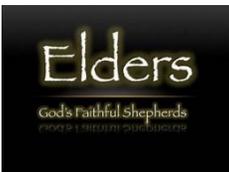
The Youth Valentine dinner is February 14 @ 5pm

The Youth of Center Church invites everyone (single, married, widowed, etc.) to the Valentines dinner for a fun time of food and fellowship. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 14 @ 5pm.



Ash Wednesday Service will be February 18 @ 6pm

We will begin the Lent Season of Reflection on **Wednesday, February 18 @ 6pm** for a brief but special worship experience where all participants will receive the mark of the cross on their forehead which reminds them of who they are in Christ Jesus.



Stated Session Meeting will be Thursday, February 19 at 6pm



Special love offering for Ricardo's mom, Annette Cooper

On February 15, the Session approved a special love offering to be taken up for Ricardo's mom (Keri's husband), Annette Cooper, whose home was damaged by Hurricane Melissa. We are collecting monies to send her so she can complete repairs to her home.



Dorcas Ministry meets every first and third Wednesday at 9:30am

The Dorcas Ministry is a vital ministry of Center Church. What a blessing! If you want to get involved, please contact Sandra Black at 423-253-3876.



Children's Bell Choir Practice on Wednesdays @ 5:30pm



On Saturday, February 21 @ 9am, Deacon Andrew Bivens will be offering a free class on CPR and AED training. The class is open to anyone who has an interest in learning how to save the life of another person.

Prayer Time

Merciful God, I offer myself as a living sacrifice; I dedicate myself to your service.

Let me not be conformed to the standards of this world; but transform me inwardly, that I may know your will- what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Let me not think of myself more highly than I should; but let me be modest in my thinking, and judge myself according to the amount of faith you have given me.

May my love be completely sincere; may I hate what is evil, and hold on to what is good.

May my hope keep me joyful; may I be patient in troubles, and pray at all times.

Help me to bless those who persecute me, to be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

Help me to have the same concern for everyone, to be humble and peaceful, and never take revenge.

Let me not be defeated by evil; but let me conquer evil with good..... Amen.

(Adapted from Romans 12: 1-3, 9- 21)