

WELLS SPRING

A Publication of Wells Church

A United Methodist Congregation

March 2026

Lent: A Time to Practice Fruitfulness

By Susannah Grubbs Carr
Senior Pastor

"If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit" – Jesus, John 15:5

As we move into March, the holy season of Lent is well underway. I hope you are experiencing spiritual renewal and a growing closeness to God through the Lenten practices you have chosen this year. Lent invites us into a slower, more intentional way of living — this 40-day journey of reflection, repentance, self-examination and renewal as we walk with Jesus toward the cross.



Carr

While Lent certainly focuses on personal spiritual disciplines, it is also a powerful season for us to reflect on who we are together as a congregation. This Lent, I invite us to reflect on the **Five Fruitful Practices of a Fully Alive Church** as part of our spiritual examination. You will remember these practices are: *Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission/Service, and Extravagant Generosity*. Lent calls us to deepen our commitment to these five practices.

First, Lent is a time to renew our practice of *radical hospitality*. As we examine our hearts and habits, we are invited to ask: How open are we — to

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Mac McNulty and Wells volunteers distribute fresh fruit to those who come to our Neighborhood Ministry food distribution every Tuesday morning.

Wells Food Pantry Serves Up Much More than Food

Church at Wells doesn't take place just on Sunday. It also is fully alive on Tuesdays at the Wells Food Pantry.

On any given Tuesday, there will be around 75 people, who gather for coffee and fellowship. They come to hear an encouraging word and receive a bag of food to help them get through the week.

Charles Araujo, Wells Mission and Outreach coordinator, says that the Tuesday Ministries served more than 6,000 people last year, distributing food with a total value of \$99,059.

The ministry has grown and developed over the years. Extra Table and the Good Samaritan Center now partner with Wells, providing not only staples, but also fresh food for the

families. The ministry is funded by contributions from Wells and others and also last year from two grants from the Mississippi Methodist Conference. Up to 14 volunteers help prepare, pack and distribute food every week.

Those are the statistics of ministry, but the Tuesday ministry does much more, especially as need has grown.

"We feed the poor, help the neglected," Charles said. "A lot of these people are in pain and here they find some comfort. It's not necessarily physical pain; they are just beat down, beat down with day-to-day survival. We are able to give them a place they feel comfortable and they can relax — and maybe renew."



March 1	Patricia Montgomery
March 4	Cecil Dexter, Justin Hays
March 7	Makyla Norwood, Mary Ann McIlwain
March 9	Roosevelt Hollis, Andy Leatherman
March 10	Joan Simon
March 11	Rev. Emma McNair
March 12	Shirley Denise Ransom
March 13	James Daniel, Sha Pollard
March 14	Camille Wright, Heather Hensarling
March 15	Elaine Phelps
March 16	Wyatt Waters
March 17	Jamie Ferguson Ertle, Kay Olliver, Lacy Thomas
March 18	Elizabeth Harrison
March 19	Joy Gates, Jerry Hynes, Mary Margarette Butler Hill
March 21	B.J. Curtis, John Banks
March 22	Diane John, Dave Cannimore
March 23	Sara Rose Parkinson Morrison
March 24	Patti Brown, Wes Truett, Todd Watson
March 26	Lacy Huddleston, Elaine Talbott
March 27	Caleb Carr, Doug Pyron
March 30	Katisa Johnson

If your birthday is in March and isn't listed, please let us know.

Fruitful Practices

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newcomers, to those who feel different, to those carrying unseen burdens? The intentionality of Lent helps us create space where people are not only welcomed, but truly received as beloved children of God.

Second, this season draws us more deeply into *passionate worship*. Through Lenten prayer, scripture, silence and song, Lent reorients us toward God, pulling us back to God's mercy and forgiving love. *Passionate worship* during Lent does not always look exuberant; sometimes it is quiet, honest, contemplative and searching. Yet it centers us again in God's grace and prepares us to be sent into the world renewed.

Third, Lent strengthens *intentional faith development*. As we commit to Lenten practices and as we dwell in Jesus' teachings — especially his parables and his journey to the cross— we allow our faith to mature. Lent encourages us to learn, question and grow, not as passive listeners, but as disciples shaping our lives around Christ's way of love.

Fourth, Lent sharpens our call to *risk-taking mission and service*. Jesus' path to the cross was marked by compassion, courage and costly love. During Lent, we are invited to follow him beyond our comfort zones, paying

closer attention to the suffering of our neighbors and responding with mercy, justice, and hope.

Finally, Lent invites us into *extravagant generosity*. As we let go of what we cling to — whether that is time, resources or control — we rediscover the freedom that comes from trusting God's abundance. Generosity during Lent becomes a spiritual practice that aligns our lives with God's self-giving love revealed on the cross.

Lent is not about perfection, but about practice. And these five practices allow us to examine our mission as Wells in loving, caring and sharing in ways that help us to grow not only in faith but also in our discipleship practice. As we commit ourselves anew to these five practices, we open our lives to God's transforming work through our church.

My prayer is that this season will deepen us — individually and together — so that we emerge at Easter as a more faithful, more loving and more fully alive church, ready to bear witness to resurrection hope!

May it be so, Wells!

Lenten Blessings.

Write Susannah at revsusannahc@gmail.com.

2026 Wells Church Giving

Jan.	\$43,278	July
Feb.		Aug.
March		Sept.
April		Oct.
May		Nov.
June		Dec.

Based on the 2026 budget, \$43,897 is needed monthly to support operations and ministries of the church in 2026.

Wells Memorial United Methodist Church Staff

Susannah Grubbs Carr, Pastor | Sue Keen Hyland, Associate Pastor

Chuck Reynolds
Choir Director

Jamie Ward
Accompanist

Ashley Rogers
Children's Ministry Director

Jane Everly
Pastoral Assistant

Kay Olliver
Treasurer

Elaine Collins
Nursery Coordinator

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Wells Notes

Lenten Activities

In March we continue our Lenten journey with activities that help us focus on this time of reflection as we move toward Easter.

We are gathering weekly for our **Brown Bag Lenten Lunches** at noon on Wednesdays. Each week, a different guest clergy member is offering a Lenten reflection to guide us in prayer, reflection and community. Speakers include:

March 4 – Rev. Walter Roberts

March 11 – Rev. Haven Boyd

March 18 – Rev. Dr. Raigan Miskelly

March 25 – Rev. Maxine Bolden

Also, please join in a **Lenten Walk** at 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays. We meet for a light morning walk and then go for coffee at a local coffee shop. Locations include:

March 5 – Natchez Trace Overlook followed by coffee at Fusion Coffeehouse

March 12 – Friendship Park Ridgeland followed by breakfast at Primos

March 19 – Parham Bridges Park followed by coffee at Cups in Fondren

March 26 – Broadmeadow Neighborhood followed by coffee at Broadstreet

Preaching Schedule

This month Rev. Susannah continues her Lenten sermon series on the parables of Jesus, “The Last Supper: Conversations That Led to the Cross.”

March 1 – “Open Invitation,” Luke 14:16-24.

March 8 – “Feasting with the Found,” Luke 15:3-7, 8-10, 11-32.

March 15 – “Crumbs from the Table,” Luke 16:19-22 and Luke 19:1-10.

March 22 – Refusing the Host,” Luke 19:11-27, Luke 20:9-19.

March 29 (Palm Sunday) – “Journey to the Table: The Host that Becomes the Meal,” Luke 22:9-21.

Find Those Small Practices that Help Us Observe Lent

By Ashley Rogers
Children’s Director

I’ve always loved the work I do at Wells — it’s fulfilling, challenging and fun! Since becoming a parent myself, the way I think about Christian education and formation has continued to evolve, and I have a better appreciation for all that the adults do in the lives of their young charges to help foster a genuine love of God and Christ Jesus.



Rogers

While I know that one day my children must choose for themselves whether to accept Christian salvation, these years when they are young and impressionable feel paramount in helping them along that journey. The pressure to get it “right” as their parent and spiritual shepherd is real! I rarely feel that as strongly as I do during these high holy seasons in the life of our church — Advent and Lent.

I love the cute celebrations with Santa, elves, and the Easter Bunny with baskets of eggs, but at the same time, I’m keenly aware that my children need to understand the true reason we celebrate. Is all that extra stuff fun? Of course. But in the upcoming weeks, if Jesus’ gift of himself on the cross isn’t forefront in our Lenten and Eastertide journey, I’ve missed the mark.

When I think of Lenten practices for children and youth, I typically consider three different categories: acts of kindness, gifts or service, and prayer. Our young people can pretty easily pick up on ways to show kindness, donate to worthy causes or serve their neighbor. Prayer is the one that can get overly complicated. Do I expect an elementary-aged child to sit silently for 20 minutes of silent prayer and reflection? I don’t. But something a young person *can* do is start a gratitude list to which the family can contribute. Or lead the blessing before a meal. Or spend time outdoors looking for all the awesome ways God has blessed the Earth.

My daughter Elizabeth is so excited to join her Wells family on the Lenten walk taking place over spring break at Friendship Park in Ridgeland and is already talking about how this will be her younger brother’s first time to join us. Her enthusiasm for this one shared Lenten practice is so sweet to behold and reminds me that it is consistent small acts and observances that build up to a lifelong practice of something.

I pray that during this season of Lent, we, as individual family units and the larger family of Wells UMC remember to find all the small ways throughout our day to actively observe Lent.

Mark your calendars now and make plans to join us at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 4, for our annual Easter Egg Hunt at Wells! Children from toddlers through sixth grade are invited to join us for hunting eggs, games, snacks, crafts and lots of fun! As always, help before the event is appreciated for hiding eggs, setting up crafts and plating snacks. If you’re willing to help, please let me know! As always, everyone is very welcome. Invite a friend!

Write Ashley at ashleyrogers@wellschurch.org.

Electronic Service Requested



Share Your Bucket List of Love for Others

By Sue Keen Hyland
Associate Pastor

Do you ever just sit and dream? I know that sounds luxurious, doesn't it? To sit for a few minutes and just think...about life, about faith, about love, about your next vacation.



Hyland

I asked a friend the other day if he had a bucket list. What were some things that he wanted to do with the rest of his life. Although a bucket list isn't something he's worked on, he knew he wanted to solo travel. He wanted to find out about a trip on Monday, book it, and if possible, jet out the next Monday.

What a life! Traveling is something that so many in the world only dream of, and likely getting on an airplane and going anywhere seems out of the scope of reality, at least for right now.

So, for those of us whose feet will stay closer to the ground, what do we dream of?

I believe that each day that we get to live is a gift. Another chance to put one foot in front of the other; a chance to love God and love each other. So, what will we do with this great, big, beautiful, chaotic, sometimes ugly and upsetting life?

Since I won't be jet setting anywhere anytime soon, let me tell you what I dream of — deep connections and relationships.

I dream of having people around my table enjoying a meal that I cooked for them. I dream of dominoes games and long conversations around a game table. I dream of helping to provide food and shelter to those who need it the most. I dream of starting a non-profit that would engage churches with those

who are struggling to find housing. I dream of sunshine that is brighter than the cloudy days and I dream of a world where we all can reach out a hand and help one another. I dream most days of everyone having enough.

So, while I'd love to keep looking at Airbnbs and trips to Mexico, instead, I'll enjoy my time here "in my own little corner, in my own little chair," dreaming of how my real life, this gift of real life, can be used to love God a little more, and share that love with my neighbors as well.

Sure, vacation is nice, but I believe that each ordinary day that we share with one another can be quite beautiful too!

Enjoy my friends.

Write Sue at
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