

The Federated Messenger

March 2026

The Value of St. Patrick's Day

by Pastor Ed Huntley

For most of my life, I've ignored St. Patrick's Day. Being neither Irish nor Roman Catholic, I assumed that the celebration was not for me and that there was no value in remembering a man who supposedly drove snakes out of Ireland. Most of the details of his life (like the legend of the snakes) are uncertain, so why should we remember him?

A little research, however, answered my question and alerted me to a fellow-Christian who has much to teach the Church at the end of the second millennium. Patrick lived in the early years of the first millennium (4th-5th century, AD), but his conversion and his commitment to Christ's mission are great illustrations of what we need today.

Patrick's conversion to following Christ was a definite act of faith at a young age. When he was sixteen and working on his father's farm, he was taken captive by a band of raiders and sold into slavery. Like the Old Testament saint Joseph, Patrick was taken from his home and family, but during his years of enslavement, he drew closer to God. He wrote, "The Lord opened to me the sense of my unbelief that I might remember my sins and that I might return with my whole heart to the Lord my God."

What a statement of conversion! He acknowledged his sin, admitted his need, and repented. All of these are needed for an authentic faith. Too often these days, people make professions of faith without turning from sin. They say, "I believe in Jesus" and go on living in sin. That's not true faith; true faith includes repentance, admitting our sin and turning away from it to Christ. Patrick remembered and returned; he was converted.

Then he heard God's call to mission. Every follower of Jesus is commissioned to "go and make disciples of all nations," and Patrick received and accepted his commission. One night, in a dream, Patrick heard a call. Like the New Testament apostle Paul, he heard a person calling, "We beseech you to come and walk among us once more."

The person was Irish. Patrick was called to return to his homeland, to the place of his most painful memory. Would he go? Absolutely; Patrick listened to the call of God, returned to Ireland, and faithfully declared the gospel for some thirty years. Dr. Hugh Blair, a Presbyterian Minister in Belfast, Northern Ireland, writes, "There is no doubt that he broke the power of heathenism in Ireland."

Patrick knew that conversion to Christ leads to the commission of Christ. Jesus saves us and then sends us, and we must be willing to go wherever He sends and speak to anyone who opens the door. Are we? Is today's Church hearing the voice of people who are calling for help and hope and answering the call by taking them the message of Christ?

This St. Patrick's Day, take a few moments to examine your life in comparison to his. Are you truly converted? Have you accepted your commission? There is no better answer to these questions than the answer of Patrick of Ireland: Yes!

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

by Christy Preston

What a winter – lots of snow and so much cold! Snow doesn't slow camp down though – our winter retreats have enjoyed the sledding hill, as well as the community during our sledding day in January. We may love winter at WLD Ranch, but once March hits, we look forward to spring. Snow melting, warmer breezes blowing, flowers blooming, trees budding – all of it! We also look forward to the fullness of our schedule - horse lessons, the [Married Couples' Retreat \(March 20-21\)](#), Girl Scout retreats, and more. April continues with horse lessons and retreats and starts Rough Riders, our therapeutic riding program. May introduces field days and various opportunities to serve school groups throughout the week, in addition to the weekend retreats. [Don't forget about our Spring Open House on Saturday, May 9 \(11am-5pm\)](#), a great opportunity to bring family and friends out to experience at day at WLD Ranch!

It's hard to think about now, since it's still a bit chilly outside, but summer is right around the corner! Camp thoughts are never far from planning for summer program and staff. Summer camp registrations are pouring in the fastest ever – both new and returning campers – so exciting! Certain weeks fill up quickly, so be sure to register your kids for summer camp while there's still room! [Look for our summer brochures in the mail or head to \[www.wldranch.com\]\(http://www.wldranch.com\) to get dates and prices for this summer's round-ups.](#) (If you do not have children who can attend camp, have you considered sponsoring a child this summer? Contact me for more information about camper sponsorships – christy@wldranch.com.)

Summer staff recruitment is a year-round process for us. We're looking for teens and young adults who are passionate about their relationship with Jesus, who love kids, and who want to serve the Lord this summer. We have many positions available this summer - counseling staff, kitchen staff, dining room staff, maintenance staff, and more. The benefits of working at camp are great! Pray that the Lord would send the right staff members our way. (Do you know any high school or college age students who desire to serve the Lord in a camp setting? Contact me for more information about available positions.)

Camp is a powerful tool that can transform the lives of all who are involved. Campers hear the truth of the Gospel and see Christ's love lived out by the staff members every day. Their faith develops through each interaction as they focus on learning particular skills, build friendships with each other and staff members, and immerse themselves in the FUN of camp life. But campers aren't the only ones whose lives are changed. Staff members learn skills they can use the rest of their lives in leadership, work ethic, and social interactions with campers and fellow staff members. Becoming part of a camp family forges friendships that will last a lifetime

because those who serve the Lord together in a camp setting are bonded uniquely to each other. And who says campers are the only ones who have FUN at camp? From the first day of staff training to the final day of camp, staff members continue to learn in the midst of WLD-style adventure and create memories to cherish for years to come.

Please continue to pray for our full-time and year-round staff this spring as we minister to those God brings our way and plan for the summer camp season. Pray for the summer staff recruiting process, that God would move hearts to join us on summer staff, that those teens and young adults would listen to God's prompting, and that their family members would support them in choosing a summer of ministry and growth. Pray for the summer staff members who come to WLD for a summer of ministry, that their hearts will be open to how God would mold them this summer. Pray for hearts to change – those of the campers who attend summer camp and those of the staff who show campers God's love. We appreciate your prayers and support as we strive to fulfill our mission and guide others to Jesus.



Monthly Bow Shoot and Fellowship Saturday, March 14, 3:00 PM, At the Pavilion (behind the Preschool)

Join the local Christian Bowhunters of America.



All skill levels are welcome. Bring your bow, invite a friend, and enjoy good shooting and great conversation. [For details on events, contact Jamie Greig, Rick Fails, Travis Burns, or Colton Owens.](#)

FED YOUTH MARCH MADNESS BASKETBALL CLINIC
SATURDAY MARCH 14 10a-12:30p
4th - 8th Grade * Just \$5
* SKILL DEVELOPMENT, GAMES, LUNCH & T-SHIRT
REGISTER BY MARCH 4





OCC SHOEBOXES by Beth Rigden

One thing that is assumed by many people is that all the shoeboxes we have packed are delivered for Christmas. That is a natural assumption since the ministry is called Operation Christmas Child, but it is not always the case! Let me explain. Once the shoeboxes leave the church they travel to a Processing Center as I explained in an earlier article. They leave the Processing Centers mid- December. Most of the gifts go by ship. The shoeboxes that are going to “nearby” countries such as Center/South America and Eastern Europe are delivered by Christmas. The boxes going to countries further away may be delayed due to distance and complex international shipping procedures. They may not clear customs in the receiving countries until spring. Then they must transport the gifts with some going to rural areas using very poor roads or waterways. So the boxes are typically delivered from later December through spring each year, extending the joy of Christmas to the children who receive them! Regardless of when the boxes are delivered the mission is still the same! Operation Christmas Child delivers gift-filled shoeboxes to children around the world in Jesus’ name as a tangible expression of God’s love. Continue to pray for the children receiving not only shoebox gifts but most importantly receiving the Gospel.

We’d like for you to be a part of this joyful ministry this year at the Federated Church. In a few months we will begin assembling items for the packing party, but meanwhile **we need some donations of the following items for the month of March:**

Coloring Books, Crayons, Card Games, Markers, Drawing Paper, Watercolor Paints (dry)

We can always use other donations throughout the year. Watch for those sales and clearances!

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” John 8:12

Springfield Senior Center Tuesday, March 10

Springfield Senior Center will resume meeting after its “winter break”. **Pastor Louis Powers** from the West Springfield Baptist Church will provide devotions *and* our program. Pastor Louis is married to Ruth. They have a 4 year old son named David.

Senior Center begins at 9:45 a.m. and concludes at Noon with a wonderful, home-cooked lunch, all for a \$3 donation.



Bring a Friend!

Watoto Neighborhood Tour

Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 PM, Albion Assem. of God

Many of you will remember the wonderful Thanksgiving 2024 service when we had the privilege of hearing from the Watoto Children’s Choir from Uganda.

We have the opportunity this spring to host another team from Watoto, this time the **Watoto Neighborhood Tour – Stories of Restoration**. The team consists of 2 mothers and 2 young adults who will be sharing their stories of God’s hand upon their lives. If you would like to read more about this, the website is

Watoto.com/neighbourhood.

We would like to warmly invite you to join us on the evening of **Tuesday, March 10 at 6:30 p.m.**

for this event. There will be tables set up with information on the Watoto ministry, child sponsorship, and items made by the ladies of Watoto which will be for sale. We will end the evening with cookies and fellowship.



NEW! Pill Bottle Recycling Program

Got old pill bottles? Keep ‘em out of our landfill and into the hands of those who can use them. In a new program at the Federated Church, headed up by Amy Bovaird, every second Tuesday of the month, a team of six will wash, dry, package and box up the recycled bottles. The West County Lions Club ships them to Matthew 25 Ministries, who include them with containers of medical supplies they send to developing countries, who do not have access to them.

Here’s how you can help: Gather up empty medicine, vitamin or supplement bottles. Peel or wash off the labels as best you can or black out your name and personal details with a marker, doesn’t have to be perfect. But be sure ALL bottles are capped. Bag your bottles and place them in the large box marked **“Prescription Bottle Recycling Program,”** located in the Family Center. **Want to volunteer for a shift of recycling? Call Amy Bovaird at 814-431-4266 or Suzanne Barton at 814-392-4383 for dates and times.**



◆ **Celebration Class**

– This class is for people celebrating their “mature” years in the church dining room, studying the

scriptures on the current sermon series.

- ◆ **Men’s Class** – Studying the book of Mark, led by Pastor Rick, Bob Pettis and others. Meet in the Church Basement Room 32.
- ◆ **Ladies Class** – Studying the book, “Your Story Has a Villain” by Jonathan Pokluda, led by Suzanne Barton, Room 10 in the church basement.
- ◆ **Faith Chapel Ladies Class** –following an inductive study on Romans led by Christina Corbett. All ladies welcome!
- ◆ **Sanctuary Class** – a verse by verse study of the book of Proverbs, led by Jerry Hills in the sanctuary.
- ◆ **Everyone’s a Theologian** - What do Christians believe and why? This series on Systematic Theology is designed for new believers and anyone wanting to grow in their understanding of God’s truth. Meet in **Room 29**, Church Basement
- ◆ **College & Young Adult Class** – Room 28 in the Church Basement, exploring what the Bible says about topics relative to life, led by Mike and Cheryl Anderson.
- ◆ **Good News Class** – Family Center Office Room, studying the book of Galatians with Seth Huntley and Sam Ring leading.
- ◆ **Couples Class** – for married and engaged couples, led by Rick Fails and Jamie Greig in Room 31 in the church basement, studying the book of Revelation.
- ◆ **Heart and Soul Class** – led by Paul Burgess in Room 19/20 of the church basement, studying Biblical Covenants.
- ◆ **The Upper Room Class** – led by Pastor Mal Beall and Paula Adams. Open to Young Adults both single and married. Meeting in the big room upstairs in the church and studying a variety of topics.

Kids Church is for children 4 years old thru 5th grade in the Family Center. The children should be signed in at the Family Center desk by a parent/caregiver before services and promptly picked up afterward.



Infant and Toddler care: During the 8:15 a.m. service, unsupervised Infant/Toddler rooms are available for families to use. Also, there is a nursing mother’s room available during both services at the back of the sanctuary. Infant and Toddler care *is* available during the 11 a.m. service in the Family Center. **MORE VOLUNTEERS** are needed to care for the children. If you can help, please contact the Church Office



WISDOM + OPPORTUNITY = WELL-BEING

The WOW Grief Group will begin a new session on **Tuesday, April 7th at 6:00 p.m.** in Faith Chapel. Led by Dave and Debbie Wehr, this group will meet for 9 weeks and is open to anyone who has lost a loved one. **For questions or more information, you can contact Dave Wehr (814-897-5569) or Debbie Wehr (717-283-6329).**

If you would like to be baptized, please plan to **attend the Baptism Class, Sunday, March 22 at 9:45 a.m. in the Prayer Room** or speak to Pastor Ed.



SPRINGFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Swiss Steak Dinner

Sunday, March 29, 2026, 11 AM to 2 PM

Federated Church Family Center

SERVING:

Swiss Steak, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Corn, Apple Sauce or Cole Slaw, Roll, Dessert and Beverage

COST:

Adults - \$15.00, Children under 12 - \$8.00

TAKE-OUT AVAILABLE

Please come support your local volunteers



MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Missions Sunday 8:15 & 11 AM Worship 9:45 AM Sunday School 4 PM Teen Ensemble 5:45 PM Ignite	2 7 PM Men's Bible Study	3 3:30 PM SALT	4 10 AM Golden Circle 6:30 PM JOURNEY 7 PM Prayer Meeting	5 9:30 AM Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM CR	6	7
8 8:15 & 11 AM Worship COMMUNION 9:45 AM Sunday Sch. 4 PM Praise Choir 	9 7 PM Men's Bible Study	10 9:45 AM Senior Center 3:30 PM SALT 6:30 PM Elders & Deacons	11 10 AM Golden Circle 6:30 PM JOURNEY 7 PM Prayer Meeting	12 9:30 AM Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM CR	13	14 9 AM-4 PM Basketball Clinic 3 PM Bow Shoot
15 8:15 & 11 AM Worship 9:45 AM Sunday School 4 PM Teen Ensemble 5:45 PM Ignite	16 7 PM Men's Bible Study	17 	18 10 AM Golden Circle 6:30 PM JOURNEY 7 PM Prayer Meeting	19 9:30 AM Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM CR	20 Marriage Retreat, WLD 	21 Married Couples Retreat, WLD Ranch
22 8:15 & 11 AM Worship 9:45 AM Sunday School Baptism Class, Prayer Room 4 PM Praise Choir 6 PM Annual Meeting	23 7 PM Men's Bible Study	24 3:30 PM SALT 6:30 PM Women's Worship Night 	25 10 AM Golden Circle 6:30 PM JOURNEY 7 PM Prayer Meeting	26 9:30 AM Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM CR	27	28
29 Palm Sunday 8:15 & 11 AM Worship 9:45 AM Sunday School SVFD Swiss Steak Dinner 	30 12 PM Mobile Food Pantry 7 PM Men's Bible Study	31 3:30 PM SALT				

MarchFed Kids Schedule

DATE	SERVICE	VOLUNTEER 1	VOLUNTEER 2
March 1	9:45 Toddler SS	Mary Ellen Hulley	Amy Swartzfager
	9:45 Check In Desk		
	11 Check In Desk		--
	11 Toddler Room	Amy & John Swartzfager	
	11 Kids Church Helper	Keah Bush	
March 8	9:45 Toddler SS	Mary Ellen Hulley	Katie Elvir
	9:45 Check In Desk	Liz Bright	--
	11 Toddler Room	Emily Corbett	Brooke/Violet/Savannah
	11 Check In Desk	Liz Bright	--
	11 Kids Church Helper	Jaelin Snyder	
March 15	9:45 Toddler Room	Mary Ellen Hulley	Amanda Nagle
	9:45 Check In Desk	Taylor Billings	--
	11 Toddler Room	Josiah Merritt	Amy Pettis
	11 Check In Desk	Taylor Billings	--
	11 Kids Church Helper	Azalea Ring	
March 22	9:45 Toddler Room	Mary Ellen Hulley	Tamim Fenton
	9:45 Check In Desk	Terena Snyder	
	11 Check In Desk	Terena Snyder	
	11 Toddler Room	Melissa Greig	Violet/Savannah
	11 Kids church Helper	Jaelin Snyder	
March 29	9:45 Toddler Room	Mary Ellen Hulley	Amy Swartzfager
	9:45 Check In Desk		
	11 Toddler Room	Kim Wurst	Connie Solomon
	11 Check In Desk		
	11 Kids Church Helper	Lily Corbett	

Come join us in Fed Kids! Reach out to Libby, if you can help us fill these needed positions!