



# GOOD NEWS! March, 2025

## Self Talk | Pastor Clay

***Lent: a period of fasting and regret for one's sins that is observed on the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter by many churches (Merriam-Webster.com).***

The free church tradition, which we Baptists are a part of, is selective and spotty at best in practicing Lent. Who wants to “fast” and “regret” for 40 days? Not so fast; as I recall, Jesus fasted for 40 days. And about regret for sins, as Billy Graham used to say, “The closer I get to God the more sinful I realize I am.” Maybe that is not regret, but grace becomes false and cheap if it is not firmly adhered to our sin-stained need for it.

What about the 40 days business; where did that come from? Well, you do not have to be a Bible scholar to realize there are numerous references to 40 days in scripture. Maybe 40 days has something to do with forming a new habit. I have heard that promoted before. What does research tell us? In the 1960 self-help book *Psycho-Cybernetics*, author and plastic surgeon Maxwell Maltz observed it took patients about 21 days to get used to their new look and theorized the three-week time could be applied to a variety of changes. Some Christian leaders have used such flawed research to suggest 40 days is the time it takes to form a new Godly habit. (Since we are dumb sheep, we need a few extra days.)

Actual research suggests a new habit takes between 18-254 days to form, with the average length being 66 days. Wow, I am stuck. What do I do with Lent now?

Length? Lent happens when days are getting longer, more filled with light. In the old days when abundant artificial light was not available, your day was over when the sun went down. So maybe Lent is a stewardship drive, time to sign your pledge card on how you are going to use the increased daytime God is giving you. It is never a bad idea to concentrate on my and your need for God's abundant grace.

Fasting is designed to be a reminder that God is more than sufficient to meet our needs. Our God provides! A break in the normal pattern to be reminded we are more than just physical beings. Often bringing light to dark places in our lives, and the process looks more like a wrestling match than a spa retreat.

Mount Washington Baptist Church is providing several ways you can give stewardship to your longer days, and many are contained in this newsletter. What we can offer is not enough and can never be enough. Your relationship with Jesus does not go through the local church; it is a direct relationship that the church can encourage. How will you spend more daylight loving God and loving your neighbor? Is there something you need to quit doing so you have more room, heart, and time for that kind of love? Praying that as our days get longer, God receives more of you and me.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Clay

## Weekly Schedule

### Sundays

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
9:15 a.m. Youth Sunday School Class  
10:00 a.m. Worship Service & Children's Church  
(in-person and streaming live on Facebook)

### Wednesdays

6:00/6:30 p.m. Lenten Dinner & Bible Studies  
(in-person and on Facebook)

**In Case You Missed It:** In our Annual Meeting of January 26, the church budget for 2025 was discussed and voted on, along with nominations for boards and committees for 2025. Copies of the Annual Report are available at the Welcome Center.

## Coming Up for Lent . . .

\* **Sunday Mornings, 10 a.m.** – Pastor Clay continues his 14-week sermon series, *What If? Seven Letters to You, Seven Letters to the Church*. Some of the “big questions” that we’ll tackle in the new few weeks leading up to Easter are these:

- ~What if you invited Jesus into your dark places?
- ~What if we dealt with sin redemptively?
- ~What if we were known as a community of prayer?
- ~What if you lived out the concept that “iron sharpens iron”?

\* **Wednesday Evenings** – We will again be offering in-person

Bible studies and dinners on Wednesdays throughout Lent. Similar in format to the popular Advent Bible study series, the Lenten series, led primarily by Pastor Clay, will look at the following topics:

- March 5, 6:30 p.m. – Ash Wednesday, fasting, and other Lenten practices
- March 12, 6:30 p.m. – Jesus: Jewish Messiah
- March 19, 6:30 p.m. – Jesus: Jewish Rabbi (led by Pastor Jim)
- March 26, **6:00 p.m.** – COMMUNITY OUTREACH DINNER / Jesus: Jewish Prophet
- April 2, 6:30 p.m. – Jesus: Jewish Priest
- April 9, 6:30 p.m. – Jesus: King of the Jews

\* **Racetrack Ministry Dinner, Tuesday, April 1, 5:30-7:00 p.m.** – The first of our summer “evenings at the racetrack”! See Jim Cagle for more information about how you can help with this ministry to the track workers.

\* **Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 12, 11 a.m.-noon** – We will host our annual Easter Egg Hunt on the front lawn, weather permitting. Be looking for requests for prizes and candy to fill the eggs. This event is a great time to share the Good News of salvation and information about our church. We have had up to 100 people participate. For questions, see Barb Cagle.

\* **Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Service, Thursday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.** – Plan to join us for a somber worship experience which serves as the culmination of our Lenten Bible Study series and addresses the topic, Jesus: Suffering Servant.

## . . . and Beyond

Plans are underway for “True North,” a Vacation Bible School adventure, to be held on the mornings of June 2-6. In VBS we focus on our day care kids, our church kids, and children from the local community. It's always a great time for our students and leaders! If you're interested in helping with VBS this year, please reach out to Barb Cagle.



## Traveling the Lenten Road



The Lenten season begins this year on Wednesday, March 5, with Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of preparation and reflection on the sacrifice of Christ, who took our sins upon Himself willingly and died so that we, with our belief, will be with him in eternity. Maundy Thursday is a time of discontent, agony and sorrow for us. We remember that Christ suffered for our sins and we should feel horror for what He had to endure. The hope is there also that Resurrection Sunday is soon, but it is important to focus on the love Christ had for all of us as He faced those times, alone and abandoned. Each of us will search for understanding in our personal journey and Christian walk as we travel this Lenten road. Resurrection Sunday will celebrate Christ's victory over death as we come together with music, flowers, and praises as the Lenten season comes to a close for 2025. Our praise will continue into the post-Easter season as we continue to worship our risen Lord!

*Photo credit: Ahna Ziegler*

As we think of Jesus's gift to us and our worship of Him, we renew our commitment to serve others in His name. We will serve our first meal of the 2025 season at the racetrack on Tuesday, April 1, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. This is a wonderfully-appreciated ministry which provides a warm meal for the workers behind the track. More information will be coming soon. See me if you can help with this meal.

Blessings!

~ Rev. Jim Cagle, Minister of Music

## Missions

### International Ministries Announces *Miles for Mission*

Have you ever considered how the simple act of *walking* can impact God's mission?

ABCUSA's International Ministries (IM) is excited to announce its first-ever virtual 5K, Miles for Mission, which will take place during Holy Week 2025. Miles for Mission is a global mission movement that unites people worldwide as they walk to make a difference for God's global mission. Every step together represents IM's commitment to walk alongside the global servants, partners, and communities they serve.

You are encouraged to come together with your local community (this could be your church, small group, family, or friends) and walk 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) together, reflecting on God's mission and celebrating Jesus' resurrection.



*Photo credit: Greg Rosenke, unsplash.com*

How to Participate

- 1) Register: You can register online at <https://internationalministries.org/milesformission/>. You'll receive a hat, digital packet, and personal fundraising page when you register.
- 2) Fundraise: Personalize and share your fundraising page with your community.
- 3) Invite: Invite your community or church to join you and share who you will be walking with.
- 4) Walk together: Walk with your community, praying together as you go.

# ***A Family in Ministry***

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## **Our Staff and Leaders**

**Rev. Clay Self, Pastor | Rev. Jim Cagle, Minister of Music**  
**Dr. Jih-Ting Chen, Accompanist | Darby Atchison, Administrative Assistant**  
**Todd Racer, Praise Band Leader | Tim Rechel, Tower Bells Director**  
**Tammy Caldwell & Robin Beier, Day Care Co-Directors**  
**Janeece Nation, Custodian**