The Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard,
Associate Pastor

During the last couple of years I have heard about a term called hygge. I have since learned it is a Danish and Norwegian word for creating a mood of coziness, well-being and contentment particularly in the winter. Described by one blogger by the name Alex, it is about increasing a sense of “consciousness, a certain slowness, and the ability to not just be present – but to enjoy the present.” This concept has been gaining ground in the late 20th century in Denmark as a means of alleviating the challenge of living the cold, dark and sameness of the winter season.

Hygge has been spreading from Scandinavian countries to other places, especially where the months of winter are intense, as a means of creating comfort and togetherness in the midst of those days are gray and the nights can be long. I know that I wrestle with the darkness of winter and I have found by adding strings of little lights, candles and other scented things, they bring more warmth into our every day world.

I found myself thinking that there are many ways in which this concept also relates to faith. Light in the darkness, gathering in community, the power of living life in the moment. In the last two months we added Advent Candles, wreaths and trees that were not only were beautiful, but were also sources of light in the darkness. We sang hymns and carols, and heard music that brought us a sense of awe in faith and the gift of being together sharing our faith.

And now we are coming out of the season of Epiphany with its story about the light of a star. We speak of Jesus as the light who came into the world. At night small lights twinkle on trees in the courtyard of the church shining with warmth and light in darkness. On Sunday mornings, people in the Gathering Space seem to take time to sit, to talk, to be in community, to offer support and simply take time to be together with no agenda but fellowship a means of sharing time and warmth incorporating hygge—coziness, community and warmth and light as a part of weekly worship and community life.

Light in the darkness. Sharing a meal or a morsel from the First Pres Cafe. Joy in the world. Togetherness and community. The gift that is rooted in Emmanuel, who is God with us. Thanks be to God. Amen!

Karen

Peace,

David

The Rev. Dr. David Holyan,
Pastor

The Swift Move Toward Ashes

Recently, I was talking to a pastor in our presbytery who is thinking about retiring in about a year. I asked him if he had an end date in mind. He said not yet, but probably 12 months. I then asked if he had thought about using the liturgical calendar as a guide: announce during Advent and retire after Easter. His response was: “I never thought of that.”

I learned during my Presbyterian Disaster Assistance work that the liturgical calendar can be a very helpful resource. A blueprint of the movement of the Spirit which can be used to guide a person or a congregation through hard times. As I listened to my colleague in the presbytery talk, I once again thought the liturgical calendar could be a good resource for guiding him on his journey toward retirement.

But as much as I’m thankful for the rhythm of our worship following the flow of Advent to Christmas to Epiphany to Lent to Easter, and on into Ordinary Time, at this time of the year, between New Year’s Day and Ash Wednesday, the liturgical calendar moves too fast. Only weeks after the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we need to quickly transition to Lent as we prepare for Jesus' death and resurrection on Easter Sunday. So, with memories of Christmas trees still fresh in our hearts, at the end of February we will be marking ourselves with the ashes of last year’s palms. Jesus grows up very fast this time of year.

While I’m sure only nerdy pastors (and music directors) pay attention to the liturgical rhythms of the year, the liturgical calendar can be a helpful aide in our spiritual growth. As we are currently in Epiphany, a time of revelation about who Jesus is, we can ask ourselves how God continues to reveal love and goodness in our lives. So be open to discovering the joys of the Lord's presence in our life today – no matter what. Be open to the wholeness offered to us all through Jesus Christ. And look for God's goodness in the lives of those closest to you, because penance and ashes are coming soon.

Peace,

David

Kirkwood Pres
February 2020

From the Pastors
A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

February 2, 2020
Sermon: “God Does the Choosing” - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 and 1 Corinthians 1:25-31
Our passage from 1 Corinthians concludes with: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” God is the source of our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. God does it all for us. The invitation for us is to be open to all God is doing within and through us in order to become peace, justice, mercy and grace in the world. Our call is to participate with the Holy Spirit working in our lives, boasting only in God’s goodness, not our own.

February 9, 2020
Sermon: “Conversation that Leads to Community” - The Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard
Scriptures: John 4: 5-42 and Romans 5: 1-11
The woman at the well is a favorite story of mine. It is one that brings into play a whole series of unexpected conversations, both literally and symbolically. Jesus and the unnamed woman appear to at first speak past one another, asking questions that lead to more questions, and connections that lead to community. It is an amazing example of the power of conversation to offer healing, welcome and connection.

February 16, 2020
Sermon: “Our Choice: Blessings or Curses” - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: Matthew 5:21-37 and Deuteronomy 30:15-20
In the Book of Deuteronomy, of all places, we find this beautiful passage where we are encouraged mightily to ‘choose life’ - to choose to live into the promises of God’s blessing. Our invitation is to own our ability to choose. We can do the right thing by entering into the blessings of God or we can live a life harmful to our well-being. And what happens when we accept that life is filled with both blessings and curses, life and death?

February 23, 2020
Sermon: “To Stand Unafraid” - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-9
In these passages about the transfiguration of Jesus, we are all invited to stand up in the midst of fear and look around and recognize Jesus. Again and again the disciples fall to the ground in fear, covering their eyes, not sure of what God is up to. And again and again, Jesus, or an angel of the Lord, says to the disciples (or Mary) “do not be afraid.” Do not be afraid – the essence of the gospel invitation.

February 26, 2020
ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
12:00p.m. and 6:00p.m. in the Tree of Life Chapel
Join us for worship as we begin the Season of Lent.

From the Director of Music Ministries

Youth Choir – I am looking into forming a Youth Choir for our congregation. This group would be open to all students in grades 6-12 and would rehearse periodically on Sunday evenings at 6:00p.m. If you or your child is interested or have questions, please let me know. This venture has great potential! Our third (and final) French Friday will be held on February 7th. Join us in the Gathering Space for delicious pastries and coffee, followed by a recital of French music on our wonderful Casavant organ. Our guest recitalist will be Dr. Steven Ball, Director of Sacred Music at St. Francis De Sales Oratory in St. Louis.

Although we just put away the Christmas decorations, it is time to think about Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26th. This year we are offering two opportunities to gather in worship on Ash Wednesday – 12:00p.m. and 6:00p.m. These services will be identical and it is our hope that by holding two worship services, more of you will be able to attend. Join us in worship as we begin the journey of Lent.

The Con Spirito Concert Series
French Friday February 7, 2020
10:30 Pastries, Coffee, and Conversation in the Gathering Space
11:15 A recital of French organ music in the Sanctuary
Dr. Steven Ball, guest organist
Work Camp Auction

Be sure you have Sunday, April 5th on your calendar for this year’s Work Camp Auction! We will have our usual silent auction, sit down dinner and live dessert auction. We have space set aside already to house donations for the silent auction - please drop things by Rob’s office any time that works for you, up until April 1st!

Leap Day Activity

Since we all get an extra day in the year during 2020, and it nicely falls on a Saturday, we are hosting a workshop to create prayer beads on February 29th!

Prayer Beads are prevalent in many eastern cultures, and last year we found a great curriculum that brings the idea into our own traditions. Each bead set will be different because each participant will find different things that help them identify what to pray about within the categories provided in the curriculum.

This event will run from 10:00a.m.-1:00p.m and will include a pizza lunch. We are asking for a donation of $3 for each person to cover our supplies and lunch.

This activity is open to anyone. Please be sure to RSVP to Rob by February 26th at the email address below.

Confirmation - Did You Know?

This year our Confirmation teachers welcomed four students from another church into our midst. Their church had only four in their confirmation age range, and they are siblings. After some conversation, we thought it would be a great way to celebrate the connectional church that we are by welcoming them!

This has been a unique experience that a church our size can offer to others. The students will join at their own church, but we are hopeful to maintain a relationship with them going forward.

Mark Your Calendars

Get this on your calendar now for the upcoming months in Children, Youth and Family Ministries:

Camp K - June 8-12 - Details are still in the beginning stages - if you would like to volunteer we would love to hear from you, soon!

Sunday School

This month, Sunday School for kindergarten through eighth grade will be delving deeply into the book of Matthew!

2/2 - You are My Salt & Light
2/9 - God Cares for All
2/16 - Specks and Logs (with singing time!)
2/23 - The Two Houses

Sunday School meets weekly at 10:00a.m. and is open to children ages 3 years old through 7th grade. Snack is included and once a month students have a sing a long!

LOGOS Updates

February is a short month in the year, thus we have fewer LOGOS nights. Lent starts in February as well and we do something a little different around here for that season. We will ask students to share something with us that they will START doing to be more like Jesus in this sacred season.

February Themes:
2/5 - Cups Night
   Cup stacking is just the start of Cups Night!
2/12 - Chocolate Night
   Our tastiest theme of the year.
2/19 - Knight Night
   We will eat at round tables, like always.
2/26 - No LOGOS - Ash Wednesday

Youth Ministry

Senior High Fellowship

Our Senior High youth meet weekly on Sunday evenings from 7:00p.m.-8:30p.m. We have a lot of fun most weeks and try to sneak a little learning in too! We will spend a lot of time in February planning to lead the Arise! service on February 23rd.

Confirmation

February is the final month of our Confirmation Class - students will join on March 1st. The class will wrap up their learning time together by writing their Class Creed to share with the congregation on the morning that they join as full members of the church. Please pray for these young people as they remember all the things they have learned, discern what they feel is valuable, and work on sharing that with everyone.

Rob Monroe - Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries - rmonroe@kirkwoodpres.org
**SUNDAY MORNINGS**

**CHRISTIAN CONCERNS LECTURE SERIES-9:00a.m. in Room 009**

February 2-February 23: Art Historian Peggy Carothers returns to share with us about the “Redemption in the Midst of the Profane: Caravaggio’s Life and Art at the Edge”. She will explore the life and art of Michelangelo Merisi, commonly known as Caravaggio, an extraordinarily gifted painter but also an angry, reactive murderer. He produced daringly unique compositions highlighting key elements of Biblical stories using ordinary faces from the Roman streets—laborers, prostitutes and vagrants allowing for the “masses” to recognize themselves in the sacred narrative playing out in their own lives.

**FIREPLACE ROOM SERIES - 10:00a.m. in Room 030**

February 2, 9 and 23: Jani Holyan, Coordinator for Parent Education for the Clayton School District, will continue leading a discussion of the book, *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed*, by Jessica Lahey. Parenting today can feel full of uncertainty about how best to prepare our kids for a future we can't always envision. Jessica Lahey, a middle school teacher and parent, uses current research about what actually helps kids to succeed. In this 4 week series, we will look at some of the following:
- Parenting for Real Autonomy
- Praise and Self -Esteem: What really builds motivation?
- Dealing with kids' mistakes: What's affordable and what's not?
- Homework: How to help without taking over.

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION CLASS - 9:30a.m. in Room 028, February 9**

The Spiritual Formation series focuses on deepening the stillness of the heart through prayer, meditation, study and reflection. Tom Edelstein leads this group which meets the second Sunday of the month. If you have any questions please contact Tom at tedelstein@att.net.

**BOOK GROUPS**

**FOURTH WEDNESDAY, Room 029, 1:30p.m.**

The fourth Wednesday book group will meet on February 26 to discuss the book, *The Language of Threads*, by Gail Tsukiyama. The story is about one of the women of the Silk Sisterhood who escapes from the Japanese invasion and finds a new life in China.

**COMMUNITY BOOK DISCUSSION**

You are invited in reading another book in this new year. The book, by Barbara Brown Taylor, is called *Holy Envy*. Barbara is an author who served for many years as an Episcopal priest. After she left the parish, Brown Taylor began teaching at a small liberal arts college. Her most popular class was one on Religions of the World, a journey that brought her face to face with preconceived notions, her lack of awareness of other faith traditions, and the chance to experience worship with her students in places that she would never have dreamed of a decade before. Through her book, we are invited to consider our own lack of awareness about the faiths of others, the importance of learning about other faith traditions and to deepen our own faith as well. The two dates we will gather to discuss this book are Friday, February 7, 9:00a.m. and Saturday, February 15 at 9:00a.m. Please sign up by calling the church office or by emailing Karen at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

*We will be bringing back movie and discussion events, led by John Huxhold. Stay tuned to future bulletin announcements for details.*

**Jill J. Duffield, editor of Presbyterian Outlook, has written a thoughtful devotion called *Lent In Plain Sight*, using images and symbols to lead us through the Lenten journey. Focusing on items that we come across in our every day lives such as bread and oil and dust and thorns, she invites us to consider how they speak to us of the life of faith and the ministry of Jesus. We will meet in room 028 on Friday mornings beginning February 28 at 10:30a.m. and conclude in time for those who want to go upstairs and get a good seat for the Lenten music programs that begin at noon. We will conclude the series on Good Friday. Copies of the book are available in the church office for $9.50.

**EVENTS**

* Jews, Christians, and Muslims will gather to read and interpret passages from the Torah, Psalms, Gospels, and Qur’an and share in textual dialogue meetings at Aquinas Institute of Theology, 23 South Spring, 63108, in the lower conference room, Tuesdays from 12:30p.m.-1:30p.m. on February 4, 11, 18, 25, and March 3.

* An Interfaith Religious Freedom Event will be held on Sunday, February 2 from 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m. at the Frontenac Chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 10445 Clayton Road, 63131. All are invited.
BREAKFAST CLUB
Join us for breakfast ($2 fee) on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 8:00a.m. in the Fireplace Room (030). Our guest speaker will be Tim Fitch, St. Louis County Councilman.

Don’t miss February 21! The Prime Timers are going to the Science Center to take in the fascinating Da Vinci exhibit with more than 50 replicas of Leonardo’s marvelous inventions. The cost is $12.95 for seniors and we plan to attend the 10:30a.m. showing followed by lunch at noon at Olympia Kebab House at 1543 McCausland Ave. Please send your checks for $12.95 per person made out to Dave Crowley, 719 Imse Drive, Apt. 103, Webster Groves, MO 63119 by Friday, February 14. Please see us in church or call us at (314) 962-3365 for information—crowleyd@charter.net. We can leave the church parking lot at 9:45 to allow plenty of time for parking ($10) at the Science Center.

The Dementia Discussion Group meets the 3rd Saturday of each month. They will meet on February 15 at 10:00a.m. in room 029. If you have any questions, contact Alice Bowen: asquare812@hotmail.com or David Evans at davidevansma@yahoo.com.

The Grief Support Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 25, 7:00p.m. -8:30p.m. in the lounge. For more information contact Ellen Hitschler at ln4cats@yahoo.com or Mary Ann Shaw at mashaw5@sbcglobal.net.

Our deepest sympathy to:
* The family of Phyllis Hoffman who died on December 23.
* Doris Derickson on the death of her husband, Forrace on December 31.
* Deborah Goldfarb and family on the death of her nephew, Peter, who died on December 24.
* Friends of Hilda (Billie) Taylor who died on January 7.
* Julie Jackson and family on the death of her sister, Mary Jane, on January 16.

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION
Registration for the 2020-2021 school year opens to Church families on Wednesday, Feb. 5, and to the public on Feb. 6. Information can be found on the Children’s Center website: www.firstpreschildrenscenter.com. Contact Sherry Peters, Children's Center Director at 314-965-4028 or childrenscenter@kirkwoodpres.org for more information or to schedule a tour.

February Meal-A-Month Items
Canned Tuna, Macaroni and Cheese
Canned Peas, Stewed Tomatoes

First Pres men of all ages are invited to join us Saturdays at 10:45 a.m. in Room 029. All men are welcome, no matter your knowledge of scripture or where you are in your faith journey. We take turns reading aloud, ask questions, discuss what the Holy Spirit might be saying, and even share in laughter. Call Robert Trottmann at 314-909-6779 with any questions.

The Bridge Bread Table will be open for business on February 9. Besides the regular items, there are mini-cinnis, artisan bagels and pan brownies. The money raised helps train and provide transitional housing to the ever-growing population of the homeless in St. Louis. Of course, donations are also appreciated. Leftovers are donated to a local nursing home.

In addition to our custodial staff, there are many behind the scenes workers that help carry out different programs and care for the building from decorating for the holidays to the First Pres Cafe, and many opportunities to serve. One of the jobs that has grown over the last few years is watering and tending to the plants all over the complex. We are seeking one or two volunteers who are willing to learn the ropes so that our chief plant volunteer, Peggy Key, has back up when she goes out of town. Peggy is willing to show you the ropes of what she does. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

Per capita is an opportunity for all members of the Presbyterian church to participate equally, responsibly and interdependently by sharing the cost of co-ordination and evaluation of mission and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians. Each member is asked to share in paying their Per Capita apportionment, $32.00 per member in 2020. This breaks down to $20.15 for Presbytery, $2.90 for Synod and $8.95 for GA. You may pay your Per Capita by using the envelope in your 2020 box of offering envelopes or by clearly earmarking your payment with cash or check for Per Capita and placing it in the offering plate. Thank you for supporting the benefits of being a connectional church.
MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

PC(USA) Minister of Gun Violence Prevention Coming to St. Louis

On the weekend of February 7-9, Rev. Deanna Hollas, the PCUSA Coordinator of Gun Violence Prevention Ministries, will come to St. Louis to teach, preach, meet with legislators and hold a workshop on “How to Have Courageous Conversations about Gun Violence.” The workshop will be held from 3:00p.m.-5:00p.m., February 8, at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, 45 W. Lockwood Dr. in Webster Groves. In addition, Rev. Hollas’ itinerary includes the following events over the weekend.

* A presentation for students and members of the public at Graham Chapel on the campus of Washington University at 7:00p.m. on Friday, February 7.
* Two worship services at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church on February 9, where she will present the sermon at 8:30a.m. and 10:30a.m., as well as present the issue of gun violence during the education hour at 9:30a.m.

In her new role, Hollas is serving as the Coordinator of Gun Violence Prevention Ministries for the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, a network which includes more than 800 local Presbyterian gun violence prevention advocates in all 50 states.

All are welcome to attend the gun violence prevention events on February 7-9, 2020. For more information, contact Emmy McClelland at emmymcclelland@charter.net or call 314-962-1796.

Mark your calendars! An adult mission trip to Omaha, Nebraska has been scheduled for the week of April 26-May 2. We’ll be staying at the NE Presbyterian Church of the Cross, and working with Omaha Rapid Response to help homeowners impacted by catastrophic flooding last March. Omaha is closer than our recent trips to Louisiana and Mississippi, so we’re hoping that will make it possible for more people to go, even for a few days. An informational meeting will be held on Sunday, March 8, at 10:00 a.m. in room 029. Contact Liz McCane (lizmccane@gmail.com), Georgina Sikorski (gwsikorski@gmail.com) or Linda Jarrett (write4you@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

40 Days of Lent Casserole Challenge for St. Patrick’s Center

Beginning in February and over the 40 days of Lent, we are challenging our First Pres members to help us prepare 40 breakfast casseroles for the St. Patrick’s Center. St. Patrick’s provides nourishing and hot meals for St. Louis homeless people. Pick up a pan and recipe from the table in the narthex. Please bring your prepared casserole to the kitchen freezer or downstairs freezer. For more information, please contact Julie Nesvig at j.nesvig83@gmail.com.

FOOD OUTREACH

Food Outreach’s mission has always been to provide nutritional support and enhance the quality of life of men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS or cancer. They have been able to serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community for the past 32 years.

First Pres is working in partnership with Faith Des Peres Presbyterian Church to recruit volunteers to help pack meals on April 4, 2020, at the Food Outreach facility, located at 3117 Olive. Adults, and families with older children, are welcome to volunteer. For more information, please contact Georgina Sikorski at gwsikorski@gmail.com.

ROOM AT THE INN

Room At The Inn is a temporary, emergency shelter program for homeless women and their families. First Pres hosts these families one Saturday a month at our church. We need volunteers to help drive, host, cook meals, and provide overnight support for these families. For more information, please contact Tim Morrison at timothy.lee.morrison@gmail.com, or Cindy Grone at dncgrone@gmail.com.

DRIVERS NEEDED

The Shepherd’s Center of Webster/Kirkwood needs drivers! We serve our clients by providing free rides to medical appointments for those who are not in wheelchairs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am-3pm in a defined service area. This is a round-trip, door through door service, meaning volunteers walk riders from their front door to the car and from the parking lot to their appointment, wait in the waiting room and then drive them home. If you are interested in joining the team, contact Karen Zelle at kzelle@shepherdscnter.org or call (314) 395-0988.
### FEBRUARY 2020

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<td>19</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I</td>
<td>10:00 AM Musikgarten II 4:00 PM LOGOS</td>
<td>4:00 PM LOGOS Rec 4:45 PM Children's Choirs</td>
<td>5:30 PM Middle School Ringers 6:00 PM Chancel Ringers</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I</td>
<td>10:00 AM Musikgarten II 4:00 PM LOGOS</td>
<td>4:00 PM LOGOS Rec 4:45 PM Children's Choirs</td>
<td>5:30 PM Middle School Ringers 6:00 PM Chancel Ringers</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM Arise! Praise Band 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>10:45 AM Men's Bible Study 2:00 PM STL Metro Orchestra Rehearsal</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>8:15 AM Communion Worship</td>
<td>8:45 AM First Pres Cafe</td>
<td>9:00 AM Christian Concerns Series</td>
<td>9:05 AM Arise! Contemporary Worship</td>
<td>10:00 AM Children's Education</td>
<td>10:00 AM Traditional Worship 1:30 PM AIM Band Rehearsal</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 1:15 PM Staff Meeting</td>
<td>7:00 PM Carillon Ringers</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 3:30 PM Music Instr.</td>
<td>4:30 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Building &amp; Grounds 7:00 PM Grief Support Group 7:15 PM Parkinson's Support Group</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 3:30 PM Music Instr.</td>
<td>4:30 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Building &amp; Grounds 7:00 PM Grief Support Group 7:15 PM Parkinson's Support Group</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I</td>
<td>10:00 AM Book Group</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>ASH WEDNESDAY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 7:00 PM Arise!</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>8:00 AM Preschool/KDO 12:00 PM Tree of Life Chapel Lenten Series</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>10:45 AM Family Leap Day Activity</td>
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