

ROUND UP

Orders taken for Smart Choice Foods

Second Congregational Church is taking orders for a food program, Smart Choice Foods. The last day to order food online is Feb. 14, by 11:59 p.m. Food will be distributed at the church on Feb. 20 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. There are no income guidelines or limits to how much can be purchased. Second Congregational Church is located at 1855 Greene St. in Marietta. For more information, call 740-373-0254 or 740-516-1068 (these numbers are for church volunteers). Email secondconchurch@gmail.com or to order online www.smartchoicefood.com

Other local participating churches are Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church in Mineral Wells, W.Va., and The Celebration Center of Belpre in Belpre.

February's menu — Smart Box - \$40; Savory Select Meals - \$25 for 7 heat and serve meals; Value #1- 5lb. Chicken Bites - \$20; Value # 2- Pasta Box - \$22; Value # 3 - Kids Box - \$25; Value # 4 - Breakfast Box - \$18; Value # 5 - 10 lb. Mini Corn Dogs- \$20; Value # 6- Variety Meat Box- \$89.

Live performance scheduled Feb. 21

Josh Wilson and Jason Gray, with special guest JJ Heller, are touring this month through April and will be live in concert at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, at The Warehouse Church, 3417 Murdoch Ave., Parkersburg. Doors open at 6 p.m. The tour will run from Feb. 19 through April 16 and is scheduled to visit 20 cities in the Northeast and Midwest, with additional dates to be announced soon.

Tickets are available at iTickets.com and at the church office (304-966-6175). General admission is \$10, general admission for groups of 10 or more is \$8, and for VIP is \$25 with early entry at 4:45 p.m.

For more information, visit www.joshwilsonmusic.com, www.jasongraymusic.com and www.jjheller.com.

Dinner slated Feb. 26 at Gilman UM Church

The United Methodist Women are sponsoring a dinner from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, at Gilman United Methodist Church. There will be ham and bean soup or potato soup, corn bread, cole slaw, dessert and beverage. The cost is \$6.

The need for interfaith dialogue and works

I think that it is admirable that the Marietta Times runs a special section in its weekend edition called Focus on Faith. This feature of our local newspaper provides a means for people to bear public witness to their spiritual beliefs. I do get discouraged, however, when I see some writers in this feature utilize this forum to discredit or disparage other religions. We have seen, for example, verbal attacks on Roman Catholicism and on Islam. I believe that it does not help the cause of building a common humanity, civil discourse, and the promotion of peace to present negative views of other religions or spiritual traditions. I am hoping that in the future persons from non-Christian religious traditions will express their views and enrich the Focus on Faith feature with first-hand descriptions of their faith. Then perhaps the Times will change the "t" in Focus on Faith" from a cross and will display symbols of other religions in the feature's heading.

With all the strife in the world that seems to be rooted in religious dogmatism, it strikes me that what is need-

ed more than professing one's own belief as superior to others is interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue may be defined as collaborative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions at both the individual and institutional levels. Interfaith dialogue can lead to increased understanding and respect for other religions and an increased appreciation of shared values across different religious traditions. If people of different religious faiths sit down for sincere and mutually respectful dialogue, there will be enhanced sensitivity to all people who profess a spiritual relationship with a higher being; such dialogue can result in a deepening of one's faith.

What I am describing as interfaith dialogue is an effort to bring people from very different religious traditions together. There have been events, even locally, for Christians of different denominations to get together for joint Christmas or Easter services, but what is more challenging and what is needed even more in a world rife with religious

Thoughts of Faith

George Banziger

conflict and misunderstanding is interfaith dialogue among Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, and other major spiritual traditions. Those who advocate for interfaith dialogue mention two important conditions for this kind of discussion: 1) no proselytizing; 2) sharing in the assumption that no one religion has the total and absolute knowledge of the nature and works of God. Ground rules for interfaith dialogue include the shared assumptions that: individual participants are not the official spokespersons of their religion; participants will be respectful to one another; participants will actively listen to others.

There are some inspiring examples of interfaith dialogue around the world, such as the Interfaith Encounter Association which is striving to achieve peace in the Middle East by bringing together Jews,

Moslems, and Christians; the Peace Walk in Tuscon Arizona, a combined effort of Jews and Moslems in that city; the interfaith Habitat for Humanity build in Georgia; and the community project, Holy Toledo, in that Ohio city.

Interfaith dialogue can lead to community projects that invite people of different faiths to work together for a common cause, such as the latter two examples. An organization called Interfaith Youth Core brings together young people of different religions to promote a community of pluralism; other interfaith groups organize community projects to help people with tax preparation, training in computer labs, employment counseling, shelter, and food/nutrition assistance. In our community of Washington County Harvest of Hope is an example of an effective interfaith organization that is addressing the critical problem of food insecurity.

A poem by Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni expresses the importance of deeds over creed in her verse, "Who are my people?:" I went to the land where I was born/Where men spoke my

language.../I was a stranger there/"My people," my soul cried. "Who are my people?"/"Last night in the rain I met an old man/Who spoke a language I do not speak./ Which marked him as one who does not know my god./With apologetic smile he offered me/The shelter of his patched umbrella./I met his eyes...And then I knew..."

When it comes to doing good and serving others, deeds matter more than dogma. Coming together for civil discourse about spiritual beliefs and then resolving to work together to address community needs and world conflicts may be the highest level of spiritual expression one can offer.

George Banziger is President, Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta; volunteer for Harvest of Hope; he was faculty member and dean at Marietta College from 1972-1992 and dean at three other colleges before retiring in 2009; he currently is a part-time grant writer for Lewis and Clark College in Illinois; he holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in social psychology from Syracuse University.

Christian season of Lent has begun

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
The Christian season of Lent began Wednesday with Ash Wednesday.

Many observant Christians went to church or other locations so that a priest, minister, chaplain, or other religious leader could make the sign of the cross on the person's forehead, using ashes. The ashes are only used for that one day in the church year. Where do they come from?

In the St. John Paul II Chapel at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Toledo's Pastoral Center, Msgr. Charles Singler, the director of the Office for Divine Worship, had a bowl of ashes.

"These are probably pre-fabbed ashes, and you can order them through any religious goods store or directly through the company that makes them every year," he said. Some churches send their used palms to a company that converts them to ashes.

"There are parishes that will take branches from the previous year," Msgr. Singler said. "You think about the symbolism, the cycle that goes from the day that palms are issued on Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday [the week before Easter], which is kind of a lead-in to Holy Week. That whole symbolism of dying and rising, and then actually using the ashes from the burned palms, the former blessed palms, to repeat that whole cycle and generate into the Lenten season."

The palms are held and waved in remembrance of the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem for Passover before he was arrested, tried, and executed, and then, the Christians believe, resurrected. They are blessed again as ashes and used as a sacramental object to "point us to the hope of the resurrection," Msgr. Singler said.



The first flames emerge from an iron caldron filled with palm fronds from 2015 Palm Sunday observances as students from St. Gregory School watch in the background Monday, Feb. 8, outside the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Tyler, Texas.

Use of ashes in religious ritual predates Christianity. It goes back to a Jewish practice of wearing sack-

cloth and ashes in penitence, and Lent is a season of penitence, forgiveness, and mercy, Msgr. Singler

said. There is also a tie to the "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" saying.

CALENDAR

Saturday

Family potluck and game night, 5 p.m. Saturday, Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; bring a covered dish or two to share and enjoy a cozy evening with friends; for more information, 740-373-1512.

Fairview Heights Chapel Ladies Circle ladies bible study, 1 p.m., each Saturday, at the chapel, at 115 High St., Marietta; Pastor Sherry Ritchie, 740-516-0917.

"Good Samaritan Free Meal and Clothing Give-away," 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., third Saturday of every month, Faith United Methodist Church, 503 Seventh St., Marietta.

Sunday

"The Story," a multi-part series, Pastor Diann preach about the story of God from beginning to end; continues Feb. 14, Part 5: "New Commands and a New Covenant" (Chapter 5); then Feb. 21, Part 6: "Deliverance" (Chapter 6), at Gilman United Methodist Church.

Worship services, 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., Sundays, at Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; Pastor Don Archer will be teaching from the Epistle Reading, Romans 10: 8b-13, confession of belief;

both services include childcare and children's sermon; in addition, the 10:30 a.m. service includes the Sanctuary Choir and Children's Church; Sunday School for all ages meets at 9:15 a.m.; for more information, 740-373-1512.

Youth group, 5 p.m., Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; open to grades six through 12; Bible lesson, food, and fun every Sunday at 5 p.m.; for more information, 740-373-1512.

Morning services, 10:30 a.m., every Sunday, at River of Life Assembly of God, 200 Franklin St., Marietta, 10:30 a.m.; children's ministry, 10:30 a.m.; 740-374-8967.

Worship services, 11 a.m., every Sunday, at Sand Hill United Methodist Church, 1295 Old River Road, Williamstown.

"Good News from Christ," radio program of worship and music from Christ United Methodist Church, Marietta, 10:06 a.m., each Sunday, on WMOA, AM 1490; 740-374-3438.

Sunday school, 9:45 a.m., and illness meeting (worship), 11 a.m., Mondays, The Salvation Army of Marietta, 136 Front St.; 740-373-4043.

Services, at Brownsville Church of Christ — Sunday services, morning bible study at 9:45 a.m.; morning worship services at 10:30 a.m.; and evening worship service at 6:30 p.m.; also, 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; church is located at 42050 Trail Run Road, New Matamoras.

Monday

Lenten Book Study, 7 p.m., Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; a six-week study on the book "Forgiveness" by Marjorie J. Thompson; for more information, 740-373-1512.

Tuesday

GriefShare Support, Tuesday, Feb. 16, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., and Thursday, Feb. 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in parish hall (social room), of St. Paul's Evangelical Church, 401 Fifth St., Marietta; it is two 13-week seminars; materials specifically address topics and issues for anyone who is grieving the death of a loved one; content is Christ-centered and biblical; GriefShare is a support group that meets weekly for 13 weeks and presented three-phases — video seminar, group discussion and personal workbook. Pre-registration is recommended,

however an "open door" policy is honored. Participation can be at anytime during the 13 weeks; for registration and information, 740-585-2087 and 740-336-9749.

Bible study, 9:30 a.m., Tuesday mornings, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 401 Scammel St., Marietta, in fellowship hall; everyone welcome; 740-373-1716.

M.O.W. (Men of the Word), men's bible study, 7 to 8 p.m., Tuesdays, at First Church of the Nazarene, 100 Mill Creek Road, Marietta; 740-373-5406 or e-mail mfcfnaz@sbcglobal.net

Bible study, 7 p.m., Tuesdays, The Salvation Army of Marietta, 136 Front St.; Home League (women's fellowship), 6 p.m. Tuesdays; and Men's Club (men's fellowship), 6 p.m., Tuesdays; 740-373-4043.

Wednesday

Midweek services during Lent, sponsored by Beverly-Waterford Ministerial Fellowship; all services are on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. except for the concluding service on Good Friday at 7:30 p.m.; ministers will exchange churches to give the sermon — Feb. 17, Beverly Presbyterian, the Rev. Russell White; Feb. 24, Watertown Presbyterian, the Rev. Robert Kawa; March 2, Waterford

United Methodist, the Rev. Tom O'Connor; March 9, St. Bernard's Catholic, the Rev. John Harra; March 16, Smith Chapel United Methodist, the Rev. Karl Kesselring; March 25, Beverly United Methodist, the Rev. Pamela Lashley.

Ash Wednesday service, noon and 7 p.m., Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; for more information, 740-373-1512; service will be cancelled if Marietta City Schools are closed.

Holy communion service, noon, every Wednesday, Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster St., Marietta; service will be cancelled if Marietta City Schools are closed; for more information, 740-373-1512.

Awana program for area youngsters, at Twin Rivers Baptist Church at 110 D.A.V. Road, Whipple; classes held from 7 to 8:15 p.m. each Wednesday from September through May, throughout the school year, for boys and girls through the sixth grade; each evening's session will include lesson time, Bible verse memorization, snacks and games; Awana classes are conducted for "Cubbies," for preschoolers; "Sparks," for children in kindergarten through the second grade; and "Truth &

Training," for students in third through sixth grades; also at 7 p.m. each Wednesday there is a teen class for students in grades seven through 12, and an adult Bible class; Twin Rivers Baptist Church is on D.A.V. Road, off Ohio 821, and is located just 300 yards north of Exit 6 off Interstate 77; a bus route is available to pick up boys and girls for the Awana program; 740-376-0440.

Adult bible study, 7 p.m., each Wednesday, at First Church of the Nazarene, 100 Mill Creek Road, Marietta, studying the book of Ecclesiastes; public invited to attend; 740-373-5406 or e-mail mfcfnaz@sbcglobal.net

W.O.W. (Women of the Word), ladies bible study, 7 p.m., Wednesdays, at First Church of the Nazarene, 100 Mill Creek Road, Marietta; starting Feb. 10, a new study with the book "Women of the Word"; call the church and order a book to participate; all women welcome, 740-373-5406 or e-mail mfcfnaz@sbcglobal.net.

Teen bible study, 7 p.m., Wednesdays, at First Church of the Nazarene, 100 Mill Creek Road; teens welcome to attend; fellowship, games and bible study; for more