

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
February 8, 2026 **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins. Therefore, whoever limits the fast to the deprivation of food, he is the one who, in reality, abhors and ridicules the fast. Are you fasting? Show me your fast with your works. Which works? If you see someone who is poor, show him mercy. If you see an enemy, reconcile with him. If you see a friend who is becoming successful, do not be jealous of him! In other words, not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well. Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness. Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others... Let your hearing also fast . The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations. Let the mouth fast from disgraceful and abusive words, because, what gain is there when, on the one hand we avoid eating chicken and fish and, on the other, we chew-up and consume our brothers?” – *John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople (Homily on Fasting)*

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE

GATHERING **Welcome,**
Announcements, Celebrations

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; They ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side.

"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do



today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong,

and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;

you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

***OPENING HYMN “*Lord, I Want to Be a Christian*” (UMH # 402)**

1. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

2. Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

3. Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you spoke your word and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ. Fill all creation with that word again, so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples, we may become one living body, your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS (pastor)

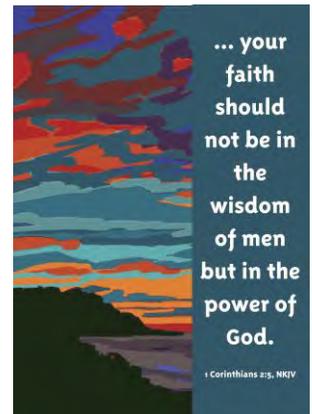
SILENT PRAYER (pastor)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all)

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.



Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

from Psalm 51:1-4, 7-10

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

***GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 5:1-2, 13-20

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying ...

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp put it under the bushel basket; rather they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."



MESSAGE

“What a Difference!”

Kirk Yenerall, Certified Lay Minister

HYMN

“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

UMH # 103

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes, most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
2. Unresting, unceasing, and silent as light, nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might; thy justice like mountains high soaring above thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
3. To all, life thou givest, to both great and small; in all life thou livest, the true life of all; we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree, and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.

4. Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light; thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight; all laud we would render: O help us to see 'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

(UMH # 95)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

(from *"All Good Gifts,"* John Tebelak and Stephen Schwartz (*Godspell*))

We thank thee now, O Father, for all things bright and good, the seedtime and the harvest; our life, our health our food. No gifts have we to offer for all thy love imparts but that which thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts. Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (pastor)

O God of light, your searching Spirit reveals and illumines your presence in creation. Shine your radiant holiness into our lives, that we may offer our hands and hearts to your work. Grant that, in the name of Jesus, who chased away the storm on the sea to bring calm and sunny skies, we may work to heal and shelter our neighbors. Grant that, through the name of the One whose garments gleamed with light on the mountain, we may labor to feed and clothe those in need. Grant that, by the name of the Holy Child whose star shone bright above Bethlehem, we will strive to break every yoke and silence evil tongues. Glorify yourself, O Light of the World, in us, who would be your servants and friends. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

***"Seek Ye First"* (three times)**

(UMH # 405)

1. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Hallelu, Hallelujah

2. Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Hallelu, Hallelujah

BENEDICTION (pastor)

after 2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. *Amen.*

POSTLUDE

Beverly J, Matthews, PsyD
Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
217 825 9010

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 36

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Sun. Feb. 15 8:00 am Men's Breakfast; Fellowship Hall

Sun. Feb. 15 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Feb. 15 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

Wed. Feb. 18 4:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service

Sun. Feb. 22 8:30 am Confirmation Class

Sun. Feb. 22 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Feb. 22 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

Sun. Mar. 01 8:30 am Confirmation Class

Sun. Mar. 01 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Mar. 01 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

Sun. Mar. 01 11:15 am Trustee's meeting, Pastor's Office

Sun. Mar. 08 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Mar. 08 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 11 Doug Huggins

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal, cereal bars or oatmeal; canned fruits and vegetables; canned soup; canned pasta; mac and cheese; shampoo; and antiperspirant. Cash donations are always welcome. **CEREAL Competition** A competition between the ladies and gentlemen of Macon UMC has begun collecting cereal for the Interchurch food pantry ending February 28, 2026.

SPEAKER SCHEDULE

- Feb. 15 Keith Baker, Lay Speaker
Feb. 22 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
Mar. 01 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
Mar. 08 Kirk Yenerall, Certified Lay Minister
Mar. 15 Keith Baker, Lay Speaker
Mar. 22 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
Mar. 29 Mark Dallner, Lay Speaker

CHURCH FINANCES 2025

Finances for our church finished in the black for 2025. The ending balance in our checking account is \$17,361, thanks to your faithful giving. It is always good to have a rainy-day fund. During our last checkup on our furnace boiler, the service technician estimated a new furnace boiler could be \$50,000 to \$60,000.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation class will be first and fourth Sundays at 8:30 am for one hour in the pastor's office using the book Confirm which can be purchased online through Cokesbury.

BOOK FOR GRIEF

I have books for Grief Share in the trunk of my car if anyone is interested. They are free and are spiritually based.

