



February 28, 2025

GROWING IN CHRIST TO SERVE THE WORLD LENT



Lent is a season of preparation — a time to draw closer to God and grow as disciples of Jesus. It began as a 40-day journey for early Christians, especially those preparing for baptism on Easter Sunday. That Easter celebration marked a new beginning, and over time, Lent became a meaningful season for all

believers to deepen their faith.

This year, Lent begins on March 5th, and we invite you to mark the start of this sacred season by joining us for our Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. Ash Wednesday is a powerful reminder of our humanity and our need for a relationship with God — a time to pause, reflect, and open our hearts to his grace.

Throughout Lent, we are excited to journey through the Gospel of John with our message series, *Come and See*. John offers a unique perspective on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, revealing the hand of God at work in every moment. As one of Jesus' closest disciples, John gives us a front-row seat to the miracles, the teachings, and the incredible love of Christ.

Here's how you can engage and grow during Lent:

- **Sunday Mornings:** Each week, we'll dive into the major themes of John's Gospel, discovering how Jesus reveals God's power and love.
- **Study Guide:** Take your faith deeper by using the *Come and See* Study Guide — perfect for personal reflection or small group discussions. Gather some friends, start a conversation, and grow together.
- **John Reading Plan:** Pick up a bookmark with our Lent reading plan. Let's walk through John's

Gospel as a church family, listening to his full testimony of who Jesus is.

For me, John's Gospel holds a special place in my heart. It was the first book of the Bible I read after giving my life to Christ in July of 1992. It shaped my understanding of what it means to follow Jesus and reminded me that God does amazing things when we believe.

That's why this series is called *Come and See*. Just as Jesus invited his first disciples to follow Him and witness God's work, we too can extend that invitation to others. Lent and Easter are seasons when hearts are open — a perfect time to invite someone to experience the hope and love of Jesus. Whether it's a friend, neighbor, or coworker, encourage them to simply "come and see" what God is doing at Marion Methodist — in our worship, small groups, fellowship, and service.

I truly believe that as we walk through John's Gospel together, we will be reminded of God's amazing love and the incredible ways He continues to work in our lives today.

Join us this Lent — let's *Come and See* all that Jesus has done and all he is still doing.

In CHRIST,
Pastor James



CONTACT US:

Church Office
319-377-4856

info@marionmethodist.org

James Parks
Lead Pastor
913-787-1823

jparks@marionmethodist.org

Helen Parks
Lead Pastor
913-710-4443

hparks@marionmethodist.org

Vicki Standley
Minister of Pastoral Care
319-310-5195

vstandley@marionmethodist.org

Harvest Market Donations

The Marion Methodist Women have been very pleased to have had the task of selecting nonprofit organizations to share our Harvest Market profit of \$9,300. After discussing several organizations, we voted on 12 with the results and donations as listed below:

Habitat for Humanity	\$2,000
His Hands Free Clinic	\$2,000
Willis Dady	\$2,000
Student Lunch Funds	\$3,000
<i>Linn-Mar and Marion Independent School Districts receiving \$1,500 each</i>	
Marion Methodist Men	\$350 for WRAP (Wheelchair Ramp Accessibility Program)

Thank you for all the ways you contributed to this successful support of God's work.

Carolyn Munson, MMW President

MARION METHODIST GARDEN MINISTRY

There is a place for you in the Marion Methodist Garden Ministry. Young or old, green thumb or brand new to gardening, everyone is welcome. Visit the link below for a current list of activities and opportunities or email Gwyn.Erb@gmail.com for more details.



Our annual spring planning meeting will be held **Wednesday, March 12 from 5-5:30 in the outbuilding.**

We'll be praying about establishing a cutting garden, talking about amending and caring for our raised beds and 4:12 pumpkin plots and hearing about lettuce, kale, and cabbage plantings for our ministry partners at Feed Iowa First.

View the activity schedule at MarionMethodist.org/News/Garden

Looking forward to seeing you in the garden!

Joys and Concerns

DEATHS:

February 14: Cyndy Wiseman, mother of Brianna (Jamie) Wilson

February 23: Carolyn McElwain, wife of Norman McElwain

March Food Pantry Item - Peanut Butter

Churches of Marion Food Pantry
Monthly Food Drive
MARCH COLLECTION ITEM
PEANUT BUTTER

Bring collection item to the Mission Depot in The Center

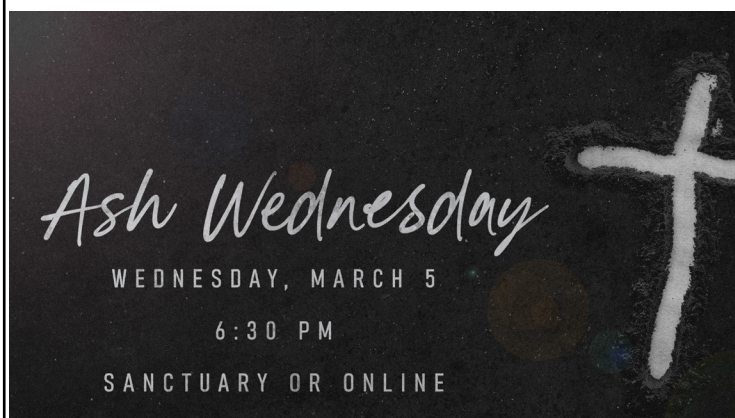
*New collection item each month!

Welcome New Members on February 16!



Front row, L-R: Laura Novak, Dora Nielson, Sandy McNeal, Jackie Sanders, Valerie Freie, DiAnne Meredith, Katia Burdick

Back row, L-R: Liz and Bud Hinzie, Collin Fristad, Zoey Sander, Chris Sander, Cindy and Jeff Linder, Tori Mills, Dan Burdick, John Nelson, Hayden Nelson (preparatory member)



Consultation Update

We are excited to share that Church Council unanimously voted to approve a Priority Based Action Plan for Marion Methodist at their meeting on February 17. This will be a three year plan with priorities to help our church focus the ministries of our church in the direction God is calling us. This scripturally based plan is being prayerfully put together and details will be shared with the congregation after Lent.

We are creating 3 task forces to help discern the strategies needed to make this ministry action plan happen over the next three years.

- **Ignite the Light's** priority is reaching all generations.
- **Be the Light** is focused on connecting with Jesus and others
- **Share the Light** task force will find ways for us to engage our neighbors.

If you are interested in joining one of these task forces, please email hparks@marionmethodist.org and let Pastor Helen know which task force you would like to join.

Most importantly, be in prayer for our Marion Methodist leadership as we focus on God's will for our church and the community around us.

Pastoral Care Message- Praying

As a church family, one of the most important things we do is pray for each other. There's nothing more powerful than knowing that others are praying for us and encouraging and supporting us with their prayers. It's probably also one of the most challenging things to do for each other; first because we don't always know others' prayer concerns and on the flip side, we don't always let others know that we need prayer.



At Marion Methodist, we have several avenues already available to pray with and for each other. In many of our Bible study groups, circles, men's and women's groups, prayer is a key element of the group and concerns are regularly shared and prayed over. Also, on our website is a link that will allow you to submit a prayer which is then shared with the pastoral staff and our prayer team. There are also cards in the sanctuary chair pockets you can fill out with a prayer which also goes to the staff and prayer team unless it's meant to be confidential.

Coming soon, we'll be adding a virtual prayer wall, one that will be accessible 24/7 and allow you not only to share a prayer but also see that others are praying for you, and you will see others' prayers also. Once a prayer has been submitted it will go on the "prayer wall", then as others are scrolling through the submitted prayers, they can click on an icon that says "Prayed" which will indicate that others have prayed for each concern. You can submit your name along with the prayer or you can remain anonymous if you choose. What a powerful way to invite others into your life through prayer and let others know that you are praying for them as well.

Richard Foster, an author of renowned books on prayer and spiritual disciplines has said, "Of all spiritual disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father." I would add that it brings us into communion with each other in the body of Christ as we care for and love each other through prayer. When we open our hearts to pray, it allows us to take our hands off the steering wheel and let God take control. We share our request knowing full well that ultimately we're placing those we love, or their circumstances into God's hands so that he will do what is best from his perspective, not ours.



In the end what matters is that we open our hearts and take all our joys and sorrows, our greatest accomplishments and our deepest disappointments and put them in God's strong hands and allow others to join us in lifting up those prayers to God. There's tremendous

power when the people of God pray together, whether for themselves, their families, neighborhoods, or the world around us.

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

God's blessings to you,
Vicki



Summer Games is Open for Registrations!

Get ready for the **best, most unforgettable week of your child's summer!** If you have a 6th-12th grader, this is the camp experience they won't want to miss. **Summer Games is packed with fun, friendships, and faith-filled moments** that will leave a lasting impact.

Why Summer Games?

Marion Methodist has been sending students to this incredible camp for years because we believe it plays a powerful role in shaping the spiritual lives of teens and preteens. This is a week of growth, adventure, and life-changing experiences!

Huge Discount Alert!

Marion Methodist is once again making it even easier for your student to attend by covering \$300 of the camp tuition! That means instead of \$449, your cost is just \$149!

Don't Wait—Spots Fill Fast!

If you have any questions, reach out to Gonzo at gsantillan@marionmethodist.org.

Tell a friend, spread the word, and register your child for the best week of the summer!

You Are Invited

X, Y, Zers

(eXtra Years with Zest)
55+ Years

Thursday, March 13 at 5:30PM

BINGO provided by Keystone Place

Serving: Breakfast for dinner



5050 REC Drive
Marion, IA 52302

MarionMethodist.org/Events

Please RSVP by Sunday, March 9 to reserve your meal. Register (\$15) on the Church App.

X, Y, Zers Upcoming Speakers:

April 10 ~ Peter Teahen and John Ockenfels— Polio pilots

May 8 ~ Ashley Grimm with Caring Transitions

June 12 ~ Details coming soon!

July 10 ~ Jamie Henley from Giving Tree Theatre

August 14 ~ Game night ~ Bring a favorite game to share

PATHfinders

CHILDRENS MINISTRY



All kids (nursery through elementary age) are welcome on Sundays during 8:15 or 10:15 AM Service and/or Wednesdays for 5:45PM Meal with Activities following at 6:30PM.

March 2 God Makes the Sun Stand Still (Joshua 10:1-15)

Wednesday, March 5 6:30PM
 Pathfinder Kids will have their own Ash Wednesday experience while teens and adults are in the Sanctuary. Kids can be picked up from their classrooms after the service is concluded.

March 9 & 12 God Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3)

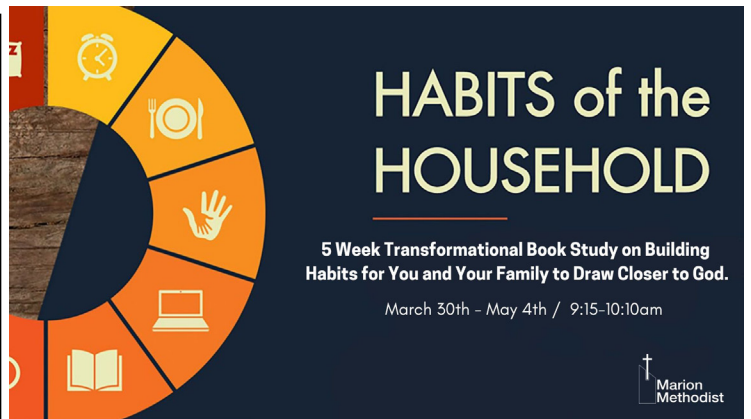
March 16 An Idol Bows to God's Ark (1 Samuel 5:1-5)

No Wednesday Night on March 19 during Spring Break

March 23 & 26 David Values Saul's Life (1 Samuel 24;26)

March 30/April 2 David Celebrates (2 Samuel 6)

Mark your Calendars for April 13: Kids will be singing & waving palm branches during 10:15AM Service. There is also a church-wide breakfast that morning. This will be a great day to invite friends and family



As a parent of four kids, all seven years old and under, I know firsthand how chaotic, hectic, and busy family life can be. Juggling work, school drop-offs, extracurricular activities, and the countless other demands of a modern family can be exhausting. However, I believe God wants to transform the way we live and interact within our households—to shape our families and make them a blessing to the world.

That is why I want to invite all parents and guardians with children still at home to join me on this transformational book study journey.

Habits of a Household is a book that has helped thousands of families build rhythms that lead to a deeper connection with God. Life with children at home is full of challenges, but what if we shifted our perspective on the time we have with our families? Even amid chaos, we can leverage these moments to build meaningful habits that draw our marriages and families closer to Jesus.

Starting on **March 30**, join me for this **five-week book study**, and come alongside other parents as we grow together in faith.

Gonzo Santillan
 Minister of Discipleship and Missions



FLY SUMMER JOB
 This Summer Join the mission of FLY and make an impact in the community

FLY Feeding Lunches to Youth

SPRING BREAK
 MARCH 17 - 21

FLY Feeding Lunches to Youth

VOLUNTEER
www.FLYMarion.org