

**First Congregational Christian  
UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST**

**March 2025**



4310 Courthouse Road; Chesterfield, VA 23832  
(804) 276-5338 [www.1st-ucc.net](http://www.1st-ucc.net) [Facebook.com/1stUCC](https://www.facebook.com/1stUCC)

## **From the Pastor – March 2025**

In high school, I had a teammate on the varsity basketball team who was catechized in the United Methodist Church. One February after practice, he asked me what I was giving up for Lent. I looked at him with some confusion. “Lint?” I asked. “No, *Lent*,” he responded. I reasoned that his South Carolinian drawl was causing him to mispronounce “lint”, but then again, I wondered, what problem did he have with the way *I* was saying it?

“You know what I’m talking about, Daniel, don’t you? I know you’re, like, really involved with church, right? Aren’t you giving up anything for Lent?” His face took on an expression of confusion and so did mine. In my mind’s eye, I was imagining a random man digging lint out of his pocket and dropping the dirty-fluff onto the floor as some weirdly symbolic kind of spiritual practice.

I responded. “No, I don’t think I’m giving anything up for lint. I’ve never even heard of that.” My teammate’s facial expression went from surprise to one of wide-eyed disbelief. “It’s Lent... and you are *Christian*, aren’t you?” He was flabbergasted. “Yeah, I’m Christian,” I asserted, “but what does that have to do with lint?”

We went through another couple of rounds with the lint/Lent confusion, until he frustratingly spelled it out for me. “L-E-N-T, *Lent!*”. “Oh, L-EEEE-N-T? I’ve never heard of that – in church or anywhere”, I responded. My teammate shook his head as he walked away saying, “your church is weird.”

*This, my friends, was my first introduction to the season of Lent.*

I didn’t grow up practicing, or even learning about, the church’s liturgical seasons and practices. We had Christmas Day, Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday; days like Good Friday and Pentecost Sunday were sometimes mentioned, but not really observed with any special practices. All of that stuff was considered “too Catholic”.

It wasn’t until seminary when I experienced a proper introduction to the liturgical season of Lent and it’s 40+ days of fasting. And when I did, fasting from things we delighted in – like chocolate or alcohol – actually seemed kind of fun and different. But over the years, Lenten fasting started to feel boring and meaningless, even to the point of wanting to give up Lent for Lent.

In the last few years I’ve been asking more pointedly the question that God asks through the prophet Isaiah: “Is this the fast that I choose/prefer?” (Isaiah 58:6a) This question hit differently, than it had before. At the same time, I started to hear of creative ways that people were practicing their fasts.

Traditional fasts are useful if the deprivation from the thing you’re fasting from actually contributes something positive to your life. Alternatively, replacement fasts can help you exchange negative or less-positive practices with positive and beneficial things – like replacing social media scrolling with reading a non-fiction book, or buying/eating from local and BIPOC owned businesses instead of from mega-stores.

Another method of fasting is to fast from practices that weigh you down. This is more vague and requires more vigilance and honest reflection, but what would it look like in your daily experience to fast from worry, avoidance, complacency, or shame? What would fasting from these things cause you to “feast” on instead?

You could decide from the outset if your fast is an “extra effort” you’re taking on for the season of Lent, or if the season of Lent is a trial run for a change that could become permanent.

If you decide to give something up for Lent, whatever it is, let be something that brings you closer to God and to creation. Let the fruits of the Spirit grow in them – both to be blessed and to bless others. And whatever you do, be careful not to make your fasting about mere deprivation for the purpose of suffering. God would rather have your pocket lint.

## WORSHIP CALENDAR Sundays at 11:00 AM

Worship is livestreamed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/1stUCC>

- March 2**                    **Transfiguration Sunday (Communion Celebrated)**  
Luke 9:28-36; “Listening to Jesus” with Rev. Willson
- March 9**                    **First Sunday in Lent**  
Luke 4:1-13; “Fasting & Feasting According to Jesus” with Rev. Willson  
**Daylight Savings Time Begins**
- March 16**                   **Second Sunday in Lent**  
Luke 13:31-35; “Fasting from Rejection, Feasting on Acceptance”  
with Rev. Willson
- March 23**                   **Third Sunday in Lent**  
Luke 13:1-9; “Fasting from Complacency, Feasting on Change”  
with Rev. Willson
- March 30**                   **Fourth Sunday in Lent - *One Great Hour of Sharing***  
Luke 15:1-32; “Fasting from Exclusion, Feasting on Solidarity”  
with Rev. Willson



### Wednesday, March 5

Drive-by imposition of ashes 8:30 – 10 AM  
All are welcome to drive by the church to receive  
imposition of ashes from their vehicle.

Ash Wednesday worship service – 6 PM



**March Birthdays**

Herschell Emery 3/05  
Kishon Lee 3/09  
John Meszaros 3/10  
Hannah Hinton 3/26  
Connie Lewis 3/26

**March Anniversaries**

3/19 Doug & Sharon Macauley



**Directory Update**

Rev. Daniel Willson  
1810 E. Cary St. Apt. MG08  
Richmond, VA 23223-7562



Along with all of "Metro Richmond at Prayer," during March let's pray for the churches and religious institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.

Our monthly Black Lives Matter protests continue. Wear a mask, bring a sign, and join us along Courthouse Road in front of the church after worship on **Sunday, Mar 16<sup>th</sup>**.



**Men's Fellowship Breakfast**

Saturday, March 15, 9 AM  
Eggs Up Grill  
2003 Huguenot Rd

**Women's Fellowship Meeting  
Sunday, March 9**

Join us after worship to plan for the upcoming Buy Nothing Event and the Easter Brunch. Lunch will be provided.



**RISC Justice Rally  
Monday, March 3  
7 PM**

**Second Baptist Church Southside**

This is especially for all clergy, team leaders, and network members, but **all** are welcome. RISC leadership will present the specific set of "asks" for this year's Nehemiah Action on March 25, and provide detailed reports on recent preliminary meetings with officials.

**RISC Nehemiah Action**

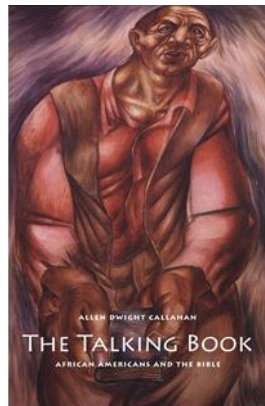
**Tuesday, March 25  
6:30 PM  
St. Paul's Baptist Church**

Over the past months, the RISC issues committees have been working hard behind the scenes doing research and meeting individually with various community leaders to identify and advocate for solutions to gun violence and the lack of safe and affordable housing. **Now it is our turn to stand up for justice** by showing up in large numbers at the Nehemiah Action on March 25 to bring the power of the people to bear on our decision makers as we advocate for solutions. **This is our central role as a Justice Ministry congregation** in helping to make the vision of justice a reality. **Everyone** in the congregation is encouraged to join with us to show up as justice-seekers at the Nehemiah Action. Our RISC Justice Team will work on arranging carpooling for those who need it. Mark your calendars now, and watch for additional information by email.

## Adult Faith Formation Sundays at 9:30 AM

Through April 6 we are continuing our discussion of *The Talking Book: African Americans and the Bible* by Allen Dwight Callahan. Join us each Sunday at 9:30 AM whether or not you've read the week's reading selection, as we discuss the modern history of the church in America!

- Mar 02 – Ch 5a (p 83-113)
- Mar 09 – Ch 5b (p 113-137)
- Mar 16 – Ch 6a (p 138-161)
- Mar 23 – Ch 6b (p 161-184)
- Mar 30 – Ch 7a (p 185-219)
- Apr 06 – Ch 7b & Postscript  
pp 219-246)



**EARTH HOUR  
2025  
8:30 – 9:30 PM  
Sat., March 22**

Earth Hour is the world's largest environmental movement for the planet, involving 178 countries and territories worldwide to empower an interconnected global community to achieve tangible environmental outcomes for our living planet. It raises awareness of the effects of climate change by asking people to switch off lights at homes and businesses for an hour, and make noise for climate change action. **Switch off your lights for an hour on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at 8:30 pm your local time.**

Share your action on social media!

## Thanks to everyone who donated to our Souper Bowl of Caring offering!

These funds will be used to support the work of Shalom Farms.

**THANK YOU!**  
First Congregational Christian UCC  
**\$604.00**

Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed, and the nation has seen the impact of people working together to help those in need. Thank you for working to transform the time around the Souper Bowl into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.

**February 9, 2025**

**TACKLE HUNGER**

*Alison Reese*  
Alison Reese  
Executive Director  
Tackle Hunger: Home of the  
Souper Bowl of Caring



**Buy Nothing Day  
Saturday, April 26  
9 AM – 1 PM**

Gather your unwanted but still useable items together, and plan to bring them to church on Saturday, April 26 to "gift" them to someone else. We will invite those in need in the wider community to come and "shop" at this event. The Buy Nothing movement was started in 2013 with the mission to build community by connecting people through local gifting, and to reduce our impact on the environment by promoting the re-use of items we no longer need or want. Thanks to Women's Fellowship for coordinating this event again this year!



## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for people in need.

You offer light when disasters hit.

You offer light when conditions threaten families and communities.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for communities here and across the globe.

You offer light that restores structures and transforms lives.

You offer light that blesses others to shine.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light that shines today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

Your contributions make a difference. Your dollars count. Give generously.

**Be the light.**

Please indicate OGHS on the memo line of your checks or Venmo payments. Thanks!



# Richmond Interfaith Iftar

**Sat. March 8 at 5:30**

Bon Air Presbyterian Church  
9201 W Huguenot Rd.  
Richmond, VA 23235

Join us for the 6th Annual Richmond community iftar. This year we will be fundraising for Anera's humanitarian aid projects in Gaza.

Let's come together for a meaningful evening, where our collective support can make a significant difference. By attending, you'll be part of a community effort to #ServeHope to the people of Gaza.

**Free event - just bring a dish to share!**



**Register with QR or [anera.org/richmond](https://anera.org/richmond)**

# RISC Nehemiah Action!



*"AND I CALLED A GREAT ASSEMBLY TO DEAL WITH THE NOBLES AND OFFICIALS." NEH 5:7*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 25th**  
**6:30 - 8:30 pm**

**DOORS OPEN AT 5:30**  
**CHILDCARE PROVIDED**

**ST PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**4247 CREIGHTON RD**



Join 27 faith communities in seeking commitments from Mayor Avula for affordable housing, mobile home repairs, & reducing gun violence.