



Meridian United Methodist  
**Church of the  
 Warm Heart**

# FOOTPRINTS

February 2025

LOVING ALL. CHANGING HEARTS. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

## HIGHLIGHTED HAPPENINGS

### Groundhog Feed

The United Methodist Men invite you to join us for our annual Groundhog Dinner. Stop by the FLC on February 1st from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. for a sausage dinner (it's ground hog, get it?). \$15 for adults and \$5 for children.



### SUNDAY WORSHIP

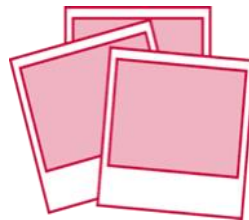
9:30 a.m.  
 11:15 a.m.

\*Both services are broadcast online.\*

### Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

2:00 p.m.

### Directory Update



Time to give the directory a refresh. Thom Juul will be available starting at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, Feb 23rd if you'd like to update your photo.

Or if you already have a photo you'd like us to use, email it to [cc@meridianumc.com](mailto:cc@meridianumc.com) (don't forget to include your names!)

### SERMON SERIES February 2025

02.02.2025

#### Stop Floundering

Ps 23:1; Phil 4:11; II Cor 12:6-10



02.09.2025

#### Youth Sunday

The Holy Spirit



02.16.2025

#### Who Do We Take for Granted?

Rom 1:8-10; Acts 20:1-3a; Luke 22:14-15



02.23.2025

#### Let Down Your Hair

Isa 43:1-3a; Ps 31:9-10,12; John 16:31-32

### Pancake Breakfast

BSA Troop #1 is hosting their annual pancake breakfast in the FLC on February 22nd. Drop by from 8:00 - 11:30 a.m. for all you can eat pancakes, sausage, eggs, & hashbrowns, plus a silent auction. The cost is \$5 per person (kids 5 and under eat free with a paying adult).



### New Members Class



There will be a new Members class after second service on Sunday, March 2nd. Join us to learn what we're all about here at the church of the Warm Heart (plus, we'll even feed you!). Contact the church office to get signed up.

### Youth Sunday

Make sure to join us on Sunday, February 9th to show our Warm Heart Youth our love and support as they take charge and lead us in worship.



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## STAFF

- Senior Pastor** (ext. 104)  
Rev. Mike Benischek [pastormike@meridianumc.com](mailto:pastormike@meridianumc.com)
- Minister of Congregational Care** (ext. 105)  
Lisa Miller [care@meridianumc.com](mailto:care@meridianumc.com)
- Minister of Worship Arts** **208-608-2520**  
Debbie Jones [worshiparts@meridianumc.com](mailto:worshiparts@meridianumc.com)
- Family Minister (Children and Youth)** **734-316-9517**  
Nicole Walker [family@meridianumc.com](mailto:family@meridianumc.com)
- Office Manager** (ext. 102)  
Angela Perry [office@meridianumc.com](mailto:office@meridianumc.com)
- Receptionist** (ext. 101)  
Lucinda Dyer [receptionist@meridianumc.com](mailto:receptionist@meridianumc.com)
- Bookkeeper**  
Maria Akers [bookkeeper@meridianumc.com](mailto:bookkeeper@meridianumc.com)
- Communications Coordinator** (ext. 103)  
**Video Production**  
Jacob Walker [cc@meridianumc.com](mailto:cc@meridianumc.com)  
[production@meridianumc.com](mailto:production@meridianumc.com)
- Nursery Coordinator**  
Jessie Layton [nursery@meridianumc.com](mailto:nursery@meridianumc.com)
- Organist**  
Kristine Ciulla [organist@meridianumc.com](mailto:organist@meridianumc.com)
- Facility Personnel**  
Dave Scarpellini [maintenance@meridianumc.com](mailto:maintenance@meridianumc.com) (M - Th)  
Don Woods [dandwoods@gmail.com](mailto:dandwoods@gmail.com) (F - Sun)

# February

### NEW MEMBERS:

### DEATHS:

*Please pray for the families of...*

### BAPTISMS:

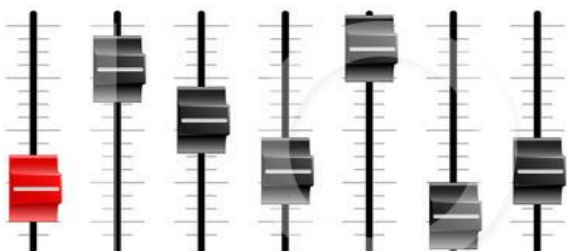
## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- Administrative Council Chair** Dennis Moberly
- Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair** Margaret Pridmore
- Trustees Chair** Ron Pridmore
- Systems Administrator** Integrity Computer Consultants
- Finance Chair** Lori Jones
- Treasurer** Lori Jones
- Financial Secretary** Diane Brister
- Futures Team Chair** Lori Jones
- United Methodist Men President** Ed Emmel
- United Women in Faith President** Dixie Jacky
- Lay Chaplain Coordinator** Faye Gabriel
- Lay Chaplains** Emma Jean Bedsole, Phyllis & Gordon Bouza, Don Brister, Faye Gabriel, Ruth Hayes, Gary Himes, Dixie Jacky, Donna Melville, Lisa Miller, Carole Ravine, Mary Rich, Carol Rounds, Eloise Stemple
- Health and Wellness Co-Coordinators**  
Lisa Miller, Sue Mattison

## JOIN THE TECH TEAM!

The tech team is looking for help running sound and video during Sunday services. No experience necessary – we'll train you! Recent volunteers have described it as "way easier than I thought". For more info, contact Debbie Jones:

[worshiparts@meridianumc.com](mailto:worshiparts@meridianumc.com)



## CHURCH INFORMATION

### MERIDIAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

240 E. Idaho Ave. Meridian, ID 83642  
**235 E. Pine Ave. Meridian, ID 83642** - Mailing Address  
 Phone: **208.888.2245** Fax: **208.888.5741**  
 Email: [office@meridianumc.com](mailto:office@meridianumc.com)  
 Website: [www.meridianumc.com](http://www.meridianumc.com)  
 Facebook: **Meridian United Methodist Church**

### Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
 Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Prayer & Praise Requests - [prayer@meridianumc.com](mailto:prayer@meridianumc.com)**

# PASTOR MIKE'S MUSINGS

Dear Warm Heart Friends and Family,

*"Standing on the promises I cannot fall  
Listening every moment to the Spirit's call,  
Resting in my Savior as my all in all,  
Standing on the promises of God."*

Thus ends one of my favorite hymns.

In the early days of our country, a weary traveler came to the banks of Mississippi River for first time. There was no bridge, of course. It was early winter, and the surface of the mighty river was covered with ice. Could he dare cross over? Would the uncertain ice be able to bear his weight?



Night was falling, and it was urgent that he reach the other side. Finally, after much hesitation and with many fears, he began to creep cautiously across the surface of the ice on his hands and knees. He thought that he might distribute his weight as much as possible to keep the ice from breaking beneath him. About halfway over, he heard the sound of singing behind him. Suddenly a man, driving a horse-drawn load of coal across the ice, came flying by him, singing merrily as he went on his way. Here our hero was—on his hands and knees, trembling lest the ice was not strong enough to bear him up—then came the stranger, along with his horses and sleigh and load of coal, upheld by the same ice on which our hero was creeping!

This is sometimes how we treat God's promises. They are as sure and solid as can possibly be, but because of our scary circumstances, we timidly tremble forth upon them as if our belief in them somehow will determine their reliability. Nothing could be further from the truth! God's promises are solid because of who God is. We are to CONFIDENTLY go forth, because God is loving and good and His Word will never fail us! We can confidently trust his promises!

So I have to ask myself sometimes: Am I standing on the promises, or just sitting on the promises?

May you have a wonderful week, knowing full well that God is faithful.

See you in church on Sunday,  
Pastor Mike

P.S. I know it seems like Advent just ended (okay, maybe because it did), but Lent is coming up fast. Please consider joining us on Ash Wednesday for the imposition of ashes, and for our upcoming Lenten Study. Here are some details:



## ASH WEDNESDAY

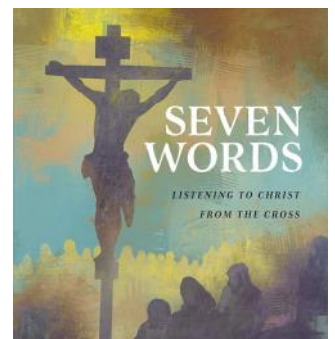
March 5, 12:30 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.

Join Pastor Mike (that's me!) in the sanctuary for a short devotional followed by the imposition of ashes.

## LENTEN STUDY

Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
6 Weeks, March 12-April 16th, in the Sanctuary

The most difficult part of Lent is, of course, contemplating our Savior on the cross: the physical pain, the humiliation, and the undeniable injustice. Our hearts break. It's natural to try and avoid the reality of how Jesus died, but it is from the cross that Jesus shows his deepest love for us. As Jesus draws his final breath and utters his last words, it is then that his deep trust in the Father and his divine glory are revealed. Please join us in our study *Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross*. Sign up with the church office by Wednesday, March 5th.





# MINISTRIES & NEWS

## FAMILY MINISTRIES

I want to express my deepest thanks to each and every one of you for being a part of this amazing ministry. Your smiles, hugs, and enthusiasm have made every Sunday, every Bible Builders, every event, and every moment memorable.

I'm so very grateful for the opportunity to have watched the kiddos grow, learn, and thrive in their faith. It's been an honor and blessing to be a small part of their spiritual journeys.

Thank you again for trusting me with your kiddos' spiritual growth and the privilege of serving as your Children's Minister. As I close this chapter and start a new one, I'll carry the memories and lessons learned from the kiddos in my heart forever.

Malia Paz  
Children's Minister, September 2023 - January 2025

Miss Malia is moving on, but the Children's Ministry is here to stay! Miss Nicole is ready to step into Bible Builders on Wednesday evenings, and our faithful team of volunteer Sunday School teachers will keep on teaching and loving our kiddos on Sunday mornings.

February dates to note:

**Wednesdays, all month — Bible Builders**  
6:00 - 7:30 p.m., Upper Room

**Sunday, February 9 — Kids in Service for Youth Sunday**  
During both services, the kiddos will be invited to stay in the church while the youth lead us! Nursery will be open.

**Sunday, February 23 — Third Grade Bible Presentation**  
Third graders will receive Bibles during Children's Time and participate in a special class during Sunday School!

**Sunday, February 23 — Musical Rehearsal**  
12:00 - 1:00 p.m., FLC

Keep an eye out for emails from [family@meridianumc.com](mailto:family@meridianumc.com), and thank you for your abundant patience and grace during this time of transition!

P.S. Parents Night Out will be coming back in March, and plans are in the works for a family night of indoor camping in the FLC during spring break!

February is an exciting month for the youth group, with Youth Sunday and our Winter Retreat on back to back weekends! We've also got some "regular" youth group meetings and (of course) our monthly spot working the Backpack Program. Inbetweeners keeps going strong this month, too.

Register for the **winter retreat** by talking with Nicole; cost is just \$75 and includes lodging, meals, and a dip in a hot springs pool!

Events for **812 Youth Group** and **Inbetweeners**:

**Sundays, February 2 and 23 — 812 Youth Group**  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Youth Room

**Winter Youth Retreat (Grades 7-12)**  
Sat, Feb 15, 9:30 a.m. – Mon, Feb 17, noonish  
Pilgrim Cove in McCall, Idaho

**Wednesdays, Feb 5, 12, 19, and 26 — Inbetweeners**  
6:00 – 7:45 p.m., Sanctuary and Youth Room

Events for **all youth**:

**Saturday, February 8 — Youth Sunday Rehearsal**  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Sanctuary

**Sunday, February 9 — Youth Sunday**  
8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

**Service opportunities for all youth:**

**Tuesday, February 11 — Backpack Program**  
3:30 – 4:30ish p.m., Meridian Food Bank



With gratitude for what has been and with excitement for what's to come,

Nicole Walker  
[family@meridianumc.com](mailto:family@meridianumc.com)

# MINISTRIES & NEWS

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE

*Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.  
~ Proverbs 4:23*

Love your heart! It's heart month.

February is American Heart Month, a time to focus on your heart health and take steps to prevent cardiovascular disease. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, affecting millions of lives each year. The good news? Small everyday actions can make a big difference! Here are a few things I encourage you to do:

- Know your numbers. Check your blood pressure and cholesterol regularly.
- Eat a heart healthy diet. Choose heart healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Get active! Engage in regular physical activity; even a small brisk walk during the day will do the trick.
- Quit smoking. It's strange to say, but with the creation of e-cigarettes, smoking is making a comeback. Alas, even in vapor form, tobacco is bad for your heart!

Do you have any questions about heart health? Check out my bulletin board to learn about the latest advancements in heart care and prevention strategies or stop by my office. Together, let's make this heart month a healthy one!

We have a few upcoming events for our Ladies Night Out group. First, on Thursday, February 6th, at 6 p.m. we will spend an evening at Wood Creations Boutique. They have a variety of projects to select from, and the cost depends on the project chosen. Please bring a snack to share and RSVP with me by Monday, February 3rd.

Then in March, we will be joining the United Women in Faith for their annual Days for Girls event. Every year the UWFaith organizes this sewing event to assemble hygiene kits for young women around the globe without access to basic feminine care products. If you can't sew, don't worry! There are many jobs that don't include needles and thread.

Finally, I just want to give one last plug for our February blood drive. As I write this, there are still some slots available, and it's not too late to sign up. Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs a blood transfusion, and since blood can't be manufactured, our donations are vital to saving lives!

Blessings and good health,

Lisa Miller  
[care@meridianumc.com](mailto:care@meridianumc.com)

## WORSHIP ARTS

**Handbell Concert** - Join us on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 6:30 p.m. at Central Gym (1415 6th Street South, Nampa) where your Koinonia Handbell Choir will be participating in a (**free!**) joint concert with other ringers at the Snake River Handbell Conference. The group will be under the direction of clinician Brenda Austin. Come support your handbell ringers and enjoy some beautiful music at what is projected to be the largest Snake River Conference ever!

**Organ Dedication Service** - Join us in person or online at our 9:30 a.m. service on Sunday, February 23, as we dedicate and bless our beautiful new Rodgers organ to God's glory! Guest organist for the morning will be Stacy Pointek:

Stacy Pointek, noted recording artist and composer, is especially known for his hymn arrangements and orchestral approach to the organ in worship. He is frequently called upon to conduct his popular workshops on blended worship and is widely recognized for his versatility of styles. Mr. Pointek is the Representative in North America for Rodgers Organ Company and currently resides in Boise, Idaho.



You won't want to miss this glorious service as we give thanks and bless this incredible instrument.

**Join the Cantata** - Come join the Celebration Choir as we prepare our Good Friday cantata "Who is Jesus?" for the April 18th evening worship. If you are interested in singing with the choir, but would prefer a short-term commitment – this is just what you're looking for! Rehearsals will begin in late February during our regularly scheduled choir practice times.

**Online worship hosts** - We have an opportunity to welcome an additional online worship host for the 9:30 a.m. service starting in February. If you would like to join this team in welcoming and engaging our online worshippers once a month, please contact me for more information.

**Children's Musical** - The Warm Heart Kids will be offering their spring musical, "Sermon on the Mount", on Sunday, April 27th at the 11:15 a.m. service. If you have a child (4 yrs - 5th grade) who would like to participate, just contact me for more info. We are doing our best to accommodate all kids who wish to participate, and we will be having both Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon rehearsals to do that. ALL are welcome!



Blessings,

Debbie Jones  
[worshiparts@meridianumc.com](mailto:worshiparts@meridianumc.com)



# MINISTRIES & NEWS

## FINANCIAL NEWS

Happy 2025! It is with a joyful heart that I write this newsletter after 2024 ended with such a miracle. We began the year facing a deficit of \$21,000. I am still basking in the euphoria of a surplus of \$68,543 to kick off the new year! This record-breaking ending to 2024 was due to a December giving figure of \$162,689. I felt confident that we would close our November deficit of over \$27,000 to almost breaking even, but never in my wildest dreams could I have predicted the end result. Thanks to the awesome Church of the Warm Heart in coming through once again.

For General Operations:	Dec 2024	2024 Final
<b>Given</b>	\$765,935	\$765,935
<b>Need</b>	\$59,861	\$967,392
<b>Outcome</b>	\$102,828	\$68,543

It is time to present the 2025 Budget to the entire congregation. We pride ourselves in being transparent regarding finances. We have experienced an influx of new members who are contributing to the financial position of this church. Coming from many churches, different denominations, and methods of raising funds, I'd like to explain how we set the budget. We practice faith-based giving here. You are not asked to make a pledge and then the budget is set based on those contributions. Our policy is to ask the ministers to set a request of how much will be needed to maintain and increase their area of responsibility. Certain fixed costs such as utilities, insurance and other benefits, normal maintenance, marketing, shared giving (which is set by the conference) and administrative costs are a part of the final budget. The SPPRC committee makes recommendations regarding raises for staff and starting salaries of new hires. Once all of that is compiled, the finance committee prepares the budget for a final recommendation to the Administrative Council (which is the governing body of the church). Two years ago, tweaks were made to this process and it is now much easier for each committee to participate in the process and aid in the final approval.

There are many positives as we begin 2025. Our youth and children ministries are growing, attendance is up, our on-line viewing is increasing, we have made updates to enhance our worship space, and there is a positive feeling every Sunday. With that being said, we know that unexpected events will occur and we will be asked to adjust. We are blessed with dedicated members who are willing and able to make additional gifts when needed. With all the positives listed above, it is now time to explore the 2025 budget. I have broken the budget into four categories for simplicity.

**Personnel** - Staff wages and benefits. This largest category includes four full-time and ten part-time employees. (65%)

**Property/Maintenance** - Utilities, property maintenance and repair, janitorial and snow removal services. (15%)

**Shared Ministries** - Our tithe to the Oregon-Idaho Conference includes conference wide leadership and education, worldwide services and missions. (12%)

**Local Ministries and Programs** - Budgets for each of our ministries, as well as marketing and administration costs. (7%)

For General Operations:	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
<b>Personnel</b>	\$549,194	\$463,744	\$489,931
<b>Prop/Trust</b>	\$99,900	\$116,678	\$114,200
<b>Shared Min</b>	\$75,587	\$75,787	\$92,350
<b>Local Prog</b>	\$58,075	\$41,186	\$55,650
<b>Totals</b>	\$782,756	\$697,391	\$753,331

The 2025 budget has been decreased by more than \$29,000 from the 2024 budget. However, this is still an increase of almost \$56,000 over the 2024 actuals, due to an increase in Shared Ministries, utilities, costs related to expanding our local ministries, small raises to staff, and some planned major maintenance repairs to our facilities. Let's face it-our facility is over 50 years old. Things break or need updating. Last year we made some major repairs to the FLC, had roof issues in the sanctuary, had to remove some trees, and added carpet. We are fortunate that some church members stepped up and bear costs which relieved the general budget of deficits.

Our 2025 Budget has been approved, and we will need to receive gifts of \$753,331 if we spend the entire approved budget figures. This rarely happens, because our staff is very frugal, but it takes money to run ministries!

I talk and write a lot about our deficits, but there is one more area of giving that I wish to address. The following missions are worthy of our continued support: Meridian Food Bank, Good Samaritan Fund, Memorials, NU2U, Youth Mission Trips, Scholarships, Camperships, Quilters, Card Makers, Joseph's Closet, Scouts, Veteran's Footlocker, Mirror Image, UMCOR, Refugees, Adopt a Family, Thanksgiving Boxes, and the Crop Walk. I am sorry that I cannot give you the exact amount given for these missions in 2024 (all over and above our budget) . I should have the figures for the March newsletter.

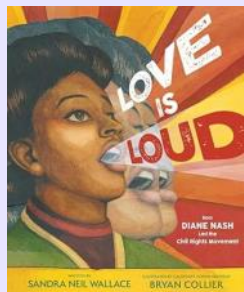
As we begin 2025, I sense an attitude of optimism in our congregation. Things are looking up and I would ask you to pray about our finances, our staff, our standing committees, our elected officials, our first responders, and our armed forces, and that God will continue to bless the Church of the Warm Heart. Please feel free to contact me (Don Brister) or Lori Jones, Finance Committee Chair, if you have questions regarding our finances. We will always take the time to meet with you to discuss your

# MINISTRIES & NEWS

## THE BOOK NOOK

Claudia Moberly

Throughout the Civil Rights Movement, men and women, black and white, stood up for what is right. One of those people was Diane Nash, whose story is told in *Love Is Loud* by Sandra Neil Wallace. Raised in a loving family, Diane grew up believing that children were more precious than diamonds, and that love is the most powerful force on earth. In her young life in Chicago, she was shielded from Jim Crow laws that separated white and black in the south, but when she went away to college in Tennessee, she saw the pervasive force of segregation. Calmly and quietly, never resorting to violence, she set out to change unjust practices. Lunch counter sit-ins, silent marches, and personal advocacy were her practices to bring about fairness, voting rights, and changes in segregation laws.



We all know the name Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. but Diane Nash? This book proves once again how powerful picture books can be in presenting information that is accessible and compelling to young people and adults. "Love is fierce. Love is strong. Love is loud."

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Dixie Jacky

This month's reflection from the UWFaith Daily Prayer Guide, spoke to me for a couple of reasons. First, it was written by a Deaconess from Idaho Falls, my former stomping grounds, and second, because the author is seeking new direction. Don't we all need this in this new year?

"My life has radically changed since her death. She moved in with me in 2000, thinking that after brainstem surgery, maybe she still had a few years. God being God, we had 23 more! When she passed there was immediate emptiness. Her spot on the sofa empty, her bedroom door, baby monitor off. There was always humor and silliness she excelled at it. I would often say, 'Mom! Get some new material!' We would laugh. She would say, 'Hey, I know the only reason you keep me around is for a laugh!' It never got old. But, what now? Since then, I've been in continuous prayer for new directions. I needed Bible verses; Jonah 2:12: 'In my distress, I called to the Lord, and he listened to my cry.' And Matthew 6: 9-15: the Lord's Prayer. These are precious ways to remind ourselves of God's presence and relationship with us. Our needs will be provided! Praise God in times of pain."

Whatever transitions you may find yourself in, God is with you. You can turn to his Word for direction and lean on your community of fellow women in faith as well!

More information on our annual Days for Girls sewing event will soon be coming out. It's been moved to March 8. Please come join us for this fun time of creating hygiene products for young women – lunch included, and no sewing experience necessary.

On February 20, the Warm Heart Book club will be discussing "A Right Worthy Woman," by Ruth P. Watson. The novel is based on the true story of Maggie Lena Walker, daughter of a formerly enslaved woman. Maggie became the first Black woman to establish and preside over a bank in the United States, as well as founding a number of other businesses. This is a Leadership Development book from the UWFaith Reading Program.

On February 24, the Sage District will again be sponsoring a Day at the Capitol from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. This is a time to be with other UWFaith members from all over the state to meet with your legislator, learn about current legislation being proposed, attend a Committee hearing, attend House and Senate sessions and have lunch with your legislator. The cost is \$15. Please register online at [www.umi.org/uwf](http://www.umi.org/uwf) or email Mary Getchell at [mlgetchell@aol.com](mailto:mlgetchell@aol.com).

Our local unit of UWFaith, under the direction of Evelyn Battema, has been faithfully serving funeral luncheons. We could use more help and would you ask you to sign up to be called occasionally to provide salad or cookies, set the tables, clean up or other tasks. Please call the church office to share your willingness to help with funeral luncheons.

As always, please continue to support our area youth with hygiene products through Mirror Image. Can you imagine being sixteen and not having reliable access to deodorant or shampoo? No one should have that be their reality. Hygiene product donations can be given to Lisa in the FLC, or you can donate monetarily!





Meridian United Methodist Church  
235 E. Pine Avenue  
Meridian, ID 83642

## February Events to Celebrate!

Please watch the E-Blast and Facebook for additional church events.

- February 1 – *Groundhog Feed, FLC, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.*
- February 3 – *Blood Drive, 12 - 5 p.m., FLC*
- February 9 – *Youth Sunday*
- February 15-17 – *Winter Youth Retreat*
- February 22 – *BSA Troop 1 Pancake Feed*
- February 23 – *Third Grade Bible Presentation & Organ Dedication Service (9:30 a.m.)*

## March

NEWSLETTER  
DEADLINE:

**Tuesday,  
February 25th**

Submissions may be  
emailed to Jacob Walker at  
[cc@meridianumc.com](mailto:cc@meridianumc.com)  
or brought by the  
church office.  
Thank you!