

THE PROCLAIMER

MARCH-APRIL 2024

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC) – MONONGAHELA, PA

Editor—Barbara Henderson

Message From Your Pastor:

Dear Christians,

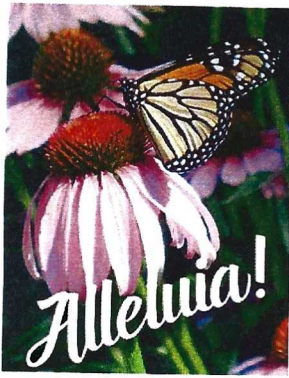
As I write this article, the weather reporter has just predicted that it will be 74 degrees this afternoon. Now, I realize that winter is not gone and that snow is likely to return, but this beautiful, sunny day is a reminder that “God is Good!” The crocuses are already poking their heads through the ground, so spring is around the corner.

I want to share some blessings FCC(DOC) has enjoyed recently. Our **Hot Meals Monday** participants is growing—we served 112 meals last week. The recipients often share their struggles with me which gives me opportunity to take them to my office for individual prayer and share the love of God.

Our dedicated servers know our recipients by name and are developing relationships with them. We have prepared baby gift baskets for two pregnant women, back to school supplies for those with school age children, and left-over food for those with large, low income families. Providing this outreach in our community has truly been a blessing to those who are working for this mission project.

Our Monongahela Ministerium is going strong. Participating churches include: Monongahela First Presbyterian Church, Monongahela United Methodist Church, Monongahela First Baptist Church, Monongahela Church of the Nazarene, New Eagle Riverview Baptist Church, Elrama Community Church, and Monongahela First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are hosting the Ministerium Good Friday Service at our church. Rev. Kevin Zufall, the new minister of the First Baptist Church, will be presenting the message and all the other ministers will participate in the order of worship.

The Ministerium is also supporting a Bible-based curriculum for Ringgold School District. This will be a voluntary, after-school program. Each church will be asking for volunteers to lead the lessons. Those interested in participating, please contact me.



Message From Your Pastor continued:

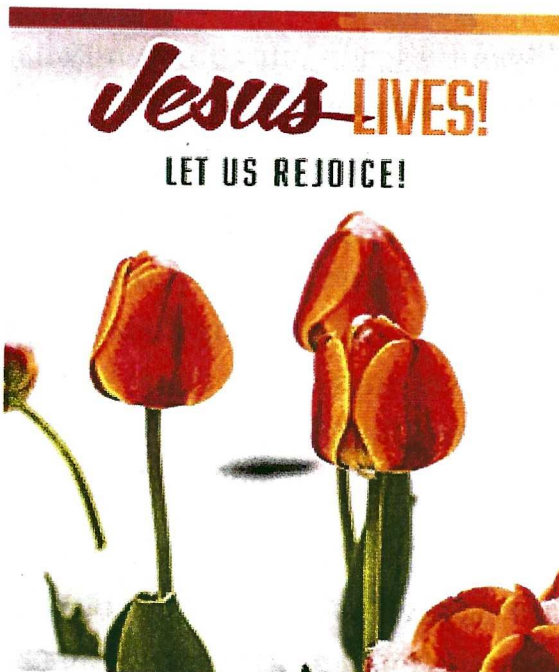
The ministerium continues to provide a community prayer meeting every Tuesday morning at 11:00 AM. Our Prayer Meeting is growing in members, but we still need prayer warriors. Our prayer focus is for revival in the Mon Valley. It's a wonderful opportunity to gather with other Christians in our community and pray together. In March, we will be lifting up our prayers at The Monongahela First Baptist Church on Main Street.

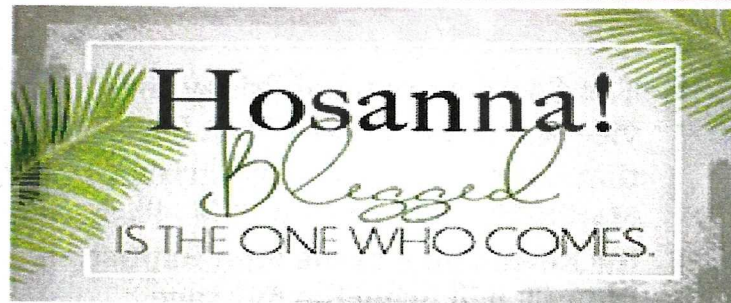
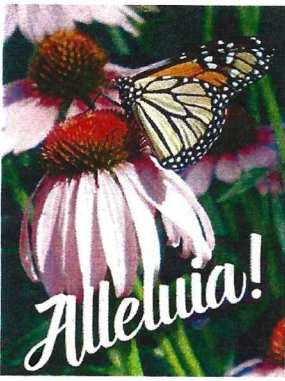
On Palm Sunday, as we remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, we will be having a baptism during the service. Praise God! After the Good Friday Service, will be a Prayer Vigil from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Folks wishing to participate do not need to pre-register. Materials will be available in the Prayer Room, the Library, the Open Door Classroom, and in the Sanctuary. Please avail yourself for this precious prayer time to ponder the sacrifice of Jesus as we remember his suffering on Good Friday.

May God bless you as you prepare for the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In His Service,

Pastor Janet





Why Palm Sunday?

Palm branches are mentioned in only one of the four Gospels (see John 12:12-15). So why do we call the first day of Holy Week Palm Sunday?

Tradition plays an important part in church history. During Jesus' time, Rome was the world's leading power. Whenever the Romans were victorious in battle, citizens traditionally threw palm branches in the returning heroes' path.

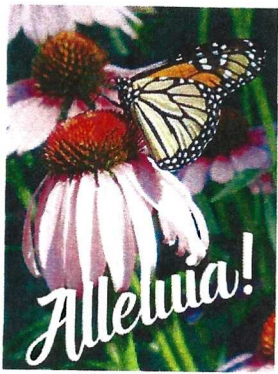
This was the accepted custom of reception. So when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was appropriate that he receive a hero's welcome. One week later, he would be victorious over death.



Corrie ten Boom, a devout Christian who helped shelter hundreds of Jewish people from Nazis during World War II, was asked how she stayed humble despite her fame.

"When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments onto the road and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him?" she replied. "If I can be the donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in his glory, I give him all the praise and all the honor."

Jesus told his followers they'd need to carry (or "take up") their cross. But how well do you carry your Savior? How do you bring him into a world that desperately needs the good news of the gospel?

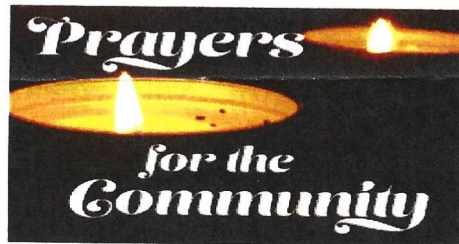


ELDERS PRAYER

Gracious God, We are now in the time of Lent as we prepare and remember the crucifixion and most importantly the resurrection of your Son, Jesus. Let us remember that through your Son, he has given us new life and renewed hope. Help us to live as new people. Grant us wisdom to know what we must do, the will to want to do it, the courage to undertake it, the perseverance to continue to do it, and the strength to complete it. Hope is alive at Easter.

In your loving Son's name,
Amen

Elder Barbara Henderson



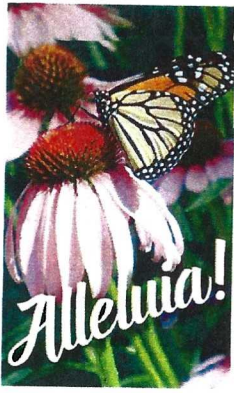
Every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m., the church community gathers to pray for the spiritual needs of Monongahela. Here is the schedule for the next two months.



5, 12, 19, and 26
at the
First Baptist Church,
Monongahela, PA



2, 9, 16, 23, and 30
at the
First Christian Church
Monongahela, PA



Holy hilarity!

More churches lately have been resurrecting (pardon the pun!) the early-church tradition of celebrating the second Sunday of Easter as Holy Humor Sunday, affirming the season's joy. Need some jokes for March 31? Try these:

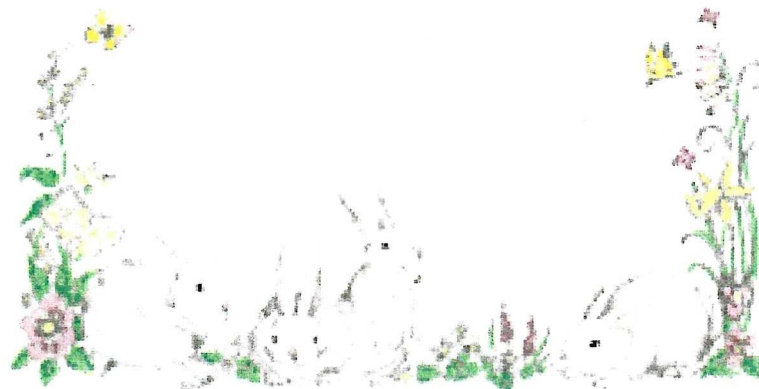
Easter is the only time when it's perfectly safe to put all your eggs in one basket.

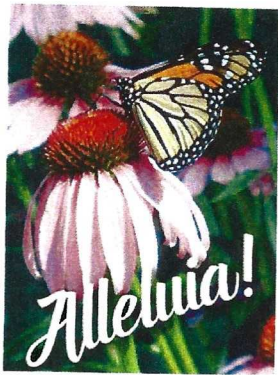
Knock knock. *Who's there?* Hatch. *Hatch who?* God bless you!

What should you do after eating so many Easter treats? *Eggs-ercise!*

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke? *It might crack up!*

An irate subscriber called the newspaper, demanding to know where her Sunday edition was. "Ma'am," said the employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper isn't delivered until Sunday." After a brief pause, the caller spoke with a ray of recognition: "So *that's* why no one was in church today."





Happy ANNIVERSARY

MARCH

23 Frank & Barbara Karnack



Lighthearted Blessings

May the good saints protect you and bless you today, and may troubles ignore you each step of the way.

May the hinges of your friendship never grow rusty.

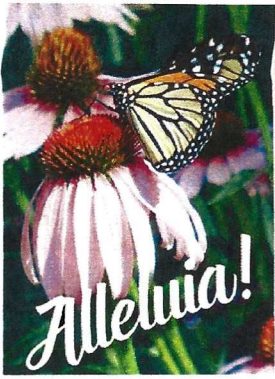


MARCH

7 Frank Karnack
10 Tawny Hyslop
15 Jamie Petrosky
16 Robert Mitchell
17 Scott McMahon
18 Kathy Haight
20 Rob Fredley
28 Sandy Wentzell
29 Kathleen Mancinelli
31 Pastor Janet

APRIL

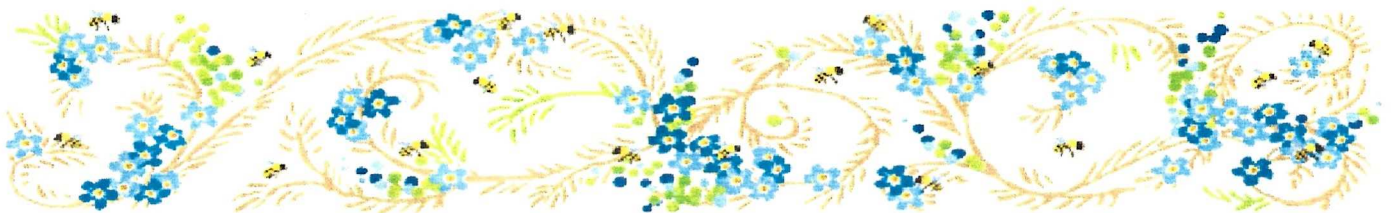
6 April Leyda
22 Jaxson Hyslop
23 Laurie Cialone
24 Ginny Day
28 Judy Cain
30 Kathy Kahl



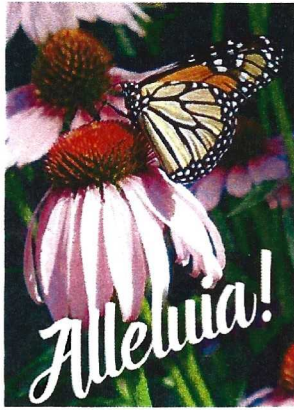
Thank You

The Monday Meal ladies would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who supports the Hot Meal Mondays. Your support means so much to those we serve. Whether you give of your time, talents or money just know that you are helping others.

Hot Meals Monday received a generous donation from the Christian singing group, Shepherds Voice. Thank you for the donation so that we can continue to serve those who are in need.

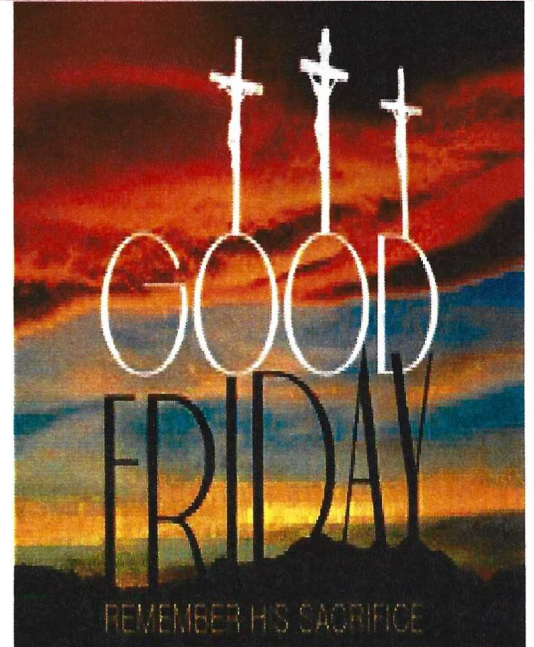


April Leyda would like to thank everyone who remembered her mother, Irene Leyda, with cards and phone calls on her birthday. It was greatly appreciated.



THE PROCLAIMER

The Community Good Friday service will be held at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on March 29, 2024 at 12:00 PM. Pastor Kevin Zufall of the First Baptist Church, will bring the message. Please come and worship as we remember the sacrifice that our Lord made for each of us.

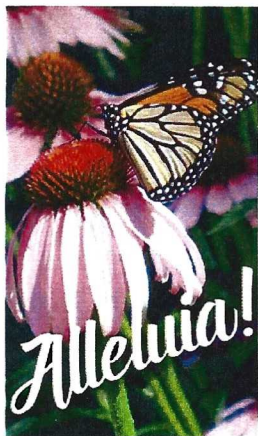


What Easter does

Jesus' resurrection from the dead is life-changing and life-giving for his followers. But, as Henry Knox Sherrill notes, Easter's "joyful news ... does not change the contemporary world." On earth, we still must deal with sin, pain, death and brokenness. And "still before us lie work, discipline, sacrifice," Sherrill adds. What Easter does, though, is provide Christians with "the spiritual power to do the work, accept the discipline and make the sacrifice."

By defeating the grave, Jesus empowers us to bear our worldly troubles with joy, peace and hope. His resurrection assures us that trials, tears and suffering are only temporary, while eternal victory and life with Jesus are permanent.





THE PROCLAIMER

Spring training for Christians

The word Lent comes from Middle English and German words for springtime. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season “spring training for Christians.” This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God’s favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we’ll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.

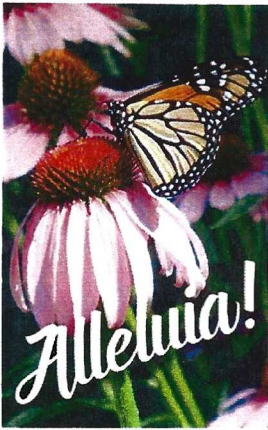
Hebrews describes spiritual discipline as challenging in the moment but yielding righteousness later. The writer urges us, “Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed” (12:11-13, ESV). May the spring training of Lent strengthen and heal us all.



An early start to spring cleaning

Although Lent starts early this year, before spring appears in many areas, it’s an appropriate time for spring cleaning. Indeed, *Lent* comes from old German and English words for “spring.” So, while it might be too soon to open windows or hang clothes on the line, now is ideal for some *spiritual* spring cleaning.

Lent calls us to examine our beliefs, confess and dispose of old grudges and selfish habits, dust off our Bibles for a new routine of study and prayer, air out our hearts and brighten up our attitudes. “Lent cleaning” lets the Holy Spirit freshen our faith — and it’s never too early for that.



Long before the time of Christ, Egyptians saw a similarity between the cloth wrappings of their mummies and the butterfly's cocoon. For these early people and the Greeks, who placed golden butterflies in their tombs, this insect was a symbol of resurrection, new life, and immortality. In other traditions, the butterfly was a reminder of reincarnation.

The butterfly has long been a Christian symbol of the resurrection, for it disappears into a cocoon and appears dead, but emerges later far more beautiful and powerful than before. The three stages of the butterfly's metamorphoses are symbolic of the three stages in the life cycle of Christ and the Christian.

The caterpillar's non-stop eating reminds us of normal earthly life where people are often preoccupied with taking care of their physical needs. The caterpillar's life also reminds us of Jesus' life on earth.

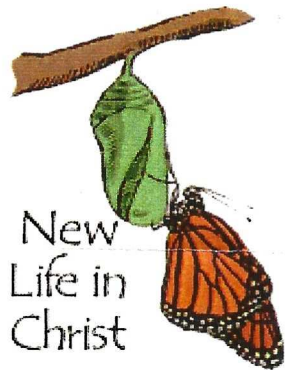
Caterpillars then "entomb" themselves in what appears to be lifeless cocoons portraying the crucifixion and burial of Jesus and the death of all humans.

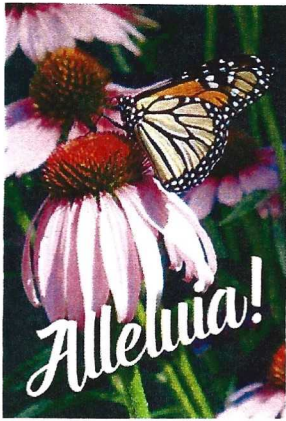
The third and final stage is the appearance of a butterfly with jewel-colored wings and the ability to soar, which represents the resurrection into a new and glorious life free of material concerns and restrictions.

A major theme in Paul's teachings is that "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). The Christian hope is that what is sown in the grave as a weak mortal body will be raised an indestructible spiritual body not subject to temptation, sorrow, death, or pain (1 Cor. 15:44-54). Through death the spirit will escape – not from its body but from the vulnerabilities and hardships of mortal flesh.

What better symbol of the Resurrection — an inanimate object out of which comes life. Butterflies are the perfect symbol of the tomb Christ conquered and every Christian's hope of their own rebirth.

-Spring Branch Presbyterian Church, Houston, TX





Don't forget to set your clocks AHEAD at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 10.



Dates To Remember

MARCH

1 World Day of Prayer
11 Board Meeting
14 Praise & Worship
19 First Day of Spring
21 Tri-County Men's Fellowship
24 Palm Sunday
27 Elders Meeting
28 Maundy Thursday
31 Easter Sunday

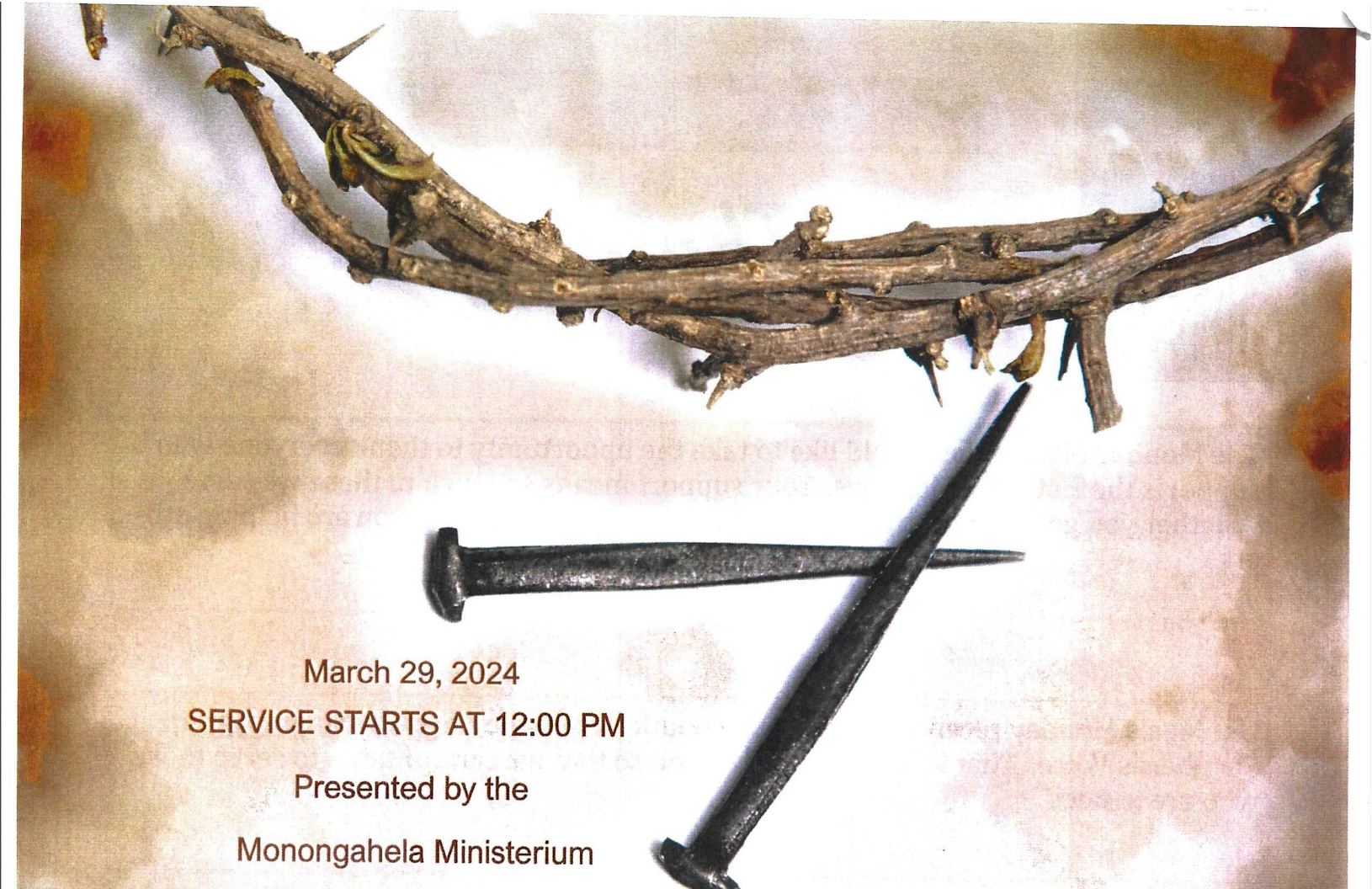
APRIL

8 Team Ministry Meeting
11 Praise & Worship
24 Elders Meeting
25 Praise & Worship



Tri-County Men's Fellowship

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 21, 2024 at the First Christian Church of Perryopolis. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. The cost of the dinner is \$15.00. RSVP to the Perryopolis church office by March 17, 2024 at 724.736.8311.

A piece of dried, thorny branch is positioned at the top of the image. Below it, two large, dark, weathered nails are arranged in a cross shape. The background is a light, textured surface with some faint, reddish-brown stains.

March 29, 2024
SERVICE STARTS AT 12:00 PM

Presented by the
Monongahela Ministerium

GOOD FRIDAY

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
630 Chess Street | Monongahela | PA | 15063
724.258.3255 | fcmonongahela@aol.com