

The Carillon February, 2024

First Congregational Church
Your Independent Worship Center
714 Hillcrest Drive - Fremont MI 49412
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THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES



January 22, 2024

Present: Pat Krehn – Vice Moderator, John Cooper – Trustees, Dean Morehouse – Men's Fellowship, Barbara Blass-Frisbey – Clerk, Jean Morehouse – Women's Fellowship, Pastor Luke Schmalz, Jack Butterick - Charitable Giving, Carrie De Mull – Clerk

Absent: Beth Hooker – Board of Christian Ed, Jack Stewart-Technology Board, Lou Deleguardia-Moderator

I. Meeting called to order at 6:34. Pat gave the opening prayer

II. Approval of the November 27, 2023 meeting minutes: Pastor Luke moved to approve, Jean seconded, passed

III. Public comments – none

IV. Board Reports

A. Board of Charitable Giving - Jack Butterick

The Board is going to meet on March 17, 2024 at 11:30 AM to discuss where they would like to appropriate the money from the 2024 budget. They will be discussing with whom to share the money with and how much each charitable organization will be receiving.

B. Board of Deacons - Ruth Cowles

They were questioning whether a review on Pastor Luke's performance needs to be done or was already done. Everyone feels he is doing a great job.

C. Board of Christian Ed - No report

D. Board of Trustees – John Cooper

1. The Trustees have decided that the Hearing Loop that was being quoted for Fellowship Hall by Loops Plus is not going to happen because of the \$4274 cost. We also don't want to have to ask the congregation to help with a fund drive because the use wouldn't warrant the money being spent. Money could be more widely used elsewhere.

2. The end of the year financial report was given for year ending 2023 and we ended the year with income being 98% of the budget and expenses being 98% of the Budget. Overall, a good year financially.

E. Women's Fellowship – Jean Morehouse

1. The Women's Fellowship met at the beginning of January. Checkbook balance at the end of December was \$8358. The Plum Pudding/Craft sale brought in \$6925.
2. The funeral for Millie Sherman was held on January 19. A cookie, Punch, and coffee reception was held afterwards. Leftover cookies are in the freezer next to the kitchen downstairs.
3. Gail Cooper took a class to renew her license for her ServSafe certificate. She passed!
4. Jean brought up the need for a handrail going up the stairs to the altar. Women's Fellowship would like to share in the cost. The handrail would likely be placed on the pulpit, something sturdy, and white metal to match wood trim and paint in the sanctuary. The Trustees will help with cost. For the sake of OSHA, maybe get the handrail installed by a contractor. Pat will talk to Bernie about possibilities.
5. Women's Fellowship ended the year with 10% donations to nonprofits as follows: \$220 to Compassion Home, \$220 to Vera's House, \$220 to True North Food Pantry, and \$1000 to the church's workshop.
6. No Valentine's Day Luncheon this year. Not enough people to offer help. The meeting will be in March.

F. Men's Fellowship – Dean Morehouse

1. December's meeting was a short one. James Kelly, the scheduled speaker, was a no show. Bill extended devotions longer. David Vandenbelt played piano. Food was excellent

G. Technology Board –

Website is coming along. Pastor Luke will be contacting the website committee to meet and review what has been happening.

V. Pastor's Report – Pastor Luke Schmalz

- A. Attendance – We had a successful Advent season. The Christmas Eve service was attended by 72 parishioners.
- B. A New Members Class will be starting in February for 5 weeks. It will be held after Sunday services.
- C. Family dinners will be starting back up again in February.
- D. Sunny Sunday will be February 11.
- E. Defibrillator Training was once again talked about for after coffee time one Sunday.
- F. Ash Wednesday Service will be February 14, 2024.
- G. Lent starts February 18th and will have a Baptism theme.
- H. Sunday, February 4, we will have a special sendoff service for Gary as he prepares to leave for Guatemala on February 8, 2024.
- I. Pastor Luke and Crystal have put together some Bibles and books to be given to congregation members or anyone who would like them.

VI. Acceptance of reports – Dean moved and John seconded to approve – passed.

VII. Old Business – none

VIII. New Business

A. 150th Anniversary Celebration of the church/2025. At the meeting in February, get the proposed budget and see about getting a feather flag, car signs, and maybe yard signs. Meals, block parties, and dinner for civic leaders was discussed.

B. Work needs to start on writing the last 25 years. Get an article in the Times Indicator and maybe as the City of Newaygo if we can have a museum exhibit.

C. Garrett Hanshue has been working the sound booth for 2 years and only has been using volunteer hours from school. Dean made a motion to give Garrett a financial gift. We will be sending an email out to the congregation to have donations either sent to the office or put in the offering plate.

IX. Pat ended the meeting with a closing prayer. Meeting adjourned at 8:13.

Next Meeting is February 26, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. in the Library

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie De Mull, Clerk

First Congregational Church
Special Executive Council Meeting
January 28, 2024

In attendance: Lou Deleguardia-Moderator, Pat Krehn-Vice Moderator, Carrie DeMull-Clerk, Ruth Cowles-Deacons, Bill Black-Representing Trustees, Dean Morehouse-Men's Fellowship, Pastor Luke Schmalz, Bernie Denney-House Chair, Jim Rynberg

Meeting called to order at 11:20.

Pastor Luke started the meeting with an explanation of why the meeting was called. Love, Inc. would like to use our fellowship space from Tuesday, February 5th through Tuesday, February 12, to house their Rooms for Refugee program. The church that was scheduled to do that week is having a problem getting the necessary renovations done to their church. Love, Inc. was wondering if we could fill in for the week.

Discussion Followed:

Pros:

Church Outreach

Big Enough Space

Not having to get volunteers

Pastor Luke will be the person Love, Inc. would call if needed for anything.

Love Inc. may use the fridge off of the kitchen and our microwave.

Cons:

Who will clean up.

Can't use the kitchen because Love Inc. doesn't have anyone licensed through ServSafe. What will happen to the crafters and Men's Fellowship who have meetings going on usually in Fellowship Hall.

Crafters will skip a week or move into another room in the church. Men's Fellowship will still meet and use the kitchen to cook their lunch. They will eat and have their meeting in another part of the church.

After some discussion a vote was taken and the Executive Council unanimously decided to let Love, Inc use Fellowship hall from February 5th through February 12th. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Women's Fellowship:

Women's Fellowship update on the Annual Christmas Craft Sale that was held this past December. As was stated in the former article, this event raises funds for special church projects as well as being able to give to local charitable organizations for their programs. The Women's Fellowship Board members voted to use some of the profits to give contributions to the Compassion Home, Vera's House, and the True North Food Pantry to help support the community. The Board members also voted to give a contribution to the Congregational Wood Shop as a thank you for all their help throughout the year. The remaining funds will be used for special projects that the Women's Fellowship would like to sponsor throughout the year. Thank you to all who participated in the event to help make it a success for us.



Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship will meet on Wednesday, February 14 (note the date change) at 12:00 noon. The speaker for today will be Lou Deleguardia, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones addressing fraud and financial need for families. Our chef will be Jeff Stewart. All men are welcome!!



Ash Wednesday Service:

Wednesday, February 14 as part of our Family Night Service beginning at 6:00 p.m.

What is Lent?



The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. On this special day of reflection, a marking of the cross in ash on foreheads. The ashes symbolize our mortality – “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” But you might be wondering, where do the ashes for Ash Wednesday come from?

Usually, the Ash Wednesday ashes are created by burning palms from the previous year’s Palm Sunday celebration. Palm Sunday is the last Sunday of Lent and leads into Holy Week. It is on this day that people laid palms to cover Jesus’s path as he arrived in Jerusalem, just days before he was crucified.

Since the palms have been blessed, instead of throwing them away after the celebration, they are saved to create ashes for Ash Wednesday.

You might also be wondering, why do we celebrate Ash Wednesday in the first place?

Ash Wednesday begins the 40 days of lent, a time when we remember that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert fasting and resisting temptation. The day before Ash Wednesday, known by many as “Shrove Tuesday” or “Fat Tuesday”, is a chance to feast and indulge – maybe even eat a pancake or two. We do this in preparation of our own fasting on Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent.

As Jesus grew hungry from fasting in the desert, he was faced with the first of three temptations. Satan appeared before him and told him to turn stones into bread. But Jesus resisted, knowing that he was being tempted to do something God did not want. He knew the word of God was just as important as bread to survival.

He was then brought to the top of a building in Jerusalem and told that, if he truly was the Son of God, he should jump from the building and angels would carry him to safety. Jesus once again resisted, knowing not to challenge God.

On the third temptation, Jesus was brought to the top of a mountain and told that all the kingdoms he saw would be his if he knelt before Satan. But Jesus resisted again, proclaiming that it is only right to give worship to God.

Just as Jesus faced temptations in the desert, we too face many temptations in our everyday lives. As we celebrate the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, you are encouraged to think about how you can better yourself during this important time of the year.

Along with reminding us of our mortality, the ashes on Ash Wednesday are also symbolic of grief; grief from the sins we have committed. We may not always be able to resist temptation as Jesus did, but Lent provides an opportunity to reflect, pray and repent for our sins. In doing so, many people make sacrifices or commit to life changes throughout the 40 days of lent. It's a time for spiritual fasting so that we can cleanse our souls and renew our faith as we prepare for the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

February Family Night

Family Night begins again this month. We meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday (February 14 and 28). Dinner will be provided beginning at 6:00 p.m.

February 14 will included our Ash Wednesday service. Dinner will be pizza.



Sunny Sunday

Join us for worship on “Sunny Sunday” - February 11. Invited your friends - think of warmer weather - wear your bright clothing to church. Following worship citrus theme desserts will be served.



Membership Class

Are you interested in becoming a member, are you a recent new member, or have you been a member for quite some time? Consider coming to our Membership Class - Christianity 101 beginning Sunday, February 18 following worship.

Please sign up by calling the church office or on the sheet on the office window.



Use one word (perhaps in different forms) for all the blanks to complete this Scripture passage:
“Dear friends, let us _____ one another, for _____ comes from God. Everyone who _____ has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not _____ does not know God, because God is _____.”

A. believe B. help C. love D. forgive

Answer: C (See 1 John 4:7-8, NIV.)

Our Church Family

Health Concerns ~

Jean Morehouse had shoulder surgery on Monday, January 29. We pray for a smooth and quick recovery.

Continued prayers for **Dan and Kathy Price**. Dan as he fights his cancer and Kathy as she recovers from recent surgery.



Sympathy ~

We extend our sympathy to **Mat Emerick**. Mat's father in law, Orville Price passed away on Friday, January 12. Services will be held in the spring at our church. Orville was also **Ginny Price's** brother in law, we extend our sympathy to Ginny as well.

Thank you ~

The Staff of First Congregational Church want to thank the church for your generosity in giving to the Christmas Purse. We all truly appreciate the financial blessing bestowed on us by you along with the blessing we receive from God in serving with you! Peace and Joy to All! Pastor Luke, Mat and Lorene

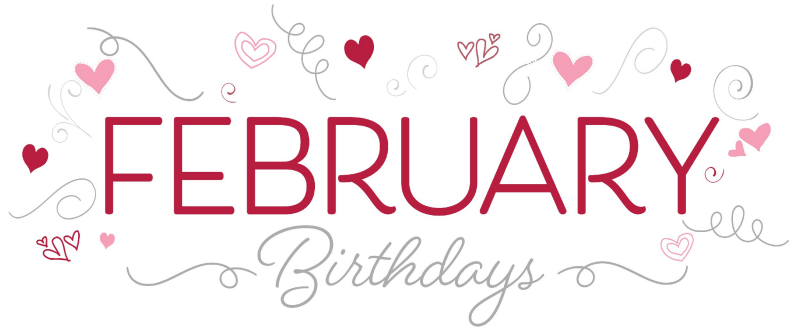
Dates to Note in February:

February 4 - Worship with communion 10:00 a.m.
February 5 - NO Women's Fellowship Meeting
February 7-9 - Pastor Luke at Calvin Worship Symposium
February 5 - 12 - Love INC - Refuge of Hope will be using Fellowship Hall
February 11- Worship 10:00 a.m. Sunny Sunday - wear bright clothes - citrus desserts following worship
February 11 - Deacons Meeting 11:30 a.m.
February 12 - Tech Board meeting 6:30 p.m.
February 14 - Men's Fellowship Luncheon 12:00 noon (note date change)
February 14 - Ash Wednesday 6:00 p.m.
February 14 - Family Night 6:00 p.m.
February 18 - First Sunday of Lent - Worship 10:00 a.m.
February 18 - New Member Class begins following worship
February 19 - Trustees Meeting 6:30 p.m.
February 20 - Easter Lily orders are due
February 25 - Worship 10:00 a.m.
February 26 - Executive Council 6:30 pm.
February 28 - Family Night 5:00 p.m.
M/W/F - 9:30 a.m. Men's Coffee
Thursday - 10:00 a.m. Christmas Crafters



February Birthdays

11	Susan Stewart
13	Ginny Price
14	Dean Morehouse
17	Jean Morehouse
22	Carol Black
26	Beverly Williams



Valentine's Day jokes for animal lovers

What did one sheep say to the other?

I love ewe!

And how did the other sheep respond?

You're not so baaa-d yourself.

Why do skunks love Valentine's Day?

They are very scent-imental creatures.

What did the enamored deer say?

I'm very fawn-ed of you!

What question did the penguin ask on February 14?

Waddle I do without you?

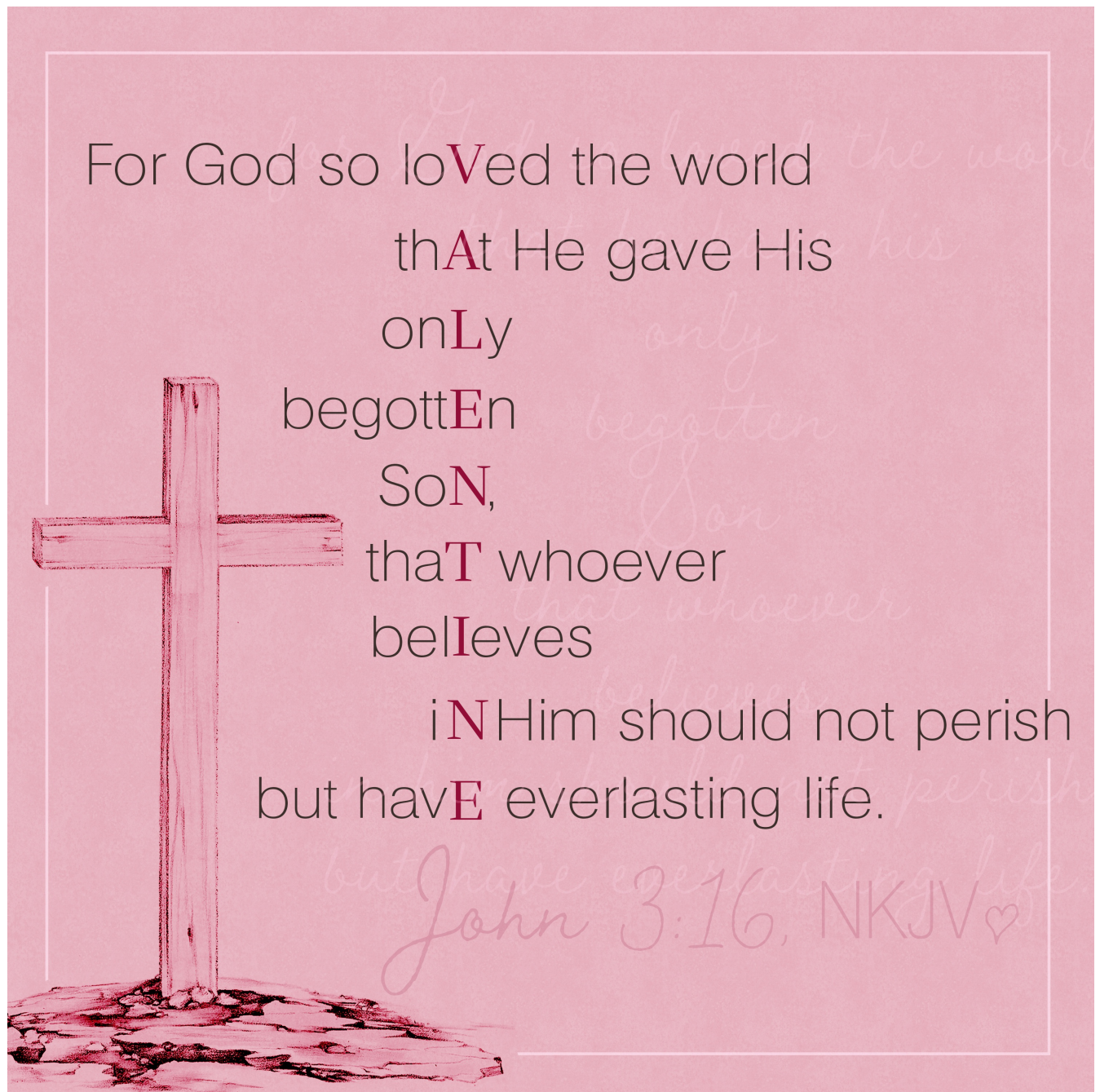
What do you call two birds in love?

Tweethearts!

What did one bee say to the other?

I love bee-ing with you, honey!





The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as “Dr. Love” for writing about the topic, said, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine’s Day is as good a reminder as any.

Walk In/Walk Up Choir:

Those of you who enjoy singing hymns are invited to join us one Sunday a month in church to sing some of our favorite Hymns together. The Hymn will be announced in the bulletin which is emailed prior to Sunday and you will know ahead of time exactly what we will be singing.

On Sunday morning we will assemble up front on the floor of the Sanctuary steps or also on the first step if we have enough to make two rows. We will walk up and sing. Then return to our Sanctuary seats.

Those comfortable singing a part are encouraged to do so. If you do not want to sing a part, join in on the melody. Lorene will be at the organ.

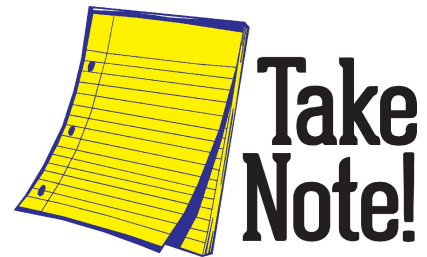
Our first "performance" will be the third Sunday in February. We will meet at 9:15 to go over the Hymn a few times to feel comfortable with it. If you don't make the practice and know the Hymn, please join us. Thank You, Bill Black



Reminder:

Board and Committee chairs and Secretary's:

Did you know you have a mailbox between the two offices. Please remember to check them on occasion. **Board and Committee secretary's** please include the church office on your emailings of minutes and agendas.



The Upper Room Devotional:

The Upper Room subscription is up for renewal. Do you prefer the large print or the small print? We currently get 5 large print copies. Often none of the 5 are taken - perhaps we don't need to renew the subscription??

Let the church office know if you have a preference.



Rooms of Refuge

February 5 - 12 our church will be hosting "Rooms of Refuge". A possibility of 15+ will be using the fellowship hall to sleep and eat dinner.

What is the purpose of Rooms of Refuge?

* to end homelessness in Newaygo County by providing a safe and welcome environment for individuals or families with housing insecurities.

* to help those in unsafe or toxic environments get out of their current situation and into a place where they can thrive.

Volunteer opportunities are available - talk to Pastor Luke if you are interested.



Lenten Baptism - Pastor Luke

This month, on February 14th, we embark on the Lenten season, a traditionally significant period in the church calendar. It serves as a dedicated time for us to prepare for Easter, our most pivotal celebration. Easter is the culmination of Jesus' work in the sacrifice on the cross, the triumph over death and the devil in the resurrection, and ultimately, our salvation. As Easter stands at the core of our faith, the church has a longstanding tradition of utilizing the time leading up to it for spiritual growth—a period known as Lent, spanning the forty days before Easter. The significance of forty days is tied to Jesus' forty-day fast in the desert before commencing his ministry.



Lent provides an opportunity for reflection on Christ, His redemptive work, our sinfulness, and work toward spiritual growth. This is done through practices such as the Lenten fast, increased generosity, charitable deeds, or the inclusion of additional spiritual disciplines in our devotional lives. Fasting, in particular, has been a significant discipline in my spiritual journey. Whether one opts for a simple or elaborate fast, the focus is on intentional growth. I plan to limit my meals to one full meal and a half meal at lunch if needed, while also cutting out sweets and carbs. I encourage everyone to choose a specific way to purposefully draw closer to Christ during this season, whether through fasting, increased charity, or adding spiritual disciplines.

The overarching theme for our Lenten journey is baptism, one of the two sacraments instituted by Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus introduced Holy Communion, a tangible means for us to receive His grace and strength—a physical representation of His love and forgiveness. Baptism, too, is intertwined with Easter, often observed as a traditional day for baptisms. In the act of baptism, we partake in the benefits secured by Christ on the cross and through His resurrection. Through baptism, we are cleansed of sins, symbolically "buried and risen" with Christ. Baptism serves as the entry point into the Christian life. During Lent, we enter as sinners, burdened by our sins, and emerge on Easter with new life, cleansed, and made holy through faith in Christ. Baptism is the embodiment of this transformative journey—a physical sign and constant reminder of the spiritual reality of Christ's work within us. The water used in baptism serves as a tangible representation of God's grace. Unlike Communion, baptism is a one-time event, but the water continues to symbolize life. Throughout this Lenten season, our focus will be on recalling the life we received through Christ, applied during our baptism.



EASTER FLOWER ORDER

_____ **6" Pot Easter Lilies (5+ blooms): (\$15.00)**
_____ **10" Pot Easter Lilies (15+ blooms): (\$40.00)**

to be used in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

_____ Following the worship service, I/we will pick up our flower(s).

_____ Following the worship service, the Altar Committee may take care of my/our flowers in an appropriate way.

Given by: _____

In Memory of _____

or

In Honor of _____

This completed form, along with your payment for each flower ordered may be placed in the offering plate, or in the church office by **February 20, 2024**



