



MELROSE  
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Messenger

April 2026

## Something To Think About



### “STILL LOOKING FOR THE NOT YET”

It's the Monday of Holy Week. I don't need my Outlook calendar to tell me that the next 7 days are going to be busy. Every pastor knows that this week is one of the most sacred and uplifting and, yes, stressful weeks of the entire year. Between the extra services and programs and preparing for the high point of the church year, Easter Sunday, I can feel both the stress and the anticipation of the “not yet” that I can see coming.

And then there is the “what will be that I can't see.” You know what I am talking about. The unexpected surprise that either lifts your heart or crushes your soul. Yesterday, my Palm Sunday included receiving a box of oatmeal packets from an Elon student that Amy and I worked with years ago that we hadn't heard from in over 10 years but had seen our C.I.A.'s “Pastor's Competition” on social media and wanted to contribute. How cool is that! I never saw that coming! Then last night, I left the house with my Duke team up double digits on UConn late in the second half to help take children home from Sunday night activities and learned as I was driving the church van that Duke lost on a last second shot. I never saw that coming either, but it hit very differently from the earlier surprise.

What else could happen in this week where there is already so much that I am looking for and preparing for?

On several occasions, Jesus told his disciples what would happen on this week. For example, Luke 18:31-33 says, “Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and the third day, he will rise again.”

Jesus lays out the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday pretty well. Even though the events of Holy Week were still the “not yet” at this point, they had a picture of what the “not yet” looked like. Still, even with all they could have known, think of

all that would be that they still could not see: the Last Supper, Peter's denial of Jesus, the darkness of the afternoon of Good Friday, the veil in the Temple torn in two. All of these moments were defining in the experience but were not anything they prepared for or saw coming.

It has been illuminating for me to think about Holy Week through the lens of the “not yet” that we have been focused on for the month and a half leading up to Easter. In this season when we are telling the story that has defined the message of the gospel and the mission of the Church, what is familiar history to us now was, for the original disciples, a combination of what they were told would take place and events they never imagined. Obviously, there were parts of the experience they handled better than others. But how they approached, walked through, and remembered the “not yet” that became the “already” of a new reality ultimately shaped the witness that they would carry to the world. Peter would go on to write in 2 Peter 3:14-18 about the importance of being found by the returning Christ “at peace, without spot or blemish” and the need to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter writes these words after telling the church things they can expect to face but also letting them know there are things that are “not yet” that not even he can tell them will be. Our call is to let our witness and presence in the world not be shaped by the circumstances we face but by the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

In the hallway in the Sanctuary, you will find some bulletin boards with stars on them. On those stars are written some of the key words and phrases that we heard in your “Prayers for the Not Yet” that you wrote. I invite you to stop by those boards from time to time and focus on one or more of those words or phrases, lifting that in prayer. That word or phrase represents the prayer of several of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray it with them. You may not know the exact circumstances in which they prayed those words, but you can still pray that Christ's life and power would bring hope and peace to whatever situation or opportunity they were lifting up. Over the next few months, Blair will be organizing opportunities for people to come together and turn those prayer sheets you filled out each week into a mobile that will hang in the church until November when it will hang at the Baptist General Association of Virginia's Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach as Baptists from all over the state will come together to turn our hearts toward the “not yet” and ask Christ to help shape our witness in the midst of what we can see coming and in the midst of what we can't.

Let's not stop looking for the “not yet”, for we believe that, no matter what comes, the story ends in resurrection, in new life. Christ is risen indeed!

- Pastor Mark

# Being Gregarious



## What day is it?

This is National Crayon & Tater Day(s)

## On this date:

In 1889, the Eiffel Tower opened. In 1870, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, Mundt Peterson became the first African American to vote.

## Need advice?

To fix any furniture scratches, use eyeliner in a matching color to fill in the damaged area.

## LOL:

*“Johnny, do you know what we must do before our sins are forgiven?”*

*“We have to sin first?”  
Bu-dum-dum-chhh*

## Spiritual Nourishment:

Isaiah 43:1 “Now this is what the Lord says – the One who created you, Jacob, and the One who formed you, Israel – ‘Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine.’”

Jere Johnson writes:

When John stepped to the plate, the bases were loaded, there were two outs, and his team was down by one run. John looked nervous. The first pitch went past him, then the second and finally the third; John never tried for a hit. Afterward, he returned to the dugout, and his coach asked, “Why didn’t you take a swing?”

“I thought you’d be mad if I struck out swinging,” he replied. Fear had paralyzed him, as it often does to athletes, whether it be fear of a coach, of failure, or of a game loss. Whatever the source, fear is a factor in sports as it is in every area of life.

Even faith can become something that leads to fear when it is enmeshed in a spirit of legalism, which is the mistaken belief that we can earn God’s blessings by our own works. This kind of fear can squeeze the life out of us in the same way if prevented John from taking a swing; it paralyzes us from living the life God has called us to live. However, we have no need for this kind of fear. That’s because Christ came to earth to free

us from fear and death, not to instill it. He came to offer life and joy through his sacrificial work on the cross. He never intended for his followers to live in fear; rather, he wants us to live in the freedom that we find in a life-giving relationship with Him.

We do not intend to make our athletes fear us; any more than God wants us to be afraid of Him. A right fear of God, what the Bible calls “the fear of the Lord” is the sort that bows before Him in amazement at how awesome He is. God has called us to Himself – not to fear- and we are His forever is we have chosen to live with, and for, Him, in and through Jesus Christ.

What are your greatest fears?

Do you have freedom from sin in your life?

How can you begin to ‘fear not’ and live with Jesus as a child of God?

*(Information shared is borrowed from the following sources.)*

- *The Coach’s Bible*
- *The Big Book of Church Humor -or- Religious Humor*
- *Who Knew? 10,001 Easy Solutions to Everyday Problems*
- *365 Trivia Twist Devotions*

# Children & Youth Updates



## HAPPENING IN MAY- PINEWOOD DERBY

The Terry Simmons Annual Pinewood Derby will be held after church on Sunday, May 3. This is a multi-generational event so all ages and ability levels are welcome. New this year is that lunch will be provided! If you want to make your own car, Pastor Greg has a few car kits left so please contact him ASAP!



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS- YOUTH YARD SALE

The Youth Yard Sale will be on Saturday, May 16 from 7 AM- 2 PM. We will start accepting donations sometime in early May!



## REGISTER NOW- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Registration is now open for the biggest adventure of the year! Children in pre-K through completed 5th grade are welcome to

join us June 8-10 from 9 AM- 12 PM. Join us as Beacon guides us on a 3-day quest to search for God's great light. Register now by going to the church website [HERE](#).



## CAMP WARD HAVEN

The Roanoke Valley WMU is hosting a children's camp at Ward Haven from June 22-26 for children in grades 2nd-9th. This camp offers a week full of activities including Bible Study, games, dancing, and more! Cost is \$100 per child but there are scholarships available for those in need.

**Interested?** Contact Asheley Shepherd at [asheleykshepherd@yahoo.com](mailto:asheleykshepherd@yahoo.com)!

# Ministry Updates

## THE LIVING LORD'S SUPPER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 AT 7 PM

MELROSE BAPTIST CHURCH

### “THE LIVING LORD’S SUPPER”

Join us for this year’s Tenebrae service on Wednesday, April 1 at 7 PM with doors opening at 6:30 PM. This year’s service, “The Living Lord’s Supper” is a dramatic retelling of the Last Supper. Come and support the work of our Deacon Fellowship and church family who has worked to prepare this special service for you.

her congregation. Breakfast will be served following the conclusion of the service by the Baptist Men’s Ministry. *Those planning to attend are asked to please bring their own lawn chair. Also, in the event of rain the service will take place in the Sanctuary.*

### EASTER SANCTUARY SERVICE

We welcome all to join us for a traditional Sanctuary service on Easter Sunday at 10:45 AM. This service will also be live streamed on the church YouTube page [HERE](#).



### WE NEED YOUR HELP- ART FOR THE NOT YET ART PIECE

Over the past 6-weeks Pastor Mark has been focusing on “The Heart for the Not Yet” on Sunday mornings. This sermon series was inspired by this year’s Baptist General Association of Virginia theme. As a celebration of this theme, the BGAV is planning an art show at this year’s annual meeting showcasing artwork from BGAV churches.

Every Sunday morning Pastor Mark has asked those in attendance to write down a word or a prayer on a piece of paper. All of those pieces of paper have been collected and prayed over. Now, as a church, we are going to take those prayers and create an art piece showcasing our “Heart for the Not Yet.”

We cannot make this happen without YOU! As a creative church, we are calling on church family members to be a part of creating this art piece. Please join us on the following work days at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall- May 8 and 21 and June 19 and 29. ALL are invited to join us for these working sessions!

The final created piece will be displayed here at the church until November where it will be sent to Virginia Beach, VA to be displayed during the BGAV annual meeting.

### Any questions?

Reach out to Blair at [communications@melrosebaptist.org](mailto:communications@melrosebaptist.org) with questions, comments, or concerns!

## Easter Weekend

CELEBRATE WITH US

### EASTER COMMUNITY EVENT

Join us for our Easter Community Event on Saturday, April 4 from 11 AM-1 PM here at Melrose Baptist Church. This event will feature an Easter Egg Hunt, children’s crafts and a FREE hot dog lunch. All children will receive a Children’s Easter activity book that has been curated by Melrose Baptist Church to help children learn the story of Easter and promote their cognitive skills and creativity.

**We need help packing candy bags!** Every child in attendance will get a bag of candy and we need help packing those bags! If you are able, please come and help us pack candy bags on Wednesday, April 1 at 4 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

### EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE & BREAKFAST

Join us on the front lawn of the church at 7:15 AM Easter Sunday for a sunrise service. We are so excited to be worshipping with Rev. Christy Krispin and members from

# Hymn of the Month

## “RENEW YOUR CHURCH”

Pastor Mark has spoken much on the creative heart of God and the “new” He wishes to make room for in our hearts. I have chosen as our Hymn of the Month for April the hymn “Renew Your Church.” The hymnary.org website describes this hymn as having a rich history which traces back to the 19th century. It was first published in 1844 in “The Sacred Harp” hymnbook, making it a hymn tune by Jesse White that many of the founding members of Melrose may have known. Let’s truly delve into our own musical roots as we seek renewal of the church birthed to us by our first Melrose members.

Kenneth L. Cober wrote the lyrics; yet they seem so contemporary to our own prayerful look at our world today.

Verse 4 Teach us to love, with strength of heart and mind, each and all, humankind; break down old walls of prejudice and hate, leave us not to our fate. As you have loved and given your life to end hostility and strife, O share your grace from heaven above, teach us, Lord, how to love.

This hymn has been a significant part of the worship of American Baptists as well, reflecting a desire for spiritual renewal in our relationship with God, and our commitment to serving others.

### **Lyrics- Verse 1**

*Renew Your church, our ministries restore: both to serve and adore. Make us again as salt throughout the land, and as light from a stand. 'Mid somber shadows of the night, where greed and hatreds spread their blight, O send us forth with power endued, help us, Lord, be renewed.*

### **Verse 2**

*Teach us Your Word, reveal its truth divine, on our path let it shine; tell of Your works, Your mighty acts of grace, from each page show your face. As you have loved us, sent your Son, and our salvation now is won, O let our hearts with love be stirred, help us, Lord, know your Word.*

### **Verse 3**

*Teach us to pray, for You are ever near, Your still voice let us hear. Our souls are restless till they rest in You, this the goal we pursue. Before Your presence keep us still that we may find for us Your will, and seek Your guidance every day, teach us, Lord, how to pray.*

### **Verse 4**

*Teach us to love, with strength of heart and mind, each and*

*all, humankind; break down old walls of prejudice and hate, leave us not to our fate. As You have loved and given Your life to end hostility and strife, O share Your grace from heaven above, teach us, Lord, how to love.*

Here is a link if you wish to listen to this sung prayer addressed to the Lord directly. Pray it with me.

- Pastor Connie



**CLICK ON THE PICTURE ABOVE TO LISTEN TO THIS MONTH’S HYMN OF THE MONTH.**

## OFFICE CLOSED MONDAY

Please note that the church office will be closed on Monday, April 6 to give the church staff time with their families after Easter. If you are need of pastoral care on this day, please call the church office at 540-366-6631, select one of the pastor's extensions, and leave a message. The pastors are able to check their voicemails remotely and will get back to you ASAP.



## DARTBALL FELLOWSHIP

Dartball Fellowship invites everyone to monthly play on April 6 and 13 at 6:30 PM in the church Fellowship Hall. All levels of play are welcome to come and experience this unique game of baseball and darts!

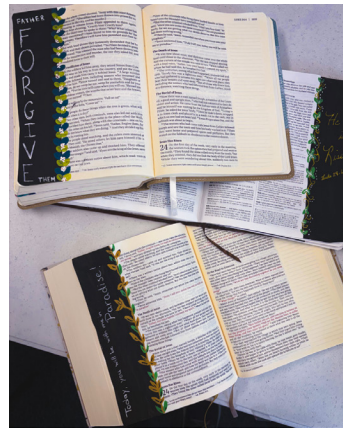


## STITCH & A PRAYER

Those that knit or crochet are welcome to come and join our Stitch and a Prayer group for their monthly gathering on Wednesday, April 8 at 2:30 PM in the Conference Room. This groups works to knit or crochet various items such as prayer shawls or lap blankets, baby blankets, hats, and scarfs.

## REMINDER- COME AND JOIN PASTOR CONNIE FOR FAITHFUL FITNESS!

Looking for a fun, low impact exercise class in a judgment free zone? Come and join Pastor Connie for Faithful Fitness on Friday mornings at 11 AM in the Fellowship Hall. This class is free and open to all who are looking to get their bodies moving! Pastor Connie has found a great virtually-taught class that uses easy movements for a great all body workout while sitting down.



## BIBLE JOURNALING Fellowship

Saturday, April 11  
10 AM  
Women of Faith Classroom

MELROSE  
BAPTIST CHURCH

## BIBLE JOURNALING FELLOWSHIP

Our Bible Journaling Fellowship will meet on Saturday, April 11 from 10 AM- 12 PM in the Women of Faith Sunday school classroom. New to Bible journaling or want to learn more? We welcome everyone to join us! Over the next couple of months we are going to be exploring how to use various creative mediums to study and explore God's Word.



## CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

Please mark your calendars for this month's church Business Meeting on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:15 PM in the Sanctuary.

## APRIL CREATIVES NIGHT

This month's Creatives Night will be on Friday, April 24 at 5:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall. This month we will be learning the basics of English Paper Piecing, a fun quilting technique that uses paper hexagons! After making a fun and easy hexagon flower we will put it on a tote bag. All are invited to join us for this fun evening of creativity and fellowship! We are requesting that those planning to come, please register on the church website [HERE](#).

# Upcoming Events



## THIS MONTH'S LAAF GATHERING

Those 50 and older are invited to this month's LAAF (Living Abundantly After Fifty) gathering on Tuesday, April 21 at 10 AM. This month the program is a presentation from Debby Hill about her trip to the Holy Land. Lunch for the day is a potluck so please bring a dish to share. The Mission Action Project will be announced at a later date.

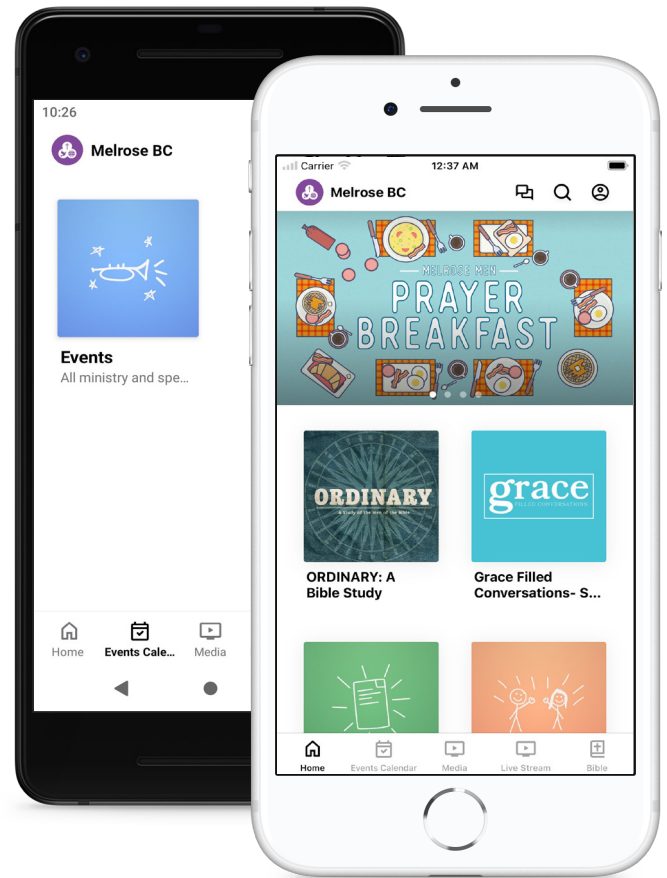


## DAY TRIP- GIRLS DAY OUT

The girls are going out for a fun day of shopping! We are taking one of the church vans to Lynchburg, VA on Thursday, April 23 for the day to visit Hobby Lobby and the Mardel Christian Store next door. We will grab lunch at Red Lobster and, on the way home, we will grab some Crumbl Cookies for a sweet treat. There are 15 spots open so call the church office ASAP to grab your spot! Friends are welcome! We will leave from the church parking lot at 9:30 AM that morning!

# Melrose Baptist Church

Available in App Stores



DOWNLOAD TODAY  
<http://get.theapp.co/ab23>

SUBSPASH®

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

We welcome all to join us for dinner on Wednesday evenings at 5:15 PM. The cost is \$9.00 per person or \$20 for a family up to 4 people. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the church office at 540-366-6631, on the Melrose Baptist Church mobile app, or the church website **HERE**.

### February Menu

- 4/8: Ranch beans, lettuce and tomato salad, corn bread, strawberry pineapple cake
- 4/15: Roast pork loin, squash saute, baked apples, dreamsicle sheet cake
- 4/22: Hamburger steaks, ranch potatoes, peas and carrots, Dr. Pepper brownies
- 4/29: Chicken ranchero, pasta, steamed broccoli, carmel apple toffee cake

## VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

### Ushers

4/5: Don Slone, Debby Hill  
4/12: Rhonda Kessler, Missy Wickham  
4/19: Rhonda Kessler, Missy Wickham  
4/26: Robin Bennett, Linley Hackworth

### Courtesy Team

4/5: Barry Wickham, Donnie Daniels  
4/12: Tracie Conley, Allen Journell  
4/19: Larry Hicks, Don Altice  
4/26: Annie Richerson, Jeff Poore

### Safety Team

4/5: Gary Hurd, Jeff Poore  
4/12: Gary Dixon, Suzanne Moses  
4/19: Larry Hicks, Jeb Wallace  
4/26: Allen Journell, Barry Wickham

### Youth Dinners

4/5: No youth and children- Easter  
4/12: Norma Engel, Becky Tobey  
4/19: The Hetherington's, The Wilson's  
4/26: The Sloane's, Tracie Conley, Stephanie Cook

## MEMORIALS

In Memory of Michael Thomas by:

Michael Lee  
Ruth McCoy  
Jill Bachorik  
Sue Spangler and Family

In Memory of Rev. Kelly Dampeer by Ron & Tracey Hughes  
of Cuba, MD

In Memory of Robert Sledd by Bobby Ayers

## MOST RECENT FINANCE REPORT- FEBRUARY

### February 2026

Monthly Income: \$72,434.72

Monthly Expenses: \$67,295.65

### Year to Date

Total Income: \$136,035.34

Total Expenses: \$132,969.22

# April Church Calendar

## April 1-5

### WEDNESDAY- 4/1

10 AM Beth Calloway  
4 PM Candy Bag Stuffing  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
7 PM The Living Lord's Supper

### THURSDAY- 4/2

6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:45 PM Fellowship Hall in Use

### SATURDAY- 4/4

11 AM-1 PM Easter Community  
Event  
2:30 PM Decor Committee

### SUNDAY- 4/5

7:15 AM Sunrise Service  
and Breakfast  
9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship

## April 6-12

### MONDAY- 4/6

*Church Office Closed*  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:30 PM Dartball Fellowship

### TUESDAY- 4/7

12 PM Staff Lunch  
1:30 PM Staff Meeting  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:15 PM Shalom Handbells  
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

### WEDNESDAY- 4/8

1:30 PM Sunday School Directors  
2:30 PM Stitch and a Prayer  
3:30 PM 5th Block  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6 PM Youth on Mission  
6 PM Finance Meeting  
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts  
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting  
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY- 4/9

10:30 AM Alma Hunt  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:45 PM Marketplace in Use  
7 PM Alma Hunt  
7:15 PM Youth Volleyball at Vinton

### FRIDAY- 4/10

11 AM Faithful Fitness

### SATURDAY- 4/11

10 AM Softball Field in Use  
10 AM Bible Journaling  
12-6 PM Fellowship Hall in Use

### SUNDAY- 4/12

9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
1-3:30 PM Conference Room in Use  
5 PM Children in Action &  
Worship Arts  
5 PM Seeds of Youth

## April 13-19

### MONDAY- 4/13

6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6 PM Constitution & Bylaws  
6:30 PM Dartball Fellowship

### TUESDAY- 4/14

1:30 PM Staff Meeting  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:15 PM Shalom Handbells  
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

### WEDNESDAY- 4/15

3:30 PM 5th Block  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6 PM Youth on Mission  
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts  
6:15 PM Business Meeting  
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY- 4/16

10 AM Sunshine Choir  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:45 PM Fellowship Hall in Use  
7:15 PM Youth Volleyball at Vinton

### FRIDAY- 4/17

11 AM Faithful Fitness

### SATURDAY- 4/18

9 AM- 4 PM Fellowship Hall in Use  
10 AM Softball Field in Use

### SUNDAY- 4/19

9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
5 PM Children in Action &  
Worship Arts  
5 PM Seeds of Youth

## April 20-26

### MONDAY- 4/20

10 AM Bible Study  
1:30 PM RVBA Board of Directors  
6 PM Softball Field in Use

### TUESDAY- 4/21

10 AM LAAF  
1:30 PM Staff Meeting  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:15 PM Shalom Handbells  
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

### WEDNESDAY- 4/22

3:30 PM 5th Block  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6 PM Youth on Mission  
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts  
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting  
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY- 4/23

9:30 AM Girls Day Out  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:30 PM Youth Volleyball at Vinton

### FRIDAY- 4/24

11 AM Faithful Fitness  
5:30 PM Creatives Night

### SATURDAY- 4/25

10 AM Softball Field in Use  
11:30 AM- 2 PM Fellowship Hall  
in Use

### SUNDAY- 4/26

*Youth Sunday*  
9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
5 PM Children in Action &  
Worship Arts  
5 PM Seeds of Youth

## April 27- May 3

### MONDAY- 4/27

10 AM Bible Study  
6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:45 PM Deacons Meeting

### TUESDAY- 4/28

6 PM Softball Field in Use  
6:15 PM Shalom Handbells  
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study  
6:30 PM RVBA Spring Meeting  
at Oakland BC

### WEDNESDAY- 4/29

10 AM Staff Meeting  
3:30 PM 5th Block  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6 PM Youth on Mission  
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts  
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting  
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY- 4/30

6 PM Softball Field in Use  
7:15 PM Youth Volleyball at Vinton

### SATURDAY- 4/2

10 AM WMU Leadership Meeting

### SUNDAY- 5/3

9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Pinewood Derby  
5 PM Children in Action &  
Worship Arts  
5 PM Seeds of Youth