



Blaine Visitor

March 2025

From Pastor Jim's desk...

Dugongs in the Desert?

Sometimes you read something and think to yourself, "Wait, what?." In Numbers chapter 4, the desert-dwelling Israelites were commanded to set up the Tent of Meeting- in the desert. Just for a few minutes, put yourself smack dab in the middle of the desert with the Israelites. Are you there? Good, when Moses read off the list of supplies to the Levites who would be in charge of all the tabernacle accoutrements, there's a slight oddity: the materials required were not the most readily available to tribes of Israel, who at the time were desert-bound nomads. Here, take a look at Numbers 4:4-6,

This is the work of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting: the care of the most holy things. When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons are to go in and take down the shielding curtain and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. Then they are to cover this with hides of sea cows, spread a cloth of solid blue over that and put the poles in place.

Did you catch that? If not read it again, and remember: desert. God told Moses that the Israelites needed to cover various articles with hides of sea cows while traveling. Again, hides of sea cows- the cousin of the manatee. Now, to be fair, a lot of Bibles translate this differently and there is some speculation as to what God is talking about. Honestly, I couldn't believe it myself when I read it (over and over). I actually Googled it, and nobody seems to really have much to say except that on the whole, most modern translators think that the NIV Bible is accurate. Either way I love this translation because it's absolutely ridiculous.

Basically, every part of the Tent of Meeting at some point or another gets covered in sea cow skins. Remember for a moment, they weren't in a big trading area like Egypt; the Israelites were wandering the desert.

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Not only were they wandering, but they were doing so without ready access to food like fish or meat and certainly not to large gray aquatic vacuum cleaners. We know this because Numbers 11:4-6 actually records the people complaining about their lack of tasty food.

The rif-raf with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost- also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

The complainers actually noted the lack of fish, which implies a lack of access to aquatic life. So how in the world were these people supposed to get what would amount to a whole bunch of dead dugongs?

Imagine Moses as he tried to keep up with God while the Lord was giving him instructions. I think the way God presents the whole set up to Moses is a little bit playful, knowing how bizarre it all sounds. I mean, the Lord could have just said, "wrap everything in blue cloth, then in the hides of sea cows." But he plays with it, again and again specifically mentioning the need for dugong skin to Moses (who in turn had to present what God told him to the Israelites).

Ok, this begs the question, "Why would God demand something so ludicrous that the Israelites absolutely wouldn't be able to get it?" Well, the Lord gave Moses and the people a seemingly impossible request in order to show His power and to test the Israelites. Moses reminds the people of this in Deuteronomy 8:2 when he says,

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

The Israelites time in the desert was wild. Yes, it was an awful desert, but God showed up all the time to meet their needs in order to gain their trust, even in the harshest conditions. Psalm 78 chronicles some of what they experienced out there with the Lord.

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The Psalm reads,

*He did miracles in the sight of their fathers
In the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
He divided the sea and led them through;
He made the water stand firm like a wall.
He guided them with the cloud by day
And with the light from the fire by night.
He split the rocks in the desert
And gave them water as abundant as the seas;
He brought streams out of a rocky crag
And made water flow down like rivers (Psalms 78:12-16).*


Can you imagine that? First God brought awesome and rather showy plagues on Egypt until the native Egyptians were so sick of the Israelites and scared of God that they paid God's people to leave. Maybe even giving them the fine leather skins of sea cows as one of their parting gifts. God had that taken care of too,

*Yet he gave a command to the skies above
And opened the doors of the heavens;
He rained down manna for the people to eat,
He gave them the grain of heaven.
Men ate the bread of angels;
He sent them all the food they could eat (Psalms 78:23-25)*

Since the desert had a severe lack of food, God actually rained down food from heaven, that was waiting for them to collect.

I believe this is God's message to us today too. God will provide, no matter what the situation looks like. Every champion of faith has had to learn that we can't look with our eyes and make a decision based on our rationality. Even Abraham, the father of faith learned this after God almost made him sacrifice his son (who was a gift from God to the extremely old Abraham). Genesis 22:13-14 God will provide everything to those who trust in him to do so.

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Jesus once said,

So do not worry saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:31-33).

And just how do we seek the Kingdom of Heaven and righteousness? Well, God provided that too, in a way almost as ridiculous as dugongs in the desert. He gave us Jesus. The perfect for the imperfect. We simply believe that Jesus was who he said he was and cry out to him for salvation. Wow!

Pastor Jim



Blaine History



Blaine Christian, The Middle Years

"It is rather difficult to describe accurately this period...The struggles of the community reflect the national turmoils of the same era. They saw their young men and women go off to fight two world wars and they well knew the hardships of the Great Depression. They also experienced the optimism and exhilaration of the promise of a better world that characterized the 1950's.

The little church reflected the same ups and downs as the nation. There were periods when attendance was encouraging, Sunday school thriving, and activities plentiful. There were other times when only a handful of the faithful kept the church from dissolving completely." - Bertine Orr

"All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost." - J.R.R. Tolkien

Let's pray for deep roots!



March Events

- 2 Choir Practice 6:00pm
- 5 Ash Wednesday - Lent begins
Soup Supper 6:30pm
Worship Service 7:15pm
- 9 Daylight Savings begins
Choir Practice 6:00pm
- 11 Worship Committee Meeting 9:00am
- 12 Elders Meeting 5:30pm
Congregational Meeting 7:00pm
- 13 Lunch with Friends 12:00pm
- 16 Choir Practice 6:00pm
- 17 Christian Education Meeting 1:30pm
Pizza with the Pastor 6:30pm
- 19 Young Adult Ministry 6:00pm
- 23 Choir Practice 6:00pm
- 30 Choir Practice 6:00pm

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT/EASTER:

Ash Wednesday, March 5th:

Soup and Bread: 6:30, Worship: 7:15pm

Lent Study during Sunday School beginning March 9th

Maundy Thursday, April 17th:

Supper and Service: 6:30pm

24 Hour Prayer Vigil 8pm April 17th-
8pm April 18th

Good Friday, April 18th-8:00pm

Tenebrae service with drama

Easter Egg Hunt for children:

Saturday, April 19th-11:00am

Easter Worship: Sunday, April 20th at
10:00am (one service) **He is Risen!**



Sermon Schedule

March 2nd- Pastor Jim

1st Reading: Revelation 21: 3-7

2nd Reading: Ezekiel 37

Sermon Title: "Dry & Dusty"

March 16th- Pastor Jim

1st Reading: Psalm 46: 7-11

2nd Reading: 1 Kings 19: 10-14

Sermon Title: "Be Still"

March 30th- Pastor Jim

1st Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:7

2nd Reading: Deuteronomy 15

Sermon Title: "Hold on Loosely"

March 9th- Pastor David

1st Reading: Exodus 34: 28-30

2nd Reading: Matthew 6: 16-18

Sermon Title: "Fasting"

March 23rd- Pastor Jim

1st Reading: Psalm 51

2nd Reading: 1 John 1:1- 2:14

Sermon Title: "Give All You Got"



SERVING THIS MONTH

Praise & Worship Service 8:30 am

Worship Leader: Gloria Magnotti

Greeter: Robin Groesbeck

Usher: Volunteer Needed

Welcome Center (both services):
Cathy Bodell

Traditional Service 11:00 am

Elders: Linda Byers & Sally Wolverton

Worship Reader: Sonja Reitan

Diaconate Servers: Ralph & Kate Jenkins,
Wayne & Nina Margetson

Diaconate Preparer: Wendy DeLisle

Greeter: Chuck Wolverton

Usher: Mary Pulido



Missions Committee Update

Workforce heading to North Carolina

The mission's committee is sending a workforce to North Carolina to help rebuild following the destruction caused by Hurricane Helene last fall. We will be working through Baptists on Mission which is the group our church supported financially immediately following the hurricane last fall. Volunteers must be willing and able to do construction, landscaping, clean up, etc. although you don't have to have experience in these areas. Anyone interested in joining the workforce needs to sign up in the fellowship hall by March 9. Volunteers must be in 8th grade or older, and anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The group will be travelling down April 26 and returning May 4. We will be working Monday through Friday in Canton, North Carolina. See Pastor David or Sue Spalding with questions. More details to follow when we know who and how many will be going.

Volunteers, donations support BACN Winter Food Drive

The Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN) is holding its winter food drive Thursday, March 6 through Saturday, March 8. Blaine Christian Church is covering all the shifts at the Family Fare in Benzonia on Thursday, March 6. Thank you to everyone who stepped up to volunteer. BACN bags were handed out recently for those who would like to make a food donation through the church. The bags are due back Sunday, March 2. The items that BACN most needs includes soup, soda crackers, canned pasta, cereal, canned chicken, peanut butter, and jelly. Thanks in advance for your support of Blaine's continued partnership with BACN in feeding the hungry in our community.

Blaine to help Onkama start Young Life Program

December's generous tithing of \$2061.89 will be used to help start up a Young Life group in Onkama Schools. Young Life's mission is to introduce adolescents to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith believing that every kid has the right to hear about Jesus Christ, regardless of economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

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Missions Committee Update

Native American Christian Academy benefits from January's tithing

January's tithing was sent to support the Native American Christian Academy in Arizona where Nina Margetson and her granddaughter went to do mission work in February. The academy provides a Christian education for Native American children and their families.

In other Missions Committee business...

- The Missions Committee will continue to put 1.25% of each month's tithing to ECHO, BACN, and Habitat for Humanity.
- The 1.25% that had been sent to Operation Christmas Child will be kept in a Christmas fund and used for several Christmas projects possibly including OCC, a giving tree, and/or support of families in need identified through local schools.
- \$200 was given from the discretionary fund to a family in the Brethren area that lost everything in a fire. Mercy delivered the gift and a card on our church's behalf.
- Trevor Magnoti and Wendy DeLisle have joined the Missions Committee.

Keep eyes open for missions opportunities

If you hear of someone in need or have a suggestion for how our church's tithing should be spent, reach out to a committee member. Current members include Sue Spalding, Mercy Sobkoviak, Mary Pulido, Trevor Magonoti and Wendy DeLisle.



thank you

Thank you to everyone
who sent cards, texted,
called, or prayed for us
during my illness.

- Kate Jenkins



Sunday School News



Our Sunday School ministry is an important part of our church life. It is a place for folks to learn from God's Word, to meet others on the faith journey and support one another.

In March and early April our classes for the children will be studying Jesus' life and events leading up to Easter as we get closer to Easter. The youth are meeting with Pastor Jim and Karl Tietz looking at "Not a Fan" by Kyle Idleman-about being a follower of Jesus.

LENT ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY

During the 6 Sundays leading up to Easter the adult class that meets in the worship area will be looking at Bob Goff's study "Undistracted" This study will help those that participate be more focused on Jesus and His priorities for your life. "You have permission to eliminate distractions! You have permission to live a more fulfilling life!

Distractions cause more harm than you might think. And they're all around us, all the time. They can disrupt our focus on what really matters, interfere with our true priorities, and divert our attention from the God who created us for his good purpose.

- Identify the distractions in your life
- Eliminate them so that you can recharge and refocus on your God-given purpose
- Start living a less-distracted and more joy-filled and love-oriented life

Plan to make the time to participate in this study and come to Easter morning more focused on Jesus and the journey you are on with Him.

Plan to come and be part of these learning times and grow in your understanding of Jesus and what His life means for your life. Bring a friend or family member with you each week.



SMALL GROUP STUDY

There is also a group for young parents that meets on Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour (9:45am) in the west lower classroom. Children too young for Sunday School are invited to come with their parents. They are currently studying "Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table" by Louie Giglio through RightNow Media and will switch to a Lent study mid-March. Reach out to Angela DeWys if you have questions or interest.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

This group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. In March they will be joining the **Ash Wednesday soup supper and service** and then have a regular meeting on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19TH from 6:00-7:30pm**. This group is for post high school through 30s age to come together and have a meal, fellowship, and discussion. The meal is provided and discussion held on the direction of the group. Pastor David and Sue continue to provide leadership for the group. Be inviting and plan to participate and get to know other young adults and build community with one another.


MID WEEK BIBLE STUDIES

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: Monday nights at 6:30 have been cancelled for March, but will resume April 7th. See Bruce Caylen or Rob Janusch if you have questions.

WOMEN'S WINTER BIBLE STUDY: 35 women studied "Heaven-When Faith becomes Sight" by Jennifer Rothschild for 7 weeks this winter and concluded their study with a potluck on February 25th.

MEN'S WINTER BIBLE STUDY: 20 men studied "The Case for Heaven" by Lee Strobel for 7 weeks this winter and concluded on February 25th.

Watch the newsletter and bulletin for future mid-week studies to be announced.



Lent and Easter Information

ASH WEDNESDAY-MARCH 5TH- SOUP, BREAD AND WORSHIP

Lent Begins- Journey with Jesus

You are encouraged to begin the season of Lent with the church family with a simple soup and bread supper at 6:30 on March 5th followed by short worship service(7:15pm) with ashes to help us prepare for this season of Journeying with Jesus to the cross and then on to Easter. Plan now to come and be blessed by this time of fellowship and worship together.

LENT 2025: "JOURNEY WITH JESUS"

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th. This is a 40 day season of reflection to remember all Jesus did for us by going to the cross on our behalf. Take time each day to use your in home devotional to "journey with Jesus" during these 40 days. This devotional is a hopeful walk through Lent with Scripture and simplicity as your guides as you consider the themes of reconciliation and renewal with God and one another, as you journey with Jesus to the cross and on to Easter".



SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT & EASTER:



Maundy Thursday, April 17th:

Supper and Service: 6:30pm



24 Hour Prayer Vigil: 8:00pm April 17th-8:00pm April 18th

Good Friday, April 18th-8:00pm Tenebrae service with drama

Easter Egg Hunt for children: Saturday, April 19th-11:00am

Easter Worship: Sunday, April 20th at 10:00am (one service) **He is Risen!**



Announcements



LUNCH WITH FRIENDS

On the second Thursday of the month (March 13th) at 12N there is a potluck lunch at Skip and Mary Lou Noble's home on Watervale. Along with the lunch cards are readied to send to our more shut in folks to brighten their days. Questions may be addressed to the Nobles.

yum!

ALL CHURCH MONTHLY POTLUCK

The March all church potluck will be **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26TH AT 6:00PM.** This is an opportunity to gather as the church family for good food and fellowship. You are asked to bring a dish to share and your own table service. Invite a friend to come with you or offer to pick up someone that needs a ride.

Volunteers Needed

We are an active church and to be so we need those willing to serve in different ministries. Some of those needs occur on Sunday mornings and others during the week. Here are some of the opportunities to serve:

SUNDAYS: worship reader (both services), greeter or usher (both services), Kids Kare (both services-see Mary Barnum or Carolyn Waterson), fellowship time (both services). See the sign ups in the fellowship hall and add your name.

OTHER: Meals for short term homebound, garden help, meal for Young Adult Ministry-see sign ups in fellowship hall.

Choose a way you are willing to serve, as together we make our church a warm welcoming place of worship, study and fellowship.

Announcements



NEEDED: EASTER CANDY



Again this Easter, our church will be offering an Easter Egg hunt and story time for children on Saturday, April 19th at 11:00am. To make this happen we are asking for donations of small wrapped candies to place in plastic eggs. If you would like to help with this outreach ministry, please bring a bag or two of candy and place it in the marked container in the office area by Sunday, April 6th. Thank you in advance for your donation.



EASTER FLOWERS



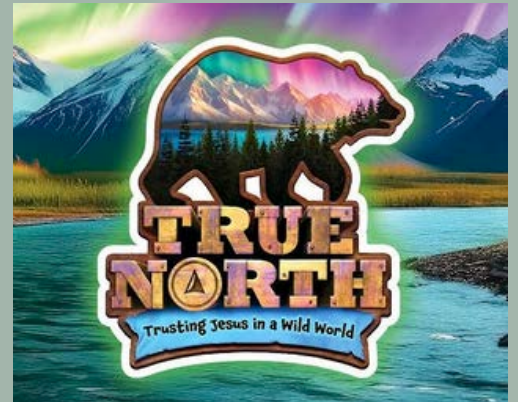
Each Easter our worship area is filled with lilies and spring flowers as a way to help us celebrate the newness of our life in the resurrection. This year you will be able to purchase a lily, tulip or daffodil in honor or memory of someone and have it in place for Easter. Watch the bulletin later in the month for order blank, cost of flowers and deadline to order by.

Save the Dates: VBS 2025

We know it is still winter—but as families make summer plans we want you to know the **VBS 2022 will be AUGUST 4th-7th from 6:00-8:10pm** each evening. Please mark your calendars now and make this an important part of the summer planning for your family.

The theme will be **"TRUTH NORTH: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World"**.

Grandparents—why not invite your grandchildren for a week of fun with you and then include VBS in the evenings for them. More information coming in future newsletters.



Staff

Office Manager- Angela DeWys
Christian Education & Membership & Evangelism- Carolyn Waterson (231) 882-9802

Congregational Fellowship, Missions, Property , Open

Committee Chairs

Christian Education

Mary Barnum (231) 313-8922

Congregational Fellowship

Rick Kemperman

Membership & Evangelism

Ben DeWys (616) 490-2508

Missions

Sue Spalding (517) 617-3661

Property

Chuck Wolverton (231) 912-0505

Worship

Tom Brown (231) 383-2364

**The deadline for the April
Blaine Visitor is March 24th.**

Birthdays

- 4 Dodie Putney, Ron Gillison
- 5 Maggie Baker
- 9 Mary Pulido, Joey Saffron
- 14 Carl Barnum
- 15 Mercy Sobkoviak
- 17 Jannette Ervin, Dianne Gillison
- 20 Mark Evans, Ron Heverly
- 28 Pastor Jim Thompson
- 29 Molly Merrill
- 30 Dale Janusch

Anniversaries

- 5 Adam & Katy Putney
- 23 Bruce & Jenny Caylen
- 30 Pastor Jim & Trish Thompson



March Blaine Visitor

Our Mission

Our purpose at Blaine Christian Church is to live and share the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Together, we seek to learn, teach, hear, minister, support, grow and worship as a community of faith. As Christ's disciples, we accept the call to reach out with God's love to those outside the church. Thus, as part of the Church Universal, we intend to serve both the physical and spiritual needs of our immediate community and the world. To this end, we commit ourselves to witness and serve in the fellowship and traditions of the Christian Church.

Pastor Jim Thompson

Pastor David Spalding

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**Blaine Christian Church
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SPRING SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. Praise & Worship Service

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Traditional Service

Bible based. Jesus focused. People Loving.