

THE MESSENGER

APRIL 2026

Hope.

Hope seems fleeting sometimes – particularly if we spend too much time reading/watching the news, or doomscrolling on social media. It doesn't take long with either of these, or any number of other signs of the times, to throw a wet blanket over the candle of hope.



And yet, on Easter, we are confronted with the story of Jesus rising from the most hopeless of hopeless places, a stone-covered, soldier-guarded, cave of a grave. It's hard to find a place less hopeful than three days dead and buried. Yet, we find the tomb open, unguarded, and empty. We are met with the message that Jesus is waiting in Galilee. Like a buried ember under a twice doused fire that we thought was long burned out, hope roars back to life.

Easter reminds us that our hope is not to be found in war reports, economic charts, or the S&P 500. Rather our hope is in knowing that we can live our lives in such a way that there is more to life than we ever thought. Jesus' return from the grave frees us from our fear of the finality of death. It releases us from the chains of the market economy. It rekindles our imagination about what the abundant life could be. In short, it gives us hope.

The hope we find at Easter is at the center of the Christian faith. It is one of the big three, according to Paul (faith, hope, and love – I Corinthians 13:13). Let's defiantly hold on to our Easter hope – living lives marked by hope, living lives that inspire hope.

Jesus is risen. He is risen, indeed!



HYMN HIGHLIGHT

By Nenette Measels, Minister of Music and Worship

As we left worship on Easter Sunday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we sang the hymn “He Is Lord”. While it is one of numerous anonymous scripture songs, this hymn began its life with the derivation of stanza one from the well-known confession of faith recorded in Philippians 2:10-11, “That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. . .and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”. It appears that Paul was quoting from an early Christian hymn. There are three additional verses not included in our *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* that point to Christ as the King who draws all nations to Him, as the source and model of love, and as the assurance for eternal life.

He is Lord, he is Lord!
He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is King, he is King!
He will draw all nations to him he is King;
and the time shall be when the world shall sing
that Jesus Christ is King!

He is Love, he is Love!
He has shown us by his life that he is Love;
all his people sing with one voice of joy
that Jesus Christ is Love!

He is Life, he is Life!
He has died to set us free and he is Life;
and he calls us all to live evermore,
for Jesus Christ is Life.*

**The Worshiping Church: A Hymnal, Leaders Edition,*
Hope Publishing Company, 1991.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Summary of Operational Budget Income & Expense through March 2026

Items of Interest

- **Online Giving** is simple and convenient, and you do not have to set up a Realm account to give online. Visit: <https://onrealm.org/fbcjeff/give/now> to initiate an online gift today!
- **Designated Benevolence Fund total** (as of 3/31/2026) = \$48,885.33

	December	January	February	March
Income	\$33,983.58	\$20,853.81	\$22,901.56	\$49,641.78
Expenses	\$34,392.01	\$20,853.81	\$31,319.69	\$32,321.93
Net	(\$408.43)	(\$15,717.91)	(\$8,418.13)	\$17,319.85
YTD	\$37,218.17	(\$15,717.91)	(\$24,519.39)	(\$7,199.54)

ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY	BIBLE STUDY	IN-PERSON WORSHIP
March 1	30	75
March 8	43	73
March 15	36	80
March 22	38	84
March 29	49	79

DEACONS & MINISTER OF THE WEEK

- April 5:** Jim Wilson/Peggy Dalton/Major Treadway
April 12: Susan Garber/Betty Watkins/Chad Hartsock
April 19: Merci Rowlett/Karen Snyder Smith/Nenette Measels
April 26: Carolyn Blevins/Jim Wilson/Major Treadway

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

By Bethany Davenport, Chair, Children and Youth Committee



On Sunday March 22, 2026 our FirstJeff Kids had their annual Easter Egg Hunt. A great time was had both hiding, and seeking all those eggs. I don't know how many were hidden but it looks like Moses and Xander made a large dent in the number of eggs available.

On Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026, our Music Makers also played a huge part in our Palm Sunday service, both by performing, *Here Comes Jesus*, and participating in the palm procession. We love our children and greatly appreciate all of you who help to make all of this possible.

BENEVOLENCE

Cary Bible, Leader, Benevolence Team



Each week before Wednesday's Neighbors, our team prays for guidance as we weigh hard questions:

How can we best help our neighbors?

What's the purpose of the program?

How can we speak truth into the lives of those we meet?

How much should we help?

As we wrestle with both the implications and realities of our neighbors' stories, a verse that I've have been meditating lately before each week is:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ... 'I tell you the truth, just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it for me.'" (Matthew 25:35-40)

Wednesday's Neighbors is the hands and feet of Christ incarnate through our church's collective giving, and through us who have the privilege of serving in the room. In March, First Baptist Church has ...

Helped the stranger: A legal immigrant family with 4 children is trying to become more proficient in English so they can have better job security and be able to engage in East Tennessee life more fully. FBC covered a month's payment of their electric bill and connected them with the free English classes here at the church.

Helped the sick: A woman with cancer, various health problems, and mounting medical bills – whose son was in a car accident and may never walk again – received a food voucher, gasoline to drive to Knoxville to see her son, and had an electric bill paid.

Invited people in and fed them: The Benevolence Team provides Wednesday Night Supper vouchers to recipients of assistance. In March, 11 adults and 12 children used the vouchers to receive hot meals, and three families even sat and ate with us in the Fellowship Hall.

Helped break the bonds of imprisonment: A single mother with 3 kids had her food stamps relapse; she had no way to feed her children, and her electricity had been shut off. She had recently left an abusive partner, seeking a better life and hope for her children. Through assistance provided by Wednesday's Neighbors, she was able to maintain her and her children's freedom as they step into this new direction.

Thank you for your support of a mission that not only changes the lives of your neighbors, but also has a real impact on those of us in the congregation sitting next to you.



Cover Art: Lorrain, Claude, 1600-1682. Easter Morning, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.
<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=46720>
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SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

9:30am Sunday Bible Studies
10:45am Worship Service

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Monday-Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Find us at www.fbcjeff.org or follow us online on *Facebook* and *YouTube*

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