

# The Peoria Christian

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The Season of Lent is already upon us and will accompany us throughout the month of March. As the weather starts to warm and life begins to reemerge from under the oppressive cold, it is the just right time to do some stocktaking of ourselves.

Lent is the season for introspection. It invites us to turn out all our proverbial pockets, strip down the sheets, lay bare the tenderest spots of our spiritual lives so that the healing light of God's presence can restore and renew us. If there are confessions to be made in your life, Lent is the time to unburden yourself for good.

Some folks uphold a tradition of giving up something for lent. A representative sacrifice to that of Jesus, so that you may be reminded of him and all he gave when desire tempts your resolve. Often we give up things like sweets, or the evening bourbon, or some other pleasantries which we will miss - but won't make or break our lives either.

But often, especially in my own formative years, the practice of giving something up didn't operate like that - it didn't remind me of Jesus. It either irritated me and made me feel resentful towards the church and its rules (as a younger person), or it was just another challenge to accomplish (my family was pretty competitive). Neither is aligned with the primary purpose of the practice, neither are worthy of Christ.

So, for the last few years in my own personal lenten practice, I have tried something different. I have instead focused on ways to develop deeper experiences of empathy as my Lenten spiritual practice. Because, empathy is born in the ashes.

Empathy is a kind of sacrifice, if you are willing to see it that way. Because it requires one to put aside their own view and strive to see the world from another's perspective, to feel the way another feels.

Empathy doesn't leave any room for one's own ego; it asks that you care because it matters to another. Because, it is one thing to conceptually understand another person's challenges, it is a whole other thing to feel the weight of their world on your shoulders.

This Lent, I encourage you to do some introspection, practice some empathy, and let us together ready our hearts for the glory of the Lord.

Blessings, Pastor Adam



## Food Pantry

In March, items donated will be going to Friendship House. Any non-perishable items are much needed.

Thank you!



## February Giving

DMF	\$1258.33
Neighborhood House	\$350



## Stewardship

In God's Kingdom, money is meant to be in constant movement, changing hands regularly to fulfill its mission from place to place; blessing many along the way.  
- Sebastien Richard



## Creation Care

Our ancestors dreamed us into being. The least we can do is listen when the earth speaks back.

- Lawrence Nault

# Loving Our Neighbors



## 2026 Worship Theme

01

JANUARY

What Is Love?

02

FEBRUARY

Learning to Love Yourself

03

MARCH

Lent:  
Learning to Love the Dust

04

APRIL

Who Is Our Neighbor?

05

MAY

When Neighbors Feel  
Like Enemies

06

JUNE

Love Wins

07

JULY

Pursuing a  
Liberating Love

08

AUGUST

God's Unbreakable Love

09

SEPTEMBER

Stewardship Campaign:  
When Love Is Enough

10

OCTOBER

*A Just Love*

11

NOVEMBER

Responding to Love

12

DECEMBER

Advent:  
Love Embodied

You Are Here



# LENT- REBUILDING FROM THE DUST



## March 1, 2026

Scripture: Luke 14:12-14

Jubilate Ringers: *Were You There?* - arr. Brian Childers  
Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

As we begin the season of lent, we have an opportunity to focus our own hearts. Because when used best, Lent is an invitation into self-reflection. The tradition is built on Jesus' experience of 40 days in the wilderness, immediately following his baptism. It was during this time that Jesus was tempted by the devil, and offered the easy way out - only to reaffirm who he is and to whom he belongs.

## March 8, 2026

Scripture: Psalm 51:10-12

Sanctuary Choir: *At the Cross* - arr. Cliff Duren  
Rev. Mason Fitch, preaching

Lent invites us not just to give things up, but to loosen the grip of whatever keeps us from loving fully. "Letting Go to Love" is less about deprivation and more about clearing space: releasing old narratives, resentments, fears, and expectations that have hardened into spiritual clutter. When we name what weighs us down, we begin to rebuild from the dust with a lighter spirit and a freer heart. Letting go becomes its own act of love: love for God, for neighbor, and for ourselves. And in the season that leads us toward resurrection, we discover that some things have to fall away so deeper love can rise.



## March 15, 2026

Scripture: Genesis 21:9-21

Sanctuary Choir: *How Beautiful* - arr. Benjamin Harlan  
Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

There might not be a more prejudiced moment in all of scripture than when in Genesis 21, Sarah tells Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." Let us remember it was Sarah who sent Hagar into Abraham's bed in the first place, because Sarah had lost patience with God. In this Sunday's sermon, we will come alongside Hagar as she is lost and found again, see her for who she really is, notice how God engages her, and admire her faithfulness. Because when love feels lost, God makes a way.



## March 22, 2026

Scripture: Luke 4:31-37

Jubilate Ringers: *Go to Dark Gethsemane* - arr. Brian Childers  
Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

The stories about Jesus casting out demons are some of the hardest to interpret for a modern hearer. The idea of demon possession just feels so foreign and ancient. Easy to be written off as the ignorance of the past to the medical advancements we have made in the last 2000 years. And yet, something happened to those Jesus touched. The torments they had once endured were now resolved. The chaos was now calm. The anxiety, peace. And whether or not we believe in demons, we all know that peace is real - even if difficult to attain. Jesus soothes the soul, his love will save us. That is the timeless truth, praise and glory.



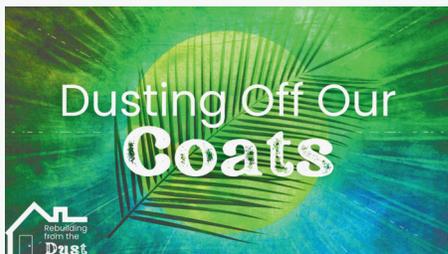
## March 29, 2026

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

Sanctuary Choir: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, cantata - arranged Mauldin/Larson

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

Hosanna is a very unique word. And is much less common in the bible than we might assume. Our Palm Sunday worship circles around the story of hosannas, the story of Jesus finally arriving in Jerusalem to a crowd who would welcome him in the most unusual ways. The stories we have heard about Christ's less than triumphant arrival in Jerusalem have been tempered, watered down, sanitized of the urgency of their message. We pursue the truth about the palms and hosannas this Sunday. If for no other reason, then the truth will set us free.





## Save the Date!

Our annual Easter Celebration will be held on Saturday April 4th at 10am. Pass the word around to your friends and neighbors! Be on the lookout for ways to serve at this event!



## Easter Candy Needed

We are needing PLENTY of candy to stuff into easter eggs for our upcoming Easter Celebration. If you are able, please bring in individually wrapped candy. We're asking for both chocolate and non-chocolate candies because each egg gets one of each. There is a basket by the main office to receive. Thank you!



## Sunday Morning Study *The Book of Hebrews* led by Frank Wheeler

We invite you to join us as we begin a study of the Book of Hebrews. Remaining faithful to our commitment to follow Jesus and his way of life is not always easy. As we read through Hebrews, we will see that the early followers of Jesus struggled with their commitment to Jesus as well. They faced some of the same issues we face today and even some that we don't. Let's see how the Letter of Hebrews encourages and motivates its readers to maintain their faithfulness and perhaps we will find a renewal of our own commitment as well.



## Responders Class led by Becky Sisk

In the Responders adult Sunday School class, we use Wired Word lessons each

Sunday, 9-10 am. We examine current events from the point of view of the Bible and our faith. Our topics are current and often challenge us in new ways. Come join us!



## Weekly Bible Study

Pastor Adam is leading a study and deep dive into the book of Esther. All are welcome to join!

## Glen Oak CC Community Meal



This is a meal served to the community once a month. It is a wonderful service to the community that they serve. We have been asked to help this month as we explore different ways that we can serve our community. Here is the schedule:

Thursday, March 5th

Schedule:

3:30-Cook and prepare the meal (Family Style)

5:00-Serve the meal

6:00-Clean up

6:30-Close

You can help in any or all of these areas.

Please sign up on the sign-up sheet on the information desk at church for the time and the area you can help with.

Please arrive on Thursday, March 5th, at the time you signed up for or 3:30 for the entire time

Glen Oak Christian Church

1115 E. Republic Street

Peoria, IL 61603

Call Steve Peters with any questions you might have 309-635-5523

## Cluster Service Meal



On March 1st, we are hosting one of the Cluster Lenten Series services, and you are invited to serve! We are inviting folks to help in the kitchen, with set up, and with clean up. If you are able to serve the cluster this way, please sign up at the information desk. Thank you!

## Filling Easter Eggs



The annual Easter Party will be on Saturday, April 4th at 10am. That means it is almost time to fill Easter Eggs!!! We need all the help we can get!! Join us on Wednesday, March 25th beginning at 8:30 am. Come and go!! If you have an hour, great! If you have all morning, great! We have lots of eggs to fill. (Candy is still needed!)

## March Birthdays

Julie Peters	3/4
Owen Jury	3/4
Sam Sisk	3/10
Brad Runkle	3/15
Tim Dougherty	3/24
Adam Bradley	3/31



## March Anniversaries

Monica & Steve Hinrichs	3/23
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### Disciple Women

**March 10th @ 12pm**

Our Guest Kathy Cobb will give us a presentation on Snack Packs. Dessert is provided, bring a sack lunch, and all are welcome!



### Tasting Peoria

**The Fox Pub**

**March 12th @ 6pm**

A Taste of Britain in the Heart of Peoria. Experience authentic British pub culture with their carefully curated selection of craft ales and traditional pub fare.



### Book Club

**The Ghostwriter**

**March 19th @ 6pm**

*The Ghostwriter* by Julie Clark follows disgraced ghostwriter Olivia Dumont as she returns home to ghostwrite a memoir for her famous horror novelist father, Vincent Taylor, who is suffering from dementia, only to discover the project is actually a confession about the decades-old murders of his siblings, forcing Olivia to unravel family secrets through fragmented notes, diaries, and hidden clues to find the real truth behind the tragedy.



### Movie Night

**Fly Me to the Moon**

**March 26th @ 6pm**

*Fly Me to the Moon* is a retro-styled romantic comedy set during the Apollo 11 mission, where a fast-talking marketing executive is hired to improve NASA's public image ahead of the moon landing. When concerns arise about a possible on-air failure, she's quietly asked to prepare a staged backup - clashing with the mission's no-nonsense launch director in the process. As the real launch nears, professional sparring gives way to romance, and both are forced to choose between controlling the narrative and trusting the truth.



### March Potluck - 3/29

Please sign up if you can help with prep and/or cleanup. Bring your own tableware to help reduce waste.



# SERVING SCHEDULES

Date	Elders	Deacons	Lay Reader	Acolyte	Greeters	Counters
<b>3/1/26</b>	Beth Smittkamp Linda Rex	Lisa Cheatham John Best Jan Cusac Cody Cheatham	Sandy Surface	Natalie Woods	Kathleen & Frank Wheeler	Mike & Laura Buckley
<b>3/8/26</b>	Connie Sinn Dave Sinn	Lisa Cheatham John Best Jan Cusac Cody Cheatham	Kate Spielman	Natalie Woods	Kathleen & Frank Wheeler	John & Lisa Best
<b>3/15/26</b>	Beth Cox Kevin Wolfe	Lisa Cheatham John Best Jan Cusac Cody Cheatham	Cheryl Davis	Natalie Woods	Kathleen & Frank Wheeler	Monica & Steve Hinrichs
<b>3/22/26</b>	Kevin Cheatham Steve West	Lisa Cheatham John Best Jan Cusac Cody Cheatham	Laura Cohen	Natalie Woods	Kathleen & Frank Wheeler	Jim & Beth Smittkamp
<b>3/29/26</b>	Chere Peters Jenny Tripses	Lisa Cheatham John Best Jan Cusac Cody Cheatham	not needed	Natalie Woods	Kathleen & Frank Wheeler	Steve West Ralph Tegg

Date	Friends with Jesus	Growing Disciples	The Open Table
<b>3/1/26</b>	Jenny Tripses	Lindsey Hinshaw	Frank Wheeler
<b>3/8/26</b>	Chere Peters	Lindsey Hinshaw	Frank Wheeler
<b>3/15/26</b>	Jenny Tripses	Laura Buckley	Frank Wheeler
<b>3/22/26</b>	Linda Rex	Laura Buckley	Frank Wheeler
<b>3/29/26</b>	Katie Fitch	none	Frank Wheeler

Psalms of  
*Lament*

Illinois Valley Cluster Lenten Services

FEBRUARY 22

Sunnyland  
Sylvia Laidig

MARCH 1

FCC Peoria  
Jennie Churchman

MARCH 8

Glen Oak  
Beth Rupe

MARCH 15

Eureka  
Adam Bradley

MARCH 22

FCC Creve Coeur  
April McClure Stewart

MARCH 29

Mackinaw