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## Pastor's Perspective

By Dave Hendrickson, Lead Pastor

### "Lamenting, Longing, Laughing: A Lenten Reflection on the Wilderness"

As LvCC journeys through the season of Lent, I invite us all into a time of self-reflection and spiritual renewal. Lent is a season for the Church and followers of Jesus to acknowledge our dependence on the Lord and our mortality—from *dust you come, and to dust you shall return*. Traditionally, Lent emphasizes our laments, those times when our relationship with God feels distant. However, as we read in the Psalms and in the life of Jesus, the wilderness is not just an empty place. It is a sacred space where lament, longing, and even laughter can coexist.

The wilderness or desert is often seen as a metaphor for trials, pain, and the apparent absence of God. It is a time when we feel vulnerable, stripped bare, and exposed to life's difficulties. David, in Psalm 13, captures this well: *"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"*

I've found myself in these wilderness moments, where frustrations and pain overwhelm me after a difficult meeting or conversation. Like David, I cry out to God in those moments, feeling vulnerable and lost. But, as David shows us, lament is not just a cry of despair. It is an act of faith. By crying out, we acknowledge that God is still present. He hears our cries, shouts, and tears.

Walter Brueggemann, a well-known theologian, describes lament as a prayer that "marks the beginning of re-engagement with God." Lament should not be the end but a path that leads us to deeper faith and a closer relationship with God. Just as Jesus met Nicodemus in the midst of his doubts (John 3), Jesus meets us in our wilderness, inviting us to a deeper relationship.

From lament, a longing for hope naturally arises. Lament stirs a desire for deliverance and renewal. The Israelites, during their time in the desert, longed for the promised land—a place flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). But their wilderness experience was also a time of refining. As Deuteronomy 8:2-3 reminds us: *"Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness... He humbled you, causing you to hunger... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."*

I, too, long for something more, for healing, purpose, or release from frustration. But even in those moments, I trust in God's provision. He will nurture and fill my longing with His mercy, grace, and joy. His Word is our sustenance.

While the wilderness often brings pain and longing, there is also room for laughter and joy. In Psalm 126, the Psalmist writes: *"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy."* The wilderness is not the end. With the Holy Spirit and God's Word, our wilderness can become a place of joy.

Paul reminds us in Romans 8:18, *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* Even in the wilderness, we hold fast to the laughter of future glory, knowing that our present trials are temporary. Theologian N.T. Wright says, *"The hope of resurrection is the ground of Christian joy in the present."* This joy is not something we wait for in the future, but something we can experience now, even in the wilderness.

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Palm Sunday is a day of celebration, remembrance, and anticipation as we enter Holy Week together, and this year, we're extending that celebration beyond worship to around the table.

On **Sunday, March 29, 2026**, immediately following our Palm Sunday Testimony service, we invite you to stay and join us for our **Fifth Sunday Potluck Lunch**. These gatherings are a wonderful opportunity to slow down, share a meal, and enjoy meaningful fellowship with one another as the body of Christ.

The church will provide **ham, scalloped potatoes, and dessert**. We invite everyone to bring along your **favorite Easter dish or a side to share**, whether it's a family tradition, a spring favorite, or something simple and comforting.

Whether you've been part of our church family for years or you're newer and looking to connect, this potluck is for you. Come celebrate Palm Sunday, share a meal, and enjoy the joy of being together as we prepare our hearts for the week ahead. **No sign-up required, just come hungry and ready for fellowship!**

## Mission of the Month: Jon and Christine Banke with SIM USA

*By Patrick Allen Missions Team Leader*

SIM had its beginning in 1893 with three young men from Canada and the United States and their vision to evangelize unreached people in sub-Saharan Africa. In the 1980's, several organizations doing missions in Africa, Asia and South America joined to form SIM (Societies for International Ministries). Today, their official name around the world is simply SIM. SIM's mission is to create disciples of Jesus in communities where He is least known. SIM supports missionaries from 65 countries working on over 70 countries worldwide.



Jon Banke and his family have worked with SIM serving the Fulani people of West and Central Africa for over 25 years. The Fulani are the world's largest nomadic group spread across 24 countries in Africa from Senegal to Ethiopia. Last October, SIM assembled stories about how God is at work among the Fulani, including a Q&A with Jon about his work in Africa. Read more here: <https://www.sim.org/stories/fulani/>

Today Jon works from their home in North Carolina consulting and supporting those working among the Fulani. He is also involved in mobilizing and training new missionaries to join in this work. Jon can use prayer for a busy 2026 schedule. He will be a speaker at

SIM-Guinea's Spiritual Life Conference. Jon and a small team will host three gatherings of key Fulani leaders in three different countries across West Africa to help the Fulani Church respond to God's call to extend its reach among its own people. And finally, Jon will be visiting a midwestern church to advise church leaders about planned ministry among the Fulani. We are blessed to be able to partner with Jon and Christine and support the mission of SIM (<https://www.simusa.org/>).

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### Pastor's Perspective, cont. from page 1:

Lent is a time to recognize the deserts we inhabit, both outside and within us. It is a season for acknowledging our struggles, frustrations, and longings. But it is also a time to rejoice in God's promise of presence, provision, and restoration. So, let us lament with honesty, long for God's presence with faith, and laugh in the hope that the wilderness is not our final destination—but the beginning of new life.

# Elder Meeting Highlights

The Elders began the February 17 meeting by praying for the prayer cards from Prayer Sunday, followed by discussion of chapters 4-6 of "The Biblical Role of Elders"

The January Financials were not submitted but will be provided next month.

Jay Holland referred to the Properties report he submitted prior to the meeting. Karen Pritchard shared she was very impressed by all that the team has been doing. Dave suggested thanking them either at the Annual Meeting or on Recognition Sunday. As addressed in the report, the condensate pump has been replaced, and we are still waiting for an appointment to address the elevator testing and other compliance issues.

The Elders reviewed the Statement of Beliefs document provided by Highlands Baptist Church. Jaime Boaglio stated that their doctrine seemed fine. The Elders voted unanimously to allow HBC to use the Community Center for up to six months and to review the agreement before it is extended.

Ben West shared that at the last Missions meeting updates were given on the Uganda Mission trip, Adopt a Mission, and Mission of the Month. Patrick is in charge of the Mission of the Month presentation for March. Lorraine Little shared that the team seems to be taking ownership for their responsibilities. Ben explained that they are still in the process of putting up the Missions display in the Lobby, waiting for photos from a few missionaries.

Dave shared that there were 25 people at the first session of Alpha, and he knows of several who weren't able to attend the first week but plan to attend. Jaime said they enjoyed the discussion at their table with some newer LvCC attendees.

Rob explained that the "Overarching Overview for Elder Round Tables" document will be emailed out to the congregation prior to the discussions to help people prepare before attending. A few questions have already been submitted, one about choir singing opportunities, one about Elders contacting members regularly, one about contemporary songs vs hymns/organ.

Laura Powers reported that the Nominating Committee has one or two people they are considering asking to submit an application to be an Elder (applications are due by March 30)

## Elder Roundtable Discussions

The second of three Elder Roundtable Discussions will be held on Sunday, March 22 at 8:30am in the Chapel or Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. The focus of this session will be "Discipleship & Community". The April session will be on "Mission & Stewardship"

**Session Topics** (if you missed Session 1, you may contact the Church Office for notes)

**Session 1: February Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 8:30 – 9:45am Chapel or Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:00pm Fellowship Hall**  
Worship & Governance How worship and biblical leadership shape our life together at LvCC, grounding our structure and practices in a clear biblical model. Elders will discuss their role as spiritual leaders, membership as a shared responsibility, and recent clarifications to our governing documents that support the church's life and mission.

**Session 2: March Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 8:30 – 9:45am Chapel or Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:00pm Fellowship Hall**  
Discipleship & Community How moving from program-based ministry toward integrated, people-centered discipleship that invites the whole body into active participation through community groups and shared pastoral care. The elders will highlight collaborative leadership practices, and explain related bylaw updates that support a healthier, more engaged church life.

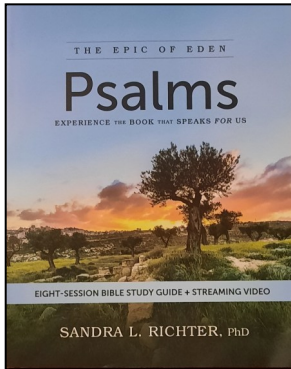
**Session: April Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> 8:30 – 9:45am Chapel or Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:00pm Fellowship Hall**  
Mission & Stewardship How stewarding people, finances, and facilities mobilizes disciples to serve our neighbors and strengthen community partnerships. The elders will also discuss how being good, safe, and established neighbors shapes our outreach and how related bylaw updates support long-term mission and leadership health.

*The congregation is encouraged to attend all three sessions.* You may register using the link in the Church Center app or the paper sign up form at the Welcome Center in the Lobby. A copy of the current bylaws is available in the Church Center registration link or by calling the Church Office.



## Women's News

The Thursday morning Women's Bible Study group is about to begin a **new 8 week deep-dive into "Psalms - the Book that Speaks for Us."** This will be the fourth study under video presenter, Dr. Sandra Richter, whose work brings the Bible to life with relevant, amazing connections, rousing archaeological evidence,



valuable linguistic insights and solid teaching! In the Book of Psalms, we will meet the Messiah, and draw closer to the very nature of God, while learning about ancient structure and functions, history and patterns, imagery and characters. We will notice the Holy Spirit very much alive within these pages, and see why the Psalms remain so relevant, connecting our deepest struggles to those of God's people through the ages, informing the body of faith in hymns and praise music, even today. If you'd like to explore the joys, the prophecies, the revealed Messiah, the laments, the praises and even glimpses of our Worship yet to come when we'll join in The Great Congregation, please consider joining us. Our next adventure begins March 12th and ends April 30th. The group meets at the LVCC Community Building at 20th and Beech streets in Longview, from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. Books may be purchased on Amazon and each include a QR code for personal video access to the entire study, should we be unable to meet due to weather conditions. Please order your book as soon as possible if you

wish to attend. Please contact Valerie Stein, at cell: (541) 972-0147 or, email : [sandvstein@gmail.com](mailto:sandvstein@gmail.com) if you wish to join the class or have any questions.

## Properties Projects



The Properties team has been hard at work recently maintaining our beautiful building and landscaping! The blocked roof drainage lines were recently flushed out and a new larger sump pump was installed in the yard tank after several years of accumulated sludge was removed. They also oversaw the installation by JH Kelly of a larger condensate pump for the boiler. The ice machine was cleaned and repaired, the automatic lock on the Fellowship Hall ramp door and chipped plaster in that doorway were also repaired. They are in the process of updating outdoor lighting and timers, replacing kitchen faucets, and finishing trim on the stage walls. The Properties team currently consists of chairperson Jay Holland, Randy Sundberg, Dave Wolff, Bob Edstedt, Vern Palmrose, Jonathan Thorsvik, Ron Junker, and Patty Howland. Be sure to thank them for serving in this way!

Mark your calendar now for the **Spring Work Party scheduled for May 16 from 8am-12pm**, and plan to join the Properties team for a few hours of cleaning and yard work! More details next month.



## This and That

Don't forget to **Spring Ahead on March 8** when Daylight Savings Time begins!

The Nominating Committee is now **accepting applications for the position of Elder**. Use the link in the digital announcements or stop by the Church Office or Welcome Center to obtain an application packet. Applications are due by March 30.

There will be a **Father/Son Pizza and Nerf Night** (5 yrs and up) on Friday, Mar 13 at 5:30pm. Contact Sarah Fix to let her know how many will be in your group.  
sarah@longviewcommunitychurch.org

Several people have inquired about singing in a choir, so we are assembling an **ensemble to sing on Easter** if there are enough interested singers. Rehearsals will be on Wednesdays Mar 18, Mar 25 and Apr 1 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary, with *attendance required for at least two of the rehearsals*. Contact director Karen Pritchard at 360-460-9973 or karenp@olypen.com **by March 14** if you are interested in singing for our risen Lord!

Join us for the **Biblical Missions Bible Study** centered on the book *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. This once-a-month gathering will meet in the Journey Room on the third Sunday of each month from 9:00–9:45 AM, offering a thoughtful, Scripture-based approach to understanding missions, compassion, and meaningful help.

There will be a **Celebration of Life** service for Joan Wilcox in the sanctuary on Saturday, March 21 at 1pm followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall.

Refresh and reflect at the **Prayer Retreat** for time to discuss and share intention and gratitude for daily prayer, time for personal meditation and reflection, and time to praise God. Join us on Saturday, Mar 14 at Mary Ross' home at 395 Mill Creek Rd. The retreat starts at 9:30am and ends following a short, casual lunch at 12:30pm. During this retreat, the discussion will be about to whom do we pray-Father, Son or Holy Spirit? Call Robert Chace at 360-270-3681 to reserve your spot or for more info.

There will be a **Men's Pancake Breakfast** on Mar 21 from 7-9am. This is a regular event on the 3rd Saturday of the month. The men usually meet in the Fellowship Hall, but will be in the Chapel basement for the March breakfast. Start your morning with pancakes and fellowship!

If you're interested in **becoming a member** at LvCC, you may contact the Church Office to have a membership packet emailed, or you may pick up a printed copy in the office.

**Medical Equipment Available** If you or someone you knows needs medical equipment, i.e. walker, wheelchair, commode, etc, please contact Roberta Baird at 360-430-8402.

### 90+ Birthdays This Month

To honor our most senior members and attenders, we will be listing their birthdays each month using the records in our database. If you or someone you know is 90+ years of age and has an upcoming birthday, please contact the Church Office by the 20th of the prior month so we may be sure to include it!

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# Longview Community Church

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# March 2026

\*\*\*For the most current information and updates, see the online calendar in the Calendar tab of our website\*\*\*  
Zoom=online Zoom meeting;  
all other meetings are onsite  
unless indicated

| SUN                                                                                          | MON                                                                                                      | TUE                                                                                                            | WED                                                                                        | THU                                                                                                                                                                                                    | FRI                                                                  | SAT                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Communion<br>10a Worship<br>11:30a Comm Kids<br>Summer Planning Meeting<br>4p Alpha | <b>2</b> 10a Staff Meeting<br>5p Monday Outreach<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Young Adult Study          | <b>3</b> 7a Men's Grp-Zoom<br>9a MomCo Meetup<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer                                              | <b>4</b> 11a Write Your Story<br>6:30p Worship Team Reh                                    | <b>5</b> 7a Men's Group<br>9a Circuit Training Class<br>9:30a 20th Women's Study<br>10:15a Pilates Class<br>11:15a Fit for All<br>6p River Sisters Group<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer                           | <b>6</b>                                                             | <b>7</b> 10a Cast Your Cares Group                                     |
| <b>8</b> 8:30a CG Leader Mtg<br>10a Worship<br>4p Alpha                                      | <b>9</b> 10a Staff Meeting<br>5p Monday Outreach<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Young Adult Study          | <b>10</b> 7a Men's Grp-Zoom<br>9a MomCo Leadership<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer                                         | <b>11</b> 11a Write Your Story<br>6:30p Worship Team Reh                                   | <b>12</b> 7a Men's Group<br>9a Circuit Training Class<br>9:30a 20th Women's Study<br>10:15a Pilates Class<br>11:15a Fit for All<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Missions Meeting                          | <b>13</b>                                                            | <b>14</b> 9:30a Prayer Retreat<br>3p YL/F/CA And/or                    |
| <b>15</b> 9a Missions Bible Study<br>10a Worship<br>4p Alpha                                 | <b>16</b> 10a Staff Meeting<br>5p Monday Outreach<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Young Adult Study         | <b>17</b> 7a Men's Grp-Zoom<br>9a MomCo Meetup<br>10a History Team Mtg<br>5p Elder Meeting<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer | <b>18</b> 11a Write Your Story<br>6:30p Worship Team Reh<br>7:30p Easter Choir Reh         | <b>19</b> 7a Men's Group<br>9a Circuit Training Class<br>9:30a 20th Women's Study<br>10:15a Pilates Class<br>11:15a Fit for All<br>3p Properties Meeting<br>6p River Sisters Group<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer | <b>20</b> Newsletter Due                                             | <b>21</b> 7a Men's Breakfast<br>1p Celebration of Life-<br>Joan Wilcox |
| <b>22</b> 8:30a Elder Roundtable<br>10a Worship<br>4p Alpha                                  | <b>23</b> FISH<br>10a Staff Meeting<br>5p Monday Outreach<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Young Adult Study | <b>24</b> FISH<br>7a Men's Grp-Zoom<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Elder Roundtable                              | <b>25</b> FISH<br>11a Write Your Story<br>6:30p Worship Team Reh<br>7:30p Easter Choir Reh | <b>26</b> FISH<br>7a Men's Group<br>9a Circuit Training Class<br>9:30a 20th Women's Study<br>10:15a Pilates Class<br>11:15a Fit for All<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer                                            | <b>27</b> FISH<br>5p Wedding Rehearsal<br>7p 20th Pure Light Karaoke | <b>28</b> 2p Wedding<br>2p 20th Pinewood Derby                         |
| <b>29</b><br>Palm Sunday<br>10a Worship<br>11:30a 5th Sunday Lunch<br>4p Alpha               | <b>30</b><br>10a Staff Meeting<br>5p Monday Outreach<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer<br>6:30p Young Adult Study      | <b>31</b><br>7a Men's Grp-Zoom<br>6p TRIHOP Prayer                                                             |                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                      |                                                                        |