

Get Your Syrup!!!

In a few more weeks, it's Pancake Day. Yes, Pancake Day. On Tuesday, February 21, it's time to break out the Mrs. Butterworth's and some wet naps. Now if that day seems familiar and reminds you of those beads hanging off of your mirror, you're right. They are all related. So, what do pancakes have to do with Mardi Gras? Unfortunately, not so much anymore. See, Pancake Day came about because there were certain foods that Christians (beginning hundreds of years ago) would 'give up' during Lent, which began on the next day, Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Easter 46 days or so later. They were giving up fats and sugar and eggs as a way to sacrifice some comforts to help focus on the spiritual preparation for the celebration of Good Friday and Easter. Somehow, though, this practice of using up some valuable ingredients so they wouldn't spoil during Lent became an opportunity for feasting and celebration. Then it progressed even further to a celebration in which people did things they knew they shouldn't do thinking they would 'get it out of their system' so they could act more 'Christian' during Lent. Now it has become (at least in New Orleans) an excuse to participate in any sin you could think of.

So how does that happen? How does what began as a way for us to prepare our hearts to honor the sacrifice of Jesus turn into a party in which ANYTHING goes? See, much of it is based on the idea that sin is a commodity we can bargain with. "We can do these three sins if we do those two good things." "Well this sin was huge so I have to do ten good things to make up for it." "Well, I can let myself do this because I did that thing for God last week." We can think sin is something we can make up for or take care of on our own - it's not that big a deal. Well, this is EXACTLY opposite of what Lent is about. Lent is about realizing that there is nothing we can do to earn forgiveness or salvation. We have no chance of 'making it up' to God when we sin. And, sin isn't something little. It isn't a mistake or a game or an oopsie. Sin drags us away from God and sin kills. It kills bodies and hearts and relationships and hopes. But what's great is how Lent ends. It ends with a celebration. A celebration of Jesus that tells us that even though we have no hope of fixing ourselves and earning forgiveness, we don't have to. Jesus has done it for us. Jesus paid the price we could not pay ourselves. But it did come at a price: the price was the life of Jesus, who willingly gave his life for us. So, this February, have some pancakes and begin to take time to prepare your hearts for the love and forgiveness that God gives us in Jesus.

- Pastor Matt

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

February Highlights

- ♥ Groundhog's Day
Thursday, February 2
- ♥ Church Valentine's Lunch
Sunday, February 5 @ 12:30pm
- ♥ Valentine's Day
Tuesday, February 14
- ♥ Church Council Meeting
Sunday, February 19 @ 5pm
- ♥ Church Wide Prayer Gathering
Sunday, February 19 @ 6pm
- ♥ Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras)
Tuesday, February 21
- ♥ Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, February 22
- ♥ Monthly Movie: **Fireproof**
Saturday, February 25 @ 7pm
- ♥ Leap Day
Wednesday, February 29

Prayer Gathering

God has been working here in Bellewood in so many ways. We believe it is because we are seeking Him and listening to Him. Let's continue to gather together to seek our God in prayer. Please join us on **Sunday, February 19 @ 6pm** for our Prayer Gathering.



Did You Know?

Did you know that every month, our front bulletin board is redecorated to give a warm and colorful welcome to our church? Each month, **Kaye Dodd** wonderfully redoes our board to make the lobby a welcoming place for our members and guests. Thanks Kaye!

Birthdays

Say Happy Birthday to:

Lisa Dodd - February 1

Louise Barone - February 2

Jim Lupole - February 12

Rose Dodd - February 28

Anniversaries

Congratulate:

Betty and Bob Taylor - February 2

Rebuilding Update

The drywall is going up and should be completed by the end of the month.

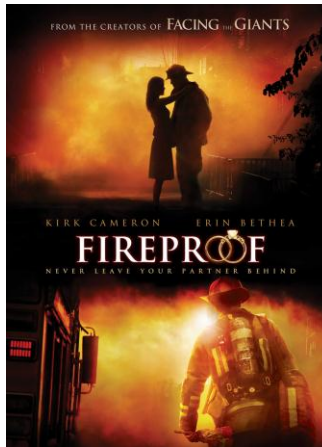
A mission team from Mississippi is coming up on **March 9-17**. They will help us complete much of the finishing work in the building.

We are on track for an **April/May opening**. Stay tuned for details about our "Grand Reopening"

God is building the church while the building is being built. God is bringing new members, new servants, new ideas, and a new passion for worship, service, and outreach. Something BIG is happening Bellewood!!!

February Movie Night

Last month, we saw the impact that a movie can have when we screened Courageous. It spawned three men's groups at three different churches and spurred us to think about what it means to be faithful to God and to our family. This month, we're showing **Fireproof** that will get you thinking and praying about what God wants for our marriages and relationships. Please join us on **Saturday, February 25th at 7pm** for our free presentation of **Fireproof**. Spread the word to all your friends and Neighbors and we'll see you at the movies.



New Men's Group

A new men's group has started at Bellewood. **DADS (Doing as Directed Scripturally)** is a place for men to gather together and talk openly and honestly about what it means to be a man who loves God. All men are invited. Currently now, they meet on Tuesdays, twice a month. For a schedule or more information, please call Phil Barrington at 403-4433.



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currently meeting at
137 Gertrude Street North Syracuse NY

