

February 7, 2024 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

## Owning It: "I'm Not Letting You Change the Church I Love"

*I almost called this post*

*"When We Love Our Church So Much We Are Inadvertently Killing It."*

By Jan Edmiston.

**Every day of my life I hang out with people who love their church.**

"Their church" is where they remember sitting in the pews as children. "Their church" is where there are stained glass windows or pew cushions or baptismal fonts donated by their grandparents. "Their church" is where they were baptized and married, where their parents' and grandparents' funerals were held. "Their church" is about fond memories of Vacation Bible School and mission trips and choir.



Lent us just a week away and some of our congregations will for Ash Wednesday services where they might hear this traditional reading:

### ISAIAH 58:6-9 (THE MESSAGE)

**"THIS IS THE KIND OF FAST DAY I'M AFTER: TO BREAK THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE, GET RID OF EXPLOITATION IN THE WORKPLACE, FREE THE OPPRESSED, CANCEL DEBTS. WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN SEEING YOU DO IS: SHARING YOUR FOOD WITH THE HUNGRY, INVITING THE HOMELESS POOR INTO YOUR HOMES, PUTTING CLOTHES ON THE SHIVERING ILL-CLAD, BEING AVAILABLE TO YOUR OWN FAMILIES. DO THIS AND THE LIGHTS WILL TURN ON, AND YOUR LIVES WILL TURN AROUND AT ONCE. YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL PAVE YOUR WAY. THE GOD OF GLORY WILL SECURE YOUR PASSAGE. THEN WHEN YOU PRAY, GOD WILL ANSWER. YOU'LL CALL OUT FOR HELP AND I'LL SAY, 'HERE I AM.'"**

**The message (and The Message) are clear and yet - if we are honest - we just don't want "our church" to be this kind of church.**

There is a huge spiritual difference between identifying "my church" as:

- The place of my ancestors and memories and power base, and
- The community that serves together to break the chains of injustice, eliminate workplace exploitation, free the oppressed and cancel debts; the community that shares our food with the hungry, invites the homeless into our own homes, clothes the ill-clad and is always available to our own families in the name of Jesus.

Continued

## Owning it, Continued

**Many of us (most of us?) just don't want to that second part that Isaiah talks about.**

Sometimes we have pastors who are on fire to step in and lead their congregations to be an Isaiah 58 congregation. But their congregations love "the church they've always been" and their pastors find themselves frustrated.

Sometimes we have church members who are on fire to shift their congregations from focusing on "getting new members" to being the kind of congregation described in Isaiah 58. But their pastors have no energy to learn how to lead that kind of church. And members leave in frustration.

Let's get serious: what kind of church is "our church"? Many of you will say "we are both a church that treasures our tradition and reaches out into the community." Maybe. But which is dominant?

The truth is that "our church" actually belongs to Jesus. How does "our church" look like Jesus and how does it not? This would be a good conversation to have during Lent.



Rev. Jan Edmiston serves as the General  
Presbyter of the Presbytery of Charlotte,  
and served as Co-Moderator of the 222nd  
General Assembly of the Presbyterian  
Church (U.S.A).



**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE &  
SIMPLE MEAL  
FEBRUARY 14, NOON  
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

# Better Together Bible Study

Monday, February 12, 2024

Second Presbyterian Church

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Join John Tindall in exploring  
the great stories and themes  
of the Bible

This week's topic:  
Exodus-  
wandering through the wilderness...

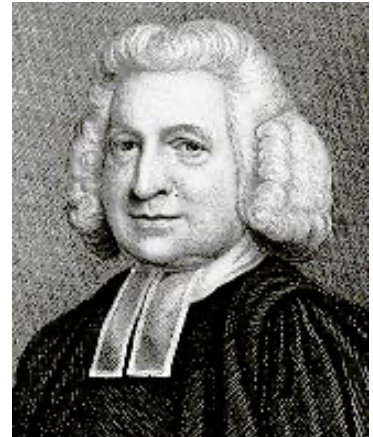
## Music Notes for February 11



Neander.

This week we celebrate the Transfiguration of Christ. The opening hymn, *Jesus, Take Us to the Mountain*, tells the story of Jesus rising to heaven in a blaze of glory, and how we as Christians respond to His example and teachings. Composer **Joachim Neader** (1650-1680) served as a tutor, a teacher of Latin and a pastor. After his death of tuberculosis at the age of 30, a valley was named after him – the Neandertal – in North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany. His became a household name when fossils of the so-called “Neanderthal man” were found there in 1856.

The words of the closing hymn, *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*, were written by **Charles Wesley** (1707-1788). He has been dubbed the “Bard of Methodism,” penning the texts of over 6500 hymns. The melody comes from a fifteenth century German folk hymn, later adapted by Martin Luther (1483-1546) as the hymn *Gott der Vater wohn uns bei* (God the Father, Be Our Stay). The hymn shines with the positive effects the light of Christ has on all who walk in His path.



Wesley.

## OUR WORSHIP CHANNELS

CLICK ON THE LOGOS





# This Week in History.



Apache Chief **Cochise** is arrested by the U.S. Army for raiding a ranch in Arizona. After his escape from custody, the Apache would declare war on the United States, a conflict which would last for 25 years.

**February 4, 1861**



Financier J. P. Morgan incorporates the **United States Steel Corporation**, which would combine the assets of Andrew Carnegie's Carnegie Steel Company, Elbert H. Gary's Federal Steel Company, and William Henry Moore's National Steel Company to create the largest corporation in the world.

**February 5, 1901**



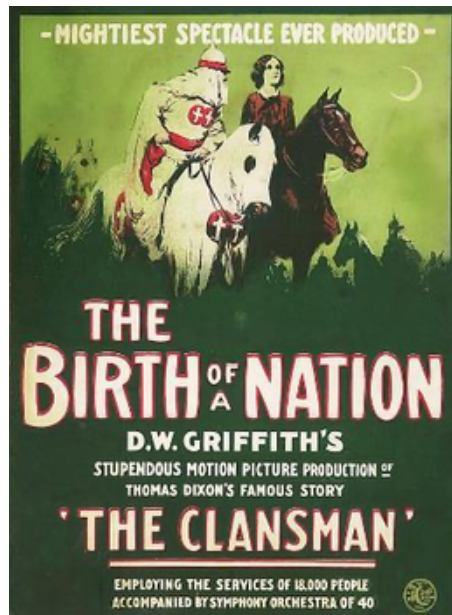
Pennsylvania Railroad Train No. 733, "**The Broker**," speed into a construction zone, derailling on a temporary wooden trestle in Woodbridge, New Jersey. 85 passengers are killed, making it the deadliest peacetime rail disaster in United States history.

**February 6, 1951**



**The Bonfire of the Vanities.** Supporters of the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola collect and burn 'occasions of sin' - thousands of objects such as cosmetics, art, and books - in the public square of Florence, Italy on the occasion of Shrove Tuesday.

**FEBRUARY 7, 1497**



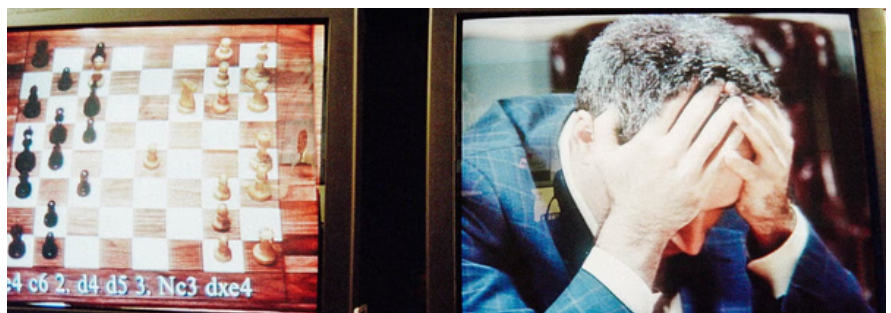
D. W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* premieres in Los Angeles. Hailed a cinematic masterpiece, it's overtly racist stereotypes and depiction of the Ku Klux Klan helps further the Myth of the 'Lost Cause.'

**February 8, 1915**



William G. Morgan, Director of Physical Education for the YMCA in Holyoke, NJ, creates a game called **Mintonette**, as an alternative to the faster paced basketball. It would almost immediately become known as *Volleyball*.

**FEBRUARY 9, 1895**



IBM supercomputer **Deep Blue** defeats Garry Kasparov in chess for the first time.

**FEBRUARY 10, 1996**