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***From the Pastor***

Dear Southminster

Ash Wednesday arrives quietly each year, carrying words that are simple, ancient, and surprisingly direct:

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

No explanation. No softening. Just a truth placed gently before us. One we rarely pause long enough to consider, and even more rarely choose to face. It’s not exactly the kind of message you find on a motivational poster. No soaring eagle. No inspirational sunset. Just... dust.

But here’s the surprising thing: it’s not meant to be an insult. It’s the truth. One we spend most of our lives skillfully avoiding.

Most of the time, we live as if we are far sturdier than we are. We make plans years in advance. We worry as though everything depends entirely on us. We act surprised when we get tired, overwhelmed, or reminded that we are — in fact — not indestructible.

Ash Wednesday is the church’s gentle way of saying, “Let’s stop pretending for a moment.”

You are dust. Beautifully alive, yes. Busy, capable, and beloved. Absolutely. But still dust.

And strangely enough, that is good news.

Because once we stop pretending we are permanent, we can relax a little. We don’t have to hold everything together. We don’t have to be endlessly strong. We don’t have to live as though weakness is failure. We can simply be what we are: fragile people held in steady hands.

Ash Wednesday clears the air. It tells the truth. And truth, even when smudged across your forehead, is wonderfully freeing.

It also prepares us for what comes next.

Holy Week is not a story about polished, composed people who have everything figured out. It is a story full of confusion, fear, love, courage, betrayal, grief, and hope that flickers when it should have gone out. It is a story about what God does with fragile lives. The kind that can break, doubt, suffer, and still be held.

We begin with ashes because the story that follows is not about strength — it is about grace.

So if you received ashes this year, or simply heard the words, carry them with a small smile.

You are dust. You are loved. And God has always done remarkable things with dust.

Blessings

***Rev. Jock O’Connell***

**Manchester Concert Series Welcomes the Midlothian Men’s Chorus**

On Saturday, March 21, 2026 the Manchester Concert Series will welcome the Midlothian Men’s Chorus who will present a concert at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary. This concert, *Let the Music Fill Your Soul: Songs of Live, Love, Courage, and Conviction* is open to the public; please invite your family and friends. Admission is \$10.00 per person, plus a non-perishable food item for the Southminster Food Closet.

**Souper Bowl of Caring Results**

While the Seattle Seahawks celebrated their victory in the Super Bowl LX on February 8th, Southminster celebrated a boost to our hunger missions. The Souper Bowl of Caring raised \$688.88, plus donations of non-perishable grocery items for our Food Closet. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and to our young Southminster MVP’s who took up the collection.



***Worship & Education***

**Holy Week and Easter**

**Palm Sunday**

March 29, 2026 ~ 11:00 AM worship

**Maundy Thursday**

April 2, 2026 ~ 6:30 PM worship with communion

**Easter Sunday**

April 5, 2026 ~ 10:00 AM worship

Egg Hunt at 11:00 AM

**Bible Fun Week – Save The Date**

Bible Fun Week will be held July 27 – 31, 2026 from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM. This year we will be offering another fun-filled week of Bible stories, song and games for children ages 2 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Older children and teens are encouraged to sign up to help us lead Bible Fun Week. We are also recruiting volunteers to make this year’s program spectacular!

Stay tuned for how to register and more information about the program in the upcoming newsletters. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, contact Laura Pearson by phone: 804-387-3913 or email: [laurapearson53@gmail.com](mailto:laurapearson53@gmail.com) .

## Spring Work Day

The Facilities Committee will hold a Spring Work Day on Saturday, March 21st from 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to help get the church and grounds shipshape for Easter. There will be plenty of jobs for every skill level. Lunch will be served. Contact Brown Pearson for details.

## Supply Minister for March

On Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> we will welcome Southminster member Barbara Benton Flynt as our supply minister. Barbara is the Director of Adult Education and Discipleship at Brandermill Church and was recently installed as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in the Presbytery of the James. Elder Jennifer Weddle will serve as lay leader this Sunday.

# Witness & Outreach

## LVS Dinner

On Friday, March 6th, Southminster volunteers will prepare and deliver dinner for the men of Liberation Veteran Services. This will be our first time delivering dinner to LVS's new location, and we are very excited! Their new kitchen space is amazing, and there are no stairs to climb to deliver the food.

Southminster prepares dinner for LVS several times throughout the year. If you would like to get involved with this mission, please reach out to Susan Pharr.

## RISC Nehemiah Action

The RISC Nehemiah Action is Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30pm at St. Paul's Baptist Church (Creighton Rd, Henrico). This is the annual event where over 2000 members from Richmond-area congregations assemble to ask elected leaders to address three matters of concern to their constituents. This year, those concerns are: **safe and affordable housing, a reduction of gun violence (this is *not* a gun-control issue), and the improvement of mental health services in Chesterfield County.**

The Nehemiah Action is organized by RISC (Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities), of which Southminster is a member. We have 17 folks on Southminster's RISC team, but we are happy to have more! Each one of our team members has a goal of bringing at least 3 people to the Nehemiah Action, so in the next few weeks, you may be getting an invitation to join us. Please consider accepting this invitation, but you don't have to wait to be invited.

This is not an exclusive event - we want as many people as possible to join us. Southminster's goal is to have 40 of our members in attendance. Bethany has graciously agreed to reschedule choir practice that week so that choir members are free to attend. That's how important this is. If you have questions, please contact Shelley Murray (current team leader), Mary Stahl, Rich Kowalski, or Jan Belote (former team leaders).

## **Time To Spring Forward**

Spring is in the air, the days are getting longer, and it's almost time to spring forward. Daylight Savings Time will begin at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night.

## **Easter Egg Hunt**

After our 10:00 AM worship service on Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, all children are invited to stay for the Easter Egg Hunt at 11:00 AM. That means we have eggs to fill! If you would like to contribute candy to fill the eggs for the Egg Hunt, you will find a basket in the Fellowship Hall starting March 1<sup>st</sup>. Donations will be accepted until March 29<sup>th</sup>. Candy should be small enough to fit in a plastic egg. No nut products please.

## **2026 Easter Lily Orders**

During the month of March, we will be taking orders for lilies which will decorate the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. You can purchase lilies to keep or send to a special care member, and your personal dedications will appear in the Easter bulletin.

The deadline to order is **Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Lilies are \$14.00 each. Order forms will be available in the Sunday bulletins, or you can contact the church office regarding your order.

## **Girl Scout Sunday**

On Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> the young women from Troop 603 will join us in worship for Girl Scout Sunday. Girl Scout Sunday celebrates the birthday of Girl Scouting in the United States; on March 12, 1912, Juliette Gordon Low held the very first meeting in Savannah, Georgia. Since 1953 this worship service has been a part of Girl Scout Week nationwide.

Please join us for worship at 11:00 AM and show your support for our Troop. Don't forget to stop by the cookie booth in the Narthex.

## **Session Highlights**

- Approved January 2026 Financial Report
- Supply Minister for March 8, Barbara Flynt
- Supply Minister for April 12 - Katherine Todd
- Upcoming Lenten Services
  - March 29 - Palm Sunday Service – 11:00 AM
  - April 2 - Maundy Thursday Communion Service – 6:30 PM
  - April 5 - Easter Sunday Service – 10:00 AM.; Annual Easter Egg Hunt at 11:00 AM.

## Disaster Relief Mission Trip

The POJ Disaster Relief Mission Team was in Asheville, North Carolina in February doing small skilled repairs on houses damaged by Hurricane Helene.



### We Pray For:

Ramona Clopton, Jean Derrenbacher,, Patsy Hevener, Winki Lampe, Jim & Jane Lewis, Shirley Martin, Donna Medicus, Nancy Peters, Lynda & Charles Reed, Billy Smith, Susan Teller, Art & Ginny Williams, Lora Anderson

**For the full list of Joys & Concerns, please see the pastor's weekly email.**

**Contact [pastor@southpreschurch.org](mailto:pastor@southpreschurch.org) if you or a loved one would like to be added to the list.**

### Southminster Notes

We want to thank you for the cards and prayers for the loss of my brother Jon. It was heartfelt during this time.

*Rick & Pat Abbott*

Thank you to the thoughtful member or friend who ordered two pairs of ice cleats during our week of being iced-in and sent them to us in the Southminster office We appreciate you thinking of us!

*The Southminster Staff*

*Notes will be published as space permits. Some notes will carry over to next month's newsletter.*

## ***March Birthdays***

- 2 Jane Lewis, Liz Snead, Thomas Swenck
- 5 Lynn Hodges
- 7 Jim Hall, ChiChi Huff
- 10 Matt Ball
- 14 Janet Crawford
- 15 Katie Roland, Sandy Stegall,  
Gabriella Ryan
- 17 Ryan Witcher, Andrew Grogan
- 18 Pattie Pinchbeck
- 22 Anne Dugger, Emily Cruciata,  
Andrew Bookman
- 23 Christy Jones
- 24 Nell Hollingsworth
- 26 Matthew Endries
- 28 Mark Endries
- 31 Bernie Chamberlain, Jane Tarter,  
Emily Ball

## ***March Anniversaries***

- 24 Hal & Debbie King (47)

*Have we missed your birthday or anniversary?  
Let the church office know: 804-276-1749.*

### **Presbyterian Women**

#### **Anna Circle**

March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM  
Debbie Greenberg's Residence

#### **Martha Circle**

March 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM  
Conference Room

#### **Ruth Circle**

March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 PM  
Conference Room

## ***March Schedules***

*If you cannot be present on your scheduled day,  
please notify your schedule's organizer.*

### **Communion**

- 1 Team 1

Elder Servers: Guy Dixon, Rick Abbott,  
Susan Edwards

### **Church Closer for March**

Frank Grier

### **Ushers**

- 1 Laura Pearson, Candace Young,  
Riki & Dennis Stone
- 8 Laura Pearson, Candace Young,  
Riki & Dennis Stone
- 15 Tracy Williams, Pat Thomas, Mary Stahl,  
David Huff
- 22 Tracy Williams, Pat Thomas, Mary Stahl,  
David Huff
- 29 Kathy Liesfeld, Judy Lee, Curtis Radt, Jerry Davis

### **Food Closet**

- 3 Frank Grier, Carol Todd
- 5 Cheriene McCall, Bonnie Kowalski
- 10 Mary Stahl, David Stahl
- 12 Freya Harper, Karen Stafford
- 17 Pat Ervin, Frank Grier
- 19 Bonnie Kowalski, Shelley Murray
- 24 Jane Williams, Freya Harper
- 26 Ann Potts, Cheriene McCall
- 31 Mary Stahl, David Stahl

# Southminster Presbyterian Church

## March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Communion</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 12 PM: Elder Training 3 PM: IPCN	<b>2</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6:30 PM: Anna Circle 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>3 Food Closet</b> 2 PM: Ruth Circle 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>4</b> 10 AM: Martha Circle	<b>5 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>6</b> 3 PM: LVS Meal Prep 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>7</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>8</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	<b>9</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>10 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>11</b> 10 AM: Martha Circle	<b>12 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>13</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>14</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>15 Girl Scout Sun.</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 12 PM: Session 3 PM: IPCN	<b>16</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>17 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>18</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>19 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>20</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>21</b> 8:30 AM: Spring Work Day 4 PM: Manchester Concert 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>22</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	<b>23</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>24 Food Closet</b> 6:30 PM: RISC Nehemiah Action 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>25</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>26 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>27</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>28</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>29 Palm Sunday</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	<b>30</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>31 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN				
Notes <b>March 8: Daylight Saving Time begins</b> <b>March 8: Barbara Benton Flynt, Pulpit Supply</b>						

**SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Return Service Requested

# March 2026



## Holy Week & Easter

### **Palm Sunday**

March 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM

### **Maundy Thursday**

April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM

### **Easter Sunday**

April 5<sup>th</sup> ~ Worship at 10:00 AM  
Egg Hunt & Reception at 11:00 AM

Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically?

Send an email to [office@southpreschurch.org](mailto:office@southpreschurch.org) with *Add Me To Newsletter List* in the subject line.