

# First Presbyterian Church

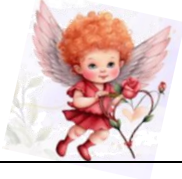
321 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Burlington, IA 52601, 319-752-6626

1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



## Connections



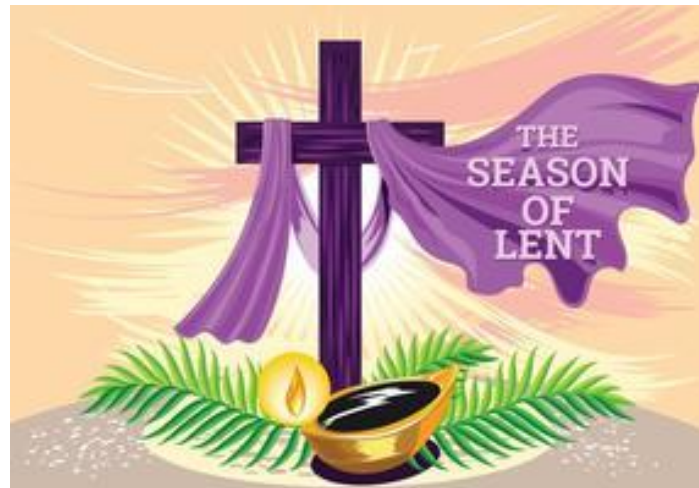
February 2024

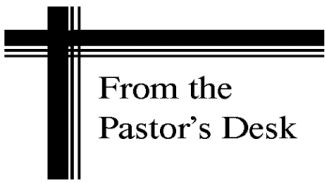


## Lent

Lent is a season of 40-days beginning on February 14 (Ash Wednesday) not counting Sundays, and concludes on Holy Saturday. “Lent” comes from the Anglo Saxon word Lenten which means “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of Spring. The forty days represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time for self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period preparing new converts and evolved into a period of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians frequently use Lent as a time to focus on their relationship with God, grow as disciples and extend themselves, often choosing to give up something and give themselves for others.





## February Sermon

The new year is less than 30 days old, and in that time we have endured one of the most severe winters we have had in a few years. In some cases, outdoor Christmas decorations are buried under snow and ice and may not appear until Spring! So as think about your reindeer and snowmen, the calendar is telling us Easter is not that far away. Lent will begin Wednesday, February 14th with Ash Wednesday. Therefore, apart from Sunday, February 11th, the rest of the Sunday's in February will be supporting the Lenten theme "The Trials of Jesus."

Like a courtroom drama, a series of witnesses comes forward to give testimony about their experiences with the accused - Jesus Christ. Through their accounts we come to know the truth, that Jesus came to take our place in the defendants chair.

February 4            The Lord's Supper by Intinction

Texts: Jeremiah 17:9-13

Mathew 26:69-75

Title: "Hard to Accept: The Responsibility to Stand Up for the Truth"

February 11

Texts: I Samuel 3:1-20

John 1:43-51

Title: "Recognizing God's Voice"

February 14            Ash Wednesday            Service in Edwards Chapel            7:00 p.m.

Texts: Matthew 4:1-11

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Title: "The Voice of Satan"            Jesus faces the tempter in the wilderness

February 18            First Sunday of Lent

Texts: Mark 14:16, 32-42

Psalm 31:9-16

Title: "The voice of Judas"            Jesus' betrayer defends his actions

February 25            Second Sunday of Lent

Texts: John 18:12-24

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Title: "The Voice of Annas"            A chief priest discusses Jesus' arrest

# Hosting Presbytery

At its meeting in January, the Session decided to host the hybrid meeting of the Presbytery of East Iowa at our church on November 23rd . This may be the first time this has happened, and we will provide our house for those who will attend the meeting in person as well as those who will join the meeting via Zoom. Hosting includes providing the sanctuary for worship and the business meeting, providing lunch for those who are attending in person, and a few rooms in which committees and educational groups can gather. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. and concludes by 2 p.m. We will be in conversation with officers of the presbytery in the coming months to flesh out the details, but suffice it to say, we will need persons to serve lunch, operate the lift, and provide hospitality, and possibly assist with a shutter service between area parking areas and the church. More on this will be announced in subsequent editions of the "Connections."





# Adult Education



Sunday School for Adults ... It's all about sharpening the edge of our knowledge of What it takes to be an effective disciple of Jesus Christ. We do deep dives into various books of the bible as well as timely subjects on ministry and mission.

Beginning Sunday, January 28th through Sunday, February 11th we will undertake the first part of a study entitled "The Message of the Sermon on the Mount." This study will focus on the 5th chapter of Matthew. The Message of the Sermon of the Mount is different from both the nominal church and the secular world, different from both the religious and the irreligious. The Sermon of the Mount is the most complete description anywhere in the New Testament of this Christian counter-culture. This is the nearest to a manifesto Jesus ever uttered as he provides his own description of what he wanted his followers to be and do.

Beginning February 18th through Easter, the class will undertake the study "God Never Gives Up on You: What Jacob's Story Teaches Us About Grace, Mercy and God's Relentless Love" This is a five-session Bible study for the members of the "Lost Halo Society" it's for the strugglers among us and the fumbler within us. It's for those who are part saint and part scoundrel. It's for those who mean well but don't always do well. And it's for those who could use a refresher course on how God enacts his perfect plan in this world by working through imperfect people. This DVD based study written by Max Lucado reveals how God used Jacob- the misbehaving patriarch who was strong on savvy but low on conscience- simply because God chose to use Jacob. Period. The word for such devotion? Grace. Grace came after Jacob. Grace found him in the desert. Grace protected him in exile. Grace wrestled him to the ground and blessed him. Grace led him home to Canaan. Jacobs story invites us to believe in a God who sticks with the unworthy and underachievers until we are safely at home.

The class meets in Edwards Chapel at 9 a.m. each Sunday. This is a great time to build up your spiritual muscles and explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.



## Reflections of Lent

For many of us one of the very first Bible stories that we learned as children was probably the story of the creation of humankind by God out of the dust of the earth. God took a lump of dust and breathed into it the “ruah” or breath of God, and it became a living being. Fantastic stuff, this notion that ordinary dust could become alive through the ruah of God.

A little later, probably about the time I was in late elementary school I learned another bit of fantastic stuff, that our human bodies are made up of about 99% water and a little bit of solid matter, “dust” if you will. Perhaps, if I had only thought about it then, I shouldn’t have been surprised at that epiphany, and the thought that, if all of the water were removed from my body, all that would remain is a bit of dust.

And so it all comes together for me as an adult on the First Day of Lent, which we call Ash Wednesday. We receive a mark of ash in the form of a cross on our foreheads with the admonition “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return...” The prayer for the blessing of the ashes says “Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

In that action of inscribing an ashen mark on our foreheads there is perhaps one of the most paradoxical of all our liturgical acts if there ever was one. That little smudge of ash is superimposed upon another mark, the indelible one made at the moment of our baptism when we are sealed and marked as Christ’s own forever.

The mark of the ash reminds us of where we came from and where we are going, “from ashes to ashes and from dust to dust..” A stark reminder that there is an ultimate defeat of our mortal nature, of all of our hard-won and cherished progress and all of our earthly accomplishments. And superimposing this mark upon the indelible mark on our souls tells us that we cannot come to the full and eternal life promised in baptism without taking seriously our need for the total and sacrificial offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies.

Sooner or later we will all wash the ash smudge off of our foreheads, but even if the material ash we receive is gone, the spiritual mark remains until Easter Day.

I would suggest that each of us, as we mark these forty days of Lent daily place before God a new and figurative batch of ashes each morning. Where might those ashes come from?

The first source is everything about you and your life which has been taken from you without your consent- the hurts, the unkind words and deeds, the power plays that sent you reeling, the withdrawal of recognition and support that someone else decided you should no longer have and had the power to take from you. Let God take those things and burn them up in God's consuming fire.

The second source are those things about you and your life that has special significance, either positive or negative, that you choose to offer to God for both transformation and renewal. There are things about each of us that may have had value once, but their day is past and they are ready either for burning or for renewing by God's ruah.

So daily, in your mind, take something from each source and place it before God and ask that God's fire come and consume it. Offer it up totally so that only the very residue of the ash remains. Then mark the sign of the cross on your own forehead as a daily reminder that which has not died cannot be raised, and anything not surrendered cannot be made new again, except by the creating, redeeming and sustaining love of God.

*We rise again from ashes, from the good we've failed to do. We rise again from ashes to create ourselves anew. If all the world is ashes, then must our lives be true, an offering of ashes, an offering to you.*

*We offer you our failures, we offer you attempts, the gifts not fully given, the dreams not fully dreamt. Give our stumblings direction, give our visions wider view, an offering of ashes, an offering to you.*

*Then rise again from ashes, let healing come to pain, though spring has turned to winter, and sunshine turned to rain. The rain we'll use for growing, and create the world anew from an offering of ashes, an offering to you.*

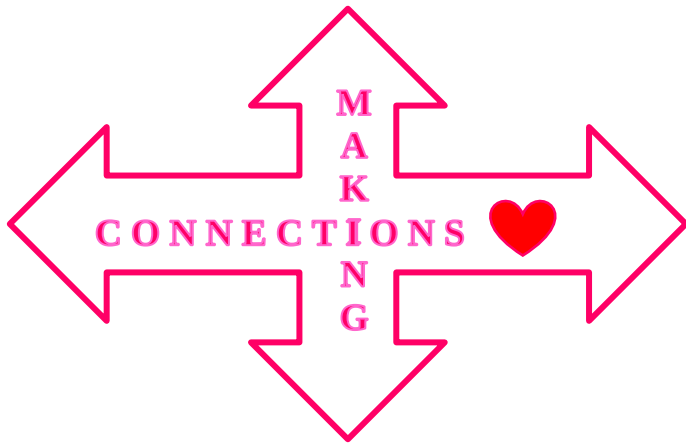
*Thanks be to the Father, who made us like himself. Thanks be to the Son, who saved us by his death. Thanks be to the Spirit, who creates the world anew from an offering of ashes, an offering to you. (Text by Tom Curry)*

I invite you to keep this paradoxical and great truth before you as you seek to walk a holy Lent.

Warmly,

Randy+





## Table for One

Our February event will be held Wednesday, 2/7 @ 5:30p.m. @ Eva Ann Elmer's home, 1431 Cambridge Dr. #301 Burlington, IA 52601



## February Birthdays

- 11 - Dick Wells
- 12 - Leona Byars
- 15 - Marcia Bailey
- 18 - Zach Carhoff
- 27 - Jay Schafer

## Yum-Yums

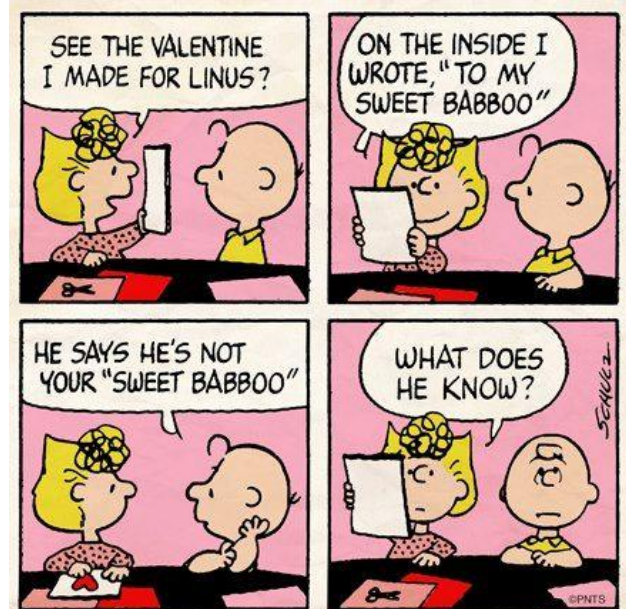
News from Yum-Yums! Fourteen people enjoyed dinner at Uncle Ronnie's in January. Those who were there, chose to go to The Drake in February. All are welcome to come with us, and you may bring a guest if you like. Our next get together will be at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at The Drake in downtown Burlington. If you have any questions, call or text JoAnn Williams at 319-754-8535.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Lunch

Plan to stay after worship on Sunday, February 11 following the morning service.

Souper Bowl is the theme for this month! Please bring cans of soup to donate to the area pantries!

Luncheon is free and gracious donations help to defray the cost.



# The Shepherd's Table

First Congregational Church along with First Presbyterian Church have started hosting a free community dinner once a month on the last Wednesday of the month. For February, it will be held on February 28. The event will be held from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. at the Congregational church.

There are no income guidelines, and everyone is welcome. Members of each congregation are donating desserts.

There will be a sign-up sheet set out for a couple of weeks prior to each month's meal for those that would like to donate or help.





# Shepherd's Table Gather 'Round the Table!

Here are some pictures from our December Shepherd's Table! Thank you to Pat Saldeen for sharing these fun photos!



# Meeting Highlights

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## Session Highlights from January 18, 2024 Meeting

Cheryl Lotz has been elected as the new Clerk of Session. Many thanks go to outgoing Clerk, Carol Brotherson, for all her hard work and dedication. Thank you Carol!

It was discussed and approved that all Communion served will be by intinction, with everyone that is able coming forward to receive Communion.

Rev. Dick shared that a confirmation class of 5 youth has started meeting. He is looking for 5 life coaches to mentor the members of this class.

Terri Huddleston of the Mission Committee said they will be sponsoring “Souper” Bowl Sunday on February 11, where everyone is encouraged to bring a can of soup to church. The soup will be distributed to Transitions, the homeless shelter, and Community Action.

It was approved that our church will be hosting the Presbytery meeting on Saturday, November 3. We will be providing donuts and coffee before the meeting, holding a worship service in the sanctuary, providing lunch, with the meeting to conclude around 2 PM. Rev. Dick expects around 50 attendees. We will also look at options to live stream this meeting.

The next Session meeting will be Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 1 P.M.

Cheryl Lotz, Clerk of Session



# Messages from the Deacons

Happy New Year to All !!

We would like to let everyone know your Deacons are here to serve you. Please let us know if there are needs we can help with.

Here is an overview of a few things we will be doing this year.

In February, the Love Fund will be replenished with your generous donations. This fund is for members of our church that find themselves in need of extra funds they weren't planning on having an expenditure for, ie: bills or a need for groceries, or car repair. Everything has gone up in price and sometimes it can be overwhelming. This fund is solely funded by your donations put into the envelopes found in the pews. The envelopes will also be found in the bulletin for the month of February. Thank you in advance for your kind donation.

We are planning a birthday party in April, and we will have another August "Worship in the Park" as last years was a big hit!!

New.....Soon, in fellowship hall you will find a basket full of cards to send to other members. There will be birthday cards, special occasion cards, anniversary cards etc. You choose one and can fill it out so you won't forget. A directory will be available so you can put an address on it. The only thing you will need to do is put on a stamp and mail it!!

The Deacons have a prayer jar with all your names on a piece of paper and at every meeting we each draw a name and pray for that person for the month. If you feel extra special some month you are probably being prayed for by one of us. ;)

We will keep you apprised of what we have planned and remember to let us know how we can be there for you.

Your Deacons





Thank you from Janet Calvin

My sincere thanks to my church family for all your support.

Being able to watch church service in my home, Pat Saldeen and Leona Byars bringing me communion, phone calls, text, cards, and prayers, have all meant so much to me!

Thank you! Many blessings to you and your families!

My prayers are also with you!  
Janet Calvin

Thank you from the Wesley Bloomberg Family

Thank you so much for the Thanksgiving food basket and Christmas gifts and food basket for the Wesley Bloomberg family. It was so very much appreciated. The boys were so happy with their gifts!

Things are starting to look up for them. They will hopefully be moving into their new home in the new year!

Please know your generosity was so appreciated!

Thank you!  
Bloomberg family  
Wesley, Sydney, William, Charlie, and Henry

Thank you from the Adult Bone Marrow Transplant Unit for Christmas gift cards

The gift cards have arrived and are wonderful! Our patients on 3JP will be so appreciative and surprised!

Thank you First Presbyterian Church of Burlington for your continued support of our patients! It means so much!

Blessings to you and your congregation at First Presbyterian Church!

Merry Christmas!  
Sheri

Thank you from Community Action

We are so grateful for your kind donation to our Neighborhood Center. Together, we can make a difference in our community.

We appreciate the food that you all have donated to our food pantry! It has helped us a lot. Thank you!

With Gratitude,  
Your Community Action Neighborhood Family  
Kim, Shelby, Stacy, Pat, and Tom



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

January 12, 2023

First Presbyterian Church  
321 N. 5th  
Burlington, IA 52601

Dear Friends of the Domestic Violence Shelter;

On behalf of the Burlington Area YMCA's Shelter Program, I want to **thank you so very much** for your thoughtful contribution of \$600 to the Domestic Violence Shelter. I really appreciate your generosity and continuous support. The people staying at the shelter have needs as varied as their circumstances. We offer them a warm bed, food, comfort, and security as well as the opportunity for them to become survivors of domestic violence. In 2023, we provided 926 sheltered nights. In addition, our partnership with Domestic Violence Intervention Program allowed us to provide 3,087 services to 359 individuals. Services included civil/legal advocacy, individual counseling, criminal justice support and housing advocacy.

Thank you again for your support to allow us to continue this important work and ensure that life-changing opportunities continue to be available for victims of domestic violence.

Sincerely,

Gina Crabtree  
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you so  
very much for  
your thoughtful  
contribution to the shelter.  
We appreciate your  
continued support.

BURLINGTON AREA YMCA

2410 Mt. Pleasant St, Burlington, IA 52601 P 319.753.6734 F 319.753.6736 W [www.burlingtony.org](http://www.burlingtony.org)



# REMEMBER KNITWITS?

There have been a number of inquiries about re-establishing Knitwits.

Want to be warm, able to relax, enjoy conversation with others and not feel guilty about it? We have the perfect answer for you: join the prayer shawl ministry group. Stop by the Church Parlor for an hour between 10:00 and 11.00 on **Wednesday, February 7th**. Whether you know how or would like to learn to knit or crochet, we will have willing and patient teachers on hand to help. Needles and yarn and some patterns will be provided, or you can bring your own.

Hope to see you there.

Questions?

Contact Pat Whitmore 319-850-6803







# Sunday School



Come join the fun every Sunday morning starting at 9:00 a.m. downstairs in the church basement and learn all about Jesus!



# Interdenominational Youth Group Update

On Sunday, January 21, Ann Comiskey and 4 other youth from First United Methodist Church braved the cold and traveled to the Klein Center. They sang songs, played games and did puzzles with some of the residents, including our own Janice Kemp.

Below is a list of upcoming Youth Group meetings. The group consists of youth in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades from FPC, Zion UCC and First United Methodist Church. We meet from 10:30am-12:30pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. If you know of anyone who would like to join us or think we should invite, please contact Millie Comiskey.

- **Sun. Feb. 18** - Youth will head to Zion UCC to help with their Taco Lunch fundraiser for their food pantry. Youth from FPC will be collecting donations (food and monetary) to bring to this event.
- **Sun. March 17** - In celebration of St. Patrick's Day, the youth will meet at the FUMC Loft to cook a menu of green foods including green eggs and ham, green fruit kabobs, green jello fluff and green punch.
- **Sun. April 21** - Youth will eat sandwiches at the FUMC Loft and then go out to clean up North Hill Park in celebration of Earth Day.



# Missions Is Up To Doing Good

## Cozy Tree Items!

Thank you to everyone who donated items to our Cozy Tree this year! Items were donated to North Hill Elementary School for students that are in need! 66 items were donated! Here is a list of those items:



- 4- Fleece Jackets
- 1- Thermal Shirt
- 10- Girls underwear
- 12- Gloves/mittens
- 12- Hats
- 3- Scarves
- 2- Ear muffs
- 21- Pairs of socks
- 1- Back pack

## Mission Committee Upcoming Meeting

The Mission Committee plans to have its monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. Bring a sack lunch. February 7th next meeting.

## February 11- Super Bowl Sunday

Mission's Committee will be collecting canned soups, to be distributed to the homeless shelter, Transitions DMC, and Community Action! Monetary donations are also accepted!

The word 'MISSION' is displayed in large, colorful, stylized letters. Each letter is filled with a different pattern of dots and lines in various colors like red, green, blue, and yellow.

# Announcements!



Confirmation classes are now in session every Sunday from 3:00pm-4:30pm until April 7<sup>th</sup>.

KnitWits will be starting up again Wednesday, February 7 from 10am-11am in the parlor. Contact Pat Whitmore for more information or any questions.

Ash Wednesday will fall on Valentine's Day this year. Service will be held at 7:00 pm in the Edwards Chapel.

Second Sunday Luncheon is on February 11<sup>th</sup> following Worship. Theme this month is "Souper Bowl"! Please bring your canned soups to donate!

Wendy will be out of the Office on February 15 and 16. The office will be closed for those 2 days.

Transfigured In God's Glory Hymn Festival will take place on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm

## Live Streaming our Worship Services

Can't make it to Sunday service? No problem! Every Sunday service is live streamed on Facebook! Please join us! Just go to Facebook on your phone, tablet, or computer and navigate to our Facebook page!

If you have not yet watched a Facebook service, or don't know how, locate Facebook on your phone, tablet or computer, search for First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, Iowa, and then sit back and enjoy. The weekly bulletin is being provided via e-mail so you can follow along and take part as you wish. Comments are appreciated.





# February 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3  <b>THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED</b> FEBRUARY 3, 1959
4 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship <b>Deacon's Meet</b> 3pm-4:30pm- Confirmation Class	5	6 <b>National Chopsticks Day</b>  National Chopsticks Day	7 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study <u>Mission</u> meets @ 1pm <u>Knitwits</u> meets @ 10:00 a.m. <u>Table for One</u> meets @ 5:30pm @ Eva Ann Elmer's home	8 <b>Session Meets @ 1pm-3pm</b>	9	10
11 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday Lunch 3pm-4:30pm- Confirmation Class <b>Transfigured In God's Glory Hymn Festival @ 3:00pm</b>	12	13	14 <b>Happy Valentine's Day</b> 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study <b>Ash Wednesday</b> Service @ 7pm in Edwards Chapel	15 <u>Office Closed</u> <b>Yum Yums Meets @ 6:00pm @ The Drake in Downtown Burlington, IA</b>  <b>Farmer's Market @ the Church 4:30pm-6pm</b>	16 <u>Office Closed</u>	17  Random Acts of Kindness Day - - - - -
18 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:30am-Youth Group @ Zion UCC 3pm-4:30pm- Confirmation Class	19 <b>Trustees Meet @ 10am</b>  National Chocolate Mint Day	20 <b>Deadline For Connections</b>	21 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	22	23	24
25 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship 3pm-4:30pm- Confirmation Class	26	27	28 <b>The Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm</b>	29 Hoppy Leap Day! FEBRUARY 29		<b>Office Hours:</b> <u>M-W-F</u> 1:30pm-4:30pm <u>T-Th</u> 9:00am-1:00pm