

The Fast I Choose...

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6)

Most of us are familiar with "giving up" enjoyable things for Lent. But there is much more to this season. Richard Rohr writes "God prefers another kind of fasting [that] changes our actual lifestyle... Isaiah makes a very upfront demand for social justice, non-aggression, taking our feet off the necks of the oppressed, sharing our bread with the hungry, letting go of our sense of entitlement, and malicious speech.... **this** is the real fast God wants."

Faith communities and local agencies are partnering to meet the needs of our neighbors who struggle. Join us as we reframe and reclaim Lent as formation and transformation – inspiring us to just and effective action on behalf of people in need.

Each gathering includes a simple supper, an expert presentation on the evening's topic, and community prayers. Events are free excepting the second for which a \$10 donation for dinner is requested.



Faith in Community

LEARNING

For the Season of Lent

Bridges Out of Poverty – Circles of Support, Learning, and Hope

Wednesday, February 24, 5:30-7:30pm

Hosted by First Baptist Church

In every faith, ending poverty is a moral and spiritual imperative. **Rev. Shelly Webb** will lead a conversation on strategies for overcoming generational poverty. **Bridges Out of Poverty** asks us to set aside what we think we know about poverty to investigate a new understanding based on the hidden rules of poverty and the hidden rules of the middle/upper class. Learn about a proven 14-week learning experience for those living on the edges of poverty that want to create a hopeful future story for themselves based on new information and support from a circle of mentors.

Rev. Shelly Webb is executive director of the Sharing House initiative of Transylvania County Christian Ministries, a collaborative of 45 faith communities working for social justice and providing crisis assistance for low-resourced neighbors.

Until All Are Fed – Partners Preparing the Feast

Wednesday, March 2, 5:30-7:30 pm

Hosted by Creekside Café and Bakery

Hunger is a downer of a topic. But hunger *action* is energizing, equalizing, hopeful, realizable – and in this case, musical! In 2010 **Rev. Bryan Field McFarland** released “Until All Are Fed,” a CD about hunger-related issues. He will share music and a recipe for a series of local events that may culminate in an advocacy-oriented musical potluck called **Jacob’s Join** in fall 2016. Jacob’s Join is a way of showcasing art, music, spoken word – but above all gathering the energy and resources needed to create a world where all are fed. Meet at Creekside to hear how this intergenerational project of “music on a mission” can help raise awareness, funding, and hopes for impoverished and hungry people in our own community and beyond. While we listen we’ll share a simple meal of clean, fresh food. Youth are especially welcome to attend this offering!

Rev. Bryan Field McFarland serves the Salem Presbytery of North Carolina as Associate Presbyter for the East Neighborhood and SEND Ministry Area, Hunger Action Advocate, and Communications Coordinator. Hear Bryan singing a song he wrote here: ["Until All Are Fed" Song](#)

A \$10 minimum donation is requested for this event.

Tough Childhood, Terrific Life – Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences

Wednesday, March 9, 5:30-7:30 pm

Hosted by St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs, identified by a groundbreaking survey, confirms that childhood stress and trauma lead to adult onset of chronic disease and early death, depression and other mental illness, violence and victimhood. A growing network of leaders in our region are developing innovative approaches to prevent ACEs and mitigate their impact through programs such as the Community Resiliency Model, made available locally by St. Thomas Church. All people charged with protecting the last, the lost, the least, and the littlest need to be informed about ACEs and given access to practices that address chronic stress and insure healthier outcomes for our children.

Ann DuPre Rogers, LCSW is the Community Outreach Director at Smoky Mountain, LME/MCO, a regional agency managing behavioral health, substance abuse, and intellectual and developmental disabilities services. **Susanne Walker-Wilson, LCSW-A** serves low-resourced children and their parents as a behavioral health pediatric care manager with Community Care of WNC. Both are certified resiliency skills trainers.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: admin@stthomasonline.org or mail@fbcburnsville.com

We would be grateful for your assistance with our set up and meal planning. An email to us with the subject heading THE FAST I CHOOSE, your name, and a reference to the date of the program would be helpful. Please “like” us on this Facebook Page [The Fast I Choose](#) for ongoing updates. You may also “join” events using this site.