

A banner for A. Frank Smith UMC featuring three photographs of church buildings. The leftmost photo shows a white, traditional church with a steeple. The middle photo shows a modern, multi-story brick building with a wide set of stairs leading to the entrance. The rightmost photo shows a large, light-colored church with a prominent steeple and a modern extension.

A. Frank Smith UMC

February 2020

40 Days in the Wilderness

Upcoming Lenten Devotional

For hundreds of years, Christians, and those who were exploring Christianity, spent the days leading up to Easter as a time of intentional spiritual growth. This was typically done through prayer, repentance of sins, fasting, denial of ego, and sacrificial giving.

In most mainline churches this tradition was formalized on the church calendar as the Season of Lent. Starting on Ash Wednesday (February 26th this year) and ending the day before Easter, the 40 days (Sundays don't count) of Lent represent the 40 days after Jesus' baptism, that he spent in the wilderness fasting and being tempted by the devil.

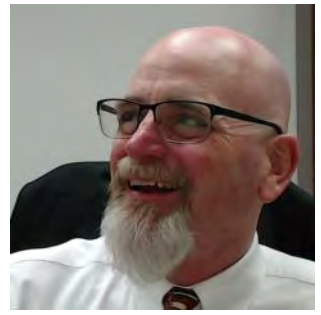
Five years ago, I wrote a devotional book for adults who had been baptized so that they could have their own 40 day focus on scripture, prayer, and applying their new faith to their lives. As I was looking ahead to this Lenten season, it occurred to me that we should use my *40 Days in the Wilderness* study as our focus this year.

I only have three copies of the book left (free to the first three people who request one) so the daily devotions will be delivered by email to everyone who wants to take part in this Lenten study.

The message for each Sunday in Lent come from my study of the devotions each week.

If you want to be part of the study, sign up on the Connection Card Sunday morning or send me an email, john@afsumc.org.

An Epistle from John



I was in one of the big hospitals in Houston today. As I sat in the waiting area, I saw a wide range of the human condition played out before my eyes.

There was an older couple (I don't know how old, but if you saw them you would say, "That's an old couple."), she had a walker and he was using a cane. They were talking with each other as they walked down the hall headed to her doctor's appointment. They were oblivious to everyone else walking past them or impatiently trying to get around them.

I saw a little boy (best guess would be around 2 years old) making a mad dash away from his frazzled father. It was obvious that the child had used up all the patience he had and was working hard on using up all of dad's as well. Mom was being pushed down the hall in a wheelchair with a mask over her face, holding a baby that couldn't be more than a couple of days old. You could tell she was tired but you could see the smile in her eyes as she watched the great race.

One lady was stopped in the middle of the lobby talking on her cell phone, crying. She was telling her mother that the tests came back negative for whatever disease they had been dreading. The joy and relief flowed out of her for all to see.

I saw a doctor walking away from a family with his head down as the chaplain was walking up to them. The shock on the faces of the family told the story of unanswered prayers and devastation.

There were so many stories going on in just that little place that I was overwhelmed with them all. I couldn't imagine how anyone could deal with all that was going on around me. It was then that I felt God speak in my heart. "I got this."

That was when I started seeing where God was in all the situations around me. In the love of two people with years of experience together. In the love of parent and child. In the healing that brought tears. In the pain of death. God's love was all over the place.

Whatever your situation, joyous or tragic, remember, God's got this.



Dana Hargrave

Shane Austin

Marianne Cote'

Donna Cote'

Cornel Mot

Barbara Whiteman

Tommye Worley

Susanne Hargrove Hill

Deysy Castillo

Steve Selman

Clint Corley

Joan Felder

Tommie Martin

Summers & Marcia Hassell

Billy Bradley

John Burriss

Milroy Weinert

Tiffany Walker

Lester & Joane Hunter

Autumn Anthony

Lisa Howard Thomson

Marjorie Warner

Rose Peacock

Ethel Best

Ray & Cathy Penn

Belissa Hicks

Dan Watkins & family

Kenny Calloway

Kenneth Walley

Don & Frances Henley

Dianne West

Dawson Grammer

Family of Danny Wayne Carter

Family of Jerry Ray Bobbitt

Bob Clayton



UPCOMING *Mark Your Calendars*
EVENTS



FEBRUARY 2nd

Church Meeting - Noon following church service

FEBRUARY 6th

Men's Prayer Breakfast - 6am at the AFS Fellowship Hall

FEBRUARY 9th

Leadership Meeting - 5pm in the Covenant Classroom

FEBRUARY 10th

United Methodist Women Meeting - 2pm in the Fellowship Hall

Sisters@Heart Meeting - 6pm at AFSUMC

FEBRUARY 13th & 20th

Men's Prayer Breakfast - 6am at the AFS Fellowship Hall

FEBRUARY 26th

Ash Wednesday Service

7pm at AFSUMC



Gifts

1/5

\$3,291.00

1/12

\$2,414.00

1/19

\$1,607.00

1/26

\$2,195.00

DISCIPLESHIP



Presence

1/5

76

41

1/12

80

60

1/19

60

57

1/26

60

41

Worship

Sunday School



Ruth Wallace	Feb 5	Joann Felder	Feb 22
Emily Conley	Feb 6	Matthew Black	Feb 21
Grace Hall	Feb 9	Ted Scott	Feb 24
Larry Griffith	Feb 14	Madge Watkins	Feb 24
J.R. Grammer	Feb 15	Mark Davis	Feb 27
Adam Davis	Feb 19	Susan Barrow	Feb 27
Autumn Cornelison	Feb 20	Rheagan Penn	Feb 27



None (that we know of)



2020 New Testament Challenge

2/3 - Matthew 21

2/4 - Matthew 22

2/5 - Matthew 23

2/6 - Matthew 24

2/7 - Matthew 25

3/9 - Luke 2

3/10 - Luke 3

3/11 - Luke 4

3/12 - Luke 5

3/13 - Luke 6

2/10 - Matthew 26

2/11 - Matthew 27

2/12 - Matthew 28

2/13 - Mark 1

2/14 - Mark 2

3/16 - Luke 7

3/17 - Luke 8

3/18 - Luke 9

3/19 - Luke 10

3/20 - Luke 11

2/17 - Mark 3

2/18 - Mark 4

2/19 - Mark 5

2/20 - Mark 6

2/21 - Mark 7

3/23 - Luke 12

3/24 - Luke 13

3/25 - Luke 14

3/26 - Luke 15

3/27 - Luke 16

2/24 - Mark 8

2/25 - Mark 9

2/26 - Mark 10

2/27 - Mark 11

2/28 - Mark 12

3/30 - Luke 17

3/31 - Luke 18

4/1 - Luke 19

4/2 - Luke 20

4/3 - Luke 21

3/2 - Mark 13

3/3 - Mark 14

3/4 - Mark 15

3/5 - Mark 16

3/6 - Luke 1

4/6 - Luke 22

4/7 - Luke 23

4/8 - Luke 24

4/9 - John 1

4/10 - John 2

**SIGN UP
NOW!**

Email Pastor John to get the daily email that includes both the text for the day and a link to Pastor John's recording of the daily reading.

john@afsumc.org

