



## *Emanuel United Church of Christ* “THE MUD CHURCH”

13989 Twp. Rd. 127, P.O. Box 121  
Upper Sandusky, OH 43351  
419-294-4144  
[www.themudchurch.com](http://www.themudchurch.com)

### *At the Corner of Corn and Beans*

Here is the story of “The Pulpit in the Chicken Coop.” I’m going to start it in very dramatic fashion: A long, long time ago, in the land of Sycamore trees, hills, and streams, the people of a country church known as The Mud Church needed a new pulpit.

A pulpit today is commonly known as a podium, or speaker’s stand, from which the preacher delivers the sermon. It’s deeper meaning is that it



serves as a symbol of the Word of God. The church building that stands today at the Corner of Corn and Beans, as we know, is not the original church. The first building was the one-room structure chinked with mud and straw to keep out the weather. Not much is said, however, about the second building. A red brick church that was in use between the Mud Church, and today’s building. It is in that second church that there became a need for a new pulpit.

So, in the late 1800s, a talented woodworker named Christian Barth made a new pulpit. It is beautifully carved and crafted, weighs approximately 150 pounds – and it’s adjustable. You can peek inside and see the wooden mechanism that allows the top of the pulpit to be raised for use by a taller speaker. When the present church was built it was moved there. As

well as this pulpit was built, however, it fell into some disrepair, and was toted up the rickety steps into the belfry because this was an era when you didn’t throw things away.

After some time the belfry storage space was needed for other things, so a church member said he would take it home and burn it on his brush pile. Obviously, he did not burn the pulpit, and here comes the fun part of the story.

Instead of throwing the pulpit on his brush pile, he sat it in his chicken coop! No one seems to know if the coop was being used, or whether the pulpit was ever used by chickens for anything, we just know it was never burned.

Some fifty years later – yes, that’s fifty years – the pulpit was pulled from the coop and restored by Kenneth McClain in 1982, and returned to the front of the church where it is still used every Sunday by those reading the weekly scripture lessons.



I believe that pulpit is a testimony to the endurance of the word of God. A pulpit, a symbol of the scriptures, could not be destroyed. Whatever thoughts or impulses that kept that man from burning this pulpit, I believe he was led by God to not destroy this beautiful symbol. The same can be true of us; if we are open to God’s leadership in our lives, we can be a long-lasting symbol of God’s word, and his work in the lives of each other.

*- Pastor Jay*

## Ash Wednesday Comes Early

This year's calendar brings us Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter a little earlier than usual. We will celebrate **Ash Wednesday on February 14** and begin our season of Lent, which leads us to **Easter on March 31**.

**W**hy does Easter always move around? Easter is determined based on the orbit of the earth and moon. It is always the Sunday after the full moon on, or right after, the spring equinox. This formula was developed by the "Council of Nicaea" in the year 325 A.D.

It's a little weird, but prior to the Council there was no set date for celebrating the resurrection. The Roman emperor Constantine called together the Council of Nicaea to get the Christian leaders of the day to set the parameters for Christianity so it could become the official religion of the empire. In so doing, they established the use of the Gregorian calendar, which is based on seasons. Once the calendar was established, they set December 25 as the date of Jesus' birth, but in order to keep Easter on a Sunday, they needed a system. This is what they gave us.

Frankly, I'm wondering if Ash Wednesday couldn't come soon enough in a world that has become so, well, worldly. We all have our list of sins, and we all know deep down inside in places we don't talk about, that we need a turnaround in our lives. Ash Wednesday is that opportunity.

We can come to the church that evening at 7 p.m. and confess together, then begin a purposeful season of Lent. Lent is a six-week period in which we give up something in our life in order to make room in our heart, mind and soul for the love of God. This prepares us to accept completely the death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

The liturgy I use for the Ash Wednesday service is an all-inclusive list of the basic sins we all commit. We are then marked by the sign of the cross, made with the ashes of last year's palm branches, in a symbolic understanding that we are only human, but blessed by God as He walks with us through our repentance.

I encourage you to experience the cleansing time of our Ash Wednesday service. It is time for us to forge a new beginning, and to let God create in us a clean heart.

- Pastor Jay



### "Souper" Bowl of Caring

After worship on February 4 we held our annual Souper Bowl of Caring celebration, with a soup buffet in the Alban Room. Soup was served for a donation, with proceeds going to local food banks. In the photo to the left Penny Pumphrey, Elita Wolfe, Dale Wolfe, Julie Keller and Marsha Barnes were among those working on soup preparation before church service.



### "Annual Meeting

Emanuel's Annual Meeting was held on January 28 after worship. The congregation reviewed the past year through the reports submitted by various committees and organizations within the church. Election of new leaders was held, and Pastor Jay led an installation of those elected. Pictured left to right are Consistory members George Noggle, Joan Wolfe, Kathy Swartz, Ron Wilch, Cheryl Wolfe, Jackie Eckert, and Recording Secretary Dale Wolfe.







## *Pie Day Coming in April*

To raise money to fight hunger in our community, The Mud Church will host **Pie Day on Saturday, April 20**. There will be a pie baking contest, pot pie meal, and the pie entries will be auctioned, with proceeds benefitting local food banks. Watch for details to be announced next month on Facebook.



## *Metal Roof “Slated” to Be Installed on Church*

Watch for the big roof project coming soon, as The Mud Church has hired a company to remove the asphalt shingles and install a metal roof. The new roof will match the one already on the 2016 addition.



## *Special Eclipse Worship Service Being Planned*

With the approach of a once-in-a-lifetime solar eclipse coming to our neighborhood on April 8, Pastor Jay Scott is planning a special worship service on **Sunday, April 7**. The service will feature a guest speaker to explain planetary orbits and eclipses, and there will be special prayers offered in thanks to God for His creation of earth and the universe.



**TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE**

APRIL 8, 2024

# SAVE THE DATE!

In 2024, a total eclipse will go through Ohio. Start planning for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!"

**Eclipse.Ohio.Gov**



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EMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

"The Mud Church"

*Support  
Your  
Neighborhood  
Church*



Sunday Service - 10 a.m.  
Sunday School - 9:15 a.m.

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13989 Township Rd. 127, Upper Sandusky, OH



*Ash Wednesday Services  
February 14, 2024  
7:00 p.m.*

## *Scout Sunday*

February 4 was Scout Sunday at The Mud Church. We sponsor two Scout troops and a Cub Scout pack at Emanuel: Scouting for Boys Troop #777, Scouting for Girls Troop #776, and Cub Scout Pack #777. The girls' pack was the first of its



kind in this area. On Scout Sunday, the Scouts help lead the service by reading the scripture and leading responsive prayers. Pastor Jay presented a special message geared toward the young people, but applied to everyone.