

The season of Lent is a time when we prepare our hearts, minds, and souls for the sacred observances of Christ's death on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter. The English word, "lent" is derived from the Germanic root for "long," because Lent occurs in spring, when days lengthen. To begin this journey we will gather on Ash Wednesday. Lent is 40 days excluding Sundays. We end it on Holy Saturday.

With Jesus' example through his life, death and resurrection, our perishable lives take on new meaning and purpose, each and every day. We can learn to serve the greater good and serve purposes greater than we can imagine. Jesus has taught us that we are capable of offering good news and healing to others. Jesus has taught us to live life to the fullest loving unconditionally. We are a church that can offer safety, support, friendship and hospitality. We are a church that lives out the greatest commandment from God.

One activity planned for Lent will be a group that gathers to discuss the New York Times bestseller, **The Shack by Wm. Paul Young**. This is an informal group meeting in homes for a meal and discussion. Interested? Call me @885-5728.

Our staff at the church continues to work hard to meet the challenges and opportunities given to us as a church. On March 1, **Candace Montesi** will be honored on her 10th anniversary as Organist and Choir Director. This is also Communion Sunday.

I hope you have had a chance to prayerfully consider your pledge to the ministry and mission of the church. **March 8th** is our **PLEDGE DEDICATION Sunday**. Thank you to all the folks who have shared their thoughts during worship about why they support the church. The world of the generous grows larger and larger!

Another Lenten opportunity will be held on **March 15th** immediately after worship entitled: "The vocabulary of faith and spiritual growth." This event is sponsored by the Interim Ministry Team. This is the "FINAL FOUR" of the forums the team has held. We continue to address issues related to moving forward toward the search and call of a settled pastor.

March 22 we will contribute to the all-church offering, **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**. Note the article elsewhere on this opportunity for generosity.

As our church life continues I encourage you to adopt a more intentional approach to your lives as disciples and the beloved of God. Listening to the voice of God is always an important ingredient. Spiritual food is what we need when drought, discouragement and fear assail us. Ready yourselves for what God has "in store" for you as a follower of Jesus.

Here are some questions to ponder for **LENT**: Does your schedule, your time, your life look like that of a person who wants to hear God's voice? What kind of noise do you have in your life? What are some things in your daily life you could change to eliminate some of the noise? Do you find silence hard to deal with? Why or why not?

Some breath prayers that can help you listen:

1. O Holy Spirit, let me feel your Presence.
2. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
3. Oh God, grant me your peace.

(Repeat over and over as you breathe deeply.)

May the Lenten journey be one of exploration and gratitude, growth and peace.