

TIDINGS

IT TAKES GRACE...

During this season of Lent, as we wait again for Easter, it's really difficult to not be drug down by the ugliness and evil present in our world today. I'm writing this a day after Valentine's Day, a day set aside for showing and sharing love, right? Maybe at one level, but it also is the day after the senseless murder of people who thought they were simply finishing their school day in Parkland, Florida. Unfortunately, the exact opposite of showing and sharing love happened. As I was going about the business of preparing for our Ash Wednesday worship, I heard the tragic news of another school shooting. I literally was typing words that would be used as Rob and I would mark the church family's foreheads: "Out of ashes, comes our salvation in Christ Jesus." As the lines came forward to receive the ashes in a form of a cross, and as each person heard those words

that remind us of Christ's purpose for dying and His promise of new life...the reality struck at a significant level. What typically is a serious moment for each person as they receive the ashes, was last night for many a moment of grief and tears. Less than four hours earlier, the life of many was snuffed out in a way that placed evil at center stage – or so Satan would hope. But God (what a wonderful phrase) reminded us all last night that the ugliness and evil present in our world today is not the last word...Every person present last night heard the reality of sin, and yet in the same sentence they heard the promise of God: "Out of ashes, comes our salvation in Christ Jesus." And if that didn't settle in at the moment, we went quickly from being marked with ashes to meeting Christ Jesus Himself at the table of grace every human is invited

to. We heard the promise of His presence, we tasted and remembered His broken body and shed blood, even as we felt the hand of a brother or sister on our shoulder. Reality of evil in our world, even in our own personal space? Certainly; we cannot avoid it. But, as we approach the Resurrection during this season of Lent, we focus on a larger reality. There is a plan of God that shows us the grace of God, that is for all who would only believe. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." [John 3:16]



Special dates of interest:

- World Day of Prayer, *March 2, 2018*
- Third Sunday in Lent, *March 4, 2018*
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 11, 2018*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 11, 2018*
- Fifth Sunday in Lent, *March 18, 2018*
- First day of spring, *March 20, 2018*
- Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 25, 2018*
- Holy Week, *March 25-31, 2018*
- Maundy Thursday, *March 29, 2018*
- Good Friday, *March 30, 2018*

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From the Assistant Pastor

I'd like to share a short article from Fuller Youth Institute about Lent and how we view it.

"Lent: A 40 day journey of noticing God"

"If you've heard of Lent before, chances are one of the first things that comes to mind is "giving something up," as in "I'm giving up chocolate for Lent." That's sort of right. But not quite.

When you stop doing something you're used to doing (like eating dessert), you notice different things. Lent is like that. It's a season—40 days to be exact (not counting Sundays)—when the Church throughout the ages has chosen to pause and notice something. That "something" is the journey of Jesus to the cross.

Alongside his journey, we're also called to notice our own journeys toward death and resurrection. In many traditions, Lent starts out with "Ash Wednesday," when many Christians choose to wear a cross or smudge of ashes on their foreheads or hands. This is a symbol that represents our death, or "mortality." It's a reminder of the pain, suffering, and loss that are part of life. It's a reminder to turn away from sin and toward God. Sounds kind of morbid, doesn't it?

But here's the thing. "Lent" actually means "Spring"—you know, the season of new life. So in the midst of the bitter winter cold and all the death that

might be around us, there's this uncanny hope that rebirth is possible.

Lent often involves a form of "fasting", which usually means some kind of hunger.

When most of us think "fast", we think "speed". You might be a fast runner or a fast test-taker. Ironically, the spiritual use of the word sort of means the opposite. Fasting is a "slow" thing. It makes us stop and notice something—something we're missing, something we're going without. Something we subtract from our lives. Like food.

Fasting may typically mean we avoid eating food, or certain kinds of food, for a set period of time. But fasting is a practice that goes beyond food. It can mean choosing to go without TV, Facebook, or Xbox. In fact, fasting is the opposite of dieting, which is about controlling our bodies for the sake of achieving a certain waist size or belly firmness. If that's one of your goals, you should absolutely not fast from food, because it's too easy to confuse the two (or celebrate one as a by-product of the other). No, fasting isn't about obsession with our bodies.

Here are a few other things fasting is NOT: It's not punishing yourself for bad behavior. It's not working to earn God's favor or doing something to please God. It's much bigger than all that.

In fact, fasting isn't just about sub-

tracting for the sake of subtraction (which is what your math class might feel like most of the time). We subtract something so that we—or perhaps God—can add something new. In other words, what happens in the void left by whatever we choose to give up? If we give up an hour of video games, Facebook or TV what do we do with those extra 60 minutes? If we give up lattes, what do we do with that money? Maybe it's adding true hunger, a hunger for spiritual growth. Maybe it's adding silence and stillness to a life full of noise and movement. Maybe we add prayer when we're usually silent toward God. Maybe God adds passion for serving the poor where we're usually self-absorbed."

The above is geared toward youth but I believe it speaks to all of us. So as we near the celebration of Christ's resurrection and remember His Passion let's make sure we reflect His image and love as well as He has loved us. And may we all focus on what we have received more than what we have given up. God is good all the time!

In Christ's Love,
Rob
Romans 12

YOUTH NEWS



Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Souper Bowl of Caring. Your generosity gave our Christian Food Bank \$762.88 to provide for those in need in our community.

Thanks also for all

that provided soups and desserts for our Ash Wednesday Youth Fundraiser. And a big thank you to everyone who came and contributed so generously.



FROM THE INSIDE

We have two golden retrievers who relish attention. The other morning Duffy, the younger of the two, came over and indicated that he needed more attention, and seemed to say: “What better things do you have to do today than spend some time with me?” I was busy being busy, and realized he was right, and furthermore, he was reminding me of what God asked earlier in the morning: “What better things do you have to do today than spend time with me?” Yes, Josephine Victoria “Joy” Behar, both God and our dogs converse with me on a daily basis, and, they make a heck of a lot more sense than you. The best reason for us to spend time

with God is to follow biblical examples. In the Old Testament, we see God call prophets to come to Him. Moses met with God alone at the burning bush and then on Mt. Sinai. David, whose many psalms reflect a confident familiarity with God, communed with Him while on the run from Saul. God’s presence passed by as Elijah was in the cave. In the New Testament, Jesus spent time alone with God. Jesus actually instructed us to pray to God alone at times: “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen” (Matthew 6:6a). To rely on Jesus as our vine (John 15:1-8), we will need to be directly, *intimately* connected to Him. Just as

a branch is linked directly to the vine and, through the vine, connected to other branches, so we are linked directly to Christ and therefore share in a community. We spend time alone with God and in corporate worship for the best nourishment. Without time with God, we will find needs unmet; we will not truly know the abundant life He gives. Spending time with God rids our minds of distraction so that we can focus on Him and hear His Word. Abiding in Him, we enjoy the intimacy to which He calls us and come to truly know Him. Spending time with the dogs is almost as good.

On the inside, Pastor Pete

Lenten Schedule

Our Lenten Season will travel forward on a path of stones this year. Sermons throughout the season will be based on passages referring to rocks and stones. Holy Week activities will include:

March 25:

Sunday School at 9:00AM
Palm Sunday Worship at 10:15AM

March 28:

Regular Wednesday Night activities with a fellowship meal at 5:15, followed at 6:00 by programs for children and youth, an adult Bible study. Choir rehearsal is at 7:00.

March 29:

Maundy Thursday Communion Worship in the sanctuary at 7:00PM.

March 30:

Our Good Friday Prayer Vigil will be going on in the sanctuary for the entire twenty-four hours of Good Friday. Sign-ups for 30-minute slots are available at the church.

April 1:

Come celebrate the resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus!
7:00AM SonRise Communion Service in the chapel
9:00AM Easter Breakfast in the gym, with an egg hunt following
10:15AM Our Choir’s Easter Cantata Communion Celebration

Finances at-a-glance For January

Income	\$19,605.33	YTD Income	\$19,605.33
Expense	<u>\$(27,930.77)</u>	YTD Expense	<u>\$(27,930.77)</u>
Net	\$(8,325.44)	YTD Net	\$(8,325.44)
Undesignated		YTD Undesignated	
Income	\$17,705.33	Income	\$17,705.33
Expense	<u>\$(24,339.48)</u>	Expense	<u>\$(24,339.48)</u>
Net	\$(6,634.15)	Net	\$(6,634.15)
Designated		YTD Designated	
Income	\$1,900.00	Income	\$1,900.00
Expense	<u>\$(3,591.29)</u>	Expense	<u>\$(3,591.29)</u>
Net	\$(1,691.29)	Net	\$(1,691.29)

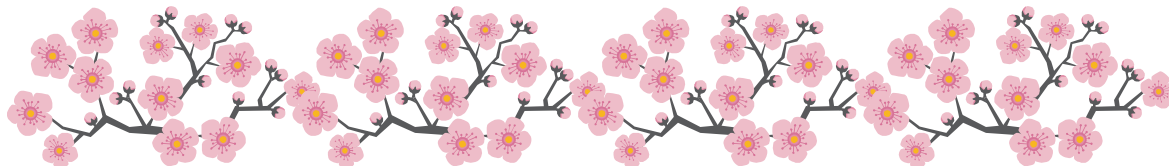


- 1st Rick Lee
- 2nd Jo Shepherd
- 3rd Karla Cates
- 5th Marilyn Coates
- 6th Brianna Gregory
- 10th Ed & Becky Moore (A)
- 12th MaryAnn Thomas
- 14th Brooks Leasure
- 15th Bob Wilkerson
Tyler Conover
- 26th Philip Taylor
- 27th Janet Agin
Philip & Amy Taylor (A)
- 29th Yvonne Bourland






March

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				Hopkins County Detention Center GB #27		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3PM Dance Lessons	GPM GB Team Mtgs	GPM Session Mtg	5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
 Spring Ahead 3PM Dance Lessons 1:30 Girl's Y.E.S. Mtg	GPM GB Team Mtgs		5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal			Girl's Y.E.S. →
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
→	GPM GB Team Mtgs	 First Day of Spring	5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal			MCDC#14 Great Banquet
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	GPM GB Team Mtgs		5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	7PM Maundy Thursday Service	24-Hour Good Friday Prayer Vigil	