



Ash Wednesday - March 1

PATHWAYS

Monthly communications from Trinity Presbyterian

March 2017

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Message From Pastor Deb

Dear Trinity Friends,

The season of Lent begins on March 1, Ash Wednesday. We will observe Ash Wednesday with a 5:30 pm chili supper and intergenerational learning project. A reflective worship service will follow (with childcare) at 7 PM. The word Lent comes from the Old English word lencten, meaning "spring season." After a long cold winter, we in Minnesota yearn for the green vitality of spring. However, Lent is much more than lengthening days and warming temperatures. In the church, we observe a period of forty days before Easter when we intentionally reflect on where we have strayed and how we might return to our loving and gracious God.



In the late winter and early spring season, we also prune trees in Minnesota, cutting away excess growth and diseased or damaged branches. This cutting may seem hurtful, but it results in trees that are healthy and fruitful. Jesus told his disciples in John 15; "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower... Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear much fruit." In the same way, Lent is a time of pruning away that which is crowding out God in our hectic lives.

John the Baptist said about Jesus, "He must increase, I must decrease." We might ask ourselves, "What in my life must decrease, so my life in Christ can grow? What needs to be pruned away so I might bear more fruit? Or, what can I simplify in my life in order to focus on God?"

Two spiritual practices that have often been embraced during Lent are fasting and prayer. Traditionally, people have fasted by giving up something like sugar, caffeine, meat, alcohol, or cigarettes to purify their bodies and lives. But you might also consider fasting from social media or TV and use that time to read, pray or enjoy God's creation. Ask yourself, "What clutters my life so it is hard to focus on God?" A Lenten fast can be as simple as turning off the radio when you drive so you can focus on God and pray.

Lent is also a time of intentional prayer. I find prayer walks are helpful, conversing with God as I walk and enjoy the outdoors. You might spend ten minutes each day in silent prayer. Some pray for those they see as they drive or walk, asking God to bless them.

Fasting and prayer are only two ideas however. Some observe Lent by cultivating an attitude of gratitude, writing thank you notes each week to those who have blessed them in their life. Others choose to volunteer one hour or more each week to a local shelter or ministry. Whatever you decide, this is a season to take stock of your spiritual health and take steps to focus your heart on the God who loves and waits for you.

May you be blessed this Lent as you carve out time to spend with God.

Pastor Deb

Worship Schedule

We will continue to journey through the story of God, discovering how God's story relates to our faith and lives. We will finishing the Old Testament in March, after which we will take a break.



- March 1** Ash Wednesday Service 7PM - Deb K preaching
- March 5** Chapter 18, Daniel in Exile
Deb K preaching
- March 12** Chapter 19, The Return Home
guest preacher, JoAnne Amaral
- March 19** Chapter 20, The Queen of Beauty & Courage
Deb K preaching
- March 26** Chapter 21, Rebuilding the Walls
Deb K preaching
-

Update from Children & Youth Ministry

Joa Sevlie



On Sunday, February 19th for our Ignite (Pre-K to 5th grade) Sunday School, we made pretzels. I have to admit, when I was elbow deep in pretzel dough, I did momentarily wonder why I always do things a

bit 'bigger' than I really have to. However, at 11 am, when our 17 students were happily munching away on freshly baked pretzels they had made themselves, I was glad we had done a bit extra.

You see, for the past month, the various parts of the CE committee have been talking about and planning for Lent. We spend a fair amount of time trying to figure out creative ways to teach on this topic, as it is a difficult one for kids to grasp. It is about doing hard things that we do not really want to do. It is about looking inward, to determine the growth of our spiritual journey. It is about looking outward, to see how our spiritual journey is affecting others in our lives, communities, and world.

Yep, Lent can be a bit hard to sell. That is why I found myself early on the 19th, mixing up multiple batches of pretzel dough - for in the form of the pretzel - the crossed 'arms' - we are reminded that Lent is a time of prayer. What I am hoping is that when the children of Trinity eat pretzels in the future, they will remember rolling out the dough, forming the pretzel, eating the pretzel, and talking about Lent and prayer - and something will be tickled in their memory. Children in our culture have many things that call for their attention, time, and energy. Finding the right combination that interests them, engages them, and calls them to future participation can be tricky. Here at Trinity we are focused on finding that combination.



Deacon's Report

by Jerry Loomis

On a quarterly basis, individual deacons have been going out with Pastor Deb to visit and/or serve communion to some of our shut-in members here at Trinity I have found this experience to be a real blessing to me

personally and to those people we have visited. It has also given me a great opportunity to know Pastor Deb on a more personal basis and to meet some of our members who are unable to attend services on Sunday mornings.

Matthew 19:26 states that "with God all things are possible." Mark 9:23 states that "all things are possible to him who believes." The following excerpt from my friend Heather's 2016 Christmas letter is a prime example of this fact. Heather is married and she and her husband James have three children; Savannah, Ali, and Austin. Heather's mother, Mitzi, passed away from cancer just two weeks before Thanksgiving 2015 and Austin was born four months after her death in March, 2016.

After writing about her kids' and their dad's 2016, Heather wrote: "Me? Well, it's been an emotion-filled season of life for me. Filled with high highs (moving into our first house this past fall) and some of the deepest lows I have ever experienced. My year has been haunted by memories with my mama and the deep grief that goes with losing a parent or any close loved one. But also the kind of grief that comes and goes in waves. Because I truly don't have much time for grieving, to be honest. Life barrels forward with three young children and a new home to take care of. So I feel my feelings when I can, take deep breaths and remember her every chance I get. I talk about her with my children and we celebrate her whenever we get the chance. The first time I showed my sweet Austin her photo, he broke into one of the biggest smiles I have seen him make and it brought such joy into my heart. I ache for them to meet one day in heaven, and I pray it will be so...All in all, my Father God is with me always. He gives me strength and shows me beauty and good and joy every day. It really is there if you take the time to really look. I trust in the one true God, the one who still holds the world in His hands no matter what may come."

I leave you with the following quotation from Ali's kindergarten curriculum for this year: "The sun shines every day, even when there are clouds. Even the largest clouds in the world cannot stop the sun from shining. We just don't see it, so we have to accept its existence by faith. God is with us every day, even when we don't see Him. Faith is knowing that God is still there and that He has a loving plan, even though the clouds in my life may seem huge (or just tiny and irritating)."

"Have a great day with the Light of the World who cares about you."

Mission News

The March Mission is FOOD SHARE! All through March we'll be participating in Minnesota Food Share which restocks food shelves around the state, including our local Christian Cupboard Emergency Food Shelf. There are tubs in the entryway and "Most Needed Items" lists if you choose to donate food. This can be especially meaningful if you have children and do the shopping with them. However, cash/checks are the best way to donate because the food shelf can purchase food from Second Harvest stretching dollars much further than we can by shopping at grocery stores. Please use the "MISSION of the MONTH" envelopes found in the



pews and mark them Food Share. Thank-you from the Mission Committee and CCEFS!

The March Mission of the Month will be kicked off by Jim Kielsmeier speaking at the 9am Adult Education class in the library on March 5th. March is Food Share month and Jim will be telling about the work of the Growing Hope Farms. He is actively involved in this important mission to provide low income folks fresh, healthy garden produce grown by volunteers. There are some exciting new plans brewing this season that Jim will share. Come and learn about this mission and how you might get involved -- whether you are an avid gardener or just a person who cares.

JOIN IN THE CHILI HUBBUB as another way to support the Christian Cupboard food shelf and have a lot of fun, fellowship and great food! Area restaurants will serve samples of their signature chili - and this year Mac 'n' Cheese - competing for your "Best Chili" vote. There will be music, games, and Human Foosball to entertain the whole family. The Chili Hubbub will take place on the grounds of Guardian Angels Church at 8260 4th St. N., Oakdale (overlooking I-94) March 12th from 11:00 - 4:00. See Doug Ryden for tickets.



March Birthdays

*If we've missed your birthday
please call the office at 738-0045*

3 - Jack Cook	14 - Allison Fisher	22 - Pam Drehmel
3 - Jake Jaros	14 - Helen Mbu	25 - Sean Finn
4 - Greg VanderVeer	15 - Brian Fisher	26 - Laura Theiss
5 - Devon Breckle	16 - Sue Betten	26 - Mike Schenck
5 - Marty Danielson	18 - Sam Elrod	27 - Kelsey Strand
6 - Bonnie Haen	19 - Arlene Richards	29 - Debi Espe
8 - Jay Wilkinson	19 - Julie Sinks	30 - Joyce Lewis
10 - Megan Berger	20 - Jane Willison	31 - Jonathan Ellis
12 - Mong Yang	22 - Karen Lindblom	

Financial Summary

Trinity Presbyterian Program Financial Summary Jan-17

	Month Actual	YTD Actual	Draft	Yr. Budget
Total Program Donations	\$18,310.00	\$18,310.00	\$223,837.46	
Total Program Expenditures	\$18,283.33	\$18,283.33	\$247,891.93	
Donations Less Expenses	\$26.67	\$26.67	(\$24,054.47)	
Checking Roll Forward Add	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00	

Income Less Expenses	\$1,026.67	\$1,026.67	(\$12,054.47)
Mortgage Fund Donations	\$6,664.81	\$6,664.81	
Mortgage Payment	\$6,269.32	\$6,269.32	
Mortgage Balance	\$480,721.67		

*Note that the Draft year budget has not been approved by Session and can hopefully be improved.



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