

From Pastor Rachel

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"
-Isaiah 58:6-7

Lent is here and during this season of Lent we are asking our entire church family to fast in one or more of the following ways:

- Fast from lunch on Monday and join us in the sanctuary from 12-1pm to sing, pray, or read Scripture together as we seek God and God's will for our lives and our church.
- Fast from a meal at home any day of the week and spend that time praying for our nation, our church and for

those who are oppressed, hungry, or homeless in our community and our world.

- Fast from something: a type of food or drink or activity and give the money that you would normally have spent on that thing to the church as part of our Lenten giving challenge.
- Fast from a negative behavior: complaining, criticizing, nagging, losing your cool, overeating, overdrinking, etc... and memorize a Scripture that you can repeat over and over when you are tempted to engage in that unhealthy behavior.

Lent is a time when we take a good hard look at our lives and figure out how we can offer up more of ourselves or our time or our struggles to God so God can shower us with the love, grace, strength and peace that we so desperately need. Lent is a time to get serious about our faith

and try something new and we hope that you will join us on this journey! To encourage you, some of us will be writing a devotional a week that you can read electronically or request in printed form. We are so excited about what God is doing at The Gathering at Scott Memorial and about what God is doing in your life and we feel that fasting during Lent is a way to strengthen our humility and discernment in moving forward together in our walk with God. Thank you for being a part of our church family!

- Rev. Rachel Gilmore



THE GATHERING at SCOTT MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

409 First Colonial Road
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Lent 2017 EDITION

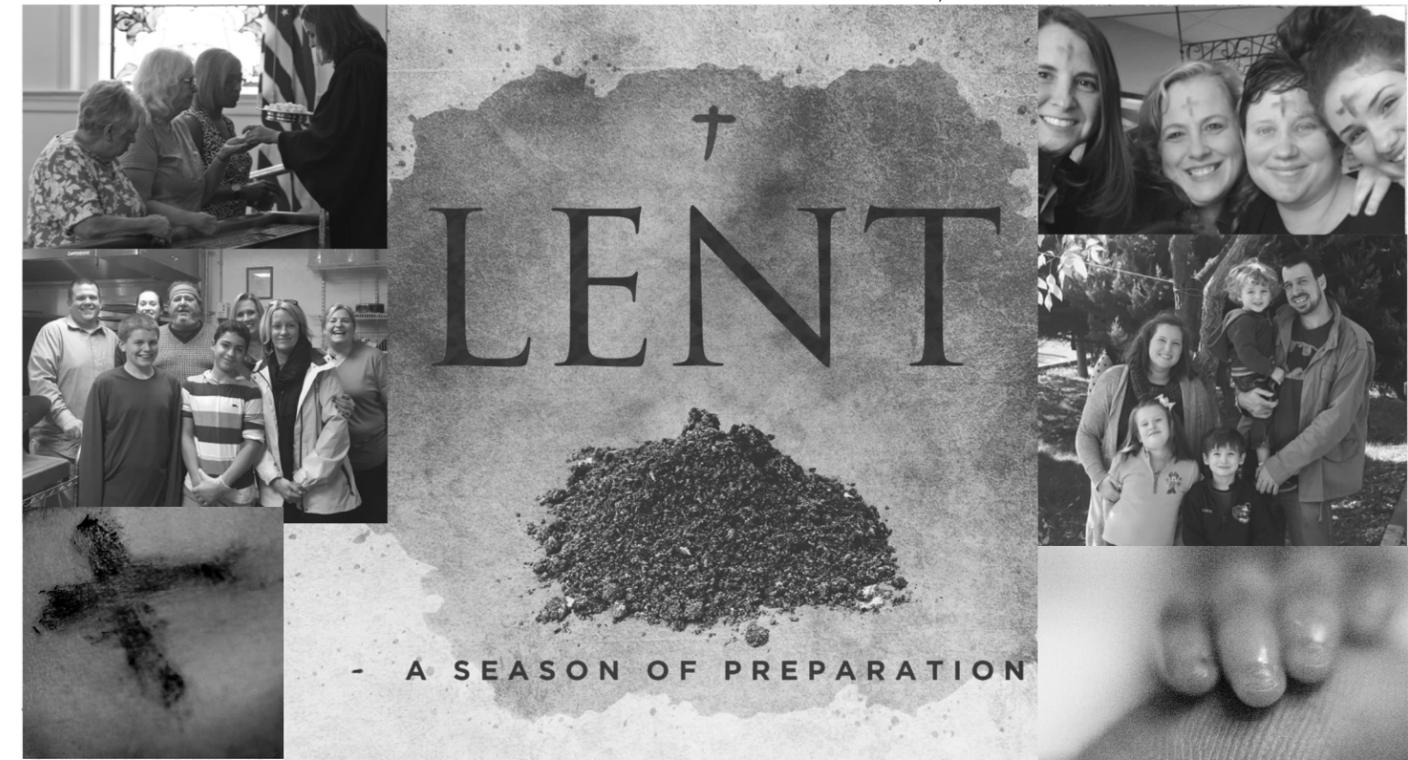
THE GATHERING at SCOTT MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Courier

RECONNECTING WITH GOD, OURSELVES, OTHERS, AND CREATION

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Lent 2017 EDITION



Lent - A Season of Preparation

Andrew Schwartz
Minister of Pastoral Care & Spiritual Formation

40 is an important number in the life of our Judeo-Christian faith.

For 40 days, Moses waited and fasted in grueling, humble anticipation in the peaks and crests of Mount Sinai to receive God's law expressed in the 10 Commandments. (Ex 34:28) Elijah walked 40 days and 40 nights

to the mountain of the Lord, Mt. Herob. (I Kgs 19:8)

Most significantly, Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights in the desert before he began his public ministry. (Matthew 4:2)

Wednesday March 1, Lent begins. I know, it seems like 2017 just began last week!

The 40 days of Lent are arguably one of the most misunderstood and under-practiced parts of our Christian year, and for that, we modern Christians are missing a beautiful opportunity

for a deeper, fuller trust in the Living God.

What is it about this number 40 and about the "desert" that each of these experiences above represent?

Well, it seems that God was very intentional, even from the very beginning, with the number 40 and the absolute necessity of occasionally reflecting upon the true state of our hearts.

It seems we become like programmed robots on our

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own. Our ego-centered minds gradually take over, often without us noticing, and before long any vibrant trust we had in God, becomes a frustratingly lonely and empty experience.

Enter Lent. This wonderful season of contradiction. In order to take in the fullness of the Easter "feast", it is necessary to fast. For us to hear the beautiful shouts of acclamation yelling "He is risen!", we must first enter the dark, stillness of night in our souls that we can't deny we feel.

If we were to just skip ahead to Easter Sunday without this season of fasting, contemplating, prayer, waiting and preparation, we might risk living through Easter unchanged and unaffected, with a robotic religiousness that often just leaves us bitter and angry.

“What is it about this number 40 and about the "desert" that each of these experiences above represent? ”

Consider the alternative. Perhaps we follow the example of Jesus, Elijah and Moses and enter our own "desert" during the 40 days of Lent. What in the world could that look like? I'd offer 3 suggestions:

Explore the Pain

What if, starting on Ash Wednesday, we woke up every morning and, opened our Bible, committed to some time of meditation and asked God something like this: *"Abba Father, help me to not be afraid of the pain inside of me or in the culture around me. I dont want to live blindly to reality. You are Reality and You are Love. Open me to the pain in your loving kindness that I might fully experience the feast of Easter...be with me now as I enter into a time of stillness."*

Depart the Ordinary

Elijah, Moses and Jesus all departed ordinary life for 40 days. That was a crucial part of their transformation. What could that look like for us? Certainly we don't have to go to a remote area of the Shenandoah for 40



days to experience the fullness of Easter. What if we each took 1 hour a week to sit in nature's stillness? What if we committed to 20 minutes a day of silent meditative prayer, such as Centering Prayer? Perhaps you could commit to joining Pastor Rachel and I at our Monday lunch time of fasting, worship and prayer at the Church?

And what if we did these things out of a trusting desperation, declaring that we need God and desire to encounter whatever God has for us? Our role during Lent is to let go and relax into God's grace and initiatives instead of a controlling, self-improvement posture. This can be so challenging in our culture!

Fast

I think this is where a lot of the misunderstanding of Lent lies, but a healthy understanding of this Spiritual Discipline can be so helpful! Throughout Scripture fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. Fasting today can be for health purposes or political and protest purposes, both of which can have great significance, but fasting for spiritual revitalization is quite different. Richard Foster, who wrote "Celebration of Discipline" says this:

"More than any other [Spiritual] Discipline, fasting reveals the tings that control us...Pride, anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear - if they are within us, they will surface during fasting. At first we will rationalize that our anger is due to our hunger; then we will realize hat we are angry because the spirit of anger is within us." p. 55

Fasting can be a powerful "re-ordering" of our hearts and minds, showing us where we have gradually slipped into the thinking of the flesh instead of the Spirit...where

PRAYER REQUESTS ♥ Remembering in Prayer

Church Family

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Agatha Sigley | Dorothy Belile, after a fall | Jill Moore |
| Betty White | Elsa Black on the passing of her | Joe Wise |
| Betty Wise | father | Naomi Mitchell |
| Carla Morrisette | George Schimmel | Staci & Junior Carrero on the |
| Chris Ramsey & Family | Harriet VanBlarcom | passing of their twin daughters, |
| Cindy Sager, daughter of | Jackie Ginn | born at 23 weeks on Jan. 23. |
| Jean Schimmel | Janie Yamrick | |

Friends & Relatives

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Alan Reil, (brother of Barney Reil) | Elizabeth & Betty Rehpelz | Larry Caffee |
| Bill Carroll | Gene Sipe | Loretta Tate |
| Chad Stokely, (son of Herk & Lennie Stokely) | Janet Deham | Patricia Childers |
| Charlotte Biggs | John Hendriksen | Sandy Vickers, Starke, FL |
| Donald Hall (nephew of Betty & Barney Reil, kidney failure) | Jonathan Todd, (nephew of Lauren Graham) | Terry Kjuches, neighbor of Mary Gilbert |
| Dwayne Einsphar | | Tony Reil, son of Alan Reil |

Missionaries

- Kate & David O'Donnell
- Vladi & Nadia Todorov
- Georgi Boev
- Reyes Family

Our world, our country, & our leaders

Misplaced refugees throughout the world

PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain is a part of the United Methodist Women's Mission Coordinator-Spiritual Growth and has been active for over 25 years.

Anyone who wishes the Prayer Chain to be activated for them or for someone else (upon their request) should call: **Pastor Rachel, 428-3720 AND Shirley Lane, 497-6263** or **Betty Horner, 340-2686** to activate the Prayer Chain.

When we receive notice to active the Prayer Chain, the information is passed to our UMW Callers who notify others of the request. If you would like to be apart of us and be notified of the Prayer Chain calls, please contact Betty Horner, 340-2686.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

at the Gathering at Scott Memorial

Director Children Ministry's - Megan Hosseinipoor

Looking for fun events this Lent season to involve your children? Look no further we have **March 17th St. Patrick's Day** with corn beef and cabbage along with our very own talent show. All are invited to participate and to watch. **April 2nd** will be a fun and exciting day for our children as they will sing during service and after will be our big **Easter Egg hunt, picnic, and crafts.** Rain or shine. Sunday school will begin learning about Jesus feeding thousands, his love, and that he is alive. Please feel free to bring a friend or neighbor as we go through this Lenten season.

Do you know where your money goes?

Because you give, we can give to others! So far this year we have invested \$650 in metal storage bins for our growing clothing closet ministry at the church and we are spending another \$850 purchasing supplies to put together 250 birthing kits on Mother's Day to help women overseas bring life into this world! Thank you for your generosity in regular Sunday giving and in our other mission fundraisers like our Soup-er Bowl which raised over \$300 in additional funds for our mission committee!

Youth in Mission Shareholders Sundays Sundays, March 19 & 26

Sunday March 19 & 26 the Youth Group will be speaking at all 3 services and the church will be decorated to highlight the Summer 2017 Youth Mission trips. We are so excited! This year we will be doing a Youth In Mission Trip Shareholder Program and invite you to invest in our experience. Each student has to raise about \$400 and they will be selling \$20 shares of Mission Trip Stock. Shareholders will receive a daily email video from our sites and will be invited to our Youth in Mission Shareholder banquet in late July. Thank you for being such a supportive and generous church!

*For more information on how you
can support the TGASMUMC
Youth in Mission contact -
Andrew Schwartz,
Andrew@gatheratscott.com*



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we have become addicted.

Fasting can also reach beyond food...I've heard of several in our church preparing to fast from Facebook, coffee, gossip...

The point obviously isn't what we give up, it's what is exposed once that thing that is producing an addiction in us is gone.

I'd love for you to join us, at least once, on a Monday lunch time at the church as we pray, fast, worship and call upon God to break us open and free us for joyful obedience together. God is truly up to something BIG in our community, and this Lent will be an important one! Shalom!



- Andrew Schwartz
Minister of Pastoral Care
& Spiritual Formation



Ash Wednesday @ Town Center Wednesday, March 1

The Daily Grind Coffee Shop (168 Central Park Ave.)

Pastor Rachel will be at the Daily Grind to administer ashes

- 7 am - 8am,
- 12 pm - 1 pm
- 6:30 - 7:30 pm

There will NOT be an Ash Wednesday service at the church.

Change in Worship Services

Beginning March 5, 2017

- 9 am: Traditional/Heritage
- 10 am: Experiential
- 11:15 am: Experiential

Church office hours:

Mon. — Thurs. 9 am - 1 pm

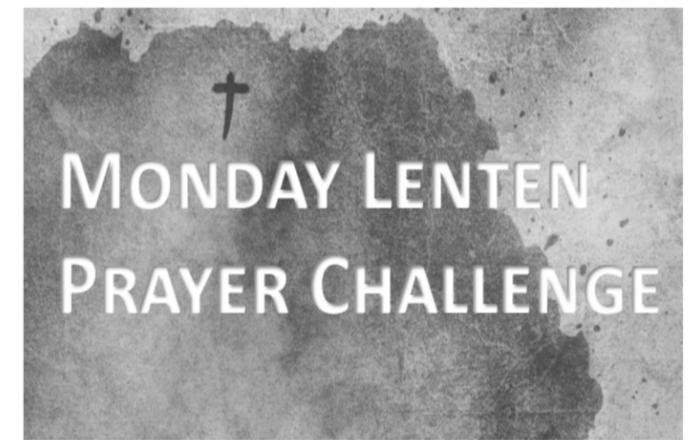
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The Gathering at Scott Memorial



Monday Lenten Prayer Challenge

Mondays March 6 - April 9

Fast from lunch on Mondays through the Lenten season. The sanctuary will be open from 12 noon - 1 pm every Monday in Lent for an informal gathering where folks can sing, pray, or read Scripture together as we seek God & His will for our lives and our church.



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • LOVE • HOPE
in action

As we go through Lent, we are reminded of the many phases Jesus, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior went through during his final days on earth. We recognize Jesus on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and on Easter, when “Jesus Arose from the Dead and Ascended into Heaven”. Jesus mentioned many times how important it was to help those in need.

We can give of our time to help serve meals and assist patrons in selecting their Fresh Food items, for physically helping with money making projects such as Dinners, Flea Markets, Book Sales, etc. [proceeds go to needy groups], for donating and/or working with the Ladies hygiene items and Clothes Closet, for donating to the Food Pantry, as well as donating to the above listed projects.

Our United Methodist Unit, Social Action has as its Mission in addition to the

above, to aid the needs of children and mothers and at Thanksgiving and Christmas, groceries and gifts for the family. Finally, to promote congressional bills aiding the needs of children, teens, mothers and families.

May Our Lord Bless and Keep You in His Care.

- Betty Horner

President, UMW at TGASMUMC



Update from Missions Committee Chairperson - Matthew Hillman

- Expansion of the Clothing Locker: We will be moving clothes and check-in to bigger space to help with organization.
- Later this year we will be assembling UMCOR birthing kits. These kits help sustain everyday life for people who lack ready access to essential supplies.

For more info on how you can help contact Matthew Hillman,
mhillman@verizon.net

Changes to Sanctuary Seating

We had a difficult but exciting decision to make in 2017. Our 10am service has been at sanctuary capacity since September so the Admin Council invited feedback from the congregation about some options for changes and 2/3rds of the church suggested that we remove 4 pews in the back of the sanctuary to make more room for handicapped seating and switch the worship styles so that the Traditional Service can be held at 9am with identical Experiential/Band-led services happening at 10 and 11:15am. This change will be made effective on March 5th, the first Sunday in Lent. Here's a picture of what we imagine the sanctuary will look like when we complete the changes. Thank you to all of you for your feedback and support of these necessary changes as our church continues to grow and welcome new people.



Computer-generated, mock-rendering of sanctuary with removed pews.

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WE BELIEVE IN
INCARNATIONAL
MISSIONS - BRINGING CHRIST'S
LOVE TO BEAR ON A HURTING
WORLD WITH OUR HEARTS & HANDS.