



SELF-DENIAL
REPENTANCE
LENT
PREPARATION
GRACE
FORGIVENESS

FASTING
PRAYER

Journey Through Lent this Month

As we try to survive the deep freeze of the past several weeks and turn our eyes toward the joyful resurrection, we move together through the introspective journey toward the cross known as Lent. Sometimes it's good to have a refresher about what exactly this time period means and why it is so important to us as Christians. The following is taken from *The Upper Room*, which is a devotional book that our Presbyterian Women use frequently. It goes through a brief Q and A about the origins of Lent, as well as ways in which you can make the journey more personal to yourself. Read on...

LENT 101

Lent is a season of the Christian Year where Christians focus on simple living, prayer, and fasting in order to grow closer to God.

When is Lent?

It's the forty days before Easter. Lent excludes Sundays because every Sunday is like a little Easter. Basically, it's about one-tenth of a year (like a tithe of time). Mardi Gras is the day before Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday. This year it's from February 18-April 5 (Easter) 2014.

(continued on page 3)

MARCH 2015

Worship Schedule

The season of Lent inspires us worship passionately and creatively. We look forward to your joining us!

MARCH 1

On a Sunday when we celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we will take a look at one of the great covenants we find in the Old Testament.

MARCH 8

By now we will be well on our way into the season of Lent. We will reflect on the most well-known covenant God initiated with us. One that deeply influences our lives in the western world. The choir will remind us that "*The Heavens Are Telling*"...telling us what?

MARCH 15

Pastor Michael and the Worship Ensemble will lead this Emerging Worship Sunday service. One of the most powerful statements about Jesus Christ will be the focus of the sermon (see I Corinthians 1: 18-25.)

MARCH 22

This worship service, based on liturgy and music from the Iona and Taizé worshipping communities, will be quiet, reflective, meaningful....and beautiful to behold.

MARCH 29

Palm Sunday. A creative and joyful worship experience is in the works. And, of course, we sing *The Palms!*

STAFF DIRECTORY

120 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218
Phone: 412-241-4613
www.fpcedgewood.org

Pastor	The Rev. Michael P. Rucker mprucker@fpcedgewood.org
Pastor Emeritus	Dr. Gerald Hollingsworth
Minister of Music.....	Shaun Cloonan music@fpcedgewood.org
Organist & Pianist.....	Sunny Sakai sunnysakai4@gmail.com
Section Leaders.....	Tyler McGuigan Mandy Rineer
Office Manager & FROGS Director.....	Judy Mysels office@fpcedgewood.org frogs@fpcedgewood.org
Building Manager	Rob Mysels building@fpcedgewood.org
Nursery Attendant.....	Kristi Cloonan LittleK815@aol.com

Office Hours:
Monday–Friday
9:00AM–2:00PM



News from the Edge ,
is the monthly newsletter of the
First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood.
If you have information you would like
to include in the next issue, email Judy Mysels
at office@fpcedgewood.org by
the 15th of the prior month.
Sponsorship is available for \$40 per month.

PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker
Pastor

Dear people of the FPCE family (members and friends...)
We are of one mind—cold, cold go away, come
again...well, maybe you don't have to come again ever!

A CALL TO GO DEEPER

I am looking forward to the next 6 weeks. Lots of
reasons come to mind. March madness. The birds begin
to arrive from wherever they have been these past few
months. I like to wake up to the sound of happy chirping.
The crocus and daffodil begin to emerge from the dark
home that has hidden them from us these past months.
Shrub buds open and the bright yellow forsythia
wondrously emerges. And, of course, Opening Day (4/13.)

But something much deeper is possible; someone is
speaking to the deep, amazing, spiritual part of our lives.
God is seeking you. God is calling you to this season of
learning and growing. Lent is the season of discipleship.

Jesus says an amazing thing: **“The kingdom of
God is among you.”** (Lk. 17:21) Lent is a season to
discover more of the kingdom of God that is among us.
Paul tells us that **“We walk by faith not by sight.”** (II Cor.
5:7) Lent is a time to walk more obediently by faith.

A spiritual leader named Roland Rolheiser writes,
*“The normal food that we eat (distractions, busyness,
entertainment...) work to shield us from the deep....that
lurks beneath the surface of our lives. Lent invites us to stop
eating, so to speak, whatever protects us from the desert
that is inside us. Lent invites us to feel our smallness, our
vulnerability, to feel our fears....to fast before we feast.”*

There are many resources that help us live into this
wondrous season. Come to worship. Attend the Sunday
morning adult Bible study or become part of the
Wednesday evening fellowship group. Go to a nurturing
website: sacredspace.ie, pray-as-you-go.org. or go to
youtube.com—enter Taize into search bar. Grab a copy of
The Upper Room devotional here at church. Or, simply sit
alone for 10 to 15 minutes. Read a Psalm. Read a chapter
from one of the gospels. Read it closely, slowly. Sit
quietly. Pray. You can do it.

Brothers and sisters. Let's go deeper this Lent -
together.

Pastor Michael

LENT 101 (continued from page 1)

Mardi Gras? What does that have to do with JESUS??

Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday." It refers to the day before Lent starts. Since Lent always starts on a Wednesday, the day before is always a Tuesday. And it's called "Fat" or "Great" because it's associated with great food and parties.

In earlier times, people used Lent as a time of fasting and repentance. Since they didn't want to be tempted by sweets, meat and other distractions in the house, they cleaned out their cabinets. They used up all the sugar and yeast in sweet breads before the Lent season started, and fixed meals with all the meat available. It was a great feast! Through the years Mardi Gras has evolved (in some places) into a pretty wild party with little to do with preparing for the Lenten season of repentance and simplicity. Oh well. But Christians still know it's origin, and hang onto the true Spirit of the season.

So the real beginning of Lent is Ash Wednesday?

Yes. Ash Wednesday, the day after Mardi Gras, usually begins with a service where we recognize our mortality, repent of our sins, and return to our loving God. We recognize life as a precious gift from God, and re-turn our lives towards Jesus Christ. We may make resolutions and commit to change our lives over the next forty days so that we might be more like Christ. In an Ash Wednesday service, usually a minister or priest marks the sign of the cross on a person's forehead with ashes.

Why ashes?

In Jewish and Christian history, ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. Mortality, because when we die, our bodies eventually decompose and we become dust/ dirt/ash/whatever. Repentance, because long ago, when people felt remorse for something they did, they would put ashes on their head and wear "sackcloth" (scratchy clothing) to remind them that sin is pretty uncomfortable and leads to a sort of death of the spirit. This was their way of confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness.

Where do the ashes come from?

On what we now call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem while people waved palms and cheered him on. Less than a week later, Jesus was killed. The palms that were waved in joy became ashes of sorrow. We get ashes for Ash Wednesday by saving the palms from Palm Sunday, burning them, and mixing them with a little water (like tears) or oil. It's symbolic.

What do Christians do with ashes?

At an Ash Wednesday service, folks are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. The minister will make a small cross on your forehead by smudging the ashes. While the ashes remind us of our mortality and sin, the cross reminds us of Jesus' resurrection (life after death) and forgiveness. It's a powerful, non-verbal way that we can experience God's forgiveness and renewal as we return to Jesus.

So what is LENT?

At Jesus' baptism the sky split open, the Spirit of God, which looked like a dove, descended and landed on Jesus, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, My Beloved, with whom I am pleased." Afterward, as told in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was sent into the wilderness by the Spirit. Where he fasted and prayed for



40 days. During his time there he was tempted by Satan and found clarity and strength to resist temptation. Afterwards, he was ready to begin his ministry.

(Speculation)

Maybe Jesus needed some time with God to sort through the major changes happening in his life. Maybe needed to get away from family, friends and the familiar routine in order to see God (and himself) more clearly. Perhaps he wanted some intentional time with God as he searched for direction and answers like you. Like Jesus, we may need to take some serious time to pray and listen for God.

Why "DO" Lent? How do I start?

Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, but not really living life with direction, purpose or passion? It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of classes, relationships, family, and work. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God.

Lent is a great time to "repent" -- to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40 day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart. You might try one of these practices for Lent:

FASTING: Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, tv, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like worry or reality tv to spend time outside enjoying God's creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do?

SERVICE: Some Christians take something on for Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend everyday of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

PRAYER: Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

Christians from many different traditions celebrate Lent. How will you use the time to grow closer to God?



LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Wednesday Nights in the Lounge

Every Wednesday evening through the season of Lent, Pastor Rucker will be leading a discussion on what we are learning, how we are growing, what God is saying to us as we make our way through the six weeks of Lent. There will be time for discipleship, fellowship, discussion and prayer. We would love to have you join us - that's 7:00PM on Wednesday evenings.

Maundy Thursday, April 2

"Maundy" comes from the Latin word for "commandment." On Thursday we recollect Jesus' commandment that we "love one another just as I have loved you." This service begins in the Gathering Place at 7:00PM, focusing on the events of the Last Supper, and then moves into the Sanctuary for a service of shadows, where we remember the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus. A meaningful service you won't want to miss.

Good Friday, April 3

Keep a lookout for bulletin announcements, e-mails, or online updates about our plans for Good Friday. We've had very little participation in the Good Friday Prayer Vigil the past few years, so the Worship Ministry Team is discussing a few other ideas to observe this darkest day of the journey when Christ died on the cross for our



P.W. Corner

Lori Stutz
Moderator



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Flea market, birthday and more, oh, my! As you know April is Flea Market Time. Please keep us in mind when doing your spring cleaning! Remember we don't accept electronic or clothing donations. We still need people to help in all ways. Please contact Sallie Monk or the church office to volunteer. This year we will be having a PREVIEW SALE on Friday, for FPCE members only, 6:30-8:30PM FRIDAY. Saturday, will be the kick off for the regular sale to the public starting at 10AM to 2PM, then we will continue the sale after church on Sunday from 12:30PM to 3PM. So, remember the flea market will be Friday, April 24, Saturday, April 25, and Sunday, April 26.

Our PW business meeting has been moved. It will NOT be on March 22. As you'll read below we have far more fun things to attend to. Instead the business meeting will be March 29 directly following church in the Gathering Place.

And the fun, will be when we can all celebrate Florence Pickels' 100 birthday on March 22, celebration luncheon to follow church. Hope everyone can come and honor this magnificent woman with us!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It's only fitting that my very first memory of Florence, has to do with the social room and the kitchen. I was about 6-7 years old. My sister and I were bored and running around the social room as it was being set up for "Pairs and Spares". I'm thinking this must have been FPCE's idea of a social for all the grown ups at the church. Now, during this time, we probably, should not have been running around. We weren't running around for long because almost immediately a petite grey haired woman came running out chasing after us with a spoon. "Get away from the kitchen", she yelled, scaring me more than anything in church ever had. Was this Florence? Oh, no, it absolutely was NOT. This was a woman name Vi. Shortly, after that Florence came out and said "you know you guys aren't suppose to be here.". with appropriate firmness. That was Florence. So, for any of you whoever thought Florence was harsh when it came to the kitchen. I'm here to tell you, you're crazy, and you never met some of the other ladies.

Fast forward to being about 11-12, me that is not Florence. Florence was my Bell Choir Director. I remember I wanted to play bells more than anything. She let me, she taught me, and was very patient with me. It was wonderful to be a part of it. The Bell Choir under her direction were magical, especially for those of us playing. Over the years, Florence was there cooking for events, coming on Family retreats, cooking for anything and for everyone at the church. She's taught me more than she'll ever know with cooking but also with people. And when I wanted a tea for my wedding shower there was no one more perfect I thought to make the perfect tea with the sandwiches and everything. Then being involved with Florence in PW. Which is where I graduated from calling her Mrs. Pickels to Florence. That took some getting use to for me. She was fun and gracious about it. I'm sure we all have our Florence memories. I can't think of a better way for PW to honor her than to give her a Lifetime Membership Award. Also, we are having a HUGE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION! We'll be celebrating her 100th birthday together as a family.

BLOCKS

Believing Little Ones Can Know and Serve

The Christian Education committee is pleased to announce a new program for our youngest members and friends. BLOCKS will be piloted this spring, one evening a month. Through this program, we aim to present a well-developed and age-appropriate opportunity based on the needs and interests of our youngest members and friends. Thematically centered on “building blocks”, we will work to build the foundations for Christian beliefs and practices, with understanding the importance of play. Through stories, songs, crafts, and – of course – play time, we hope to offer a fun and meaningful “Introduction to Sunday School”. This program is open to any FPCE member or non-member and will be promoted within the larger local community. Please contact Emily Lilly (EmilySLilly@gmail.com) with any questions.

Ages: 6 months to kindergarten, with caregiver. The set-up is “Grown-up and Me” and a caregiver or parent is expected to attend with the child. We cannot provide unaccompanied child care.

Date and Time: The first program will be Wednesday, April 15th, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. We will announce a May date soon.

Location: FPCE, Gathering Place

Sign-ups: To ensure adequate resources for all children, RSVPs are appreciated. Sign-up by emailing Emily Lilly at EmilySLilly@gmail.com.


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



FROGS have been hopping during the month of February. We made Valentine crafts to be included in the Deacons’ goodie bags delivered to their “friends of the church”. The kids also made Valentines for their own family members and played Valentine bingo. Thanks to Dan Mielke who baked cupcakes for a special Valentine’s dessert.

A huge thank you to Mary Ann Hartman, who visited on March 17 to teach dental hygiene, giving individual bags with toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, etc. The kids learned a lot and had fun doing so.

FROGS are in need of snacks such as: individual juice boxes/bag, individual snack packages such as peanut butter/cheese crackers, fruit roll-ups, pretzels, chips, Rice Krispies bars, etc. Thank you!



Stewardship Meditation
 All shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. (Deut 16:17, NRSV)
 Blessings,
 Paul Ohori, Stewardship Chair

Top Ten List:
Things You Can Try for the Lenten Season

10. **Try an electronic fast.** Give up TV, Guitar Hero, texting, tweeting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week. (or everyday of Lent!) Use the time to read & pray.
9. **Start a prayer rhythm.** Say a prayer every time you brush your teeth, hear an ambulance, or check your e-mail. Before you text someone, pray for them.
8. **Read one chapter in the Bible each day.** (Matthew's a good book to start with. Psalms, too.)
7. **Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (maybe even yourself.)**
6. **Give up soft drinks, fast food, tea or coffee.** Give the money you save to help folks in Haiti or others in crisis.
5. **Create a daily quiet time.** Spend 30 minutes a day in silence and prayer.
4. **Cultivate a life of gratitude.** Write someone a thank you letter each week and be aware of how many people have helped you along the way.
3. **Be kind to someone each day.**
2. **Pray for others you see** as you walk to and from classes or drive to and from work.
1. **Volunteer one hour or more each week** with a local shelter, tutoring program, nursing home, prison ministry or a Habitat for Humanity project.

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion 9:30 Choir (C) 9:45 Pollyanna (GP) 9:45 Adult Class (L) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship (L)	2 7:00 Scouts (SC)	3 10:00 Book Club (L) 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Deacons (L) 7:00 AA (SR) 7:00 ESO	4 7:00 Lenten Study	5 3:45 FROGS	6 8:00 AA (SR)	7 8:30 AA (SR)
8 9:30 Choir (C) 9:45 Pollyanna (GP) 9:45 Adult Class (L) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship (L)	9 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Scouts (SC)	10 10:00 Book Club (L) 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session (GP) 7:00 AA (SR)	11 7:00 Worship Ensemble (S) 7:00 Lenten Study	12 1:00 PW Circle (GP) 3:45 FROGS	13 8:00 AA (SR)	14 8:30 AA (SR)
15 Emerging 9:30 Worship Ens. 9:45 Pollyanna (GP) 9:45 Adult Class (L) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship (L)	16 7:00 Scouts (SC)	17 10:00 Book Club (L) 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	18 7:00 Lenten Study	19 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Grief Group (L)	20 8:00 AA (SR)	21 8:30 AA (SR)
22 Taizé/Iona 9:30 Choir (C) 9:45 Pollyanna (GP) 9:45 Adult Class (L) 11:00 Emerging 12:15 Florence Birthday Party	23 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Scouts (SC)	24 10:00 Book Club (L) 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	25 7:00 Lenten Study	26 1:00 PW Circle (GP) 3:45 FROGS	27 8:00 AA (SR)	28 8:30 AA (SR)
29 Palm Sunday 9:30 Choir (C) 9:45 Pollyanna (GP) 9:45 Adult Class (L) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship (L) P.W. Mtg. (GP)	30 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Joy Circle (L) 7:00 Scouts (SC)	31 10:00 Book Club (L) 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	C=Choir Room GP=Gathering Place L=Lounge O=Office PS=Pastor's Study S=Sanctuary SC=Scout Room SR=Social Room	Looking Ahead to Next Month: Thursday, April 2 - Maundy Thursday Service Friday, April 3 - Good Friday Prayer Vigil Sunday, April 5 - Easter Service Saturday, April 25 - PW Flea Market		

EASTER FLOWERS

We seek your help in making our sanctuary a place of graceful beauty and meaning on Easter morning. Through your donation, we can accomplish this:

I wish to contribute an Easter plant:

____ Daffodil ____ Hyacinth ____ Lily ____ Tulip

The wording for the bulletin is:

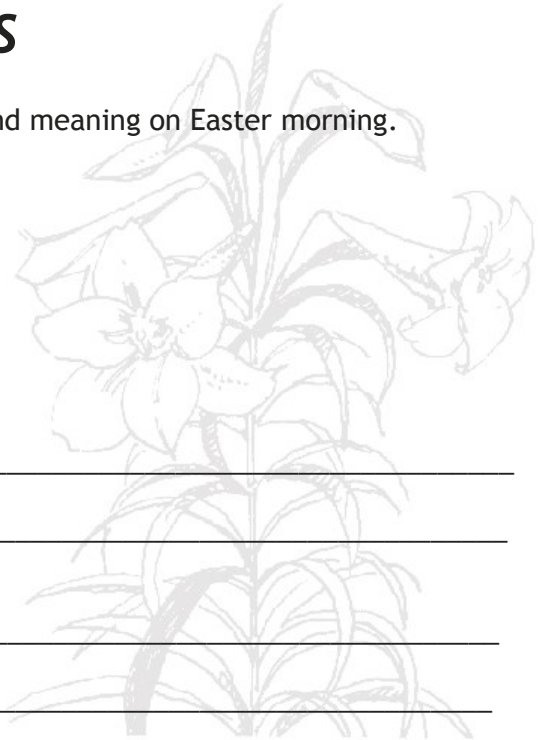
____ In honor of _____

____ In memory of _____

Order placed by _____

Please check: ____ I would like to take the plant after the Easter service.

The cost of each plant is **\$8.00**. Please attach your check (payable to First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood) to this order form and return it to the Church Office. **Deadline is March 25, 2015.**



*Sharing in the
joys and concerns
of our family &
friends at FPCE*

- Sympathies to Bill Crean and the Crean family in the loss of Bill's sister, Angie, who lost a long battle with Cancer.
- Special thanks to the Scouts for their participation in Scout Sunday, February 8.
- Let's give a warm thank you to the adults who have faithfully led the FROGS program during these very cold days: Judy Mysels (Director), Mary Ross, Nozomi Sakai, Rick Masten, Ruth Miller, Dan Mielke, Connie Black, Flo Raisig, Ranger Tim (and Ed Masten is checking us out!)
- A prayer of thanksgiving to Mary Ann Hartman's brother in law, "Sudsy" for his recovery from a debilitating illness.
- Good ministry Deacons! Our homebound members each received a Valentine's Day basket full of sweet things.



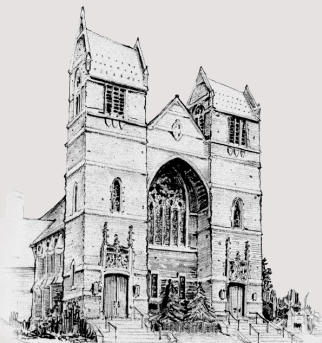
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**A monthly support group
for people surviving the
loss of a love**



First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood
Rev. Michael Rucker, Pastor
120 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

412-241-4613
office@fpcedgewood.org
www.fpcedgewood.org

GRIEVING SPACE

at the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

Here, we understand that finding the space to grieve can sometimes be every bit as challenging as the loss itself.

Should you need us, our support group is here.

Meetings: every third Thursday of the month, 7pm

Call us to let us know you are coming: 412-241-4613

Individual support with a certified grief counselor is also available through:



Edgewood Psychological Services