



There is just something about March. Even though it doesn't feel like it, this is the month that officially starts spring, Yahoo!!

Many of us struggle to get through winter and what seems like the endless cold, grey days of winter. Just a couple days ago, I was walking up the driveway looking at where my gardens are hiding under a bunch of snow. For a few moments I felt warm sunshine on my face before the afternoon clouds and cold took over.

What a feeling of hope I had even though I knew in my heart there is more than a little winter left. That is what I like about March. Somehow, we know that regardless of what winter weather is left to come that spring will not be denied. I wait with anticipation as the snow melts to see the little buds starting to appear and the daffodil shoots pushing up. We watch and report our first sightings of robins. There is hope.

There is hope and preparation for greater things to come. That is what this month in the church calendar is about as well. This year March is full of Lent. Lent provides us a wonderful opportunity to consider and pray about how we can get closer to being the person God would have us to be and to consider what it is God would have us to do.

Many consider Lent simply a time of giving up something we like for a few days but I think that just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness contemplating his ministry, we too are called to spend time considering our own ministry. Let us use this time for planning and preparing. Lent is a time of spiritual preparation. I invite you not to simply give up something but to take time to prepare your spirit for an exciting new journey. Here are a couple suggestions. Spend an extra few minutes each day in prayer and meditation. Read a book on spirituality, commit to reading the upper room every morning with your coffee (it's only a small page), read one proverb every day from the bible (there are 31), commit a daily and intentional act of kindness, join me in a day of fasting, you get the idea. Prepare yourself for what God has planned for you.

As many are aware that during the purple seasons of the Christian calendar, I fast. It has become a wonderful practice for me that has truly changed my spiritual journey. I invite you to share in "A day of fasting with the pastor" this year. Fasting is not about suffering. It is designed to help us focus on our relationship with God. I follow an Islamic tradition of fasting which includes nothing to eat or drink from sunrise to sunset each day, but more importantly four times a day intentional prayer and meditation. Please remember, if you have medical or physical issues that make it unsafe to fast, DO NOT do it. Again, I encourage you to not just "give up" something but to add a little something that will feed your spirit.

Although most of us don't think of Lent as an uplifting time of year I would like us to think about Lent the same way gardeners think about March. It is a time of thinking, planning, and preparing for spring. It is a time of great anticipation. We dream about and prepare for new growth in our gardens, we remember projects from last year that we want to finish, we sharpen our tools and start ordering seed. We remember the exciting successes of springs past and prepare to start this spring full of expectation and optimism.

This is my vision for us at St James. As we begin our journey into Lent, let us not think of this as a season of spiritual winter but rather a time of preparing for our own spiritual spring both personally and as a community of faith.

Whoever you are and wherever you are at on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here in at St James.

Take care and be well, Peace
Ken



Prayers for

Ellen Grimnes, Barb & Joe Tocco, Sue, David, Joe and Carmela, Doris Sues, Karen Marie, Mary, Barbara, June, Anne Enders, Leo Solomon, Paul Veryser, Tom and Sandy A & family, Carlene Kaniski, Erin, Sue, Carol, Kerry, Kenny Murphy, Scott, Erin and Charlie, Jeremy, Brian, Carol, Gepi, Sandy S



One Great Hour of Sharing provides support for health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries by working with local, national, and global partners. The offering is received most often during Lent. This year we have marked March 15th as the date to dedicate our giving. It is administered in the national UCC setting by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources.



If anyone in our congregation will be celebrating a 50th wedding anniversary this year, please let Lynn Robertson, Stella Czenkus or Bev Kulman know so we can plan to help you celebrate with a coffee hour in your honor.



Our annual St. Pat's Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner will be held on March 22nd at Perch Point Conservation Club.

There is a sign up sheet in the basement of the church for you to sign up to bring assorted vegetables and to help prepare for the dinner. We need everyone's help, as this is one of our biggest fundraiser of the year. Anything you can do will be appreciated.



K.I.D.S. in Distress

Please don't forget Kids in Distress is an ongoing project at St. James. A tote box is in the basement for your gently used clothing (especially children's jeans). Thank you for your support.



Food Pantry

The St. A's food pantry is in need of the following items:

Hamburger Helper, Jello, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Cake Mix and Frosting.

Please remember the food pantry while you are shopping. The items can be left in the box in the vestibule. They will be delivered when the box is full so please help fill it.



Communion Elders

March

Jerry Lindke- Preparing
Devon Klomp - Serving
Ralph Ski - Serving



Ushers & Greeters

March

March 1 - Bev & Gordie Kulman
March 8 - Open
March 15 - Bob & Teri Wagner
March 22- Open
March 29 - Open

Liturgist March

March 1 - Bev Kulman
March 8 - Maraleen Cottrell
March 15 - Teri Wagner
March 22 - Open
March 29 - Maraleen Cottrell

Altar Care March

Betty Robertson

Scripture Readings for March

Sunday, March 1

*Gen 17:1-7, 15-16
*Ps 22:23-31
*Rom 4:13-25
*Mark 8: 31-38 or Mark 9:2-9
Always Close

Sunday, March 8

*Ex 20:1-17
*Ps 19
*1 Cor 1: 18-25
*John 2: 13-22
Beautiful Law

Sunday, March 15

*Num 21:4-9
*Ps 107:1-3, 17-22
*Eph 2: 1-10
*John 3:14-21
No Matter What

Sunday, March 22

*Jer 31: 31-34
*Ps 51: 1-12 or Ps 119:9-16
*Heb 5: 5-10
*John 12: 20-33
Deep in Our Hearts

Sunday, March 29(Palms Sunday)

*Mark 11: 1-11 or John 12: 12-16
*Ps 118: 1-2, 19-29
(Liturgy of the Palms)
*Isa 50: 4-9a
*Ps 31: 9-16
*Phil 2: 5-11
*Mark 14: 1-15:47 or Mark 15: 1-39(40-47)
Into Jerusalem

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St. James United Church of Christ
Annual "St. Pat's" Corned Beef Dinner
Honoring Pat Bandlow

Sunday, March 22nd at 4:00pm

Perch Point Conservation Club
7930 Meisner Road, Casco

Price – \$10.00 for Adults
Donation for Children

Dinner includes Dessert, Coffee and Tea
(Cash bar available)

Come and spend the afternoon with friends and family
"Cead Mille Failte"~A hundred thousand welcomes await you at our annual
St. James dinner!

Bake Sale and 50/50 Drawing



Dinner tickets will be available at the door.