



PRESBY PRESS

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ASH WEDNESDAY and THE IMPORTANCE OF LENT

The meaning of Lent revolves around preparation, reflection, and penance. During Lent, Christians honor the 40 days and nights following Christ's baptism when He went into the wilderness without water and food and was tempted by Satan. During that time, Christ did what we do today when we fast: wrestle with temptation. This was not the first fast; biblical figures often fasted when petitioning God for something important. *"So we fasted and implored our God [...], and he listened to our entreaty"* (Ezra 8:23). The Israelites *"mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword"* (2 Samuel 1:12).

Christians often engage in practices such as fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as a way to deepen their connection with God and to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Fasting during Lent typically involves abstaining from certain foods or luxuries as a form of self-discipline and solidarity with the sufferings of Christ.

OUR MISSION

TO BE THE LOVING COMMUNITY OF
JESUS CHRIST THAT WILL

WIN

NEW FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST TO SAVING FAITH

GROW

ALL FOLLOWERS TO DEEPER FAITH

GO

INTO THE WORLD AND DEMONSTRATE FAITH

The primary purpose of Lent is meant to be a time of repentance. That's not a feeling of shame but an awareness that sin separates us from God and what Christ endured to save us from sin, death, and the devil.

"Shame has its place, but feeling shame over sin is not the same thing as repentance from sin" because "our tempter can take our obedience to God and turn it into a source of pride." Repentant sinners "seek [...] cleansing from sin, but also freedom from shame." True repentance leads to a "180-degree change of [...] direction" and requires "true brokenness," but repentance starts with "a regretful acknowledgment of sin with a commitment to change."

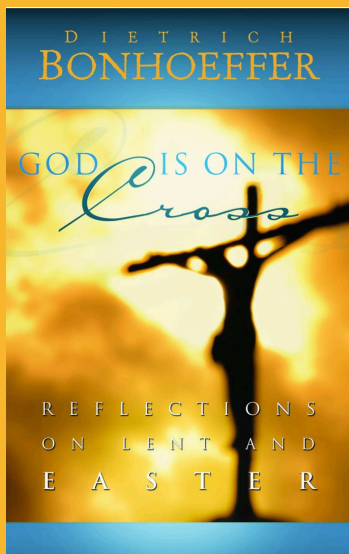
christianity.com; candance lucey; january 27, 2025

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE * MARCH 5, 2025 * 7pm

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

Pastor John shares these two wonderful books as we enter the Lenten Season. Both devotionals offer daily, meaningful reflections for spiritual encouragement during the season of Lent. Either can be ordered online.

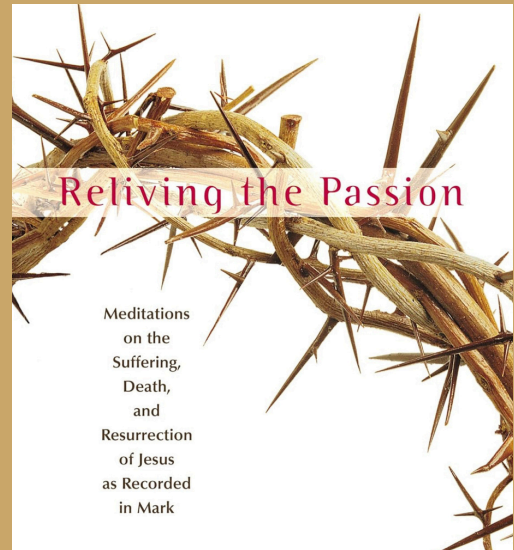
Lent begins very soon with Ash Wednesday on March 5th.



**"GOD IS ON THE CROSS"
BY: DIETRICH BONHOEFFER**

**THESE 40 STIRRING DEVOTIONS
WILL GUIDE AND INSPIRE
READERS AS THEY MOVE
THEMATICALLY THROUGH THE
WEEKS OF LENT AND EASTER.**

You can find it on Amazon.
at this QR Code below:



**"RELIVING THE PASSION"
BY: WALTER WANGERIN JR.**

**THE VIVID MEDITATIONS FOLLOW THE
STORY AS GIVEN IN THE BOOK OF
MARK, FROM THE MOMENT WHEN CHIEF
PRIESTS PLOT TO KILL JESUS TO THE
RESURRECTION.**

You can find it on Amazon.
at this QR Code below:



EASTER BELL CHOIR

Our Bell Choir will begin practicing for the Easter morning performance on March 12th, 2025. Each practice will be held in Scott Hall on Wednesday nights from 6-7pm.

If you are interested in joining the bell choir, please let Lloyd Chapman know at 815.488.8114, so parts can be assigned for each player.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



OUR EASTER SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

8:45am - Easter Breakfast
continental breakfast served in Scott Hall

9:30am - Worship Service
with special music by our bell and vocal choirs

11:00am - Easter Egg Hunt
meet in the East Room after service

12:00pm - Community Meal
serving our community on this special day

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt for all kids up to 12th grade, will be held on Easter Sunday - April 20th - shortly after the worship service ends. We invite you to come down to the East Room to collect your child's bag and wait while the eggs are spread out and ready for the hunt! Birth through 4th grade will be held on the playground. Fifth graders through seniors will be held inside the building.



PRIZE BAGS WILL BE AWARDED TO ANYONE WHO FINDS THE GOLDEN EGGS!



Our Fellowship Team will be hosting a Continental Breakfast at 8:45 am on Sunday, April 20th. Mark your calendars for this special time of fellowship together as we celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Savior!

EASTER LILY ORDERS



Easter Lilies will be available to order in next month's newsletter. Forms will also be made available at the back of the sanctuary starting on Sunday, March 30th.

Lilies can be ordered both in honor of and in memory of. Those names will be listed in the Palm Sunday bulletin and the Easter Sunday bulletin.

Our Maundy Thursday Service will be Thursday, April 17th

Good Friday, we know. And Easter (Resurrection Sunday) most certainly. But what is Maundy Thursday? It is the Thursday before Easter, believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples.

Most notably, that Passover meal was when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. He then commanded them to do the same for each other.

Christ's "mandate" is commemorated on Maundy Thursday; "maundy" being a shortened form of mandatum (Latin), which means "command." It was on the Thursday of Christ's final week before being crucified and resurrected that He said this commandment to His disciples. Jesus and his disciples had just shared what was known as the Last Supper and he was washing their feet when he stated:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34).

christianity.com; alex crain; march 27, 2024



AOK SUNDAY is coming up on May 4th!



..also known as Star Wars Day

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Presbytery of Blackhawk is hiring an Office Administrator.

The person in this position assists pastors, presbytery, and church leaders by fielding inquiries, developing and maintaining communications, keeping records and other necessary functions to further the mission of the organization.

Follow this QR Code to learn more about this position, or visit their website at

<https://blackhawkpresbytery.org/employment-opportunities/>.



Blackhawk Presbytery



Coffee in Your Corner

Your Presbytery Staff is coming to YOUR corner of the Presbytery to have coffee with you!

Join us Tuesday, March 11 at 10:00 am in Ottawa, at Jeremiah Joe (807 La Salle St). We will be available to answer questions, suggest resources for your congregation, or just catch up on what's happening. We would love to meet with pastors or leaders of your congregation.



"Everyone should believe in something. I believe I will have a cup of coffee."



Dear 1st Pres,

Thank you all so much for the lovely "Walkers Recipes" collaboration. We have so many wonderful recipes to try out this year and for years to come!

Thank you and Much Love.

from, Matthew and Katie Walker

JOSIAH VENTURE

Dear First Presbyterian Church

Thank you for the extra amounts of support you sent from 2024. God has used you to provide for us as we make disciples in Central and Eastern Europe. Your ongoing support through prayer and financial giving sustains us, and we know that you share in the fruit of God's movement here!

We are amazed by His grace as we look back and see how your generosity has met our needs.

Thanks for your faithfulness and your partnership in the gospel.

In Christ, Sean and Sarah Smith





Birthdays

MARCH

Lisa Smithmeyer	2
Kerry Gerding	5
Randy Ehret, Sr.	8
Joanie Bixby	13
Kathy Gonzalo	13
John Walker	16
Sarah Walker	17
Grant Smithmeyer	21
Allen Tucek	22
Madie Trolinger	22
Matthew Walker	24

APRIL

Rob McGrath	1
Sue Koestler	3
Kyle Booras	6
Mike Farrell	8
Amanda Brockman	10
Diane Farrell	11
Eli Martin	12
Brian Huebner	12
Don Bixby	18
Karla Armstrong	18
Tyler Angus	19
Brad Angus	20
Hannah Duggan	21
Rhonda Love	26
Pete Trolinger	27

SUNDAY SCHOOL WINTER/SPRING SESSION

BIBLE ZONE - 8:30-9am

3 yrs - 3rd grade
in the East Room

MIDDLE SCHOOL - 11-11:45am

4th-8th grade
on the 2nd floor

HIGH SCHOOL - 11-12pm

9th-12th grade
on the first floor across from the elevator

YOUNG ADULT CLASS - 11-12pm

in the Pastor John's Office

ADULT CLASS - 11-12pm

in the church library

FLASHBACK CORNER

Who Do You See?



2000

FPC STAFF and ELDERS

John Walker PASTOR	David Farrell ADMINISTRATION	Lisa Smithmeyer DISCIPLESHIP
Lori Trolinger CHURCH SECRETARY	Pete Trolinger ADMINISTRATION	Amanda Brockman FELLOWSHIP
Kerry Gerding CLERK of SESSION	Brian Huebner TRUSTEE	Peg Kramer FELLOWSHIP
Joy Huebner TREASURER	Mike Farrell TRUSTEE	Allen Gibbs WORSHIP
Lloyd Chapman MUSIC DIRECTOR	Dan Mestelle TRUSTEE	Ron Koestler WORSHIP
Diane Chapman ORGANIST	Cheryl Stohr MISSION	



COMMUNITY MEALS

We still have open dates in 2025. Are you looking for a way to serve either as a family, a small group, or with friends? Here are the dates we're hoping to fill:

MAY 18TH - REGULAR SERVICE

JULY 20TH - OUTDOOR SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 21ST - START OF SS



We invite you to be a part of refreshing the PRAYER LIFE of our congregation! We know that the foundation of prayer is so important for anything we do. There is an opportunity each week to be a part of this important and special work of the church; WEDNESDAY mornings from 9-10am (NOTE: from January through March we meet by ZOOM). Please come join us in the church library or by ZOOM. You can ask Pastor John for the link. Come and see what great work God is waiting to do, as we thank, seek, and ask Him in a weekly season of prayer together.

Heavenly Father, Thank you that we can come before you, our loving, powerful Father, and ask for your help and guidance. Thank you for how you have blessed FPC these past 150+ years. Will you please continue to pour out your blessings upon us? We ask for your protection and provision, for our church and leaders, as we enter this time of wanting to grow closer to you and be your disciples. Please help our hearts to be open to what you want to teach us. Help us to see your love for us and others all around us. Show us where we can be your hands and feet. Give us courage to speak out in love and kindness, in your name, where we see need. Please heal those who are sick; comfort those whose hearts are hurting; provide for those in need; bless and protect our families; heal our nation and world. Jesus, thank you for your amazing gift of complete forgiveness, because of your obedience and sacrifice on the cross, on our behalf. Please help us to live with new awareness of the freedom we have been given as your deeply loved sons and daughters. Help us to grasp and understand the rich PRIZE you have for us, and those all around us. Holy Spirit, please reveal yourself to us. Guide, lead, and protect us. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

**Want more help with HOW to pray and for WHAT?
See the daily calendar for PRAYER on the next page.**

<p>1 Pray for our Restoration and Revival Psalm 80:19</p>	<p>2 Pastor John and his family Galatians 6:9</p>	<p>3 FPC Staff 1 Corinthians 16:4</p>	<p>4 Our Hurting World John 3:16</p>	<p>5 Public Schools and Opportunity School Proverbs 22:6</p>	<p>6 Shut-ins James 1:27</p>
<p>7 Community Meals Matthew 25:37-40</p>	<p>8 Worship Psalm 86:9-10</p>	<p>9 Hearts of Hurting People Psalm 34:18</p>	<p>10 Session Isaiah 41:10</p>	<p>11 PADS Shelter and Homeless Matthew 25:35-40</p>	<p>12 Protection of the Congregation Ephesians 6:10-18</p>
<p>13 Invite and Welcome the Holy Spirit Titus 3:4-7</p>	<p>14 Choir and Music Team Psalm 92:1</p>	<p>15 Youth Group Ministry Proverbs 22:6</p>	<p>16 Our Children Matthew 19:14</p>	<p>17 Pray for our Missionaries strength and protection Acts 1:8</p>	<p>18 Food Pantry Luke 21:18-19</p>
<p>19 Health of the Congregation James 5:14</p>	<p>20 Small Groups and Missional Communities Hebrews 10:25</p>	<p>21 Nation, State, and Government 1 Timothy 2:1-4</p>	<p>22 Bible ZONE and all Sunday School Programs Matthew 19:14</p>	<p>23 Our Seniors Psalm 90:14</p>	<p>24 Churches of Ottawa Hebrews 10:24-25</p>
<p>25 Ottawa Mayor and City Counsel 1 Timothy 2:1-4</p>	<p>26 Leaders of Ministries Hebrews 13:17-18</p>	<p>27 Ottawa Community Jeremiah 29:7</p>	<p>28 Pray for those who are far from God Luke 10:2</p>	<p>29 Servant's Heart Matthew 25:37-40</p>	<p>30 Under His Wings Ministry Jeremiah 29:7</p>

PLEASE PRAY EACH DAY WITH US
FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND CHURCH



March 2025



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

			Prayer Meeting 9am by ZOOM			1
2	3	4	ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE 7pm	6	7	8
First Sunday in Lent Communion 9:30am		COFFEE IN YOUR CORNER 10am in the 807 Building (see page 5) Committee Meetings 7pm	Prayer Meeting 9am by ZOOM Bell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Second Sunday in Lent SOUL SHINE 9:25 am Community Meal 12pm			Prayer Meeting 9am by ZOOM Bell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Third Sunday in Lent			Prayer Meeting 9am by ZOOM Bell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Fourth Sunday in Lent			Prayer Meeting 9am by ZOOM Bell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm			
30	31					