

## **Pastor's Page for March 2017**

Today is Ash Wednesday, the start of the Lenten season...a season of preparation for Easter. Our English word Lent comes from an Anglo-Saxon word which means "to lengthen" and is associated with the lengthening of days in the spring. For the first two centuries of Christianity, the period of preparation for Easter was only 40 hours in remembrance of the time Jesus spent in the tomb. By the third century, this observance had extended to six days, and in 325 A.D., the season extended to 40 days. By the eighth century, Ash Wednesday was recognized as the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday derives its name from Old Testament times when sackcloth and ashes were used as symbols of repentance.

Lent is a season of discipline, reflection and getting closer to God. I encourage you to actively plan for Lent. Take advantage of some of the programs being offered by the church to deepen your own relationship with God, your neighbors and yourself.

- Sunday morning meditation gives you a chance to be still and listen for God's calling in your life;
- Four Lenten Learning presentations provide an opportunity to explore who we are as a church and what we bring to our relationship with God;
- At the Deacon's Dinners we live out the virtue of hospitality, welcoming neighbors and getting to know one another;
- Daily devotions will be provided for you to start your day with a prayer;
- Highlighting Christian Action activities all month offers a glimpse into some of the ways you might put your faith into action.
- Attending Sunday worship throughout Lent prepares your soul for Easter.

Lent is a beautiful time in the church year. It is the season when we recommit ourselves to a life of faith. We examine our life and lifestyles and assess the strength of our commitment to God. It is a time of repentance – acknowledging those areas where we might have turned our hearts away from God. It is also a time of adopting spiritual disciplines that will bring us back or closer to God. Most importantly, Lent is a season of action. Do something for Lent! I pray that the season will bring you closer to God, your neighbors and yourself.

Wishing you peace on the journey,  
Pastor Diane