

To dust you shall return

You are going to die. I'm sure you know this, but have you really considered it? Have you stopped and thought about the fact that one day you will die?

Your life will come to an end. And what's even more sobering is that some people will be sitting at your funeral wondering what they are going to serve for dessert and hoping the preacher's eulogy doesn't go too long.

Life goes by quickly. Then it ends. And most people are soon forgotten.

I'm writing this column on Ash Wednesday. Today, at many churches, pastors and priests make the sign of the cross in ashes and declare the somber words from the book of Genesis, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

These words remind us of our frailty and our mortality, but most of us would rather not think about such things.

Medieval monks used to greet each other in their monasteries with the simple expression, "Memento mori," which literally means, "Remember your death."

What a strange greeting! I think you should try this greeting the next time you're at the grocery store and see what kind of reaction you get.

Maybe not. It's far too bleak for our modern sensibilities.



TRISTAN BORLAND
Riverview Church

It's much easier just to ask, "How's it going?" while not caring at all how things are really going. I'm just trying to get a gallon of milk and get out of here without really being bothered with how people are or being reminded of my imminent demise.

We don't like to think about death or to even mention the word. Have you noticed how few people will say the words "death" or "died" or "dead"?

It's more consoling to use euphemisms. Uncle Jim "passed away." Aunt Betty "went home to glory." Euphemisms make us feel better.

It's easier to imagine Aunt Betty in glory than to think about the process by which she arrived there.

Death is unsettling. It's more comfortable not to think about it or talk about it.

But, death comes for us all in the end, whether we acknowledge it or not.

I know what you're thinking. "Thanks for such an uplifting faith article this week, Tristan!" You're welcome.

You may also be wondering what is the point of Ash Wednesday

and this morbid reflection. I'll conclude with two thoughts.

First, facing death should make us consider our lives. Our days are fleeting quickly.

Are we using them wisely? Are we taking time to do the things that really matter? Are we becoming the person we know we should be? Are we growing in wisdom and virtue? Are we loving well?

You may not be able to answer "yes" to all these questions. That's OK. There's no better time than today to start living the life we know we should live.

Finally, facing our inevitable death should make each of us consider the question of life after death. Is this life all there is, or is there life beyond this life?

This is one of the most important and mysterious questions of human existence. What we believe about this question will shape our lives here and now.

The Christian hope is that there is life after this life, and we ground this belief on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality and it leads us through Lent to Good Friday and the death of Jesus.

But, Lent ends with Easter and with hope.

Death comes for us all, but it is not the end of the story.

Tristan Borland is pastor at Riverview Church in Pine River.

Pine River-Backus students to collect cereal for food shelf dominoes event

PINE RIVER — Students are being asked to collect donations of new, unopened cereal for a giant domino effect at the school.

The Pine River-Backus School District and Pine River Area Food Shelf are partnering to boost donations for Minnesota FoodShare Month in March.

Donated cereal will be lined up in the halls of Pine River-Backus School with students gathered to watch as the "dominoes" are knocked over in a giant display of a chain reaction.

The cereal and other donations will be partially matched and increased due to the partnership with the Minnesota

FoodShare Campaign. Donations in March help to provide more food for food shelf customers throughout the rest of the year.

The Pine River Area Food Shelf is a "Super-Shelf" food program. This means they have a broad variety of produce, protein, staple foods and hygiene items for those in need. This is made possible in part with the assistance of local farmers and businesses who help stock not only canned and boxed foods, but also fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, milk and meat.

The Pine River Area Food Shelf is beginning its 41st year. They use a client choice model

allowing those who come to the shelf to pick food items they are guaranteed to use.

In 2022, the shelf distributed 80,412 pounds of food to 3,010 clients, an average of 250 clients per month.

Cereal boxes can be placed on carts near the PR-B Elementary School office before March 15, after which the domino show will go on. The cereal will benefit the Pine River Area Food Shelf and the Tiger Den.

Monetary donations may be mailed to the food shelf at P.O. Box 1, Pine River, MN 56474. Other donations may be brought in person to the food shelf on Barclay Avenue in Pine River.

Lakes area churches start Lenten food shelf challenge

CROW WING COUNTY — Seven lakes area churches in Crow Wing County are collecting food and finances to benefit the Pequot Lakes and Crosslake Lutheran food shelves during Lent.

This is the third year of collecting food, and more churches have joined: Grace United Methodist Church in

Pequot Lakes, Crosslake Presbyterian, St. Alice Catholic Church in Pequot Lakes, Lutheran Church of the Cross in Nisswa, Crosslake Lutheran Church, St. Christopher's Catholic Church in Nisswa and Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Pequot Lakes.

Items of particular interest at local shelves include: coffee, hot tea,

hot chocolate, oatmeal, facial tissues, peanut butter, tomato paste, oyster crackers, sugar, cooking sprays, taco kits, tortillas, canned meats, pasta sauce and noodles, bread products, wild rice and more.

The program began on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, and will end Palm Sunday, April 2.

Pine River church to host Old Age is Not for Sissies presentations

PINE RIVER — Pine River United Methodist Church will host three sessions of Old Age is Not for Sissies in the coming months featuring topics that include self defense and gardening.

Pine River Police Officer Andy Rooney will teach the first session from 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, March 15. The event

is "Situational Awareness and Self-Defense for Seniors."

Motivational speaker Dan Hegstad will present from 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, April 12. His topic is "Aging with Attitude and an Intro to Tai Chi."

Master Gardener Mary Keppers will present from 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, on "Jump-

ing Worms in Your Garden? and More Questions."

Sessions will be held in the church's lower level dining hall. Use the Third Street entrance.

This series is for anyone aging. It is presented at no charge and no commitment. People may attend one or all events. Refreshments will be provided.

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500 scores

1 p.m. Tuesdays

Pine River American

Legion

Tuesday, Feb. 21

► Ken Schrupp 3360, Ven Wolkenhauer 3320, Bill

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2960. Cindy Miller won the door prize.

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