

## A Note from your Pastor

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 1:15 (NIV)

Welcome to Lent everyone!

This Gospel statement from Jesus represents the spirit of Christ’s entire ministry: a series of demands for rebirth and renewal – change. Jesus makes us realize that we do wander off from God through our willfulness and sin. We often stray far from the kingdom at times, and we can’t make our way back without Christ.

In all of Jesus’ preaching and teaching, he consistently calls us to change our lives from one of the world’s culture and to convert us into loving witnesses to the coming of the “Reign of God” which he proclaimed here. What does this mean? It means to forgive those who hurt us, to pray for those who mistreat us, to bless those who hate us, to give aid and comfort to those who need us, to humble ourselves before the weak, to be most merciful and compassionate toward the outcasts of our society, to do all these things consistently means for all of us an entire lifetime of dedication to change. Never are we fully equal to the task. Always there is the need to reorder our lives.

Jesus asks us to dig deep within our hearts to encounter the person God would have us become. God asks us to recognize God’s sacred presence within us. Lent is a time to repent, believe, and wait on God’s future in and through us.

As we all reflect upon Lenten disciplines I want to challenge you all to read a daily method of devotion and scriptural reflection and compare it to your daily living. The passage I chose this week comes from 1st Thessalonians chapter 5.

Paul writes, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. We ask you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”

So, add a reflective scripture in your life and to listen to each word and see what God has to say to you through those words. It can be a life changing event! Along with this reflective scripture I also challenge all of you to become a part of one of our many Bible Studies that are listed in this newsletter. Hearing the word of God yourself DOES change you too!

AMEN