

February 19, 2021

Dear Friends,

The Lenten journey has begun.

On Ash Wednesday, I greeted some friends: Happy Lent. You're mortal. As dying people, we get tangled up in deadly attachments and wrong-headed priorities. It is unnatural for us to choose Life. But being loved and living full out life is what God wills and works out for us through Christ. We are slow learners. A 40-day period of repentance and renewal is built into the annual rhythm of the church because we need it. We need to repent, to turn away, to detach from all false props. On Ash Wednesday, we read from Matthew (chapter 6) about three key practices that help us to repent, that is, to turn around, emptying our hands of things that have become of destructive importance.

To give "alms," or to give to those in need, is to let go of the stuff we thought we needed in order to trust God's abundance for us and for others. To pray is to let go of our supposed superior insights in order to trust God's view on reality and God's interventions. To fast is to let ourselves feel our own emptiness in order to remember and experience God as the one who truly fills us. None of these actions are about impressing God or anyone else. (Jesus warns us about doing these things for attention, or to impress.) Rather giving, prayer, and fasting are ways for us to make space for God. He already loves and values us as we are; that's a given. No need to impress.

Sunday Online Worship Gathering at 10 a.m.

This first Sunday of [Lent](#) we learn from Jesus. He knows he is God's beloved Son. From the starting point of being-in-love, he can face anything, even the wilderness. Tempted by Satan, surrounded by wild beasts, angels wait on him. (Mark 1:12)

Loved one, in the middle of your wilderness, your temptation, your 'wild animal' experiences, God is ministering to you. Draw near to him. All will be well.

Please [email me](#) for a Zoom link.

*Please join the Zoom meeting after 9:30 a.m. to avoid problems entering.

For this week's scripture readings and other announcements, go to [Sunday's bulletin](#).

Next Prayer Gathering: March 2 at 11:30 a.m.

We will not have an online prayer gathering this coming Tuesday. I will be going away for a prayer retreat this coming week. If you would like me to uphold your prayer concerns before God during my retreat, please [email me](#) by Sunday at 2 p.m. at the latest to let me know how I may pray.

Litany for Lent

As you seek life change this season, you may find the following litany offers ideas for what you may let go of and what you may take on. I found this in Steve Bell's *Pilgrim Year Series* booklet titled "Lent."

Fast from judging others; Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from apparent darkness; Feast on the reality of Light.
Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.
Fast from thoughts of illness; Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute; Feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from anger; Feast on patience.
Fast from worry; Feast on unceasing prayer.
Fast from complaining; Feast on appreciation.
Fast from bitterness; Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from anxiety; Feast on hope.
Fast from yourself; Feast on a silent heart.

With love and prayers,

Pastor Kerry Kronberg (with the whole team)