



News From The Rock

Solid Rock United Methodist Church • Warren, Indiana

March 2021

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In-person worship has resumed

In-person worship resumed on February 21. We continue to practice social distancing and request that masks be worn.

For those not yet comfortable coming into the building, we will continue to broadcast Sunday morning services to the parking lot on FM 87.9. Beginning soon, services will be livestreamed on Facebook. They will also be available for playback at any time following the live broadcast. Until all technical details of this livestream are worked out, prerecorded services will continue to be posted.

Bible Study

Our Monday evening “Feasting on the Word” Bible studies will make more sense now that the Solid Rock people are having face-to-face worship gatherings. Thank you



Lord! The month of March continues with our Lenten themes as well as preparing us for Easter, the

March 29th study. Following are the scriptures for the indicated studies. Continue to pray for Pastor Paul as we journey together to the cross and an empty tomb.

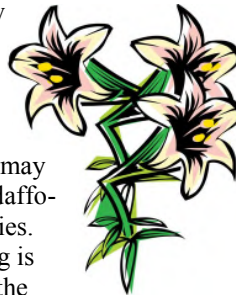
- March 1: Matthew 28:18-20, “Commissioned Leadership Matters”
- March 8: Matthew 19:13-15, “Let the Children Come”
- March 15: 1 Corinthians 5:20, “Relationships Matter”
- March 22: Mark 11:1-11, “The Devil’s Walking Parody” (Passion/Palm Sunday)

- March 29: Matthew 28:1-10, “Opening Day” (Easter Sunday)

Bible study gatherings continue to be at the church beginning at 7:15 p.m. Bring a friend, an open heart to God’s Spirit, and a hope to learn more of the “Jesus Way.”

Easter Flowers

Flowers may now be ordered to be displayed in our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. The cost is \$9.00 each, and you may choose from tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, or lilies. Deadline for ordering is March 7. A copy of the order form is included with this newsletter mailing. Please call Jane at the church office, 375-3873, if you have questions.



What is Lent?

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent



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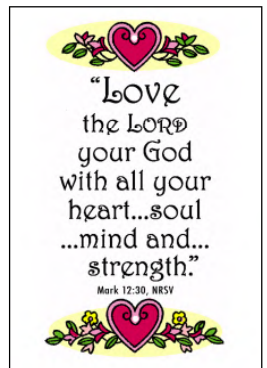


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from
Pastor Paul

In Mark 12:28-34, one of the teachers of the law comes to Jesus and asks him, “Of all of the commandments, which is the most important?” Jesus answered, “The most important one is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”



Last month, as we do every year, we observed Valentines Day, a day when people go out of their way to express to others how important it is to have them in their lives. Cards, flowers and gifts were exchanged as an expression of our love for those we hold dear in our lives. Although our intentions are genuine and sincere, I wonder just how well we comprehend the love that God expects us to exhibit.

The Gospel is quite clear that we are called to love one another as Christ has loved us. This message comes into focus in John 3:16. God’s love is not static or self centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here, God sets a pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice.

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Our Vision: Sharing and experiencing the life-giving message of Jesus, to restore wholeness and build an intentional community of hope, relationship, and purpose for everyone.

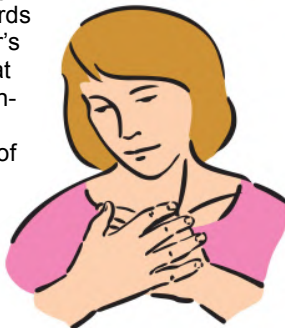
What does repentance mean?

The biblical meaning of the Hebrew verb to repent, *shuv*, is “to turn and go a different direction.” In Greek, this term was rendered *metanoiein*, meaning to change one’s mindset. The selection of this verb in Greek revealed a fundamental difference between Hebrew and Greek culture and language. For the ancient Hebrews, life was experienced and filtered primarily through the actions and senses of the body. In Greek culture and language, life was experienced and filtered primarily through the perceptions of the mind. The Greek understanding of “changing one’s mindset” was parallel to the Hebrew idea of a physical “turning.”

Both convey what today we might speak of as “making a 180.” You were heading

one direction. Now you are heading another. You had one set of ideas. Now you drop those and take on these. You had one preferred approach. Now you let it go and take up this one instead. That’s repentance.

It’s important to get this concept right, important enough that the first words of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses, what many would consider the first “trumpet blast” of the Protestant Reformation, are about repentance. Why? Because many Latin translations had used *poenitentiam agere* — to do penance — instead of something closer to the original Greek or Hebrew ideas. Our English word “repent” comes from the Latin words, *poenitentiam*, penance, and its root, *poena*, punishment. The Latin translation suggested that repentance was about carrying out the requirements of the punishment earned because you had sinned and showing that you were serious about accepting the responsibility to make things right.



Not so, said Luther. The call to repent wasn’t simply to mend what you broke or endure some punishment because you broke it. Luther’s reading was much closer to the Greek — an “inward repentance,” a “change of mindset” that should result in a change in behavior. For Luther, repentance is fundamentally about turning back to God.

Nor is repentance merely feeling bad about what we have done wrong, or even apologizing (saying we are sorry) for what we have done wrong. Those are part of repentance. But they are not themselves repentance. Repentance requires readiness and commitment to change.

Repentance is hard. Becoming aware of the need to repent challenges our view of ourselves, how we see and interact with the world around us, and how others see us. Often when we think we’ve turned from sin, we find ourselves falling into our old ways or into other sinful ways instead.

When God shows us where we have sinned, we have the opportunity to confess (acknowledge the wrong), make things right as we are able, and allow God to give us the power to change and walk in the way God wants us to go.

Charles Wesley expressed this beautifully in his hymn Depth of Mercy,

*“Now incline me to repent,
let me now my sins lament,
now my foul revolt deplore,
weep, believe, and sin no more.”*

Learning how to repent — turning around, changing our mindset, and then living differently — is an ongoing, lifelong process. We trust that God’s grace can free us from sin and for lives of love toward God and every neighbor. So difficult as repentance is, we know we are given what we need to learn it.

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A bountiful life

“Life is given to you like a flat piece of land,” said actress Jeanne Moreau. “I hope that when I’m finished, my piece of land will be a beautiful garden.”

God, who put the first human in a garden to care for creation, blesses us with talents and resources to wisely manage. In gardening terms, God gives us the plot of ground, the seed, the wisdom and strength to bring forth beauty and abundance. Yet we do the work, with God’s help, to make it a reality. Like Adam, we till, but God gives the increase. God’s provisions and our labor bring the garden — and our lives of stewardship — to fulfillment.

As stewards, we ponder: When God calls us home, what will our garden be like, and what will it have produced?



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Sunday School at 9:00 (temporarily suspended)

Worship at 10:00

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Office Phone: 375-3873

Monday - Thursday

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Closed Friday

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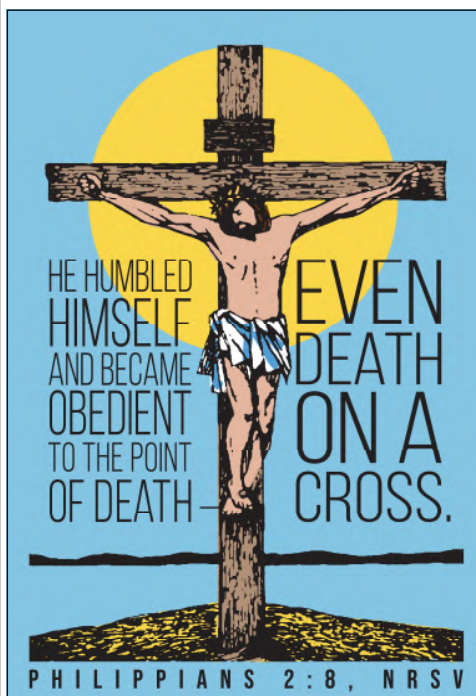
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News deadline for the April newsletter: March 21



January Financial Update

General Fund Receipts.....	\$17,067
General Fund Expenses	\$15,446

(Continued from *Pastor Paul*, page 1)

God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that he had bought for us.

When we share the Gospel with others, our love must be like Jesus'—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love. To "believe" is more than an intellectual agreement that Jesus is God. It means to put our trust and confidence in him, that he alone can save us. It means to put Christ in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting his words as reliable and relying on him for the power of change.

As we approach Easter, let us not forget the sacrifice that Christ made for us. Let us continue to make the effort to change our behavior and truly set out to make a difference in the world we live in. When we learn to trust in God, accept his love, and in turn take that to others, we will make a difference. If you have never trusted Christ, let his promise of everlasting life be yours...and believe.

See you Sunday!

(Continued from *Lent*, page 1)

in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

—umc.org

- "No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no hall, no glory; no cross, no crown."
—William Penn
- "Always show kindness and love to others. Your words might be filling the empty places in someone's heart."
—Mandy Hale

Paying it back — and forward

During the pandemic, acts of kindness seemed especially meaningful. Last spring, as Covid-19 hit Native American communities particularly hard, an interesting transatlantic outreach occurred. Donations from Ireland began appearing in a relief fund for Navajo and Hopi families, leading administrators to suspect the account had been hacked. Then



they realized a cross-generational payback was underway.

In 1847, Choctaw Tribe members sent \$170 overseas to Ireland to help with Potato Famine relief. That generosity was never forgotten, and by May 2020, people in Ireland had contributed more than \$4 million toward pandemic assistance for relatives of people who'd helped their ancestors. Many donors included an Irish proverb meaning "In each other's shadows the people live."

The concept of paying it forward dates back to a 1784 letter by Benjamin Franklin. It also echoes Jesus' Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). How might you live out this practice today?

The comfort connection

Amid suffering, we might feel alone and wonder what good can come of it. But later we may discover ourselves equipped to serve precisely because of what we experienced.

Writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin stated: "You think your pain and heartbreak are unprecedented ... but then you read. Books taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive or who had ever been alive." Whether through books or direct human interaction, we often learn that our suffering connects us to other people and that our pain gains meaning by moving us to support someone else who's hurting.

Paul writes of such connection: "Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV). May you share the comfort you have received from God with others in pain. As a bonus, along the way you'll realize you're not — and never have been — alone.

Setting captives free

Though St. Patrick's Day has become a secular "holiday," March 17 commemorates the life of a Christian missionary. St. Patrick grew up in a Christian home in Britain but wasn't very devout until he experienced crisis. As a teen, he was captured and sold into slavery in Ireland, escaping after six years. "The Lord opened my unbelieving eyes" in Ireland, Patrick later said. God led him back there, and he converted tribe after tribe to Christianity.



In *Confessio*

61, St. Patrick writes, "I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for returning to that nation ... except the Gospel and God's promises."

Some holy humor

He comes to church once a year--always on Easter. I'm glad to have this local rancher join us in worship, and I shook his hand heartily as he left the church.

"Great to worship with you today!" I said. "Really?" he responded.

"Sure. It's always good to have you with us on Easter," I said.

He scratched his head. "Well, maybe I'd come more often if you'd preach about something different!"

—Rev. E. Marie Gasau

The minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to, at the end of the worship service, ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building. Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was out and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute.

The substitute wanted to know what to play. "Here's a copy of the service," he said impatiently. "But you'll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances."

During the service, the minister paused and said, "Brothers and sisters, we are in great difficulty. The roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected, and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up."

At that moment, the substitute organist played "The Star-Spangled Banner."

And that is how the substitute became the regular.

—Author Unknown

Padding through Lent — and life

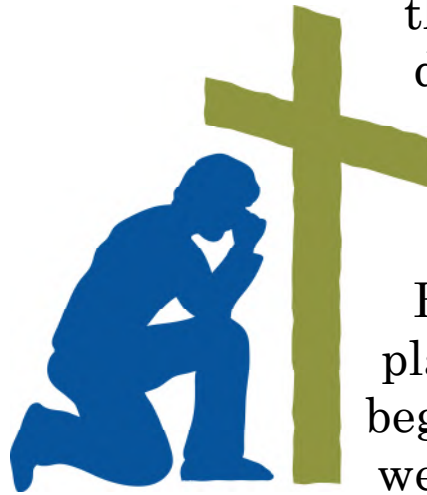
Lent is a time for restoring balance to our lives. The Eskimos practice balance as they venture into freezing Arctic waters in little boats. If you've ever paddled a kayak, you know how easy they are to tip. Thankfully, kayaks are just as easy to turn back upright.

That isn't a bad image for Lent — or for life as a whole. Whatever spiritual disciplines we adopt, if we succumb to temptation, it's no biggie. One of the lessons of Lent is that, as long as we're traveling light, it takes only a quick twist of the paddle to right us. That paddle twist might take the form of a quick but heartfelt prayer: "Jesus, set me straight again!" Or it might mean some extra time set aside for quiet meditation with God. Don't get worried if your spiritual discipline fails now and then. Just let Jesus help you get upright once more, and keep paddling!



—adapted from Carlos Wilton, in *Homiletics*

Forgive those things we have done which have caused you sadness, and those



things we should have done that would have brought you joy. In both we have failed ourselves, and you.

Bring us back to that place where our journey began, when we said that we would follow the way that you first trod.

Lead us to the Cross and meet us there.

—faithandworship.com

