

Volume XXI
Issue II
MONTH OF
MARCH, 2022

Newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church, Lac du Flambeau, WI

Our Mission Statement: As people of God and servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, we believe our Mission to be the building of a strong fellowship, ministering to the Spiritual and physical needs of the church, the community, and the world fulfilling our Lord's command to "Love our neighbors."

A Prayer for Lent

This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on March 2. During worship services that day, pastors in many Christian churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.

Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," Genesis 3:19). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday – and throughout the 40 days of Lent – ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, You know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help Your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of Your Word, so that we may be victorious over the seduction of the evil one and reach the paschal feast in the joy of the Holy Spirit."

**Session notes
from February 14,
2022**

Session Meeting February 14, 2022

Present: Lawrence Lee, acting moderator, Bill Raduege, Steve Schunk, Kathy LaBarge, Jill Consie, Tom Gelwicks, Mary Jane Stevens, Glenn Morrison, and Owen Karlmann.

Excused: Ralph Kerler.

After determining a quorum meeting called to order at 12:45 with a prayer.

Clerk's Report

Motion by Mary Jane Stevens and seconded by Owen Karlmann to approve minutes from the January 19, 2022, meeting. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The budget is looking good. There are assets of \$134,756. Motion to approve the budget made by Mary Jane Stevens and seconded by Glenn Morrison. Motion carried.

Missions

The committee for missions has left up the tree in the Fellowship Hall and changed it to a Giving Tree. Current donations will go to the Boulder Junction Food Pantry.

Budget & Finance

Glenn Morrison reported that fifteen pledges have been received.

Discussion on reporting to the congregation about the finances of the church. Should something be put in the monthly newsletter.

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee will get together and plan for stewardship.

Worship and Music

Discussion on whether to have an Ash Wednesday Service. Would it be worth it? If we do, we could put in the newspaper and on the website.

Education

Mary Jane Stevens is working on getting a Bible Study going.

Personnel

There is a new cleaning person.

Discussion on whether to pull the MIF form and sending messages to the two candidates that we are still interested in them. Possibility they could be part time?

Old Business

Question as to whether Chips Paulson was paid. He has not. Mary Jane Stevens will run the check.

Question as to when we can serve food at Coffee Hour.

New Business

Discussion on giving Pastor Lee a per diem for being at the session meeting today. Motion made by Steve Schunk and seconded by Mary Jane Stevens to pay him \$100.00. Motion carried.

Discussion on placing an ad in the Presbytery magazine.

What do we want from a new pastor? Do we want a part time pastor with financial stability?

Discussion with Pastor Lee regarding what we want to do next, and he suggested we need to be honest with Manitowish Waters about what we decide.

Bill Raduege will contact the two candidates letting them know we are still deciding what to do and will stay connected with them.

No meeting in March. No date decided yet for April.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03 with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy LaBarge, Clerk of Session.

Scripture readings 1st Sunday in Lent – March 6, 2022
March, 2022 Deut. 26: 1-11 *and* Ps. 91: 1-2, 9-16; Rom. 10:8b-13; Luke 4: 1-13
 2nd Sunday in Lent – March 13, 2022
 Gen. 15: 1-12, 17-18 *and* Ps. 27; Phil. 3:17-41; Luke 13: 31-35
 3rd Sunday in Lent – March 20, 2022
 Isa. 55: 1-9; *and* Ps. 63: 1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13: 1-9
 4th Sunday in Lent – March 27, 2022
 Josh. 5: 9-12 *and* Ps. 32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3,11b-32

Special Dates

Ash Wednesday	March 2, 2022
World Day of Prayer	March 4, 2022
Daylight Savings Time Begins	March 13, 2022
First Day of Spring	March 20, 2022

March Birthdays

Pam Fraboni	March 3
Bill Streng	March 6
Nancy DiCristina	March 12
Owen Karlmann	March 15
Dennis Robertson	March 25

Anniversaries *No Known Anniversaries*

To the Presbyterian Women in LdF:

Manitowish Community Presbyterian Church Women's Fellowship is extending an invitation to join us for our Bible Study. If you are interested, we meet September -May, first Thursday of the month, at 9:30 A.M. at our church. We are studying the PW Horizon "What Our Grandmothers Taught Us". We also meet the third Thursday, 9:30 A.M. for working on Missions projects.

If you aren't meeting, please feel free to join us. We have extra books and are happy to have you.

Sincerely,

Hope Dougherty

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Update: Pastoral Nominating Process

This past month, your LdF Community Presbyterian Church session had a joint meeting with the Manitowish Waters Community Church session to discuss our congregations' search for pastoral leadership. As was discussed in our recent congregational annual meeting, our churches have been interested in exploring the concept of sharing an interim minister and perhaps a long term minister.

The two sessions, meeting at the LdF church discussed challenges and opportunities of cooperative ministry with the help of Rev. Lawrence Lee, our contact with the Northern Waters Presbytery Committee on Ministry. Rev. Lee moderated a discussion of the two congregations could share and what would likely be kept separate if we were to have a cooperative ministry. For example, it would be likely our churches would have separate services and budgets, but could share cost of a minister, manse, and bible studies.

Our session decided to inform two pastors who have responded to our information posted on the nation-wide Presbyterian pastoral leadership connection, a web based job posting system, that our search process is being delayed. Our session is interested in hearing back from the Manitowish Waters session as to their interest in continuing to explore cooperative ministry.

In the meantime, we are blessed to have Pastor Jack and Helen Fashbaugh lead our services and read the scriptures during this time of searching. Your session will continue to keep you informed as to developments. Please reach out to anyone on session with any questions or input you may have.

Sincerely,

Your LdF CPC Session



A Short Version of the Long History of Lent

Feb 1, 2018 · Christopher Hunt

As a fairly recent student of the history of Lent, I wondered, “How can I tell a succinct story of Lent?” in the context of the vast history of the Christian Church, spanning nearly two millennia, with all its schisms, reformations, counter-reformations, and revivals. It has definitely not been an easy task, but I hope this overview is a helpful primer for those looking to learn more.

Beginning about six weeks before Easter, Lent is a time traditionally set aside for fasting, prayer, and reflection in preparation to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is one of the most enduring seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar with some elements dating to perhaps earlier than the second century. While observed for centuries by Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopal, and Methodist Christians (and certainly others), Lenten traditions and practices have evolved over time.

Yet, in spite of a turbulent church history, to say nothing of the ebb and flow of human migration, the rise of kingdoms, the decline of empires, the essence of Lent remains largely unchanged from its earliest history. In recent years, Lent has seen a renewal among evangelical Christians who have been historically wary of some of its trappings.

So, how to tell the short version of a very long history? Let's answer a couple of key questions to find out. Where did Lent come from, and how has it changed over the centuries?

The origins and early history of Lent

Historians generally agree that the 40-day period before Easter, known as Lent, emerged shortly following the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Earliest observances of Lent seem to have focused particularly on the practice of fasting. Council records suggest that the fast applied at first mainly to new converts as a period of repentance and reflection before baptism at Easter. In any case, Lent quickly became a general practice churchwide. The actual 40-day period varied region-to-region, even church-to-church; some including weekends, some not; some fasting Sundays, others not. But in every case, the fast was strict: one meal a day after 3 PM with no meat, fish, or dairy. It was Pope Gregory I (590 - 604) who finally regularized the period of the fast churchwide, to begin on a Wednesday 46 days before Easter with a ceremony of ash, and not to include Sundays, which were perennial days of celebration.

Other historical records indicate that a pre-Easter season of fasting, had actually been in practice already, as far back as the second century, and perhaps even earlier. In "History of Lent," Father William Saunders writes that early church father, St. Irenaeus (c. 130 - 202), in a letter to Pope St. Victor, mentioned a dispute about the number of days for the pre-Easter fast. Irenaeus noted that such "variation in observance did not originate in our own day, but very much earlier, in the time of our forefathers." Irenaeus himself was a third generation disciple after the Apostles, so his dating of lenten fasting back to the time of his "forefathers" establishes it as a practice from the very earliest days of the church. Irenaeus' letter references the idea of a fast lasting 40 days before Easter, strongly suggesting the concept predated Irenaeus' own time. Jesus fasting 40 days and 40 nights in the desert to prepare for his public ministry is thought to be the primary inspiration for such a timeframe.

Following Nicea, Lenten practices remained essentially unchanged for centuries. However, by the 800s, the strictness of the fast began to relax. By the 1400s, Christians had begun eating the one meal earlier in the day, and later began to add a smaller meal to keep up their strength for work. Eventually, the one-meal restriction was lifted altogether, and new practices emerged, like the idea of giving up some luxury or need as a personal sacrifice for the season. Over time, “giving something up” became the centerpiece of Lent.

The post-Reformation Protestant critique of Lent

The emergence of various new Christian movements during the Protestant Reformation dramatically affected the tradition of Lent. While some Protestants continued to observe Lent, such as the Lutherans, some like the newly emerged Calvinists criticized the annual rite, claiming there was no scriptural basis for it. They condemned Lent as “man’s” tradition and a works-based vanity. Writing in 1536, John Calvin charged that Lenten practices were not a true imitation of Christ. Jesus kept the laws of Torah throughout his life, and fasted at appropriate times. He fasted 40 days to prepare for his public ministry and to testify that his gospel was from God. Calvin argued that Jesus taught no specific times of fasting. Lent “was therefore merely false zeal, replete with superstition, which set up a fast under the title and pretext of imitating Christ...” (IV.12.20., p. 760). A century later, Puritan theologian John Owen critiqued the Roman church for the Lenten practices of mortifying the flesh, the self-denial of giving something up. Owen charged that Lent called people more to “mortification” for its own sake, to count as righteousness, than to actual belief in the all-sufficient work of a Savior. “The truth is, they neither know what it is to believe nor what mortification itself intends...Such men know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (p. 290).

Considering the excesses of the Catholic Church in the years leading up to the explosion of the Reformation, the reformers’ wariness of works-based, or showy, practices is understandable. Luther, Calvin, and many other reformers, confronted many notions of the Catholic Church, such as the selling of indulgences, Purgatory, the Virgin Mary, the Pope, and the intercession of the saints. They relied upon the scriptures alone to understand God’s plan of salvation. For many of them and their progeny in the faith, Lent smacked of righteousness by works.

As evangelicalism rose in the 18th and 19th centuries, the biblical critique of Lent sharpened. The great evangelist Charles Spurgeon summed up the evangelical distrust of Lent with these words from 1885: “It is as much our duty to reject the traditions of men, as to observe the ordinances of the Lord. We ask concerning every rite and rubric, ‘Is this a law of the God of Jacob?’ and if it be not clearly so, it is of no authority with us, who walk in Christian liberty.”

Lent in More Recent Days and a Renewal Among Protestants

Lent continued to evolve in practice in the centuries following the Reformation. In the Lutheran Church, Lent remained an important part of the lectionary, but was fully voluntary with regard to individual observance, whereas in the Catholic Church it remained a “Sacred Tradition,” with the force of church law behind it.

But over the years, Lent has become less strict in almost every western tradition. In the Catholic Church, for example, the number of obligatory fasting days decreased incrementally from six days a week to three, and then eventually, to just two in the whole season of Lent: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The well known “fish on Friday” tradition began in the United States in 1966 when the Pope affirmed the abstinence from “flesh” on Fridays. In every tradition, however, the act of “giving something up” has remained strong. For all of these changes, though, the tradition of Lent is still largely recognizable to what it was nearly 2,000 years ago.

In recent years, Lent has resurged in importance among mainline Protestant churches and has even seen renewal among Protestants. In a time that some call the “post-Christian era,” many evangelicals have gained a new appreciation for the Church Liturgical Calendar, and for a season to reflect on their need for the cross and to prepare their hearts to celebrate Christ’s resurrection. For all faithful observers, Lent is about Jesus and what he did. “You could observe 1,000 Lents,” says Eric Ferris, founder of the Lent Experience, “and it won’t ever accomplish in your life what the cross of Jesus has.” Whether Christians observe Lent or not, what really matters is our embrace of Christ crucified and the empty tomb.

