

The Messenger

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March 2006

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C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

March 1

Since we will be observing Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, March 1, our regular Wednesday Evening Service will not be held. Instead, we hope that you will join with us and the Presbyterian Church of Mountaintop as we come together for a service of Communion which will include the imposition of ashes for anyone who wishes to receive them. This special worship service will begin at 7:00 pm with the Rev. James Shanley of the Presbyterian Church and Rev. Fred Rogers of Emmanuel officiating.

COMMUNION and CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

March 5

The Worship Service on March 5 will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion. A Congregational Meeting to update everyone on various subjects will be held during the Coffee Hour which will follow the Worship Service.

GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY

March 5

In honor of Girl Scout Sunday, members of our local Girl Scout Troops will participate during the Worship Service on Sunday February 5. Please show your support for these youth as they show their faith through service to our God.

CONSISTORY MEETING

March 16

The Consistory will meet on Thursday, March 16 at 6:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

March 20

The Women's Bible Study Group will take a brief hiatus for the first two weeks of March and then will resume studies on March 20.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

March 26

We will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Sunday, March 26. Please give

generously to this special offering sponsored by our UCC denomination.

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much;

it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt

TWILIGHTERS

The Twilighters will not meet during the month of March.

WEDNESDAY EVENING WORSHIP

Our Wednesday Evening Worship begins at 6:00 pm. This mid-week service emphasizes self-reflection and includes the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please join us at the Lord's Table and bring a friend.

The Food Bank

is open from 9 am to 12 noon Monday thru Thursday or by appointment. Stop by or call the church office if we can help you or someone you know.

The **deadline to put information into the April Newsletter** is March 22. Please get all information to me before that date. This includes pictures and news articles which I would love to include. Thanks, Denise

UPCOMING DATES

April 8	Sunday School Easter Party
April 9	Palm Sunday
April 13	Maundy Thursday Service
April 16	Easter Sunday
May 20	Ham and Chicken Dinner

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Members and Friends:

When I was just a little boy (find that hard to believe?) Well I was. Anyway, Lent provided a time which forced me to ask some Questions and they remain questions to this day. First was the Term itself: LENT. I thought that was something that your mother took off your dark clothes after the wash. NOW I know that the

word comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word, *Lencten* or *Lenchten*, which means the lengthening of the days as spring appears.

There were other questions that Lent seemed to present: like how come Easter is always a changing date, how can Thursday be a "Monday" at the same time, and what about this Good Friday anyway. If Jesus was crucified on that day, how in the world could it be called Good? And those Ashes--how come all my little friends go to church on Wednesday and come out with a dirty forehead and further WHY CAN'T I GET SOME OF THOSE NEAT ASHES TOO? I hope to be able to answer some of those questions for I think that many of us may have had some of the same questions too.

Originally in the first century, Lent was only a period of 40 hours in keeping with the 40 hours Jesus' body was thought to be in the tomb. It later grew into six days during the third century. These six days were known as Holy Week, days of strict abstinence. Holy Week observance began in Jerusalem during the fourth century. Services were held on the appropriate day at the places where special events took place during the last week of Jesus' life: the upper room, Gethsemane, Pilate's court. Ultimately Holy Week ended up this way:

Palm Sunday--Entry into Jerusalem

Monday--the cleansing of the temple

Tuesday--the Discourse on the Mount of Olives

Wednesday--Judas' agreement to betray Jesus

Maundy Thursday--the upper room meeting (Maundy NOT Monday comes from the Latin Mandatum to mandate or tell as Jesus TOLD the disciples to meet there.)

Friday--Good Friday, Calvary and Jesus on the cross Jesus dies. Good because none of the Good things (Jesus being able to be our Savior; the resurrection etc.) would have happened unless Jesus had been crucified.

Saturday--the rest in the tomb

The number 40 was a popular and meaningful number: Jesus was tempted 40 days in the wilderness, Moses fasted 40 days on Sinai, Elijah fasted 40 days on the way to the mountain of God and the Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness.

Now Lent begins 46 days before Easter in spite of the fact that lent is a season of 40 days--See how this can be confusing; especially to a little boy? It is 46 because the church didn't count Sundays as part of Lent. So in our Sunday bulletins we see that Sundays are spoken of as the first Sunday IN Lent rather than

OF Lent. When Lent begins depends upon the date of Easter. In 325 the church decided that Easter would fall on the first Sunday after the full moon which occurs on or after March 21.

As I have said Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. The name "Ash Wednesday," was given to it by Pope Urban II in 1099. The day was set aside as a special day of repentance and as the opening of a season of repentance. "Ash" symbolized the repentance called for. Priests had the custom of sprinkling Ashes on the heads of the faithful as they said, "Remember thou are dust and to dust thou shalt return." The protestant church ceased this practice because it was thought to be hypocritical.

The day before Ash Wednesday is called by some Shrove Tuesday (to shrive means to cleanse of your sins). It was also a day of feasting and carnival. The French called it "Mardi Gras." The Germans: "Fasch Nacht." (Fasch meaning fat). This is how we get Fat Tuesday. People had to use up all the fat they had stored in the house as they were not to use it during the Lenten season. The Germans came up with Doughnuts and the English with pancakes as a way to use up the fat.

So, in past centuries Lent was strictly observed and was a very meaningful season of the church year. There are four specific reasons.

1. It was a time of preparation. Especially for new members about to be baptized.

2. It was a period of penitence and a time for mourning, solemnity and sadness, the color is violet. Alleluia was not sung nor was the Gloria. Organs were stopped. Weddings ceased. Public entertainment was outlawed. After all, when one's savior is on his way to death on your behalf, it is most unseemly to be frivolous and gay.

3. People took part in fasting. And they took their fasting seriously: only one meal per day and very little meat. Fasting's purpose is twofold: a. for personal discipline, participating in the sufferings of Christ. B. to render some service: people gave to the poor whatever they gained.

4. It was a time for special prayer and here is where the pretzel gets born.

But that was THEN

Today few people celebrate Lent as it was celebrated; people see it as meaningless and superficial. YET IT CAN BE THE FIRST FRUITFUL SEASON OF THE CHURCH YEAR AS THE FAITHFUL STRICTLY AND SINCERELY OBSERVE THE SEASON ONCE AGAIN. How you ask?

1. By again seeing it as a period of self-denial and fasting... We are too used to "Enjoy, enjoy, you owe it to

yourself." In a world where crime multiplies, selfishness reigns and sex dominates, we need a period in which to repent and turn to God. This is what Lent is for.

2. Teaching. Bible study. Adult learning. Lent can be a time of growth in the knowledge of the Lord in a world of biblical illiteracy.

3. Outreach/ evangelism.

4. Prayer. Lent can be used today as a special period for EXTRA prayer, both private and public. By the end of Lent, a person should be built up in the faith. Easter should find us more dedicated to God's work and more consecrated to Christ. As a period of spiritual stimulation, Lent can mean renewal and revival in a church!

May God bless your Lenten journey!

Introspectively,

Pastor Fred

THESE DAYS SUBSCRIPTIONS

I spoke with the representative for These Days and was told that they are now automatically renewing the subscription. I will cost \$4.95. Please let me know whether or not you wish to renew and I will update their information. Thanks

Denise

A NOTE OF



I would like to thank everyone for their cards and well-wishes while I was ill.

Sharon Horensky

I would like to thank Pastor Fred for his calls and visits, the choir for the flowers and everyone for your cards, calls and concern while I was sick.

Mary Rinehimer

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the Craft/Vendor Fair, from setting up the hall to serving food to stripping the hall back down for Sunday morning. I appreciate all the support of those who came out to see and purchase the wares the vendors

had to offer. We had over twenty vendors with wonderful items for sale.

Connie Miller

Sharon Moyer received this thank you message from Ellie Lecrone:

My dear friends, Words cannot express how much your love, support, prayers and calls have meant to me over the past months! God sends all of us what and who we need, and I certainly did need you! Thanks for being so thoughtful and so loving. Ellie



We received thank you letters from the following organizations:

Bethany Children's Home thanked us for our gift of \$150 (Christmas Offering) which will help provide care for more than 300 boys and girls.

Phoebe Devitt Homes thanked us for our gift of \$150 to help provide care for their residents.

Lancaster Theological Seminary thanked us for our gift of \$250 which was applied to its Annual Fund.

The Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center sent a thank you letter for the Valentine cards. The Valentine box was almost filled when it was taken to the Hospital for distribution to the veterans.

A big thank you to our congregation for restocking the food bank. Please continue to keep people in mind who may have need of the food bank. Because of people like you, we are able to help our local neighbors in need.



Thanks to Chris Dietrich and Camille

Daniels, we are currently creating a new website which will be maintained by us (instead of a third-party webmaster). You can

check out their progress by going to www.emmanuel-ucc.org.

Kimberly Park, niece of Mary Rinehimer, went home to the Lord on February 13, 2006. We extend our sympathy to Mary and her family.

CONGREGATIONAL

OPERATION SNOWFLAKE

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In order to make sure that everyone is informed when our Worship Services need to be cancelled due to inclement weather, please tune in to the radio stations WARM, Magic 93, 97BHT, 97.9X, or JR93.7.

Joshua David Rotski was born on February 10, 2006, to Jason and Lori Rotski. He weighed 7 lb. 7 oz. His grandparents are Jayne and Rich Rotski. Congratulations!!

OUR NEW PASTOR IS COMING! One of these days we will be saying those words. In order to help this become a reality, we have two things which need to be done at this time.

1. Support your Search Committee by making a contribution to our historical timeline. If you can provide any pertinent information about our history, please see Gwen Hight or Betty Baker.
2. Clean House. Mark your calendar to help get the church spruced up on Saturday, May 6, beginning at 8 am. We'll be rolling up our sleeves bright and early and will add another day if necessary. Do you have a particular area of the church that you could make shine? If so, get a crew together and coordinate with the deacons.

We'll hope to see you on May 6 and I'll be looking for a few volunteers to cook breakfast!

Sharon Moyer

Our Custodial Crew needs additional elbow grease! Anyone who can help clean the church on a regular basis (approximately 7 times a year) is asked to see Dave Myers or call him at 868-3655.

If you quit because no one praised you or thanked you, it was a job. If you stay with it even though no one seems to notice, it's a ministry.

If you do it because someone else said that it needs to be done, it's a job. If you are doing it because you are convinced it needs to be done, it's a ministry.

It's hard to get excited about a job. It's almost impossible not to get excited about a ministry.

If your concern is success, it's a job. If your concern is faithfulness, it's a ministry.

People **may** say "well done" when you do your job. The Lord **will** say "well done" when you complete your ministry.

An average church is filled with people doing jobs. A great church is filled with.....



Congratulations to Jared Yakscoe for Council awards in the Cultural Arts Program. He received 1st place in Visual Arts for the 6-8 grade level and 3rd place in Photography for the 6-8 grade level. His entries were forwarded from the local level to the Council level and will now be forwarded to the National level. Good Luck, Jared!



I am planning a Mission Project for March to help the people of the McKinney Clinic. The details are not completely worked out yet so I will have to get information to you when it is finalized. The amount of support you show for our mission projects always amazes me and I am so thankful to be part of such a caring Christian family.

The Sunday School Easter Party will be held on Saturday, April 8. I will have more details soon.

THANKS for all your support!

Sharon E



SONRISE SINGERS

I have picked out some songs for the season of Lent and Easter. We will begin by singing "God Provides" at the Ash Wednesday Service on March 1. We will also be singing on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and at the regular Easter Sunday Worship Service. The Sunrise Singers includes all age groups (no age discrimination here). All we ask is that you have the love of God in your heart and wish to lift your voice to praise Him. Practice is on Sundays after Worship.

Make a JOYFUL NOISE!

Denise



On Sunday, March 26, we will receive the offering for One Great Hour of Sharing. Your donations to this special offering make possible missionary projects and disaster relief efforts through our UCC

denomination, along with eight other denominations and Church World Services. The funds sent to help missionaries improve the lives of people here at home and around the world and to provide quick disaster relief. When considering your offering, please remember how fortunate we have been and give generously.

UCC CONFERENCE NEWS

This section is provided to inform you of our local Conference and Denomination's activities and projects so that we can better understand our role as members of the United Church of Christ.

The next "Lay Ministry in the 21st Century" program will be held on March 18, 2006, at First UCC, Schuylkill Haven. It is entitled *Evangelism and Transformation* and the registration deadline is March 10. Registration forms are on the table in the narthex.

Tanglefoot Concert – The famous Canadian folk group, Tanglefoot, will be appearing at St. John's UCC, Laurys Station on Friday evening, April 21, 2006 at 7:30 pm. Tanglefoot well-known in the Lehigh Valley, has performed all over the US, Canada and Great Britain. Tickets (\$15) can be secured by calling Tammy Bates (610-706-4546) or St. John's Church (610-262-8061) or by emailing office@stjohnslaurys.org.

PNEC DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM is planning a "Work Camp Week" for ages 15 and older, Monday, July 31, through Sunday, August 6, 2006. If you feel the call to respond to our work camp trip, please contact the Conference office at 610-826-3113 or Linda Lenhart at 610-434-4363.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 2006

March 5 – First Sunday in Lent

Organist: Don Eroh
Greeters: Girl Scouts

March 12 – Second Sunday in Lent

Organist: Orceil Bloss
Greeters: Judy Cybulski and Carol Duffy

March 19 – Third Sunday in Lent

Organist: Harriet
Greeters: Dorothy Hoyt and Doris Yurchak

March 26 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Organist: Orceil Bloss
Greeters: Roy and Betty Baker
Our Cleaning Volunteers
Dave & Rosemary Myers
Clifford & Gladys Readler
Marc & Connie Davis
John, Linda, J.P. Jankowski

Look who made the news!

Keegan Farrell's first book report included an illustration portraying events in the book. Students in Mrs. Dutzar's class were encouraged to present more than just a written report.

