

Lento

Ash Wednesday to Easter 2012

Faith United Church of Christ

The final letter in the title of this year's Lenten schedule is not a typographical error. Lento is a musical designation that means "slowly" (typically, 40-60 musical beats per minute), and it resembles the name for the season of the liturgical year we are soon to enter, Lent.

Although Lent and lento come from different roots (Lent comes from a Germanic root meaning "spring" and lento comes from a Latin root meaning "slow"), their visual and aural similarity may be helpful to us as we prepare ourselves for Easter. In a phrase, the musical designation may remind us of one of the important functions of the liturgical season, which is to slow down.

Lent is the time in the church year when we clear away some of the demanding non-essentials and remind ourselves of those aspects of our lives that matter most. When we do that – when we prioritize our wants, needs, and commitments – we discover that there are many things we can easily manage without – indeed, we are better off without – leaving us more time, energy, and attention to devote to the things that are essential for our spiritual as well as our material lives.

A recent power outage just before morning worship reminded us of what awaits when we slow down, look around, and step away from our ordinary, harried routine. Far from being a hardship, the service without electricity was a treat: streaming sunlight, a more tightly-knit congregation, an altar aglow with candlelight. We rolled with the punches – or, better perhaps, frolicked in the waves, to our delight.

Lent reflects life clearly in the sense that we get out of it what we put into it – and, sometimes, take out of it. I pray that you will make a solid investment – and perhaps withdrawal – in Lent and in life.

Yours in faith,



Gene McAfee, Pastor and Teacher



Homewood Service

Tuesday, February 21st (11:00 a.m. special service here at Faith), and Tuesday, March 20th, 11:30 a.m. at Homewood, Bldg. 4, second floor living room. Since the autumn of 2008, Faith has had the privilege of providing a brief service of Scripture, song, reflection, and prayer for the residents of Homewood Assisted Living across Richmond Road from our church. On the third Tuesday of every month, we gather with our friends and neighbors at Homewood – including Frances Olhava and the late Betty Newby – to share God's love and Word. Everyone is welcome to participate, and the residents of Homewood greatly enjoy meeting members of the congregation. Please contact Don Post, Donna Nedrow, Karen Wagner, or Gene if you would like to join us. On February 21st, Faith will host a special edition of this monthly service to remember and give thanks for the life of Betty Newby. Everyone is invited to attend.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 22nd, 7:00 p.m. Lent begins with a service of confession, reflection, Scripture, and music centered around the imposition of ashes, the ancient and traditional sign of penance and mortality. Children are welcome in the service.

Bread for the World Lenten Table Tents

Let our Bread ministry help you help the poor and hungry each time you sit down to an abundant table with Bread's Prayers for Hungry People table tents, which will be provided in the bulletin to take home on the first Sunday in Lent. Each table tent includes a Scripture reading, a prayer, and a call for action for each of the five weeks in Lent.

Lenten Midweek Suppers and Study: *Bread of Life*

Faith is honored to welcome **the Rev. Barbara J. Essex**, most recently Minister for Higher and Theological Education at the national setting of the UCC, to launch our 2012 Lenten study of her book, *Bread of Life: Lenten Reflections for Individuals and Groups*. Based on the Gospel of John, *Bread of Life* seeks to help us answer the question, "Who is Jesus – for us and for our world?"

Our series of five Wednesday evening suppers and studies begins at 6:00 p.m. with a light supper provided by our Worship Ministry, followed by the discussion of our reading for that week and time for prayer and reflection until 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Essex will be our guest to launch the series on February 29th, and the leaders of the following sessions (March 7th, March 14th, March 21st, and March 28th) will be Nancy Jacquet, Donna Nedrow, Karen Wagner, and Gene McAfee.

Please sign up to attend and speak with Karen, Nancy Jacquet (chair of the Faith Formation Ministry), or the pastor if you have any questions.

Stations of the Cross

Our Prayer Team invites everyone to join them at St. Paschal Baylon Church (5384 Wilson Mills Road, Highland Heights) to participate in that congregation's weekly **Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, March 9th**. The Stations of the Cross are a form of devotion dating from the late Middle Ages built around the gospel narratives of Jesus's final hours before his crucifixion. We will gather at 6:30 p.m. in our parking lot and carpool to St. Paschal's, and all who wish to discuss the Stations afterward are invited to do so.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

The UCC partners with other global ministry and aid organizations in over 80 countries, providing clean water, agricultural assistance, medical help, disaster relief, schooling, job training, shelter, and ministry. OGHS is one of the UCC's 5-for-5 offerings, and our support of OGHS helps make us a 5-for-5 church. **This year's OGHS offering will be received on Sunday, March 18th.**

You can learn more about how the OGHS offering is used to support, for instance, UCC missionaries Monica and Tom Liddle in East Timor, by watching their video at <http://www.ucc.org/oghs/video-monica-and-tom.html>.

Palm/Passion Sunday

Sunday, April 1stth, 10:45 a.m. The children of Faith Church will open Holy Week with a palm procession at the start of Morning Worship, followed by a dramatic reading of the Passion narrative according to Matthew by members of the congregation.

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae and Communion Service

Thursday, April 5th, 7:30 p.m. The service of Tenebrae ("shadows") focuses on Jesus's last evening with his disciples. We will gather around the Communion Table in the sanctuary for a quiet service of remembrance and thanksgiving, with a reading of Jesus' last evening by members of the congregation and communion served to all and by all. Children are welcome at this service.

Good Friday Ecumenical Service

Friday, April 6th, noon to 1:00 p.m. Join congregations from the Hillcrest area in a traditional one-hour service of Scripture, music, prayer, and meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Music will be provided by a joint choir that includes singers from Faith. The service will be held at **St. John's Lutheran Church, 1000 Ford Road, Highland Heights.**

The Great Vigil of Easter

Saturday, April 7th, 8:00 p.m. We welcome the high point of the Christian year and the Christian life by keeping the Great Vigil of Easter, which will include the Service of Lights, the Service of the Word, the Service of Water, and the Service of the Table. Children are welcome in this intergenerational service.

The Sunday of the Resurrection, Easter Day

Sunday, April 8th. Lent having ended at midnight on Holy Saturday, we will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord with an all-church pot-luck breakfast at 9:15 a.m. in place of church school, jointly hosted by the Faith Formation and Worship ministries, followed by a service of Holy Communion during regular Sunday Worship at 10:45 a.m.