

When you hear the word "lent" do you duck your head, or run in the opposite direction?

We hope you'll take a second look, and discover that Lent is less about "original sin" which too often shames us, and much more about "original blessings," with an invitation to grow in our faith in hopeful, life-giving ways! Join your Excelsior friends in worship, service opportunities, and some tantalizing Wednesday night offerings on ways to pray, meditate, and connect to God and each other more deeply. Ever made a prayer bracelet? Walked a labyrinth? Had chocolate on Ash Wednesday? Take a second look at Lent! - Pastor Katie



Lent begins with ASH WEDNESDAY...and Chocolate?

February 14th, 7 pm Sanctuary: A Brief Ash Wednesday Service of Ashes and...Chocolate. Yes, Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday are kindred spirits when we remember that we have less of "original sin" and more of "original blessing" because of God's love in Jesus—God's love is the best Valentine of all. Will there be a chocolate fountain to "taste" the goodness of God's grace? Come and see! Bring children, too.



Wednesday Lenten Experiences, 6:00-7:30 pm

Each Wednesday in Lent we will explore another way to grow closer to God and each other through our senses: make a prayer bead bracelet (not just for "girls") , practice praying scriptures or nature (lectio or visio divina), breath prayers, singing our prayers, walking your prayers (Labyrinth), circle dance prayers, and centering prayer will all be offered in one-time sessions. Come for one or all; you'll be doubly blessed to participate in all of them. Children, youth and adults all welcome. Facilitator: Pastor Katie and others.

February 21st: Praying the Scriptures, Images, and Nature

February 28th: Visualization: Prayers and Scriptures with Gayle Colehour and Pastor Katie

March 7th: Singing our Prayers with Pastor Katie andall who love to sing, or listen to music of the "heart"

March 14th: Prayer Beads - Make your own Prayer Bead Bracelet. Different than a rosary, prayer beads help us stay focused and centered on the prayers we want to pray. Bead artist Connie Ortberg will help the bracelets be beautiful, too!
Connie Ortberg with Katie

March 21st: Walking our Prayers: Learning how to walk a Labyrinth...Fellowship Hall. Katie

Labyrinth Walks available in Fellowship Hall for two weeks from Saturday, March 17th through Easter Sunday.

Special session of "Walking our Prayers" Labyrinth available to Community Lunch participants and anyone else who want to experience it on Saturday, March 17th 11:30am.



Grow your Servant Heart - Sundays Serving in Lent:

Several special servant events are being offered after worship in Lent, as well as our Simpson and Community Lunch ministries. Stay on Sunday and serve to grow in faith, together! See details on reverse side.

SUNDAYS in Lent



February 18th - **First Sunday of Lent: *Re-Turning***. Just as Jesus was “led by the Spirit” into prayer in the desert, we are called to seek our truer selves, that we might re-turn and re-discover our true home in God. Scripture: Mark 1:9-15. Music: Bellievers, Handbell Choir.

February 25th - **Second Sunday of Lent: *Facing Fear***. How can facing whatever is your cross, lead us “from death into life?” Scripture: Mark 8:31-38. Music: Women Who Sing.

Servant Event: Simpson Homeless Shelter Musical Open House Fundraiser, with wonderful musical offerings from area high school students, organized by our own youth Anna Newell, who has a passion for making sure Simpson keeps feeding the hungry and offering a warm shelter to those in need. See details on the front page of Shorelines.

March 4th - **Third Sunday of Lent, with Sacrament of Holy Communion: *Noisy gods***. Perhaps when Jesus toppled the tables in the temple, he was calling us to see what gets in the way of true worship of God. What is the clutter and noise we use to keep God at a distance? Guest musician Christian Nielsen will lead us with flutes, digeridoo and drumming of indigenous peoples to help reduce the “noise” so we can re-center and encounter God. Scripture: John 2:13-22. United Methodist Committee on Relief Offering allows UMCOR to act as the arms and legs of Christ’s church, assisting those impacted by crisis or chronic need.

Servant Sunday Event: We will host tables of activities which provide the opportunity to complete short service projects that make a big impact on our community.

March 11th - **Fourth Sunday of Lent: *Breathe***. How are our lives given back to us in the gift of Jesus? We take a fresh look at an often over-used and misunderstood scripture: John 3:14-21. Music and Dance: River Valley Dance Academy, including their Adaptive Dance Company.

March 18th - **Fifth Sunday of Lent *Finding Home***. Is it really possible that in giving ourselves away, we find our way back home, into the heart of God? Pastor Katie is pleased to invite Pastor Kent Johnson as guest preacher today. Pastor Kent served EUMC for 21 years, until 2014. Scripture: John 12:20-33. Music: Joyful Noise, Brass Group.

HOLY WEEK



March 25th - **Palm/Passion Sunday: *A Costly Love***. Worship begins with a Palm Parade of Praises, but we discover our praises grow faint when our faith is challenged. Experience and hear the poignant story of “holy week” through scriptures, songs and prayers. Scripture: Holy Week events from the Gospel of Mark 14:1-15:47. Music: Chancel Choir.

March 29th, 7 pm - **Maundy Thursday: *Servant Hearts*** Jesus shows us the poignant power of kneeling, and serving those whom he loved. Find hope in the bread and cup, with other companions on the way. Scripture: John 13: 1-17, 31b-35.

March 30th, 7pm - **Good Friday: *A Service of Shadows***. A moving service with deepening darkness as candles are extinguished. Yet even in the dark places of our lives there are whispers of love, if we are tuned to listen. Scripture: John 18-19, selected verses; Music: Chancel Choir.

April 1st - **Easter Sunday: *Alive! There’s no foolin’ God!*** Scriptures: John 20:1-18; Luke 24:1-12.

Outdoor Sunrise Service, Christmas Lake, 8 a.m

Continental Breakfast follows 8am service (8:45-9:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall)

Easter Sunday Celebration, Sanctuary, 10 am. Concludes with the singing of the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah, with congregation and choir! Music: Chancel Choir.