

From the Pastor:

It seems like Christmas wasn't that long ago and now, days after our UCC church's Annual Meeting, we are looking at Lent coming right up upon us! This year, Lent comes very early. Lent is the season that we prepare for the coming crucifixion of Jesus and God's affirmation of Jesus' life and teachings and path to God in his resurrection that we celebrate on Easter.

Ash Wednesday falls on the day before Valentine's Day in 2013. This linking is really quite appropriate. As our culture celebrates "love" on Valentine's Day, especially romantic love, Ash Wednesday introduces the element of sacrificial love. In fact, the scripture readings for each Sunday in Lent concern themselves with the sometimes challenging part of God's loving us and our loving each other.

So as we prepare ourselves for the journey of Lent, and as we explore the practice of love at Valentine's Day and elsewhere, consider these issues the Scriptures raise:

Lent 1 (2/17) – The temptation of Jesus asks to what we are tempted to give our hearts.

Lent 2 (2/24) – Psalm 27 explores trusting God's love, even when it is tough to do so.

Lent 3 (3/3) – In Isaiah, God loves and disciplines the people who found it difficult to be loyal to God in the wilderness. In Luke, Jesus gives the fig tree (and us) another chance.

Lent 4 (3/10) – All texts concern a love that forgives and reconciles.

Lent 5 (3/17) – In John, Mary anoints Jesus' feet as a loving gift. In Philippians, Paul says knowing Christ is more important to him than anything else.

Pastor's Note

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Palm/Passion Sunday (3/24) –Love keeps going, even with a broken heart.

Maundy Thursday (3/28) – Jesus, in the Gospel of John, tells us love is the new rule.

Good Friday (3/29) – Love sacrifices all and forgives.

Easter (3/31) – Love conquers even death.

As a faith community, let's take up the challenge to be more loving. For example, we can go through our closets and donate unused clothing for someone else to wear. We can volunteer to prepare Saturday or Sunday sack lunches (Sunday, just show up about 9:30 and pitch in!) We can agree to bring a dish to the dinner we prepare for New Directions every 3rd Saturday. We can work on increasing the love in our homes and work places by practicing forgiving, speaking with kindness to everyone, or working to love one person that we find ... challenging. You get the idea. We are limited only by our imagination.

In God's love,

Pastor Lynn Bohlmann