

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – MARCH 2024

513.541.5676

5742 Hamilton Ave. | Cincinnati, OH 45224

chpc.org

MAKING SENSE OF LENT

BY SHARLYN STARE, BTN EDITOR

The liturgical season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14th and leads to "Holy Week" —Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday-The Last Supper, Good Friday, Vigil Saturday, and then Easter Sunday, the wonderful celebration of God raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

For much of my life, Lent has been a mystery. My family moved a lot and I was exposed to a wide variety of

religious traditions. I observed them, but they had little impact on me until Barry and I were on the CHPC Worship Team in the 1970's. That was when I first spent time to reflect on and make sense of Lent. Here what I learned.

In 312 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine committed his life and kingdom to Christ. To clarify Christianity, he convened leaders of the faith in 325 AD at the first Council of Nicaea in Bithynia (modern-day Iznik, Turkey). The key question that was addressed was "Is Jesus fully God, not made?" In the process of answering that question, the Nicene Creed was created. Plus, annual liturgical seasons like Lent were adopted to help folks remember key features of Jesus's life and ministry, and to teach them to the next generation of believers. It worked.

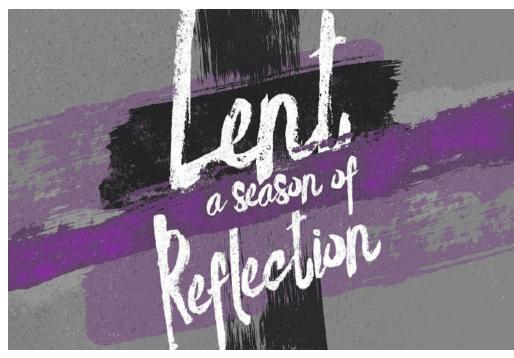
During the Protestant Reformation, (1517-1648) many Roman Catholic

practices were rejected by the emerging denominations. So, it is little wonder that many protestants can't make sense of them. Let us reflect on some of the most common Lenten features and practices.

40 DAYS —Lent is observed by the Roman Catholic, Eastern, and some Protestant churches as a 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and giving prior to Easter. Try as I may I couldn't figure out the 40-day count until I learned that Sundays are not included. The number 40 is a significant

> number for Christians. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. Noah had to wait 40 days for his ark to float. And Moses, along with his followers, traveled through the wilderness for 40 years before reaching the Promised Land.

ASHES—On the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, Christians may (CONTINUED PAGE 4)



THE VALUE OF PROVIDING SPACE FOR SADNESS

BY: JEANNE SCHNEIDER, MA LPCC-S, DIRECTOR OF LIVING HOPE COUNSELING

In the Lenten season, we are reminded of that time of reflection and turning back toward Christ. Lent provides an annual reminder of Christ's love for us. He endured much grief and sorrow so as Jesus followers, we can be in communion with him forever. . .and HE is sharing our sadness.

When, we endure sorrow in the losses of our lives from the death of a loved one to the many non-death losses such as relationship disruptions, jobs, resources, traditions, and health, let us remember the value of acknowledging those losses.

Grief can take on many forms, and we can experience a variety of emotions. We recognize sadness as being one of those emotions experienced. Alan Wolfelt, grief expert, states that sadness "forces us to regroup—physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually." It provides a season to pause even though we live in a world that says keep going. We could learn from our ancestors who honored grief by dressing in sack cloth and weeping publicly or wearing black as outward symbols of the internal pain.

As I mentioned during my sermon* at CHPC on Feb 4, 2024, "Learning to Trust in the Face of Loss," grief is not an individual sport. Outward symbols can signal to others that we are in pain. In our culture, we typically don't have those outward symbols. If we are fortunate, we might receive three days off from work. So often, this creates beliefs like "I should be over it." For those who are grieving non-death losses, it is even more challenging because it may be the loss of watching a loved one decline in health, noting the losses within your own health, or recent changes

within a family structure that create loss of those things valued. In those cases, there is not a funeral marking the loss.

GRIEF SHARED

How do we, like Jesus (as he said to his disciples in Gethsemane), communicate our sorrow to those around us? Sometimes, it may take slowing down and acknowledging our feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about the loss.



Sharing with a close friend those feelings, thoughts and beliefs. At times, just letting the friend know you just need a listening ear. No "fixing" is needed. Other times, you may just need someone near without talking. In the Bible, Job's friends sat with him and grieved for seven days after the destruction around him. If you are the listener, please don't tell someone how they should or should not feel. Be present. Our experiences are all different.

Moving toward the emotional pain experienced in loss gives a place of honoring your pain. Your emotional wounds need tending as much as any physical wound. Wolfelt writes, "If your heart and soul are prevented from feeling the sadness, odds are your body may be harmed in the process. Your grief is the result of an injury to your spirit." The pain will continue to surface in relationships, your body, and your soul until given that space to be attended to.

CONNECT WITH GOD DIRECTLY In addition to sharing with others there are other ways to honor your pain. Consider externalizing the pain through praying, writing, and drawing about your loss. There are times reading the Psalms may speak to your loss and provide space to acknowledge your experience. I have at times written my own psalms and present them to the Lord. Eventually, you may look for ways to make meaning of the loss.

There are many Christian resources available. Two of the well-known grief experts are Alan Wolfelt at www. centerforloss.com and David Kessler at grief.com. Living Hope provides counseling, and CHPC offers grief support (contact Joanne Cornelius at JCornelius@chpc.org or Janet Johnson at timandjanetjohnson@me.com.

LIVING HOPE offers individual and couples counseling for grief and many of life's challenges. If you or someone you know would benefit from counseling, please call us at 513-371-5135 or go to our website at www.livinghopecs.com. Living Hope appreciates those who have donated tangible items this month. We are also grateful for those who can also support us financially. We can be available to clients who would not otherwise be able to receive counseling. If you would like to support the ministry, please make checks payable to LIVING HOPE COUNSELING SERVICES and mail to 5742 Hamilton Ave Cinti, OH 45224.

^{*}LISTEN TO JEANNE'S SERMON ONLINE AT CHPC.SERMON.NET/EMBED/main/22225648



"SECRETS" OF TALKING WITH GOD AND OTHERS

This article by Dr. Gary Sweeten speaks to communication between people. The principles are also applicable to our conversations with God through prayer. When we consider the response we desire from God, we are less likely to miss God's answers to our prayers.





"What did your dad say on the phone call?"[Or "What's the difference between a hypersphere and the universe?"]

In today's fast-paced world, interpersonal communication is crucial. People come to us with various kinds of needs, and it's important to understand how we can respond to them. In every conversation, people are sending signals about their wants, interests, and feelings, and as listeners, we must be able to discern them. Some are simple? Some not so much!

6 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION
These are some examples of requests that we all regularly operate in but may not recognize:
The first type of communication is a •REQUEST FOR ACTION. It could be a simple request, such as asking for a book, or even something subtle, like needing help with simple tasks. It's important to clarify these requests and respond accordingly.

The second type is a *REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, which requires us to provide knowledge that we have. It could be anything, from "When are you going to the gym today?" to

The third type is a *REQUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING OR INVOLVEMENT, usually expressed as a concern. For instance, someone may express their discouragement about their job or the troubles in their marriage. Responding with empathy, respect, and warmth is key to understanding the true meaning behind these statements.

The fourth type is a *REQUEST TO HANG OUT, which is usually a friendly conversation where you chat with someone about something you both enjoy, like sports or movies.

The fifth type is a ••REQUEST TO RELEASE EMOTIONS like frustration, anger, or confusion. Listening with empathy and creating a safe place for them to vent their feelings is essential.

The sixth type is a *REQUEST FOR AN INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION, which includes rumors, gossip, attacks, and requests for illegal or unethical behavior. These violate the "Golden

Rule" of treating others how you want to be treated and require a different approach. It's crucial to stay cool, calm, and collected during these interactions and to respond with grace and empathy.

Responding inappropriately or trying to correct can make the situation worse. Developing strong listening skills helps us effectively respond to diverse needs.

Communication is a vital skill that we can hone to navigate our daily lives. By developing the skills outlined above, we can become better listeners and communicators, enabling us to build trust and caring relationships regardless of the situation!

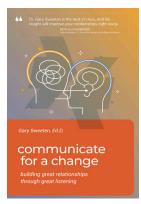
If you're like me, you probably want to get better at communication in your relationships. Check out our Communicate for a Change course to learn how!

GO TO THESE ONLINE COURSES www.relationalpeace.org

The online courses are broken down into bite-sized 5-15 minute videos so you can easily fit them into your busy life. The courses are a great resource for small groups to use to learn together.

You can also take a FREE 60-second Quiz to find out "What's Your #1 Prohibitor of Peace?"

Dr. Sweeten's latest book Communicate for a Change is available at Amazon and other book retailers



MAKING SENSE OF LENT



(CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT COVER)

go to church to have ashes applied on their foreheads in the form of a cross for all to see. In the Bible wearing ashes was a common sign of repentance for sins, and a sign of one's humility before God. Ashes often come from burning last year's palms distributed on Palm Sunday.

FASTING— One of Lent's three central components (pictured above) is fasting. Typically, the term is used in dieting and involves denying oneself food or water for a period of time. The body "burns through" stored fat and releases energy in the process. However, a Lenten fast often involves denying oneself something of personal significance—a form of pleasure (movies, watching sports, music, candy, flowers, etc.).

JESUS & FASTING—Jesus recommended fasting, not as a formality, and not as a burden to be imposed on the poor. Instead, Jesus recommended fasting when one fails to sense that God is near.

When the devil tempts Jesus in the desert with a comfortable life and a full stomach, Jesus responded: "One does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3). Fasting and abstaining makes this real. It also hones our appetite and instills gratitude. (Absence does make the heart grow fonder. Aren't we more grateful for what we've hungered

and thirsted for?)

FISH— Fish and vegetables have been associated with sacred holidays even in pre-Christian times. The medieval Christian Church kept adding more meatless days to honor "saints" and significant events in Christ's life. Fridays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, during Advent and Lent, were added to other holy days The need for fish grew. Scarcity of local fish prompted the growth of a global fishing industry.

According to Christian teaching, Jesus died on a Friday. He was "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." The Old Testament had many prescriptions about sacrifices, many that included admonishments about the "blood" of various sacrifices. So, teachings about fasting became a way to remember and deeply honor Christ's warm-blooded sacrifice. Over the years this teaching has been relaxed to "You can't eat meat on Fridays, but you can eat fish, other cold-blooded animals, and vegetables."

COLORS OF LENT—Violet is the official color of Lent, as this represents mourning for Jesus dying on the cross while also celebrating his resurrection with the colors of royalty.

GIVING MONEY, TIME, AND SERVICE— In the Middle Ages, not eating meat wasn't much of an issue. Poor peoples' diets consisted of fish and vegetables—meat was considered an upper-class luxury. Later, followers were encourage to set aside the money saved by eating fish, and giving that as church offerings during Lent. Today, fast food restaurants promote their fish sandwiches. "Fish Fries" abound and provide church volunteers fund-raising service opportunity.

PRAYER—TALKING WITH GOD
Prayer is another of the three
common components of Lent. It helps
Christians stay centered in Christ and
God the Father.

There are several articles in this *Bell Tower News* about communication. Building a personal relationship with Jesus is similar to deepening a relationship with another person. DON'T MISS page 2, 3 and 7. For example, the Thursday Morning Prayer Group is an opportunity to learn from the prayers of others.

I hope that this article will help you make sense of Lent, and reflect on God's good gift of it to the Church.

SAVE THE DATES

FIRST Tuesdays of the month, February to November at 7 PM.

The College Hill Gardeners (CHG) meet at CHPC. If you have a "black thumb" (no disrespect intended), come and meet neighbors who can help your garden bloom. Have a "green thumb?" Enrich your garden-

ing experiences and build relationships with fun folks who share your interest. Expect great programs, enrichment projects like the Spring Plant Sale, the College Hill Garden Walk, and the



Wee-Patch Fall Festival for families.

TUES., APRIL 2nd
"TEA FOR TWO OR MORE"
experience the talk on tea, its types,
traditions & history by Sam & Barry Stare



2024 MISSION TRIP TO KENYA

MAY 18-31, 2024

BY MARY SUE VERHAGEN

God has called eight members of the CHPC community to go to Kenya: Dave and Maggie Smith, Barbara McMullen, Kelley Foresman, and Rev. Erwin Goedicke. They will provide special activities for about 284 school-age children at Hope Community Centre—sharing devotions and Bible studies, leading sports training and sewing lessons. Jill and Michael Gaines and Catherine Sanders will assist our global worker Gabe Howard as he teaches English and builds relationships among young adult refugees in Nairobi.

Attend the March 17 Global Outreach Gathering to meet the Kenya Team and see Gabe Howard via Zoom.

UGANDA

Lake

Victoria

TANZANIA

ETHIOPIA

KENYA

□Nairobi

This trip
represents a
new step of
faith in each
team member's
walk with Jesus,
and a further
step for our
congregation
to obey Jesus's
command to
"proclaim the
gospel to the

whole creation." (Mark 16.15) Each of us can have a part in fulfilling Jesus' goal of worldwide proclamation.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE TEAM

PRAY: Everyone is welcome before God's "throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4.16) The Apostle Paul, while taking the Good News of Jesus all over the Roman world, asked his friends at Thessalonica to "pray for [his mission team] that the word of the Lord may speed

ahead and be honored, as happened among you." (2 Thess. 3.1)
PRAY FOR—

- Each team member's spiritual preparation for the trip. They are praying and fasting weekly until departure. While they are away from us, each team member will need someone praying and fasting daily for them and the team. Offer this support to one of the team members.
- · God to bring healing, wholeness, and growth to any area of each team member's life where it is needed.
- · God to prepare the hearts of the people to whom they will minister.

GIVE: Team members must provide their own airfare and pay for housing and food. You can help the team raise the needed funds by giving at www.chpc.org/Kenya or by check to CHPC marked "Kenya Mission Trip."

SOMALIA

Indian Ocean

SEND: Just as the church leaders at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas as the first missionary team, so our congregation's pastors and elders will commission

and send this team. The Kenya Team goes on behalf of the whole congregation.

GO: This spring Dave, Maggie, Barb, Kelley, Erwin, Catherine, Jill and Michael will GO to Kenya. God has invited us to join him in building his kingdom. Please be open to God's work in your life. Follow his nudges. He has the big picture and will decide best where each of us needs to mature into the fullness and stature of Jesus Christ!

YOUR INVITATION 2024 MISSION TRIP TO ALASKA

JUNE 2-12, 2024

Looking for a *cool place* in the USA to serve? One of our sister churches, New California Presbyterian in Marysville OH invite you to participate in a mission trip to Kake, Alaska. Pastor Joey Chang is an ECO pastor at Kake Memorial Presbyterian Church on the island of Kake. A group of four of us went last year. We're hoping to have more folks "serve Kake" this year.

DETAILS: Travel on your own to Juneau, Alaska by Sunday night, June 2. The Team takes the ferry from Juneau to Kake Tuesday, June 4 and returns Tuesday, June 14. Fly from Juneau home anytime starting June 12. The Team will lead a 3-4 day VBS for the Tlingit people, serving lunch for the weekly "Piece of Kake" community dinner, join worship on Sunday, and partner in any other ways.

COSTS: The base cost \$1200-\$1400 for the mission portion: basic coach airfare, ferry travel, and seaplane from Kake back to Juneau. An information sheet is available.

COMMITMENT DATE IS MARCH 17.

More info? Contact CHPC's Janet

Dumford (513) 477-3471, or Earl

Dunbar (614) 873-4178, pastor of New

California Church.





THE CHPC PARENTS & FAMILY MINISTRIES PRESENTS A NEW FREE EQUIPPING EVENT

"THE BOUNDLESS WORKSHOP"

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 9 AM-3 PM (CHECK EXACT TIMES)





MICHAEL GAINES



JEANNE CHNEIDER



MAGGIE BECKJORD



Imagine a free event where parents, grandparents, and guardians join church and community leaders to learn, play, and grow together. Experience becoming less bound as parents and leaders so that your impact can leave a more positive

imprint on the lives of those around you. There will be space and time to develop new abilities, strengthen skills, and encourage one another. Learn practical tools to use and infuse into areas of life, whether at home or in the marketplace.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN! LUNCH & CHILD CARE PROVIDED



DATES for SWIM LESSONS

Children (age 5 and above) & Teens lessons At North Hills Swim Club. Mornings —10 AM, 11 AM or 12 Noon Week #1 July 15-19 Week #2 July 29 to Aug 2

Adult lessons

Twin Tower's Wellness Connection Pool 6-7 PM—Week A July 8-12 Week B July 22-26

OUR ONLINE BROCHURE is available now at www.chpc.org/swim

Student Online Registration begins Monday, April 1, 2024

QUESTIONS ABOUT JOINING THE STAFF? Contact Katy Verhagen at Katy.Verhagen@gmail.com Mature Teens, ages 11 and above who are swimming at American Red Cross Level 4, and Adults with some swimming background who like kids may apply. TRAINING is June 13-15, Thurs & Friday (6-9 PM) with dinner, and Sat., June 15 (9 AM-4 PM)

PRAY WITH US FOR GOD TO BE **GLORIFIED IN ALL WE DO.**



This 4-day Summer Day Camp is designed for children ages 3-8 and will have an Olympic theme.

WHEN: From 9 AM to 12:15 PM Mon., July 29th to Thurs., Aug 1st, in the 3C's Wing of the CHPC Learning Center.

COST: \$70/first child. \$10 discount for each additional sibling (\$60, \$50, \$40). Discount is calculated at bottom of form. All children must have emergency information on file before attending the 3Cs' Camp.

FULL PAYMENT IS DUE AT REGISTRATION. Cancellations before May 31st will receive a refund less any processing fees.

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.



Thursdays, 10 AM at CHPC

June Elwood (513) 205-7991 or Gwyn Spindel (513) 761-7185 for weekly details

A caring fellowship group of social knitters and fabric arts women who use their talents for the benefit of others. In its 17th year. Open to the community. "A great place to go and unwind."



THREE WAYS THURSDAY MORNING PRAYER CAN HELP YOU DURING LENT AND BEYOND



For many years, I have been involved in a group that meets on Thursday mornings at 9 AM at CHPC Fireside Room. We pray for the church and the community and grow personally by doing so. We've seen people healed, new staff hired, and our community grow in opportunities. This is a great place to experience Lent at a deeper level. We'll keep it confidential.

Here are some ways you might benefit from the group:

- 1. Not sure how to pray in a group? This is a great place to learn and practice with nice people who won't be "judgy!"
- 2. Need healing—physical, mental or emotional—or help in any area of life? We would like to pray with you. Join us Thursdays, or contact me, Colleen Scheid (scheidison@gmail.com) about your prayer need.
- 3. If you would like to join us but aren't sure you can attend regularly, join us when you can. I always leave our hour of praying (we end at 10 AM sharp) feeling more peaceful, hopeful, and focused on God's truth.

THREE MORE UPCOMING PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

WEDNESDAY, 3/6 - Prayer for our congregation at 7 PM, Parlor. SUNDAY, 3/10 - Prayer for Global Workers between services, Prayer Room TUESDAY, 3/19 - CHPC Prayer Canopy day.

I appreciate your hearts for our congregation and look forward to our continued growth in God and prayer. There are many terrific prayer stories in and around our congregation. I look forward to hearing more! Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions or want to discuss prayer opportunities.

Blessings, Christy Roediger (513-675-0346 chrisroediger1014@gmail.com)



For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 5:11 (NIV)

Since Jesus sacrificed himself before you or I or anyone we know ever said YES to him, we can have great confidence in his love for us. On this Lenten journey, whether you are giving something up, adopting a new practice, or in some other way observing Lent, experience it with the knowledge that your efforts please Jesus.

Sometimes, I just want to please God and think that I'm doing something right in his eyes, and then I'm reminded that he sees me as his child, knows me better than I know myself, and is patiently helping me through this life to the eternity that he's already preparing for me. How can we not relax a bit under his care and trust ourselves to his almighty quidance?

Almighty God, in this Lenten season where we get just a tiny taste of your journey to the cross, show me how I am reconciled to you and that there is something that pleases you in me.

Guide me, Jesus, to walk with you in ways that are both courageous and loving to this world in which you've planted me. Help me, Lord, to walk this Lenten journey with you. Be glorified in my life. Amen!

— CHRISTY ROEDIGER





ark 1:15 The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

Jesus called his followers to "follow HIM" in every aspect of life, much as apprentices do with a master in any field. Our journey with Jesus constantly gives us opportunities to choose the *better way* of His direction. Repentance is not a one-time event but a lifelong journey of redirecting our lives according to Jesus's way every day. Each Sunday of Lent we will look at passages in Mark that highlights different aspects of Jesus' "Better Way."

March 10 - BETTER TRUST

Jesus shows us the way of total trust in the love and wisdom of the Father. All other objects of our trust will disappoint or decay. God is the only one worthy of our faith.

Mark 10:17 - 31 – Jesus tells the rich young man to sell all he has and give to the poor and follow me. In Mark 12:41-44, the widow impresses Jesus by giving all she has.

MARCH 17 - BETTER DESIRES

Our natural desires for power, popularity, wealth, and protection can get in the way of Jesus' way of love, servanthood, and humility. Jesus leads us down a path of serving others.

Mark 10:35-45 – The disciples argue about who is the greatest. Jesus

says the greatest is the servant.

March 24 - BEST WAY

On Palm Sunday, Jesus shows the best way. Jesus demonstrates that being religious and having a popular legacy does not matter in the context of eternity. Following the will of the Father is the *only* way.

Mark 11:1-26 –God is worthy of our full allegiance. Jesus' obedience led to direct opposition, but the resurrection shows that it is the best way.

MARCH 31, EASTER SUNDAY Which Way is Better?

Mark 16:1-8 ends with a decision in the balance. Jesus' tomb is empty. The followers are unsure. We are left hanging. Mark's account reminds us that Jesus comes to show us *more than a better way*. He shows us that he is more powerful than disease, the devil, and death. He invites us in every circumstance to follow him.

We are given the option to trust him even though we don't see him (I Peter I). The other Gospels, the rest of the New Testament, and the history of the Church are one consistent testimony to the lifetransforming effects of responding to God's Call to intimately know Jesus as Savior, Master, and Lord.

WHICH WAY ARE YOU CHOOSING?

COMMUNITY KIDS' EGG HUNT & MAGIC SHOW AT CHPC SAT. MARCH 23, 10 AM TO 12 PM



HOLY WEEK AT A GLANCE



PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 24 WORSHIP 9 AM AND 10:30 AM

All four gospels tell of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the waving of palms and "Hosannas." It marks the first day of Holy Week.





MAUNDY THURSDAY MARCH 28, 7 to 8 PM

Jesus meets with the disciples in the Upper Room, washing their feet and sharing the Passover supper with them. He gives his mandate to "love one another as I have loved you."



GOOD FRIDAY MARCH 29, 7 to 8 PM

The most pivotal event of eternity Christ's Passion—trial, mockery, crucifixion, death, and entombment.



EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31 WORSHIP 9 AND 11 AM

Celebrate Christ's RESURRECTION from the dead. Lord of ALL!

