



Grace Notes

Community of Grace UMC

February 2018

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Lent – Giving Up, Taking On, Finding God

After his baptism, the Lord Jesus “was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted 40 day and 40 nights and he was famished.” Matthew 4:1-2

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

February 14th is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season. Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death.

In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or volunteering and giving of themselves for others.

I'm often asked about this...is it better to give up something for Lent, or take on some new task?

Either choice is fine as long as you're giving up or taking on for the right reasons.

First: it should be a sacrifice. Second: the purpose is to bring you closer to God.

When we give up something, we often find more time (especially when we give up time-consuming activities) to focus on our relationship with God. Or when we give up something we love (like a certain food), each time we think about having that thing, we are reminded of not just our sacrifice, but Jesus' sacrifice for us. Our “hunger” for what we have given up can be re-channeled as a hunger for God.

When we take on something for Lent, volunteering or adding to our prayer time, we find that our routine is challenged. We have to reorganize, reprioritize what we have been doing to fit in the new thing. In that process we put God at the top of the list, setting other things aside to make room to serve God.

The point of giving up something, or taking on something is to find a deeper more meaningful relationship with God. During this Lenten season, take time to repent and reflect as we prepare our hearts to receive the risen Christ on Easter Sunday.

Striving to be Faithful,

Pastor Donna

February Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Brent Hart	Feb. 2
David Eakle	Feb. 2
Michael Pack	Feb. 5
Lori Crawford	Feb. 8
Austin Preece	Feb. 9
Teresa Eakle	Feb. 13
Jack Bybee	Feb. 22
Gordon Jones	Feb. 23

Anniversaries:

Cary and Jackie Smoot Feb. 26

Things Worthwhile

These things make life worthwhile to me;
 A sunset sky, a maple tree;
 A mountain standing grim and grey;
 Against the skyline far away;
 A baby’s laugh, a summer breeze;
 A roadway winding ‘neath the trees;
 A friend to trust, a book to read;
 And work which meets some human need;

And through it all, a sense of God

Lifting my soul above the sod;

The hope and peace which He can give---

These make it worth my while to live.

Unknown

UPDATE FROM HAITI

Jean Baptiste

Community of Grace has helped support Jean Baptiste for several years. Several of you also have contributed to his support during his medical studies. He graduated in December 2017 and was very appreciative of our prayers and support. He is now doing his rotations and will not get paid for this.

He has visited with us on several occasions and even helped with the flood relief in West Virginia a couple of years ago.

Community of Grace is continuing to support him this year.

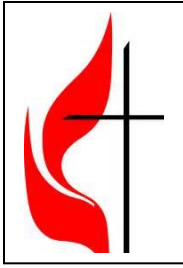
Real hope for Haiti

This is one of the places several members of our church visited when on work teams in Haiti. A recent letter told the stories of Vilson and Michelene. They send their thanks.

Vilson shared that God helped him come to Real Hope for Haiti (RHFH). He had skin sores, hurt a lot and could not walk. He says he is thankful to God for medicine and mamba. He wants to thank us for helping him heal. He says he is almost 100%.

Michelene shares when her grandmother brought her to RLFH, she was scared, sick, and needed help. She is glad for medicine and mamba. She loves feeling good and being with the children around her. She wants to say to us “you helped me heal”.

If you would like to contribute to either of these projects (Jean Baptiste or Real Hope for Haiti), please put your contribution in one of the special offering envelopes in the back of the chairs and mark for Jean Baptiste or Real Hope For Haiti.



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