

The Lily Pad

“I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.” Solomon 2:1



***Lent 2019 will begin on
Wednesday, March 6
and ends on
Thursday, April 18***

Forty Days. Six weeks. A time to wander through the wilderness. A time to explore your faith. A time to get through until Easter arrives.

However you think about it, there is no stopping the reality that Lent is upon us.

Christmas is but a distance memory; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Observance was once again an amazing ecumenical celebration, followed by Kindness Week! Before, the final Christmas sales ended, we were being harpooned by Cupid's love arrows – from chocolates, roses, and the mushiest cards Hallmark stores had to offer. It seems we've had little time to prepare ourselves for the approach of Lent, yet, it's here and we might not feel fully prepared, almost as though it has crept up on us. It can be a bit disconcerting, when Lent is just HERE. I know that there are many of you out there who highly dislike Lent. It feels depressing. It feels like a punishment. It feels hopeless. It feels like something you just have to get through. This year though, we're hoping to view Lent a little bit differently, and hopefully because of that, we all might grow a bit, individually and as a community, and maybe by the end, we'll feel a little bit better about Lent.



The season of Lent is one of the two most known seasons of the Church (liturgical) year. Whereas Advent leads up to the birth of Christ, Lent marks the final days of Jesus' life and ministry. The season lasts for forty days, from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) excluding Sundays.

At its heart, Lent is a journey. It is a path that we step onto that leads to the cross and leads to the empty tomb. Along the way, there are hills and valleys, stones to stumble upon, and smooth paths to tread over with confidence; and hopefully along the way, there are moments of clarity where our faith seems a little bit clearer, even though there will also be moments where it seems foggy and uncertain. As with all journeys though, Lent is easier when traveled together. Our focus as a congregation for Lent this year will be on the journeys of our faith, and how we can better lift each other up, learn from each other, and live together in the kingdom of God. There are a couple of ways that we are doing this, and I hope that you are able to participate in many of the options we will have for you throughout this holy season.

Ash Wednesday: Wednesday, March 6

Worship will focus around the various stages of our faith journey, from baptism to healing to forgiveness to hope. The service will include the imposition of ashes, as we turn our eyes towards the beginning of the 40 days of Lent.

Their Journeys, Our Journeys: Midweek Fellowship and Faith Conversations – (March 13, March 20, March 27, April 3, April 10)

West Bend Ecumenical faith communities will once again come together for our 12:15 Wednesday's Lenten services. Locations and this year's theme will be shared by 1 March 2019. We hope you will come as we journey together, hope together, worship together, and share the promise of Easter with the West Bend community.

When Our Feet are Tired from the Journey: Maundy Thursday, April 18

The Holy Three days will begin with a service of foot-washing and Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. Worship will be at 7:00 p.m. and will be centered around the ways we are called to serve each other on this journey of faith together. We will hear Christ's call to service in the gospel and gather together as a family around the communion table.

Where Christ Walked, We Will Follow: Good Friday, April 19

Holy Week will continue with Good Friday service at 7:00 p.m. We will be centering our time together around the Stations of the Cross, retracing Christ's journey to the cross through scripture readings and faithful reflections.

The Journey Ends AND Begins in Hope: Easter Sunday, April 21

We will gather for our Sunrise worship services on Easter Sunday at 7:00 a.m., followed by our Third Annual Midwest-Southern Sunrise Breakfast at 8:00 a.m. Resurrection Sunday worship service will be held at 9:30 a.m.

I pray that we might all be able to take this journey together, learning about each other and ourselves. Lent is a holy time, and a time I look forward to spending with all of you.

Women's History Month

March is also Women's History Month, and it marks the celebration of biblical, historical and contemporary women who have responded to the call of peace, justice, equality, and humanity in the world. This month should also be a reminder that the celebration of the diverse gifts and contributions of women should not be limited to one month—or set time, but all the time. Women's History Month is also a time of celebrating and acknowledging the ways that women both locally and globally, inspire, transform and enhance our lives. Every year March is designated Women's History Month by Presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women's contributions in American history.

The 2019 Women's History Month theme is *"Visionary Women: Champions of Peace & Nonviolence."* The theme honors *"women who have led efforts to end war, violence, and injustice and pioneered the use of nonviolence to change society."*

I invite you to celebrate Women's History Month. For instance, you can buy a book of stamps that commemorates notable women and perhaps use them to write and reconnect to an old friend or make a new one. You can also donate some money to your public library and instruct them to buy a book on women's history, or even donate a book on women's history yourself to a school classroom. You can also give a child the biography of a famous historical woman such as Gertrude Stein, Maya Angelou, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Bessie Coleman, Clara Barton or Ella Baker.



I wish you blessings on your Lenten journey this year. May we all grow closer and more faithful to Christ.

In humble service to Christ and his Church,

Pastor Clarissa