

Catch Me In My Scurrying by Ted Loder

Lent (meaning "springtime") is the season for us to live our most honest response to our gracious God. As pastors and staff, we found this poem prayer helped us identify that which we want to "clear out" during this springtime for the soul. Please join us in this prayer! - Pastor Alanna Tyler

Catch me in my anxious scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this Lenten season: hold my feet to the fire of your grace and make me attentive to my mortality that I may begin to die now to those things that keep me from living with you and my neighbors on this Earth; to grudges and indifference, to certainties that smother possibilities, to my fascination with false securities, to my addiction to sweatless dreams to my arrogant insistence on how it has to be; to my corrosive fear of dying someday which eats away the wonder of living this day, and the adventure of losing my life in order to find it in you.

Catch me in my aimless scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this Lenten season: hold my heart to the beat of your grace and create in me a resting place, a kneeling place, a tip-toe place where I can recover from the dis-ease of my grandiosities which fill my mind and calendar with busy self-importance, that I may become vulnerable enough to dare intimacy with the familiar, to listen cup-eared for your summons, and to watch squint-eyed for your crooked finger in the crying child, in the hunger of the street people in the fear of the contagion of terrorism in all people, in the rage of those oppressed because of sex or race, in the smoldering resentments of exploited third world nations, in the sullen apathy of the poor and ghetto-strangled people, in my lonely doubt and limping ambivalence; and somehow, during this season of sacrifice, enable me to sacrifice time and possessions and securities, to do something... something about what I see, something to turn the water of my words into the wine of will and risk, into the bread of blood and blisters, into the blessedness of deed, of a cross picked up, a savior followed.

Catch me in my mindless scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this Lenten season: hold my spirit to the beacon of your grace and grant me light enough to walk boldly, to feel passionately, to love aggressively; grant me peace enough to want more, to work for more and to submit to nothing less, and to fear only you... only you!

Bequeath me not becalmed seas, slack sails and premature benedictions, but breathe into me a torment, storm enough to make within myself and from myself, something... something new, something saving, something true, a gladness of heart, a pitch for a song in the storm, a word of praise lived, a gratitude shared, a cross dared, a joy received.

#reimaginingLent

Lenten Calendar

Easter Garden - every year, we beautify our Sanctuary for Easter by asking for contributions for a lily or blooming plant. Watch for your chance to purchase a plant to remember a loved one's memory

Sundays in April The Youth will partner with our Cornerstone Store to raise money for their upcoming mission trip to Detroit. Stop down every Sunday after service (except Easter) in April to visit, donate, or purchase some new spring clothes or home décor.

A Communal Reading of The Gospels Join us at 6:30 pm each Wednesday of Lent (March 8-April 12), as we read the Gospels in their entirety. Experience a panoramic presentation of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Messiah each week from the unique perspective of each Gospel. All are welcome!

Wednesday, March 1 Ash Wednesday Service and Soup Supper 5:30 pm in the Dining Room followed by service in Sanctuary at 6:30. Family-friendly and no cost!

Sunday, March 12 MENSAJE DE SOLIDARIDAD (Message of Solidarity) *see article

Sunday, April 9: Palm Sunday with kid's Palm Processional at 10:00 am service.

Thursday, April 13: Maundy Thursday Service (commemoration of Last Supper) service with foot-washing at 6:30 pm.

April 14: Good Friday Service 6:30 pm: Seven Last Words* see article

April 16: Easter Sunday Service Glorious worship services at 8:30/10:00 am

April 16: Easter Pancake Breakfast Support the Youth Mission Trip to Detroit and enjoy pancakes and sausage! 8-10:00 am in the Dining Room. Freewill donation.

COMING EVENT Spring Choir Concert featuring Greta Oglesby! Sunday, April 30 at 4pm in the Sanctuary.

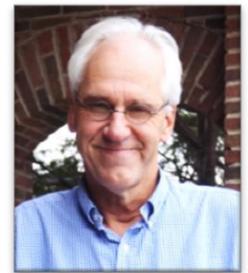


March 2017

Welcome to Lent 2017 at Park Avenue Church ... a message from Senior Pastor Will Healy

With the season of Lent almost upon us, I'm guessing we'll need to brace ourselves for the age-old question: "What are you giving up for Lent?" If you're like me, the answer tends to be, "Ah... well... um... I haven't decided yet." Alas...

It's not that giving up things is a bad idea, per se, but for some of us the notion of taking on something for a season is also helpful. It's why I'm so excited about our Lenten focus at Park over the next few months. We're calling it, Giving It Up: Re-imagining Lent, a season of worship and growth opportunities gathered around the Book of Psalms and God's call on us to be people who:



- Accept the value of spiritual discipline in our lives: Psalm 32
Give up our fear and hesitancy to become advocates for others: Psalm 121
Give up our sense of privilege to humble ourselves in worship: Psalm 95
Give up our hurrying and scurrying to accept God's invitation to rest: Psalm 23
Give up our impatience to learn to wait on God in hope: Psalm 130

Would you join me in praying that God would use these important weeks to strengthen our church? And might you be open to what God might be calling you to by way of participating in opportunities offered at Park—opportunities for prayer, confession, worship and service?

Pastor Will Healy (handwritten signature)

Why ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. The service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been triumphed over through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The minister will lightly rub the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of worshipers. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship. Historically, ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins. The ash cross on the forehead is an outward sign of our sorrow and repentance for sins.



Warm up with homemade soup before Ash Wednesday's service on March 1

Join the Park Avenue congregation and community on Wednesday, March 1st prior to the Ash Wednesday service at 6:30 pm. Starting at 5:30, we'll provide a simple spread of soups and breads in the Dining Room, then gather in the Sanctuary for an hour-long, family-friendly interactive worship service.

#reimaginingLent

Forty Things to Give up for Lent ... and beyond!

1. **Fear of Failure** – You don't succeed without experiencing failure. Just make sure you fail forward. (Psalm 23)
2. **Your Comfort Zone** – It's outside our comfort zones where new discoveries are made. (Matthew 8:18-20)
3. **Feelings of Unworthiness** – You are fearfully and wonderfully made by your creator. (Psalm 139:14)
4. **Impatience** – God's timing is the perfect timing. (Galatians 5:22-24)
5. **Retirement** – As long as you are still breathing, you are here for a reason. You have a purpose to influence others for Christ. Our work is not always tied to a paycheck. (John 14:12-17)
6. **People Pleasing** – I can't please everyone anyways. There is only one I need to strive to please. (2 Timothy 4:1-8)
7. **Comparison** – I have my own unique contribution to make and there is no one else like me. (Philippians 3:4-10)
8. **Blame** – I am not going to pass the buck. I will take responsibility for my actions. (Romans 8:31-39)
9. **Guilt** – I am loved by Jesus and he has forgiven my sins. Today is a new day and the past is behind. (Psalm 103)
10. **Overcommitment** – Do less better and accomplish more. (Matthew 5:37)
11. **Lack of Counsel** – Wise decisions are rarely made in a vacuum.
12. **Impurity** – Live lives pure and without blemish.
13. **Entitlement** – The world does not owe me anything. God does not owe me anything. I live in humility and grace. (Mark 10:35-45)
14. **Apathy** – Life is too short not to care. (Luke 7:18-23)
15. **Hatred** – Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)
16. **Negativity** – I will put the best construction on everything when it comes to other people. I will also minimize my contact with people who are negative and toxic. (Psalm 46)
17. **The Spirit of Poverty** – Believe that with God there is always more than enough and never a lack. (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)
18. **Going Through the Motions** – The more you invest yourself, the more you will get back. (John 4:20-26)
19. **Complaint** – Instead of contributing to the problem, be the solution. (Jude 17-25)
20. **The Pursuit of Happiness** – God wants something greater and more lasting than happiness. It is called joy. (Psalm 30)
21. **Bitterness** – The only person I am hurting by holding on to bitterness is myself. (Philippians 4:4-7)
22. **Distraction** – Life is filled with distractions that will take our eyes off the prize. (Hebrews 12:1-2)
23. **Giving up** – God never gives up on us. (Luke 18:1-8)
24. **Mediocrity** – If you are going to do something, then give it all you got. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
25. **Destructive Speech** – Encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25).
26. **Busyness** – It is a badge of honor to be busy. But that does not always translate to abundance. (Luke 10:38-42)
27. **Loneliness** – With Jesus I am never alone. He is with me wherever I go. (Psalm 28)
28. **Disunity** – If two of you agree on earth about anything, it will be done for them by the Heavenly Father (Matthew 18:19)
29. **The Quick Fix** – Rarely does true transformation happen overnight. (Hebrews 12:3-17)
30. **Worry** – God is in control and worrying will not help. (Matthew 6:25-34)
31. **Idolizing** – Don't assign anyone a standard they cannot live up to. (Philippians 2:1-11)
32. **Resistance to Change** – Change is certain. It is not if we will change, but how we will change. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)
33. **Pride** – Blessed are the humble. (Micah 6:6-8)
34. **Small View of God** – Don't tell God how big your problem is, tell your problem how big your God is. (Psalm 19)
35. **Envy** – I am blessed. My value is not found in my possessions, but in my relationship with my Heavenly Father. (Psalm 37)
36. **Ungratefulness** – You have been blessed in a way greater than you realize. (Psalm 118)
37. **Selfish Ambition** – God has a mission for me that is bigger than me. (Philippians 3:4-11)
38. **Self-Sufficiency** – Jesus is my strength. I can do all things through him. (Matthew 26:14-75)
39. **Sorrow** – Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning (Matthew 27:1-66)
40. **My Life** – Anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go...you'll have it forever, real and eternal. (John 12:20-26)

SOURCE: <https://www.greaterthings.today/40-things-to-give-up-for-lent-the-list/>

SEVEN LAST WORDS

Good Friday

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“To us, Good Friday is as important as Easter”

“Without His death on the cross, there would be no resurrection. As we acknowledge the fact that this is when – and how – Jesus died, Good Friday becomes an important opportunity for worship that is often overlooked. It's our way to say “Thank You”. It is a reminder of WHY I am WHO I am today.”

“In attending the “Seven Last Words” service over the past years, we've never failed to leave without an ‘Aha!’ moment when listening to the unique perspectives presented from seven different speakers, who also bring members from their congregations which creates a dynamic worship service. We've learned new historical insights as well as receiving spiritual touches to the heart, soul, and mind.”

-- Lee and Kathy Rainey

Join us for “The Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross”

In recent years, Park Avenue Church has hosted a Good Friday evening worship service called “The Seven Last Words,” an evening commemorating Jesus' death on the cross through music and the preaching of a series of short homilies taken from Jesus' last words. As such, the service is a time to think about how we, as Jesus' modern day disciples, might follow Jesus' sojourn. We will again welcome some of the most gifted preachers in our extended community to break the bread of the word for us that evening, so plan to join us!

THE **FIRST** WORD. Luke 23:34a

THE **SECOND** WORD. Luke 23:43

THE **THIRD** WORD. John 19:25-27

THE **FOURTH** WORD. Matthew 27:46

THE **FIFTH** WORD. John 19:28

THE **SIXTH** WORD. John 19:29-30

THE **SEVENTH** WORD. Luke 23:46

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

“Woman, here is your son.”

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

“I am thirsty.”

“It is finished.”

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

If you've never attended this inspiring evening of music and preaching from speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds, take a look at the video link on our website parkavechurch.org from last year's event. The service tends to run upward of two hours so keep in mind that it's OK to arrive a little late or leave a little early if your situation requires it.



Mr. Ed Hawkins and Rev. Jesús Purisaca at last year's retreat

Also happening during Lent ...

Park in the Community:
MENSAJE DE SOLIDARIDAD
(Message of Solidarity)

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12

On Sunday, March 12th at 4 pm, we will be opening our doors to friends and neighbors of our local immigrant community as a way of showing hospitality and encouragement during these unsettled times. Bishop Bruce Ough of the Minnesota Annual Conference will be the guest presenter and our partners from *Iglesia Piedra Viva UMC*, Living Stone United Methodist Church, led by Pastor Jesús Purisaca will preside. Light refreshments will follow.

MEN'S RETREAT: March 17-19 at Miracle Lodge Retreat Center/Ironwood Christian Ranch in Stewartville, MN. Be in prayer for our men as they spend a weekend in worship, encouragement, challenge, meditation, activities and fellowship. Sponsored by Park Avenue Church United Methodist Men's ministry, dedicated to providing fellowship and encouraging spiritual growth among Park Avenue men and their community.