



The First Word

March, 2017

First United Methodist Church, Racine

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Trustee Chairperson

Judith Schulz
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Nancy Cook
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Jeanne Whiteside
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Amanda Schnaare
Family Ed & Nurture Coordinator

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“Why the Dark-Gray Dirt on my forehead?”



“When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes.”(Jonah 3:6)

Comes Wednesday March 1, 2017 many Christians around the world will be receiving the sign of the Cross of Jesus Christ on their foreheads from the thumps and fingers of their pastors, priests, and other congregational leaders. Why this ancient traditional rite? Chances are there are those who still struggle with questions around the meaning, purpose and relevance of this ritual to their faith and relationship to God and salvation in Jesus Christ.

As a young Christian, I had a lot of questions when I first received the sign of the Cross in wet dark ashes on my forehead at a Baptist Church. I kept asking my friend who took to me the service to explain the purpose of the ritual, but he was just a novice as I was. Even as I grew and began reading the Bible with a bit of seriousness, I tried to find any book, chapter or verse that explicitly talks about “Ash Wednesday,” but to no avail. However, now that I’m a matured Christian and a Pastor, I have made some relevant connections, and have certainly come to appreciate the Ritual with the help of Christian Theology and Biblical History. I believe the brief overview of this ancient rite, “Ash Wednesday,” will serve three groups of people: 1. A reminder to matured Christians who may already know its importance; 2. Additional information for those believers with very vague ideas about the importance of the this ritual, and 3. A vital piece of education for those who might be taking on the ashes for the first time.

While it is true that there is no mention of “Ash Wednesday” in the Bible, the tradition of donning and sitting on ashes as a sign of penitence predates Jesus and the Protestant reformations. In the Old Testament, Job repents “in dust and ashes;” the King of Nineveh declared a regional fast and covered himself with sackcloth and sat on ashes as signs of penitence; Queen Esther, Samuel, Isaiah and successive prophets.

In the New Testament, “Ash Wednesday” is identified with the imitation of Jesus Christ forty (40) days spent fasting

and battling with Satan in the desert as recorded in the Gospels. Actually, there are forty six (46) days between Ash Wednesday and Easter, but most churches do not count the Sundays as part of Lent. The ashes used during Ash Wednesday service come from burning the palm branches of previous year’s Palm Sunday Service. As usual, the clergy leaders would “impose” or “dispense” the ashes, making a sign of the cross on the forehead of each person. As they “impose” or

“dispense” the ashes, the pastor or priest would remind each Christian of Genesis 3:19 **“For dust you are and to dust you shall return.”** This is both an acknowledgement and reaffirmation of our mortality as human beings in this world.

This practice became widespread in the Churches until the 16th Century when the protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, expressed concerns about the ritual lack of Biblical basis. In spite of Martin Luther’s skepticism, many Christian Denominations, including Protestants then and today, continue to mark Ash Wednesday as the first day of Lent. Lent is the time of **reflection** and **penitence** leading up to Easter Sunday. Lent reminds and invites each believer to reflect on the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ for his/her redemption. Remember, Jesus as the “Lamb of God that takes away sin,” (John 1:29). “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23). “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). Do any of these mean anything to you? Christ has given his life for yours and mine sin! What can you and give in return? If you are like me, I would simply repent and ask for a new beginning this Lenten! That’s exactly what God’s Word calls and challenges us to do as we put on the ashes on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent!

Here at First UMC, you are invited to join us for a light supper on Wednesday March 1, 2017 @6:p.m and followed by a transforming “Ash Wednesday Service” in the Church’s Social room in observance of first day of Lent. Also available is a six weeks Lenten Study: “The CREED- What Christian Believe and Why?” at 9:a.m each Sunday. Author: Adam Hamilton. Along with this study is a five weeks sermon series on the following topics: Renounce, Accept, Confess, Nurture and Believe.

Finally, remember this season challenges us to reflect and repent. As we reflect on Christ’s life and works,

we are called to examine our hearts and lives to see how our relationships with both our Savior and with one another have been and heading. These are all in observance of true Lenten Season. Christ gave His life for me! What can I give for His sake? Let these be our soul searching questions throughout this Lenten season and beyond!

Have a Blessed Lent, Rev. Jakes

March Sermon Themes based on “The Creed”

Lent - 1st Sunday/ Holy Communion 03/05/2017
Psalm 32: 1ff., Genesis 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7
Roman 5: 12-19; Matthew 4: 1-11
Theme: Renounce.....

Lent – 2nd Sunday 03/12/2017
(Daylight Saving)
Psalm 121:1ff. ; Genesis 12: 1-4
Hosea 5: 15; Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17; John 3: 1-17
Theme: Accept

Lent -3rd Sunday 03/19/2017
Psalm 95: 1ff.; Exodus 17: 1-7; Romans 5: 1-11
1John 1: 5-10; John 4: 5-42
Theme: Confess

Lent – 4th Sunday 03/26/2017
(One Great Hour of Sharing)
Psalm 23: 1ff.; 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5: 8-14
John 9:1-41
Theme: Nurture

Lent- 5th Sunday 04/02/2017
Psalm 130: 1ff.; Ezekiel 37: 1-14; Romans 8: 6-11
John 11: 1-45
Theme: Believe

Dear friends,

This will be the last newsletter I edit for the church as I have decided it's time to retire and allow someone else the wonderful opportunity to become the Administrative Assistant of First Church. This is a decision that took a lot of prayer and soul-searching over this last year; however, I feel it is time to look forward to new adventures with my husband and family. I have been truly blessed to have been a part of the church in this capacity for over 35 years. Rest assured, I'm not leaving the church – this is my home

HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN MARCH!

2 – Sue Mills
6 – Amie Jean Feest
Nathan Michael
12 – Becky Meredith
14 – Dawn Nejedly
15 – Scott Boehm
16 – Patti Walker
18 – Debby Ganaway
19 – Sandi McQuade
28 – Carol Christensen
29 – Rob Meredith

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IN MARCH!

29 – Justin & Shannon Hirth

ALTAR FLOWERS IN MARCH

5 – Dee Feest
12 – Patti Walker
19 –
26 –

FOOD BANK ITEM FOR

MARCH is Chunky soup. Bring your donations to church any time and place them in the crates near the entrances. All food collected is distributed by the North Side Food Pantry (see related article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING

FOR MARCH is designated for HALO (Homeless Assistance Leadership Organization) of Racine. This being the only homeless shelter in Racine, there

away from home and I will always be a member of this wonderful congregation.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years – I know you will extend that same level of support to the incoming Administrative Assistant. Blessings to all – Carol Feest

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is a constant need for funds for a variety of the programs HALO provides. Simply place your loose change – or more – in the small brown envelopes found in the pew racks. Thanks for your continued support of our outreach ministries.

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USHER SCHEDULE

Mar. 5

Chuck & Jean Harmon
Jeff Fernholz

Mar. 12

August Grulich
Ricky Castro
Jan Rosellini

Mar. 19

Dave Johnson
Roger & Betty Oakley

Mar. 26

Jeff Fernholz
Chuck & Jane Bragg

If you are unable to be a greeter/usher on your assigned day, please contact someone from the usher list to substitute for you. Thanks.

IN MEMORIAM

Dorothy (Dotti) Bent – 02-16-17

START COLLECTING YOUR

RUMMAGE!! The United Methodist Women will be sponsoring a Rummage Sale **on Saturday, April 22 from 9:00 –**

3:00 pm. You can start bringing your donations at any time.

UNITED METHODIST

WOMEN LUNCHEON – The United Methodist Women will meet at noon on Thursday, March 9th when Alison Sergio of the Healthcare Network will be our guest speaker. Jane Jarrett is our hostess this month; devotions will be given by Kay McClelland. The cost of the luncheon is \$8.00. Reservations are necessary for the lunch and may be made with the monthly callers or by calling Lenore Creuziger (633-4637) by noon on Tuesday, March 7th. All are welcome!

A Word of Thanks

We would like to thank everyone for the great outpouring of love and prayers following Rick's accident. Also thank you to those who brought food for Ricky & Christian while Denise was spending so much time at the hospital. Rick is out of the hospital and continuing a miraculous recovery. Your support means so much to us.

Denise Ferguson & Rick Reinhard.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN

THE CHOIR – Our wonderful choir will be presenting an Easter Season Program on Palm Sunday, April 9th during morning worship.

This is a perfect opportunity for members to join the choir – even if it’s only for a short time – to share the gift of song as we celebrate one of the most sacred seasons. Rehearsals for this program will begin on Wednesday, March 8th at 6:00 pm. Join us – you’ll be glad you did!

I hope everyone will take time to congratulate Carol Feest on her new adventure called retirement. Carol has spent the last 35 years as the Church Administrative Assistant and while she is retiring from this position, she and Pete are not leaving the Church. I am sure we will continue to see them serving the Church with their

time, talents and faith for many years to come.
 Congratulations Carol!
 Have a wonderful retirement that is richly deserved!
 Fred Ganaway
 AD Board Chair



UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing) is March 26, 2017

When disaster strikes around the globe—Haiti’s 2010 earthquake or Typhoon Haiyan in 2013—so many watching the drama unfold on our living room televisions feel entirely helpless. How could any one person make a difference in the wake of such widespread devastation? As responders around the globe scramble to help survivors, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, UMCOR, is prepared to act.

Since 1940, when UMCOR’s forerunner was established to meet the needs of those suffering overseas at the onset of World War II, we’ve continued to respond to those in desperate need—today throughout more than eighty countries around the world.

The response of UMCOR isn’t something “they” do, it’s something “we” do. UMCOR will be able to offer aid in Jesus’ name to those who suffer because United Methodists give through UMCOR Sunday, (**formerly One Great Hour of Sharing**). In fact, it’s your

generous giving that allows us to respond when disaster strikes.

When we meet the needs of those who suffer we actually minister to Jesus, who said: “I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.” (Mt. 25:35-36, CEB)

As we respond, we recognize Jesus in those who are reeling in the wake of disaster.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each Sunday

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Adult Sunday School | 9:00 am |
| Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Morning Worship & Sunday School | 10:00 am |
| Fellowship Time | 11:15 am |
| Keith Griffin Pokemon League | 1:00 pm |
| Casa de Dios Worship Service | 5:00 pm |

Each Monday

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|--------------------------|---------|
| OFFICES CLOSED | |
| Casa de Dios Bible Study | 6:30 pm |

Each Wednesday

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|-------------------------|---------|
| Kiwanis Club Luncheon | Noon |
| Chancel Choir Rehearsal | 6:00 pm |

Each Saturday

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| Sack Lunch Program | Noon |
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Wednesday, March 1

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| Ash Wednesday Dinner & Worship | 6:00 pm |
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Thursday, March 2

Bishop’s Day Apart in Franksville

Saturday, March 4

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| Keith Griffin Choir Retreat | 10:00 am |
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Sunday, March 5

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| FFRANC Breakfast | 9:00 am |
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Monday, March 6

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| Crafting Conversations | 6:00 pm |
| <u>Wednesday, March 8</u> | |
| First Alive Pot Luck & Program | 5:30 pm |
| <u>Thursday, March 9</u> | |
| United Methodist Women Luncheon | 12:00 pm |
| <u>Friday, March 10</u> | |
| Casa de Dios Event | 4:00 pm |
| <u>March 15</u> | |
| Youth Group at Faith UMC | 6:00 pm |
| Event at Carthage Siebert Chapel | 7:00 pm |
| <u>Saturday, March 18</u> | |
| Controlling Community Violence | 9:00 am |
| <u>Family, Education and Nurture Ministry</u> | |

March approaches! Are you ready? I don't know if I am, but we are being called into the quiet contemplation of Lent. Please join us for some of our engaging up-coming events.

Join us as we share a meal and worship in the Social Room for Ash Wednesday on March 1 at six o'clock. This is a special time to join in the Holy Spirit with music and resonating readings.

Our monthly FFRANC breakfast will be held on March 5th at nine o'clock, before worship. Please invite your friends, families, acquaintances, neighbors and co-workers for this abundant breakfast gathering!

Crafting Conversations is watching a video study called Living Life Together on RightNow Media. We meet on Monday March 6 at six o'clock in the Social Room. Join us for shared snacks and insights. Bring a long any projects that you are working on; we have space to spread out.

First Alive! Potluck Dinner is a monthly gathering of our congregants held this month on March 8 at 5:30. We will be sharing a short video about St. Patrick. We have a casual dinner, with people joining and leaving as their schedules allow. Please join us and bring guests, all are welcome!

*****Daylight Saving Time Reminder*** On Sunday March 12, we Spring Ahead! Don't forget to set your clocks ahead the night before, to be ready to worship with us at 10 o'clock!**

Our Young Adults will be meeting on March 22 and March 29th this month at their regular meal time of 7:30 on Wednesday Night in the Social Room.

Wednesday, March 22

Young Adult Dinner & Discussion 7:30 pm

Wednesday, March 29

Young Adult Dinner & Discussion 7:30 pm

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We will worship and fellowship with our Ash Wednesday and First Alive! meals as a full congregation.

On March 15th, we will be attending a speaking event at Carthage College featuring Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core. The event begins at 7pm and is held in the A.F. Siebert Chapel on Carthage's Campus. Please contact me, if you would like to join us or need a ride to the event.

On Saturday March 25th is our first volunteer day for the Saturday Sack Lunches program, all young adults interested in helping should meet Amanda at 10:30 to being making lunches in our kitchen.

Youth Group is planning on talent show for April 5th, to be held at Faith United Methodist church at 6:30pm. Please contact Scott if you have a young person who would like to share their gifts with our joint congregations.

The youth group (aka God's Cheeseheads) meetings for March are being held at Faith on March 1 and 15th at 6pm.

I wish you a blessed month and hope to see you along the way!

In His Love,
Amanda Schnaare
Family, Education and Nurture Ministry Coordinator
Ladymae13@aol.com

NEWS FROM THE NORTH SIDE FOOD PANTRY
Summary of 2016 Mission Activities and Results

First UMC contributed:

- 542 pounds of food items
- \$250.00 in cash donations
- 120 plus hours of service

Northside Served:

- 3,125 folds during the year. That's 1,142 households with 2,014 adults and 1,110 children.

We received:

- 12,638 pounds of food donations from our member churches.
- \$13,603.98 in cash donations from our group

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

745 Main Street

Racine, WI 53403-1211

and the community.

- 7,504 pounds of bakery and miscellaneous foodstuffs from Piggly Wiggly.

We spent: \$10,050.55 on purchased foods and \$2,200.00 on a new freezer.

Our current cash balance is approximately \$15,200.00.

Thank you to all our member churches for a very successful year!

David Brittig, Site Manager.

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The Mission of First United Methodist Church

- **To provide a place for people to experience God and find inspiration for daily living.**
- **To welcome all people as valued members of the**

community.

- **To encourage growth in faith and service on their spiritual journeys.**
- **To work for social justice.**
- **And to invite all to experience eternal life through Jesus Christ.**