

Dear United Church Congregation,

As we come to the First Sunday of Lent this weekend we will read the Beatitudes in Matthew. It may not have the same Lenten feel as Jesus' temptation in the wilderness readings in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but it certainly leads us to reflect on our faith and life throughout these 40 days. This reading can be compared to the first day of Lent (Ash Wednesday) or the first Sunday of Lent in that it is recognized enough to stand alone. Within these opening verses, Jesus has pronounced God's blessing upon the crowd gathered around him and beyond. To this day, churches from all traditions still center their life and mission around the Beatitudes. Like Ash Wednesday and this Sunday, however, the Beatitudes remain part of Jesus' larger lesson that we know as the Sermon on the Mount. And the Sermon on the Mount is intimately tied to Jesus' entire ministry and mission. As challenging as his lesson remains from that day, he did begin with blessing. And as confusing as some of these blessings seem because of being directed to people in very difficult situations in life, they were spoken out of love as a foundational and powerful revelation of God's love.

Join us for worship this Sunday at 8 and 9:30 a.m.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon: "The Blessing Problem"

Classes for all ages begin at 11 a.m.

All-Church Potluck will be at 12:15 p.m. in Graves Hall Boards will meet at 1 p.m. and the Executive Council meets at 2 p.m.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME begins this Sunday-- Spring forward!

Thursday Ecumenical Lenten programs begin next Thursday, from 6-8 p.m., beginning with a soup dinner in Graves Hall.

There are sign-up sheets to help set up and/or clean up.

There will also be a sign-up sheet to bring soup and bread on our day-- Thursday, March 21.

Christ's blessing throughout this Season of Lent- David