

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS



*GLASSBORO FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GUMWRAPPER
February 2018*

Sisters and Brothers,

Lent is coming! Are you excited? No? Okay, Lent doesn't get many people riled up. After all, it's about giving up coffee or chocolate or something else you love. I think that's where Lent gets a bad rap. Lent is about so much more than that! The 40-day period between Ash Wednesday (February 14th) and Holy Thursday (March 29th) is a time to turn intentionally toward God, toward the suffering of Christ, and toward the empty tomb and be in awe of our sinful state and God's greater love. So, if giving something up helps you do this, then do it! If you would rather add something to your day to do this, then add it! The point is to center our minds, our behavior, our whole selves on God in love and awe.

This Lenten season, we will be focusing on prayer as a way of drawing us closer to God in a series called "Praying with Power and Purpose." Each week we'll equip ourselves and learn to use different tools to build a more meaningful prayer life. I hope you'll join us in Sunday worship, in our small groups, and at our Wednesday night Bible study which will also include a "meager meal" at 6pm with the study at 7pm.

Another way we can draw closer to God is through giving to others. Our Lenten offering will be used to provide coats and shoes for the needy in our community. We ask that you consider giving toward this worthy cause and praying for those who will receive it. If you need an offering envelope please call the office at 856-881-3295 or email glassboromethodist1@comcast.net. You can also find info or on our website (glassboromethodist.org) and Facebook page (facebook.com/GlassboroUMC).

We are also working on a church-wide mission trip to Puerto Rico. If you want to go on the trip, support those going, or just find out more info, please come to a Puerto Rico briefing with Rev. Tom Lank on Monday, Feb. 12th at 7pm in the Fellowship House. Tom will share his experiences in PR, explain what we'll be doing there, and answer all your questions.

Whatever you do this Lenten season, may you come to a deeper, fuller, richer knowledge of Jesus Christ and God's redeeming love for you. Peace, Pastor John

P.S. Our Lenten service schedule is as follows:

- ***Ash Wednesday, 7pm***
- ***Holy Thursday dinner and communion in the Fellowship House, 6pm***
- ***Good Friday prayer and reflection in the sanctuary, 12pm-1pm***



The Delicate Shoots

Snowflake after snowflake glistens in white its beauty so bright. Its memory lingers pressed in pages of my mind.

Thoughts of Jesus, His word flowing steady bestowing a blanket of truth so white. Truth trickling down its path so sure, nourishing to life each new letter root. Its vines spreading sharing their fruits. Creates, restores and births each new precious shoot.

Watered in love, glistening in white sturdy new shoots flooded in truth. Delicate looking as snowflakes are they but with the foundation to withstand furious strong winds. In His word they will grow and accumulate and thrive banding together as one. A mountain range of snow His people, His army will be. Far reaching, all encompassing, everlasting in Him we will be.

Penned by the late Ann Palmer



Ash Wednesday prayer

Merciful God, you called us forth from the dust of the earth; you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism. Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days bearing the mark of ashes, and bless our journey through the desert of Lent to the font of rebirth. May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.

—Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers

Meeting needs

“My neighbor’s material needs are my spiritual needs,” said 19th-century theologian Israel Salanter. In other words, when someone else suffers hunger and poverty, when people endure a natural disaster and lack shelter, when another human being is sick or injured — in all such cases, God calls us to action. And God knows that whatever we do to meet those material needs will meet our spiritual needs at the same time.

It might be our spiritual need to expand our horizons into neighborhoods, cultures or situations where we’re uncomfortable. We might need to grow in love for people different from us. By serving others, we might find our own sagging spirits nurtured with a sense of well-being or even joy. And as we reach out to help, surely we’ll notice others doing the same thing, and our spiritual need for renewed faith will be met. —Heidi Mann

“What Do I Have?”

What do I have, Lord, that you would need me as a servant?

Eyes, he said,
to see the beauty in all that I’ve made —
and my children as they travel life’s highway.

Hands, he said,
to reach out and touch hurting souls,
to give a hug or encouraging pat on the back.

Feet, he said,
to lead my children through this world of strife
and to help them run from sin and follow me.

Mouth, he said,
to lift up your voice and sing praises to me
so others may hear the joy in your heart.

Ears, he said,
to listen to my still, small voice of love
and to hear my children when they cry for help.

Heart, he said,
so you may know the full love of my Spirit
and love my children as I have loved you.

—Thomas Butler

A heavenly focus

“Why are not our hearts continually set on heaven?” asks 17th-century pastor and author Richard Baxter. Focusing on heaven stirs our faith, guards against temptation, eases suffering and makes us an encouragement to others, Baxter says. He urges: “Bend thy soul to study eternity, busy thyself about the life to come ... and let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe thyself in heaven’s delights.”





10 biblical ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting. “To answer before listening — that is folly and shame” (Proverbs 18:13).
2. Speak without accusing. “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).
3. Give without selfishness. “The righteous give without sparing” (Proverbs 21:26).
4. Pray without ceasing. “We have not stopped praying for you” (Colossians 1:9).
5. Answer without arguing. “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife” (Proverbs 17:1).
6. Share without pretending. “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of ... Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
7. Enjoy without complaining. “Do everything without grumbling or arguing” (Philippians 2:14).
8. Trust without wavering. “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:7).
9. Forgive without punishing. “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).
10. Promise without forgetting. “A longing fulfilled is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12).

—From various websites; all Scriptures NIV



The limited power of ashes

“The cross, with which the ashes are traced upon us, is the sign of Christ’s victory over death,” wrote Thomas Merton. “The words ‘Remember that thou art dust and that to dust thou shalt return’ are not to be taken as the quasi-form of a kind of ‘sacrament of death’ ... It might be good stoicism to receive a mere reminder of our condemnation to die, but it is not Christianity.”

Perhaps we should structure Ash Wednesday worship with the imposition of ashes early on. Then their dusty symbolism can be supplanted by the forgiveness-flavored bread and wine of Holy Communion. Yet even if the service you attend is laid out differently, remember that ashes mark you only temporarily. Jesus’ resurrection — and the empty cross of victory — assures you already of everlasting life, which begins now.



FAMILY PROMISE is a ministry of our church. We are the support church for St. Thomas Episcopal Church. St. Thomas will again be hosting February 18 - 24. If you can assist by providing a meal, driving the van (morning or evening) from the Center on Ellis St. to St. Thomas, or as an evening host or overnight host, please contact Audeen.

THIS LENTEN SEASON, we will be focusing on prayer as a way of drawing us closer to God in a series called “Praying with Power and Purpose.” Each week we’ll equip ourselves and learn to use different tools to build a more meaningful prayer life. Please join us in Sunday worship, in our small groups, and at our Wednesday night Bible study (starting February 21) which will also include a “meager meal” at 6pm with the study at 7PM.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the VBS Volunteer Kickoff Party on Sunday, February 25th at 12:00PM in the Fellowship House. Learn more about how you can get involved and all the great things we have planned! Lunch will be provided! See you there!



2018 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - Information on scholarships are available from the Greater NJ Annual Conference on the table under the TV in the Narthex. All scholarship applications must be postmarked by March 31, 2018.



A huge THANK YOU to Paul Conklin for his many years of service as Financial Secretary!

(Here shown are Pastor John Inverso, Paul Conklin, and Robert Wooton)

Thanks to Donna Mickle who has graciously stepped up to take this position!

GIFT CARDS & AND HOAGIE TICKETS

The Finance Team will have gift cards available in the Narthex for Shoprite, Acme, Bed Bath & Beyond, the Blooming Group (Outback, Carrabba's, Bonefish Grill), Staples and the Darden Group (Olive Garden and Longhorn) on the first Sunday of each month. Checks payable to the Church are preferred, but cash is acceptable. The UMW are offering Heritage's Hoagie tickets on the first Sunday of each month outside of the Memorial Room after each service; tickets are

\$6.50 each which includes hoagie and beverage of choice. Thank you for supporting the mission programs of the United Methodist Women.

CHURCH MISSION TRIP TO PUERTO RICO – Coming soon! Please keep an eye on the bulletin for more details.

GIVING STATEMENTS for 2017 and your 2018 pledge information are on a table in the Narthex. Please take yours.

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The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

New Disciples • Vital Congregations • Transformed World

Our Prayer:

Most holy and gracious Creator,

Humbly we give thanks for you, a worker of wonders, a giver of life, the creator of us all. Thank you for reaching into the deep rich dark soil, for gathering gorgeous red clay, for taking handfuls of tan sand, and for gathering the warm brown earth to create your people. We are wonderfully made, each race, every person of every color reflects your image. Thank you for making us different and the same, for making us unique and like everyone else. Creator forgive us for hatred and bigotry. It is a sign of the continual struggle between good and evil, between honoring you as the creator and making the world after our own image. Give us the strength to love like you. Through Christ Jesus who taught us this same love we pray. Amen.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This Sunday and throughout the week, I call upon every congregation and disciple of Jesus Christ to give thanks for the Creator who made heaven and earth and every hue of humanity. I especially want you to give thanks for all people and their country of origin, especially for those in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.



I have had the opportunity to visit eight countries in Africa and several in Latin America and the Caribbean. I have always been warmly received and found people to be just like those of us in the United States. Some are rich and some are poor but they are all people who are ambitious, hopeful and wanting prosperity, education, security and well-being for themselves and their family.

I have also seen and experienced the deep struggles some of these nations have faced including multiple years of drought and natural disasters, years of colonialism and dominance by other nations, racism and stereotyping. In the midst of these challenges, in my visits I received generous hospitality, was inspired by boundless hope and resilience and witnessed a deep desire to continue to improve, much like I find here in our own nation.

I will never forget an experience in Zimbabwe on one of my trips. One of the pastors traveling with me was invited to share a meal at the home of a Zimbabwean pastor following worship. They had a delightful chicken dinner. It was only after the meal, the American pastor found out that the Zimbabwean family had only two chickens and chose to butcher one to share for the dinner with their American guest. So, I call upon all church people, all civic leaders, all leaders of nations, rather than disparaging one another, rather than seeing ourselves as superior, rather than cheapening others, ourselves and our Creator by making hateful and harmful remarks about one another, to give thanks for our Creator recognizing we are wonderfully made. I call all of us to work together and to honor the Creator by honoring one another.

Today, I call you to prayer and to action. I call you to prayerfully change hearts and to act in concert with our Creator honoring every race, creed and people as a gift to be treated with dignity and equality. I call you to stand up when you witness injustice and anything that is not of God, and to let your voice be heard and your actions to be a testimony of the way of Jesus Christ.

Today, I also give thanks for the United Methodists of Greater New Jersey. You are a witness to others in our communities and throughout the world that we can serve together and honor one another. Our diversity makes our witness stronger. Our five largest congregations are ethnic congregations, we speak nine languages on a Sunday morning, we have more than 150 multicultural congregations and more than 100 cross racial appointments. You have already blessed the Creator with such a powerful witness. Thank you.

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey



A NEW COMMANDMENT

In John 13:34, Jesus offers important instructions for his followers.

Directions: Figure out the pattern in each vertical line of letters. Then add the next letter in the sequence to the blank underneath, completing John 13:14, NIV.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCD...

F L S Y F K Y X E I Q B V O O J F
 H M T A I L A Y H K R D Y P S M G
 J N U C L M C Z K M S F B Q W P H

E X M B C L M B U V F R P L V F R
 F Y P C F M P C X W I S Q M W I S
 G Z S D I N S D A X L T R N X L T

A R J Q C C S B F K Y X H L Q B Y I
 E S M R F G T C I L A Y J M R D A L
 I T P S I K U D L M C Z L N S F C O

JOHN 13:34, NIV



heart sandwich

Show your love by making someone this heartfelt snack on Valentine's Day.

What you need:

- 2 slices of bread
- 2 heart-shaped cookie cutters (one large, one small)
- Lunchmeat and cheese (or peanut butter and jelly)

What you do:

1. Cut a large heart out of each slice of bread.
2. Cut a small heart from the middle of one big heart.
3. With the small cookie cutter, make several heart shapes out of the meat and cheese. Place between the bread slices.
4. If you're using peanut butter and jelly, spread both onto the large, solid heart. Then place the slice with the small heart cutout on top.

Answer: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34, NIV

