



The Good Tidings

Arena Congregational Church

March 2017

CELEBRATING OUR PAST-EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

Affiliated with the Wisconsin Congregational Association

Thoughts from here and there...What Do You Think of Lent?

After Sunday school in a Methodist church, a mother asked her three-year-old boy what they had studied that day.

"We talked about Lent," the boy replied. "Lent is the stuff between your toes after you take your socks off."¹

Lent is more than lint. Lent gives you time to prepare for Easter. Lent is a time for an introspective look at life. Where are you in your Christian experience? What is it that you might do to develop a clear and more powerful relation to Jesus?



In an article by Bob Smietana - Facts and Trends titled "Eat, Pray, Lent: Here's What Americans Actually Abstain From"²

Nearly 3 in 10 evangelical believers now observe the season before Easter.

During the season of Lent, some Americans give up chocolate or alcohol. Others dump guilty pleasures like social media or binge-watching television.

But most abstain from Lent itself.

Three-quarters of Americans (76%) say they don't typically observe Lent, according to a new survey from LifeWay Research.

During a family dinner, Nancy Whitley said "my four-year-old granddaughter Madelyn Anne announced, 'I gave up chocolate for Lent.'"³

Later that evening, Madelyn asked if I had any candy. "Yes, I do," I replied. "I have some M&Ms."

Her face lit up in anticipation, but quickly changed to a pout when her older sister Amanda reminded her of her promise.

Madelyn thought for a second, then shrugged her shoulders and said, "Well, I'll just have to give up Lent."

¹ Out of the mouths of God's kids, quoted in Fellowship of Merry Christians, The Joyful Noiseletter, March 2006. Used with permission

² <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2017/february/eat-pray-lent-what-americans-actually-abstain-from.html>

³ Nancy Whitley, Memphis, Tennessee, ChristianityToday.com Connection Newsletter (HTML) [connection.html@lists.christianitytoday.com]

Giving up Lent is a possibility but then you may give up something that will be helpful for your spiritual development. Try giving up criticism. Exchange criticism for compliments. Try giving up procrastination. Exchange procrastination for doing what needs to be one in a timely manner. Give up sleeping in on Sunday mornings. Exchange this for being in worship. There are probably more exchanges that you can think of and apply in life.

Giving up something for Lent may be an exercise in self-discipline.

Giving up something for Lent may be beneficial in restoring or maintaining good health.

Giving up something for Lent may produce an active and satisfactory life.

It is worth a try.

SERMON



SCHEDULE

Sermons for March

March 1, Ash Wednesday, Women's History Month: Lessons: Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, Sermon Title: God's Chosen Fast

There is a time and place for initiating a fast. God asks for a fast but not from food. What does God expect?

March 5, First Sunday In Lent: Lessons: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19, Sermon Title: Playing God

March 12, Second Sunday In Lent, , Girl Scout Sunday Daylight Savings Time Begins: Lessons: Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, Sermon Title: Move On

March 19, Third Sunday In Lent: Lessons: Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:5-42, Sermon Title: Water-Water

March 26, Fourth Sunday In Lent, (One Great Hour of Sharing): Lessons: Psalm 23; John 9:1-41, Sermon Title: Sight and Insight

April 2, Fifth Sunday In Lent, Communion Sunday:

Lessons: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11,
Sermon Title: Dry Bones Live

Ezekiel cried, "Dem dry bones!"

Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk aroun'

"Oh, hear the word of the Lord."



Special Days in the Secular and Church Calendar

Mark Your Calendar! March, Woman's History Month

March 1, Ash Wednesday

March 3, World Day of Prayer

March 3, Employee Appreciation Day

March 5, (S), First Sunday in Lent

March 12, (S), Second Sunday In Lent, Daylight Savings Time Begins, Girl Scout Sunday

March 17, St. Patrick's Day

March 19, (S), Third Sunday in Lent

March 20, First Day of Spring

March 26, (S), Fourth Sunday in Lent, One Great Hour of Sharing

A Promise and A Prayer

A Promise

"The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever," (Isaiah 32:17, NRSV).



A Thought

From the beginning to the end of human history, Jesus Christ can be all that these words express, if we accept Christ's invitation to, "Come to me, all you that are

weary and are carrying heavy burdens...learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls," (Matthew 11:28-29, NRSV). Christ is to his people life and strength, calmness and power, wisdom and holiness.

A Prayer

I am prone to worry, O God, and anxious because of my concerns for my life and safety. Help me to unburden myself by sharing my concerns and anxieties with you. Help me to learn of and from Jesus how to live in such a way that I can find peace and rest. Amen.

Spotlight on the Family

Spiritual Training Ideas¹



We want to pass on spiritual values to our children. But how? Encourage your child's spiritual growth with these everyday ideas.

READ BOOKS: Look for books with strong moral, social, or spiritual messages. For example, teach children about kindness and compassion by reading *The Diary of Ann Frank* or *the Velveteen Rabbit*. Or help them recognize vanity by reading about *King Midas*. Avoid books that send messages about revenge, unhealthy competition, or violence.

(Continued on [page 3](#))

¹ Victor Parachin, "Spiritual Training Ideas," © Children's Ministry, Vol. 4, No.1 (March/April 1994), 45. Used by Permission.



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THE GOOD TIDINGS is a monthly publication of the Arena Congregational Church, 383 Oak St., PO Box 125, Arena, WI 53503-0125.

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LOOK AT NATURE: Impress children with the grandeur and variety of God's creation. Take a short hike to a nearby park. Talk about new life in spring by looking at plants and leaves. Compare spring's newness to new life in Christ.

CELEBRATE SPECIAL DAYS: Offer a family prayer of thanks for each family member on her or his birthday. Or create your own celebration day such as *Kindness Day*. Encourage family members to practice kindness for that day. Then end the day with a festive meal at home or at a restaurant. Have family members report about the day's events.

VERBALIZE FAITH EXPRESSIONS: Talk about your faith. Start with these ideas: Say, "God helped us to be alert to danger," after seeing an accident or "God is so kind" when your child relates an experience. Also remind your child to pray for a sick friend's healing and recovery.

HAVE REGULAR DEVOTIONS: Keep it simple. When children get up, teach them to thank God for a new day and all the activities in it. In the evening, have your child pray for a good night's rest and thank God for the day's blessings.

TALK ABOUT GOD: Allow children to say whatever's on their minds about their faith. Don't shackle your

child's beliefs by saying, "It's wrong to believe that." Talk about your own relationship with God often.



Officers for 2017 - 2018

Governing Board

President: Jim Favreau, 753.2334

Vice-president: Joanne Brown, 753.2316

Treasurer: Steven Wilkinson, 753.2131

Clerk: Joe Hodgson, 753.2520

Financial Secretary: Ray Johnson, 753.2845

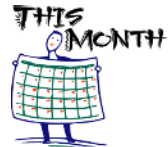
Church Secretary: Steve Wilkinson, 753.2131

Officers

Sunday School Superintendent, Karen Wilkinson, 753.2131

Choir Director, Leslie Shultz, 574.0707

Head Usher Jim Favreau, 753.2334 and Ray Johnson, 753.2845



Meetings

Governing Board: Second Monday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.

Men's Breakfast: Third Saturday, March 18, 7:30 a.m., at Grandma Mary's.

Greeters

March 5 - Joyce Reimann

(Continued on [page 4](#))

Recipe of the Month

Inside Out Ravioli

From recipe files of Helga Shultz

16 ounces pasta	1 lb lean ground beef
1 10 ounce package frozen spinach	1 cup chopped onion
½ cup bread crumbs	2 cloves minced garlic
2 eggs, beaten	1 8 ounce can tomato sauce
¼ cup olive oil	1 6 ounce can tomato paste
1 ½ cups shredded Mozzarella cheese	1 16 ounce jar spaghetti sauce



Cook pasta in boiling salted water until al dente and drain.

Cook spinach according to direction on package.

Brown ground beef, chopped onion and garlic in large skillet.

Stir in the tomato sauce, the tomato paste and pasta sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Combine cooked spinach, cooked pasta, bread crumbs, shredded cheese, beaten eggs and olive oil.

Spread spinach mixture evenly into the bottom of a 9 X 13 inch baking dish. Top with meat mixture and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes.

P.S. You can also use sauteed fresh spinach.

I tried it on our family and they like it.

(Continued from [page 3](#))



- March 12 - Ray and Colleen and Family
- March 19 - Joe and Carol Hodgson
- March 26 - Judi Salava
- April 2 - Steve and Karen Wilkinson

Adult Bible Study, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.,

We are meeting at the home of Steve and Karen Wilkinson, 817 Brown St., Arena.



Our study is on World Religions from a Christian Perspective. Next we will be examining Popular Christianity.

These studies are informative and helpful in understanding World Religions. They also help us to better understand our own Congregational Christianity.

We will not meet on March 1.

Worship On Compact Disks

The Worship Services are recorded each week on a CD so that you may share in the fellowship and enjoyment of worship. If you would like to listen to a service to share the music, pray the prayers and learn from the sermon call either Steve Wilkinson, 7532131 or Pastor Shultz, 5740707 and a CD will be delivered to you. Let us know if you need a CD player.



Missions

We are supporting the Congregational Mission of Jardin America with a gift of \$40 a month through the missions program of the National Association of Congregational Christians. We also contribute \$50.00 a month to the Arena Food Pantry, and \$25.00 a month to the Food Pantry at the Spring Green Community Church. Thank you for your support of our local and foreign mission projects.



Something to Think About

“Unless you can create the WHOLE universe in 5 days, then perhaps giving “advice” to God, isn’t such a good idea!”¹³



Humor

A little boy named Bobby desperately wanted a new bicycle. His plan was to save his nickels, dimes and quarters until he finally had enough to buy a new 10-speed.

Each night he asked God to help him save his money. Kneeling beside his bed, he prayed, “Dear Lord, please help me save my money for a new bike, and please,

Lord, don’t let the ice cream man come down the street again tomorrow.”

(Lee Griess, *Taking The Risk Out Of Dying*)
PreachingNow [mailto:preaching.com]



A blonde was playing Trivial Pursuit one night. It was his turn. He rolled the dice and landed on “Science & Nature.”

His question was, “If you are in a vacuum and someone calls your name, can you hear it?”

He thought for a time and then asked, “Is it on or off?”

Received from Tim Stirmel, The Good, Clean Funnies List [mailto:gcf-info@gcfl.net]



A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women’s locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover.

The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, “What’s the matter? Haven’t you ever seen a little boy before?”



Ending his sermon, a preacher announced that he would preach on Noah and the Ark on the following Sunday, and gave the scriptural reference for the congregation to read ahead of time.

A couple of boys noticed something interesting about the placement of the story in the Bible. They slipped into the church and glued two pages of the pulpit Bible together.

The next Sunday, the preacher got up to read his text. “Noah took unto himself a wife,” he began, “and she was” - he turned the page to continue - “three hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high.”

He paused, scratched his head, turned the page back, read it silently, and turned the page again. Then he looked up at his congregation and said, “I’ve been reading this old Bible for near fifty years, but there are some things in it that are hard to believe.”

Pastor Tim [mailto:posts@cybersaltlists.org]



“It’s no use. Art doesn’t listen to me,” said a little boy who was praying for a new bike.

“Art who?” asked the boy’s mother.

“Art in heaven,” came the reply.

Beliefnet Religious Jokes
[mailto:BeliefnetReligiousJokes@partner.beliefnet.com]

Products Instructions and Warnings

On a bar of Dial soap: Directions: Use like regular soap.

On Teco's Tiramisu dessert: Do not turn upside down. (Printed on the bottom of the box.)

On Swedish chain saw: Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands.

On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding: Product will be hot after heating.

On a string of Chinese-made Christmas lights: For indoor or outdoor use only.

On some Swanson frozen dinners: Serving suggestion: Defrost.

On a hotel-provided shower cap in a box: Fits one head.

On a bag of Fritos: You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside.

On Boot's Children's Cough Medicine: Do not drive car or operate machinery.

The Good, Clean Funnies List [gcfl-info@gcfl.net]



The following was overheard at a recent high society party...

"My ancestry goes all the way back to Alexander the Great," said one lady. She then turned to a second woman and asked, "How far does your family go back?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "All of our records were lost in the flood."

The Good, Clean Funnies List [gcfl-info@gcfl.net]



Long, long ago an old Indian chief was about to die, so he called for Geronimo and Falling Rocks, the two bravest warriors in his tribe. The chief instructed each to go out and seek buffalo skins. Whoever returned with the most skins would be chief.

About a month later Geronimo came back with one hundred pelts; sadly, Falling Rocks never returned.

Today as you drive through the West you can see the evidence of love and devotion the tribe had for this brave. At nearly every mile marker there are signs saying, "Watch for Falling Rocks."

Received from Groaners list. The Good, Clean Funnies List [gcfl-info@gcfl.net]



Cards offering used textbooks for sale are posted on the college notice board at the beginning of each semester. One read: "Introduction to Psychology, \$8, never used." The card was signed, "Must sell."

The next day a note had been added: "Good price. Are you sure it's never been used?" Signed, "Prospective buyer."

Below in a different hand was: "Positive!" Signed, "Professor who graded his exam."

Pastor Tim [posts@cybersaltlists.org]

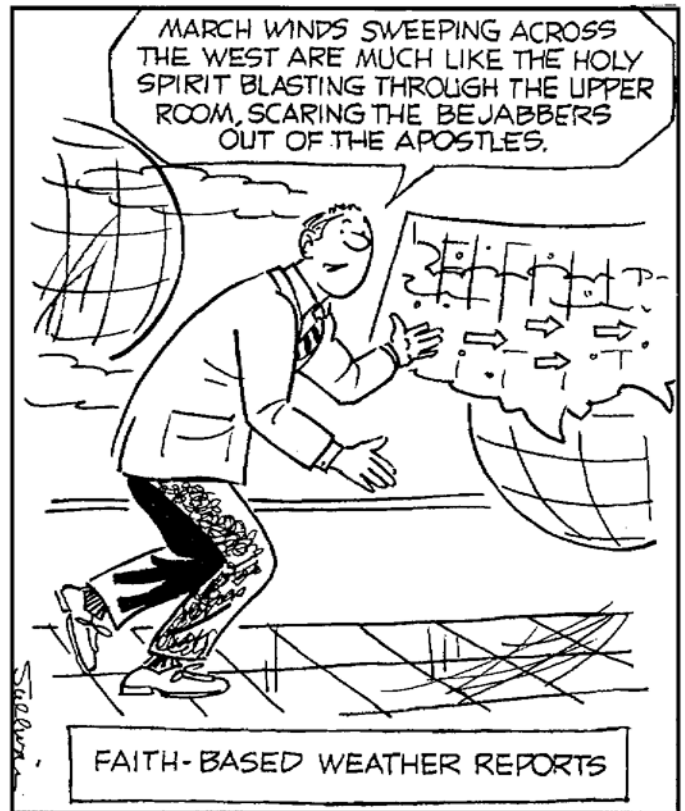


A out-of-towner in New York at the height of the tourist season decided to revisit an uptown restaurant he'd enjoyed on a previous trip to the city.

Finally catching the eye of an overworked waiter, he said, "You know, it's been over five years since I first came in here."

"You'll have to wait your turn, sir," replied the harried waiter. "I can only serve one table at a time."

Received from FranCMT2. The Good, Clean Funnies List [gcfl-info@gcfl.net]



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You are invited to attend the Ash Wednesday Service March 1, 6:30 p.m. We will not receive ashes, but create them. Each person will receive a slip of paper on which may be written something for which you would like God's forgiveness, or a troublesome area of your life for which you would ask God's help. We will put our requests in the old ceramic pot and burn them as symbols of forgiveness and cleansing.



We move the clocks ahead one hour ahead at 2:00 A.M. on March 12.



7:00 P. M. March 11.

Please watch for an announcement in the Church Bulletin or an Email that will reveal what the movie will be.

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