

According to Mark . . . March 2018

The Lenten season is upon us, and each year we try to figure out what that means for us individually. Let's remember that Lent is the preparation for Easter through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial. Some of us do all of these, or some of these. And our current national political leaders do none of these. What is a good example to follow? What are we to do?

Let's remember to not do anything crazy or dangerous. So if you want to fast, that's fine, but not if you're on medication or you've decided this is a way to jump-start a long awaited diet plan. If we want to pray, OK, but think about this as something that is regular and outside yourself---not asking for more this or that's. The point is, in our age of consumerism and facebook posting all our little achievements in hoping that we'll get a tiny thumbs-up by dozens of others, that we should look to be finding ways to reflect on how our lives are not our own.

So let's remember that purpose of Lent is to be mindful of Christ's sacrifices for US...not to figure out a feel-good way that will diminish that intent. That our lives are God's and not ours. That we come to faith humbly and in a way that honors all that we have...and acknowledge that we have enough. And while that includes all that stuff that we see around us, let's also know that it includes those to whom we can reach out and befriend, if we only made the effort. We are not alone in our journey, though it seems that way. We are connected and together, just as the disciples were a group, so we are a group finding our way through the wilderness of temptations and knowing, finally, that our needs have always been tended by our Good Shepherd. And then we see the flyer in the paper for the President's Day sale, the St Patrick's Day special, or actually go shopping on Easter Sunday for new clothes, new furniture, new cars to get the deal of a lifetime.

We are full of contradictions, we creatures of God. We are too easily distracted, and value our money too much. We spread it far and wide on bangles and beads, and forget the poor, the underprivileged, and the Church's work in the world that should be as important to our souls as our health club memberships, or soccer league fees, or any number of other charities we support.

This month's newsletter reflects TCC's work in the world, but it only goes as far as we are willing to give alms. To take some of the abundance of our lives and direct it into God's work as we strive to become a community church that reaches out to everyone. So as we think about how we can serve God for Lent, let's think about how we can support God's purposes through what we do at TCC. Do the Trything thing. Try just a little bit with time, talent, and treasure. Give to the Birthday Fund. Clean out the attic for the auction. Come and teach Sunday School during March. Attend a bible study. Or come see me during office hours and let's catch up, and I'll pray with and for each of you who does so. TCC is our faith home. And it demands sacrifice from each of us. Let's start treating it that way, as our Lenten devotion. And for THAT solace and presence in our lives, thanks be to God.

Pastor Mark