

## Pastor's Page—March 2017

Whether it comes in like a lion or a lamb, March will be full of opportunities for reflection and involvement at First Congregational United Church of Christ.

Lent officially begins this year on March 1 with Ash Wednesday and spans 40 days, not including Sundays. It is a time when many Christians throughout the world prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. The purpose of Lent is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial and resurrection. It is observed as a season of soul-searching and repentance, a season for reflection and taking stock in preparation for the joy of Easter.



The Bible does not mention a specific custom of Lent, but the practice of repentance and mourning in ashes is found in 2 Samuel 13:19; Esther 4:1; Job 2:8; Daniel 9:3; and Matthew 11:21.

In the modern Christian church, we often choose to give up the comfort of a favorite food, drink, or habit in order to gain a better understanding of our Savior's suffering and temptation. By observing the forty days of Lent in this way, we seek in some small way to imitate Jesus' forty-day withdrawal into the temptation of the wilderness. Lent is a journey without which we would not be prepared to experience the joyous event of the Easter resurrection.

Our weekly observance of Lent will begin with an Ash Wednesday service at 6:30pm on March 1—following the Mission Board's "Squash Hunger" squash soup kickoff dinner.

Then on the remaining Wednesdays through April 5, you are invited to participate in a brief reflective Lenten service at 5:30pm in the chapel, concluding the series with a Maundy Thursday service on April 13 (also at 5:30pm). The services will last no longer than 30 minutes, which will allow for chimes, choir, and/or board meetings afterward, so bring your entire family and help make these gatherings a successful and meaningful time for all.

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*