

# THE LENT CHALLENGE

There have been many versions of this that have been done, but one that sticks in my mind is to take an empty box and fill it with one item of non-perishable food each day for the 40 days of Lent and then take the full box of food to your local food pantry. For those of you who are looking to start “de-cluttering” your homes, what a better opportunity than this. Lent is a time of praying, fasting and almsgiving and of course walking with Jesus on his journey to the Cross. Lent started on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 26th) and ends on Thursday April 9th. Won't you join us?

## 40 DAYS - 40 ITEMS

Instead of giving up something for Lent this year,  
why not try the **40 days - 40 items challenge?**

Each day of Lent, remove one item from your house,  
which you don't use or wear anymore and place it in a  
bag. At the end of Lent, donate these items to a  
charity shop or to a homeless shelter.

They'll be shared with those who really need them!

**#40Days40Items**



## FAMILY MATTERS

Where can you find excited youth, delicious food, lots of fun, and caring adults? At church on Wednesday evenings!! 112 different adults and youth have attended at least one Family Matters event. WOW!! The evening is started with a circle prayer and then a yummy kid-oriented meal. Songs, new and familiar, are sung with a mini-worship following. The 6-7th graders and senior high school students head upstairs for discussion and of course gaga ball. The “young-uns” as we call them watch a video lesson and finish the evening with games and/or crafts.

The jr and sr high students attended the Todd Becker program on February 5th. Valentines were made by the younger students and delivered to Stone Hearth Estates on February 12th. In March only three meeting nights will be held; the 4th, 18th and 25th. Because of Spring Break at school, no Family Matters will be held on March 11.

## MARCH BIRTHDAY'S

- 1— Lynnette Stevens
- 2— Valerie Anderson
- 4— Kevin Hinds
- 8— Marc Bartlett, Nan Ostendorf, Charlene Sawyer
- 9— Sam Sabin
- 11— Kyle Johnson
- 13— Gene Bosch
- 14— Helen Mak, Scott Bartels
- 18— Roxanne (Johnson) Ritz
- 19— Isaac Edson, Matt Sell, Janet Vass, Stu Simmons
- 20— Wendy Ristine, Kayden Foster
- 21— Amber Burge, Chase Ostergard, Wally Trimble
- 23— Susan O’Keefe
- 26— Claire Edson
- 27— Brylee Koubek, Carol VanOverbeke
- 29— Tim Greenlee, Ashley Groene, Matt Weiss
- 30— Richard Larson





# Pastor's Perspective

I was driving to Kearney on Ash Wednesday, early in the morning; while it was early, it was late enough that I did not have to drive with the sun sitting on the horizon as I often do (poor planning to always be driving eastward in the mornings and westward as the sun sets). I was going to Kearney because I had been invited to offer ashes to the pastors in our district at the Gateway District Office. Coincidentally, a member of our congregation was in the hospital in Kearney as well, so it seemed a blessing to be able to care for several things in one trip. What I did not know about was the surprise blessing in the drive itself.

Shortly after I had joined the truck traffic on I-80, I looked up in the sky. Above me flew hundreds of birds, all in that powerful “V” formation that helps the birds fly such great distances. I pulled over to the side of the road to watch the drama of this amazing flight of birds (Sandhill Cranes, geese and ducks) that happens every year in our area as we draw close to spring. What a gift it is that we have this amazing migration as part of our annual ritual! I forget that Gothenburg sits just on the edge of the Sandhill Cranes migratory route—until I take to highway and can see the birds at a great distance, dozens of V-formation flocks flying all at once. It is truly an amazing sight.



The gift of my drive on Ash Wednesday was the reminder of the power of gathering together and of working together. This is part of the reason why there is great wisdom and value in worshipping as a community of believers. In the earliest days of Christianity, the community was crucial. There were not only shared values but shared practices as well, and these practices gave the Followers of Jesus a recognizable identity. When people began to define a particular practice as “Christian”, it became a shaping force. In spite of the great American propensity for wanting an individualized approach to our relationship with God, we also recognize the powerful pull of a communal practice that is repeated.

Lent and Ash Wednesday offer us some opportunities to experience these practices—or rituals as they are often named in religious circles. We mark this time as “set aside” for a special relationship between us and God, a time to change some of our regular behaviors in order to spend more time and attention on God. Ash Wednesday, with its distinctive mark on our foreheads or hands, begins this season of 40 days (not counting Sundays) that lead up to the celebration of Easter. Communion and Easter celebrations are also such repeating practices that tie us into the cycle of the church year and the cycle of life

Repeated practices and rituals help us stay focused on what is important. For the birds stopping by in Nebraska each spring, it is time to rest, refresh, and refuel for the rest of the journey and the continuation of their species. For Christians, the season of Lent provides us with a similar time on our journey of faith. I invite you during this season of Lent to look for spiritual practices and rituals that can help deepen your relationship with God and with others on the similar journey. And this year, may the sight of birds in the air remind you of the power of “flying in formation” that gives strength to those with whom you travel. God bless us all in this holy season! Pastor Jamie



## Mark your Calendars!



### RETIRED PERSONS LUNCH BUNCH



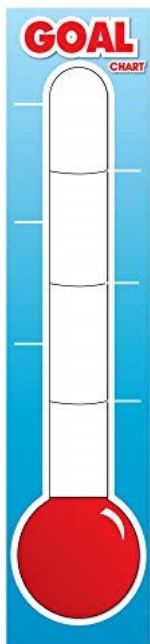
It is time for the wearing of the green. We will be doing this on Wednesday, March 4th. The Lunch Bunch Retirement Group will meet at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. If you have a desire for corn beef and cabbage, now is your chance to try your culinary skills. Or maybe have some other Irish dish you want to share. The food and fellowship will be awesome so come join us for a grand time.

### LOOKING FOR BOOKS

Celebrate Recovery is working on a library for A New Hope at the church and A New Hope jail ministry. If you have any Christian devotionals or books for helping heal hurts, we would appreciate them. The inmates are asking for devotionals, journals and Bibles.

### FUNDS FOR A FURNACE

Fundraising has begun to help cover the cost of a new compressor and other repairs for the unit that supplies our fellowship hall with climate control. Our goal is to raise \$9,999 which will cover the cost of the new compressor and then give us some "left over" to save for a new unit...because that is coming!! These units are old and in need of attention, so if you want to donate to the cause, please mark "furnace" on the memo line of your preferred donation method and help us raise the temperature on the thermometer and track the progress in the Narthex!! If you have any questions about this please contact any member of the Trustees.



www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org

USA  
MENTAL HEALTH

Sometimes, first aid isn't a **bandage**, or **CPR**, or the **Heimlich**, or calling **911**.

Sometimes, first aid is **YOU!**

Someone you know could be experiencing a mental illness or crisis. You can help them. You are more likely to encounter someone — friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, or member of the community — in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. Mental Health First Aid teaches a 5-step action plan to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self help care. Anyone can take the 8-hour Mental Health First Aid course — first responders, students, teachers, leaders of faith communities, human resources professionals, and caring citizens.

Sometimes, the best first aid is you. Take the course, save a life, strengthen your community.

ALGEE: the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Questions? Contact Shannon at 308-534-6029 ext1152.

"This project was supported in whole or part, from state and federal funds received from the Division of Behavioral Health of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services."

Adult Mental Health First Aid Training will be held at the Church on Saturday March 28th from 8 am to 5 pm (lunch from 12-1 on your own). There is no cost to take this training and it is approved for DHHS Childcare Licensing hours. Pick up a registration form at the church and register by Monday March 23, 2020. Sponsored by Region II Human Services.