

## The Reverend's Ruminations

**LENT**...contrary to popular belief it is not found in your bellybutton or under your refrigerator!?! Or is it? In the literal sense of course, I'm playing with a child's humorous misinterpretation of a Sunday school teacher's pronunciation (particularly in the south). But then again, what *does* come to your mind when you think about the church season of Lent? Perhaps a period of personal "navel-gazing" as you examine your habits and beliefs, or a season of self-denial as you gaze longingly into the fridge at snacks you swore off until Easter?

Lent, after all, is a time in which all of us as Christians are called to draw ourselves into the story of Jesus' expanding ministry and the controversy it caused with the religious authorities of his day. It is observed as a season of soul-searching and repentance—a season for reflection and taking stock in preparation for Easter. 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' 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.

Each Wednesday evening during the season of Lent you are invited to pause in your busy week to sing, pray, and share in some additional thoughts on the scriptures leading us toward Easter. Ash Wednesday will begin the season on March 6 in the sanctuary, followed each week by short Lenten services at 6:00pm in the chapel (unless we outgrow the space). I hope you will invite a friend or neighbor and come as you are to get a little boost midway through your week!



As most of you know, I recently returned from a two-week adventure in Norway with the Minnesota National Guard. It was an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience that included cross country skiing, winter camping, dog sledding, historical and cultural tours, and lots of great food. It was also a wonderful opportunity to learn more about my Norwegian heritage and interact with many new friends. Among the many highlights were visits to several beautiful churches which made our 150-year anniversary seem like just a drop in the proverbial bucket. One of the most revered among them is Stiklestad Church, completed in 1180 over the site on which King (later Saint) Olaf II was slain during a famous battle in 1030. I also had the honor to share in leading worship and communion with one of the Norwegian Home Guard chaplains at Værnes Church, near the base where we stayed outside of Trondheim. The Værnes Church, one of the oldest in Norway, was completed in 1109! I look forward to sharing more about my journey in the coming weeks.

Yours in Christ's service,

*Rev. Cory Germain*



Stiklestad Church



Skiing at Haltdalen Training Center



Communion at Værnes Church

(Photo by Kristian Kapelrud, Norwegian Armed Forces)