



Dear FPC Family,

The season of Lent is just around the corner beginning March 6th with Ash Wednesday. Most of the year we live abundant lives in comfort. Lent is a season where the church enters into a 40 day period of preparation for Easter. It is a time of fasting, penitence, and spiritual reflection. Some Christians choose to give up something they enjoy for Lent, and some choose to take something on. Churches often simplify their worship, refrain from using the word halleluiah/alleluia, and a few choose not use flowers.

Whatever we choose to do this Lenten season, let us consider sackcloth and ashes for our 40 day spiritual journey into the desert. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (Ecc.3:1).” Rather than uninterrupted days lived as usual, for a short time we are asked to make one change in our lives that will remind us of our own sin and total dependence on God. We live and worship with great joy throughout the year because of Christ. We must be careful not to step over the cross on our way to the joy of the resurrection. Lent is a time when we are called to faithfully turn toward...death.

We cringe at the very thought, but this does not simply mean we consider our own mortality. In a sense it means that we bury a part of ourselves for a short time—a comfort, a security, or an insecurity. Whatever we choose to take up for Lent, or set aside, it seems rather trivial in the shadow of the cross. We will not be mocked and stripped of our clothing. None of us must carry the heavy load of a cross, and not one of us will die. That has already been done by God. As sinful and deserving as we are, as a whole and as individuals, all that left is to *remember* and choose our path carefully.

As Jesus walked to the cross, he must have looked so small and fragile, broken and alone, certainly not strong or powerful. For a short time, let us walk alongside him with our hands unclenched and open to God. Let us fall in step, with our small burdens and little sacrifices. For a short time, we will enter a wilderness, giving up part of our comforts or giving of ourselves in new ways. In so doing we are turning towards the cross and looking into the places we fear; places that remind us even more than the ashes on our foreheads that we are indeed dust, and to dust we will return. May this season of Lent prepare each of us to be a site of resurrection so we can truly be a resurrection people.

Grace and Peace,
Natasha

This Week’s Daily Bible Readings

<i>Sustained by God’s Word of Prayer</i>			Wednesday	March 6	Psalm 32
Sunday	March 3	Psalm 27	Thursday	March 7	Psalm 35
Monday	March 4	Psalm 30	Friday	March 8	Psalm 38
Tuesday	March 5	Psalm 31	Saturday	March 9	Psalm 39