

Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | March 2021

WHY LENT? WHY NOW?

Welcome to the new e-news monthly newsletter. We are so glad to be able to provide all our members and friends with helpful news and information which will strengthen our "Lenten Connections" long beyond this current season of Lent! We began our 40 days of Lent, (not including the 6 Sundays) with a Drive-Thru Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. While the ashes are an ancient practice, our UCC churches came to it rather recently. For instance, the UCC's Book of Worship, first published in 1986, says, in the introduction to the Ash Wednesday resources, "While the imposition of ashes is not widely used in the tradition of the United Church of Christ..." No wonder I don't remember doing the ashes when I was a kid!

Easter was the first and original Christian holiday. The earliest followers of Jesus began to worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, because that was the day they recalled Jesus' resurrection. Every time they gathered on a Sunday morning; it was a little Easter. Then, once a year they would celebrate a Great Easter. Over several decades, as the church developed and spread to new cities and towns, (continued on page 2)



Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod
Pastor, First Congregational Church

Church Address: 131 N. Webster Street
Port Washington, Wisconsin

Email: pastorscott@portucc.org

Website: portucc.org

Church Phone: 262.284.2022

Cell Phone: 262.903.0449



The words of our Church Covenant proclaim:

*Depending upon the teachings and life of Jesus for inspiration and guidance,
we promise to seek to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind,
and to love our neighbors as ourselves.*

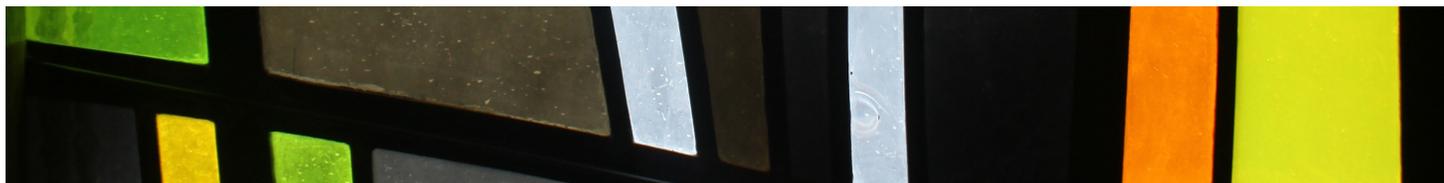
WHY LENT? WHY NOW? continued...

a tradition began around baptizing new gentile converts on Easter. To ensure they were ready to join the church, the community developed a 40-day period of preparation for baptism. Just like Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days in preparation for his public ministry, the newly converted were prepared to enter the church membership. Often the whole church would join them in their fasting and special prayerful preparations and instruction, and so by 325 C.E. the liturgical season of Lent was officially recognized.

Because these liturgical seasons were not, strictly speaking, biblically mandated, many of our protestant churches moved away from observing them after the Reformations of the 16th Century. But in the 20th Century ecumenical movements (which gave birth to the United Church of Christ), churches like ours rediscovered their richness and have incorporated them back into our regular seasonal calendar.

I do hope you enjoy the worship services on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and find them meaningful during this special time of year. I look forward to celebrating Easter next month, April 4th, even if it must remain online only. Hopefully, if the infection rates for Covid-19 continue to fall and the vaccination rates continue to increase, we'll be able to join together in person on a Sunday morning before too long.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Scott



THIS MONTH'S SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

March 7

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

March 14

Numbers 21:4-9

John 3:14-21

March 21

Jeremiah 31:31-34

John 12:20-33

March 28

Mark 11:1-11

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1-11