

## *The Pastors Connection*

Feb. 2014

### **Lent Practices and Abundant Life**

*“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set his face towards Jerusalem.” John 9:51*

*“I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly” John 1:14*

The past years we shaped Lent worship to reflect on Christ’s journey “*setting his face towards Jerusalem.*” It honors Christ to recall his strength to not exercise his option of escaping the cross knowing what awaited him. It deepens our capacity to face our suffering without turning away from him. It enlarges our appreciation of resurrection life.

Today I call us to reflect upon Christ doing this work in obedience to His Father, but also “*that we might have life, and have it abundantly.*”

By reading gospel accounts we sense some of the trauma Jesus faced at Calvary. They describe wrestling till he sweated blood in Gethsemane, brutal beatings, and eventual death on a Roman cross. Any who have watched movies like “The Passion of Christ” can feel the immense sacrifice Jesus made to earn our salvation.

Do we stop to recognize Christ’s motivation was ***our abundant life?***

I wonder how badly ***we*** want abundant life. Do we go after healing for old wounds? Are we willing to trade in sweet dreams of revenge for the sweeter reality of being set free? When we don’t forgive, bitterness enslaves us. Biblical forgiveness releases the matter to Jesus entrusting him to judge. That is when we find freedom!

Worship Planning Team has again affirmed using Leader magazine resources with this year’s theme of “*Encountering God, what are we witnessing?*” It meshes beautifully with our Lord’s 2014 promise to CMC that “Honest Sharing Will Strengthen Faith.”

Something new we envision beginning March 9 is to offer a five week “Light Lent Lunch” during Sunday’s not already scheduled for fellowship meal. We will keep it simple with no pressure to participate. Some persons have other plans. Some prefer eating at home. Some prefer a restaurant. But others may delight in connection!

We picture those wanting to participate finding seats in the fellowship hall for prayer before entering serving lines. We encourage sitting with persons you know less well. Since research hints that NT believers shared communion weekly, a leader at each table will open by breaking bread and passing the cup. A simple two soup option with bread and salad will follow. Hot dogs will be provided for young children and young at heart.

We envision two different households each week working together to provide the soup and salad; plus doing set up and clean up. Lois Ann Mast has volunteered to coordinate. If you wish to help host a Light Lent Lunch speak with Lois Ann or watch for sign up opportunity.

It is our prayer that all of us taking time over Lent to remember; and some of us participating in one or more of these Light Lent Lunch's will indeed deepen our connection with God and one another. It is our hope that we will more ***fully know abundant life!!***

Joyfully Living HiStory Together with You: Pastor Bob Petersheim