

# The In Touch

March 2014

Volume 49, Issue 3

---

*Our Mission: To Seek, Know, Love and Serve Christ in all Persons and in all Creation*

---

## RAMBLINGS from the Rev. . . . .

By Samantha Crossley

Two phrases - try them on in your mind. Test your reactions.

**"Spring is almost here."**

**"Lent is almost here."**

After our long, snowy, cold winter, "Spring is almost here," wafts in like a breath of fresh air - waking up our senses, gently nudging us out of our long hibernation to meet the balmy above zero breezes with new zest, new life, new hope.

"Lent is almost here," lends a more somber tone with its overtones of self-examination, sacrifice and deprivation. But Lent IS our spiritual spring. Much as the spring thaw clears out the dirt and collected grime of the winter, Lent allows us to clear out the spiritual detritus of born in the day to day routine.

In the quiet introspection and awareness of the days to come, our Lenten series will discuss "Our time in the wilderness". The following offering comes from a 1998 article in Christian Century by Barbara Brown Taylor on the meaning of Lent.

### Settling for Less

Do not bother looking for Lent in your Bible dictionary. There was no such thing in biblical times. There is some evidence that early Christians fasted 40 hours between Good Friday and Easter, but the custom of spending 40 days in prayer and self-denial did not arise until later, when the initial rush of Christian adrenaline was over and believers had gotten very ho-hum about their faith.

When the world did not end as Jesus himself had said it would, his followers stopped expecting so much from God or from themselves. They hung a wooden cross on the wall and settled back into their more or less comfortable routines, remembering their once passionate devotion to God the way they remembered the other enthusiasms of their youth.



Little by little, Christians became devoted to their comforts instead: the soft couch, the flannel sheets, the leg of lamb roasted with rosemary. These things made them feel safe and cared for -- if not by God, then by themselves. They decided there was no contradiction between being comfortable and being Christian, and before long it was very hard to pick them out from the population at large. They no longer distinguished themselves by their bold love for one another. They did not get arrested for championing the poor. They blended in. They avoided extremes. They decided to be nice instead of holy, and God moaned out loud.

Hearing that, someone suggested it was time to call Christians back to their senses, and the Bible offered some clues about how to do that. Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness learning to trust the Lord. Elijah spent 40 days there before hearing the still, small voice of God on the same mountain where Moses spent 40 days listening to God give the law. There was also Luke's story about Jesus' own 40 days in the wilderness during which he was sorely tested by the devil. It was hard. It was awful. It was necessary, if only for the story. Those of us who believe it have proof that it is humanly possible to remain loyal to God.

So the early church announced a season of Lent, from the old English word *Lenten*, meaning "spring" -- not only a reference to the season before Easter, but also an invitation to a springtime for the soul. Forty days to cleanse the system and open the eyes to what remains when all comfort is gone. Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves.

I think of it as an Outward Bound for the soul. No one has to sign up for it, but if you do then you give up the illusion that you are in control of your life. You place yourself in the hands of strangers who ask you to do foolhardy things, like walk backwards over a precipice with nothing but a rope around your waist or climb a sheer rock face with your fingers and toes. But none of these is the real test, because while you are doing them you have plenty of people around and lunch in a cooler.

The real test comes when you go solo. The strangers put you out all by yourself in the middle of nowhere and wish you luck for the next 24 hours. That is when you find out who you are. That is when you find out what you really miss and what you are really afraid of. Some people dream about their favorite food. Some long for a safe room with a door to lock and others just wish they had a pillow, but they all find out what their pacifiers are -- the habits, substances or surroundings they use to comfort themselves, to block out pain and fear.

Without those things they are suddenly exposed, like someone addicted to painkillers whose prescription has just run out. It is hard. It is awful. It is necessary, to encounter the world without anesthesia, to find out what life is like with no comfort but God. I am convinced that 99 percent of us are addicted to something, whether it is eating, shopping, blaming or taking care of other people. The simplest definition of an addiction is anything we use to fill the empty place inside of us that belongs to God alone.

**That hollowness we sometimes feel is not a sign of something gone wrong. It is the holy of holies inside of us, the uncluttered throne room of the Lord our God. Nothing on earth can fill it, but that does not stop us from trying. Whenever we start feeling too empty inside, we stick our pacifiers into our mouths and suck for all we are worth. They do not nourish us, but at least they plug the hole.**

To enter the wilderness is to leave them behind, and nothing is too small to give up. Even a chocolate bar will do. For 40 days, simply pay attention to how often your mind travels in that direction. Ask yourself why it happens when it happens. What is going on when you start craving a Mars bar? Are you hungry? Well, what is wrong with being hungry? Are you lonely? What is so bad about being alone? Try sitting with the feeling instead of fixing it and see what you find out.

Chances are you will hear a voice in your head that keeps warning you what will happen if you give up your pacifier. "You'll starve. You'll go nuts. You won't be you anymore." If that does not work, the voice will move to level two: "That's not a pacifier. That's a power tool. Can't you tell the difference?" If you do not fall for that one, there is always level three: "If God really loves you, you can do whatever you want. Why waste your time on this dumb exercise?"

If you do not know whom that voice belongs to, read Luke's story again. Then tell the devil to get lost and decide what you will do for Lent. Better yet, decide whose you will be. Worship the Lord your God and serve no one else. Expect great things, from God and from yourself. Believe that everything is possible. Why should any of us settle for less?



- 3/6 ~ **Jay Noland** (son of Mike & Caryn)
- 3/10 ~ **Mike Brennard**
- 3/13 ~ **Laura Smith** (daughter of Waiva)
- 3/14 ~ **MavisTanem**
- 3/15 ~ **Gary Davison**
- 3/22 ~ **Sharon Wood** (daughter of Flossie Knutson)
- 3/22 ~ **Matthew Jenkinson**
- 3/26 ~ **Linda Krieger** (daughter of Wilbur & Mary Ann)
- 3/28 ~ **Diana Russiff** (daughter of Donna Day)



## *Weddings*

3/26 **Robin Manahan & Becky Lucas**

## *Baptisms*

3/28 **Jim Briggs**

## ECUMENIAL LENTEN SERIES

**Theme: Our Time in the Wilderness**



Soup Supper at 6:00 PM (March 12 – April 9)  
Service at 7:00 PM

DATE	OCCASION	PLACE	TOPIC
March 5	Ash Wednesday	Holy Trinity	Preparing to Depart
March 12	Soup supper 1	Faith United	A Time of Doubt
March 19	Soup supper 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Lutheran	A Time of Complaint
March 26	Soup supper 3	Holy Trinity	A Time of Formation
April 2	Soup Supper 4	Zion Lutheran	A Time of Testing
April 9	Soup Supper 5	St. Thomas	A Time of Dependence
April 13	Palm Sunday	Holy Trinity	A Time of Celebration
April 17	Maundy Thursday	Holy Trinity	A Time of Service
April 18	Good Friday	Holy Trinity	A Time of Death
April 20	Easter	Holy Trinity	A Time of New Life

**Everyone is welcome!**

# March 2014 – Sunday Service Lay Responsibilities

Dates	Celebrants	Acolytes	Lectors & Lessons	Greeters
<b>2</b> Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Last Sunday the Epiphany	Rev. Samantha Crossley Deacon: Melanie Mattsen	Melanie Mattsen	Mike & Tricia Brennard	Mike & Tricia Brennard
<b>5</b> Holy Eucharist 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday	Rev. Samantha Crossley Deacon: Melanie Mattsen	Lee Grim	Melanie Mattsen Tessa Walls	
<b>9</b> Holy Eucharist 10:00 am 1st Sunday in Lent	Rev. Samantha Crossley Deacon: Lee Grim	Tessa Walls	Tessa Walls Mavis Tanem	Donna Day Karen Walls
<b>16</b> Holy Eucharist 10:00 am 2nd Sunday in Lent	Rev. Samantha Crossley Deacon: Melanie Mattsen	Melanie Mattsen	Kay Herman Ragna Godland	Kay Herman John Shewchuk
<b>23</b> Holy Eucharist 10:00 am 3rd Sunday in Lent	Rev. Lynn Naeckel Deacon: Lee Grim	Erik Strand	Mavis Tanem Erik Strand	Mavis Tanem Flossie Knutson
<b>26</b> 7:00 pm Soup Supper	Rev. Lynn Naeckel Deacon: Lee Grim	Melanie Mattsen	Kay Herman Lee Grim	Melanie Mattsen Tyler Downs
<b>30</b> Holy Eucharist 10:00 am 4th Sunday in Lent	Rev. Lynn Naeckel Deacon: Melanie Mattsen	Erik Strand	Erik Strand Melanie Mattsen	Gary & Carolyn Davison



# March 2014



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Altar Guild <b>Carolyn Helen</b>
2 <b>Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.</b>	3	4 <b>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:00</b>	5 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.	6	7	8 Altar Guild <b>Carolyn Helen</b>
9 <b>Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.</b>	10 Vestry Meeting 6:30 p.m.	11 9:30 am Coffee @ Coffee Landing 6 pm-Total Ministry Meeting	12 Soup Supper Faith United	13	14	15 Altar Guild <b>Flossie Jeanne</b>
16 <b>Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.</b>	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18	19 Soup Supper 1 <sup>st</sup> Lutheran	20 <b>1<sup>st</sup> Day of Spring</b>	21	22 Altar Guild <b>Flossie Jeanne</b>
23 <b>Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.</b>	24 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	25	26 Soup Supper Holy Trinity Soup 6:00 Service 7:00	27	28	29 <b>Georgeann Donna</b>
30 <b>Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.</b>	31					

