

From the Pastor...

When I was growing up, Ash Wednesday was something that got mixed up in my mind with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in a way that sometimes made me wonder if they were all a part of the same week.

Obviously, I eventually learned that Ash Wednesday was some 38 days before Maundy Thursday, but I never understood its meaning until much later in life.

I don't remember the Ash Wednesday services of my youth, but I do remember some of my first experiences of receiving and giving an ashen sign of the cross on the forehead.

As best I can remember, my first experience of these ashes came on Ash Wednesday of 1992, when my first son was a baby sleeping in my husband's arms and I had to look into the cherubic face of my firstborn and say, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." I had a catch in my throat when I said this, thinking I was insane to be reminding my husband and me that this brand new life, barely 3 months old, was merely on loan to us and we didn't know how long the loan was going to be. We hoped and prayed that he would outlive us, but we were reminded that that wasn't guaranteed.

Imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday has been a part of United Methodist worship for only 25 years when there was a movement among Protestant churches, including United Methodists, to recover these more multisensory ways of worship. There was a growing recognition that people have multiple ways of learning, multiple ways of worshipping. Worship that engages more than just our intellect is worship that becomes more meaningful to us, becomes a more powerful experience.

On Ash Wednesday we remember that all that we have, including our lives, are on loan to us from God. Nothing we have can be taken for granted. As we use the more recent terms when imposing the ashes: "You have come from the garden and to the garden you will return," we are reminded that as a member of humanity, we have come from the idyllic Garden of Eden, traveled with Jesus through the anguish of the Garden of Gethsemane and will eventually be fully reunited with God in paradise.

Blessed Ash Wednesday, blessed Lent to you all.

Faithfully,
Holly

March Celebrations

Birthdays

- 3-02 Sharron F.
 - 3-03 Madelyn J. Madelynn K.
 - 3-07 Sheila P.
 - 3-17 Jessica S.
 - 3-18 Samantha Jo K.
 - 3-19 Steve K.
 - 3-27 Tommy A. Andy E. Kaylee E. Donna K.
 - 3-28 Janet R. Gary S.
 - 3-29 Bessie G. Linda R.
 - 3-30 Mike H.
- ### Anniversaries
- 3-31 Karl & Jeanne L.



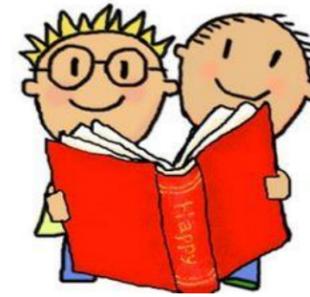
Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers to serve as greeters and ushers. These are valuable ministries! There's nothing better than being welcomed to worship by a smiling greeter. And our ushers do all those little tasks that help the worship service move smoothly so the rest of us can focus on worship. If you are willing to greet guests as they arrive for worship or serve as an usher, please talk to Bernie Sausen, our Sunday worship volunteer coordinator, and she will add your name to the schedule. Thank you so much for serving!

Making a Difference at Wyoming Elementary

The weekend food we send home with children is making a difference. The school counselor at Wyoming Elementary says: "We have about 30 students who benefit from the program. Parents appreciate the food bags each week. Many students look forward to Fridays, and when they see the delivery is here on Thursday, it's almost like you can see the happiness on their faces. I have even gotten hugs from a couple of them. It is a nice service to be able to offer to families, especially when they are finding themselves in a period of hardship. There have been parents who have been able to contact the school when their circumstances have improved to un-enroll from the program as well."

It's good to know that we can make a difference in the lives of these children in our neighborhood, isn't it?



Reading Buddy Update

Several Wyoming United Methodist Church members have been enjoying their weekly time with 'their' class of first or second graders these last couple months. The typical Reading Buddy goes and spends an hour to an hour and a half, listening to children read to them, helping

them understand the words they are reading and giving the children valuable practice with their words. Ask any of these Reading Buddies and they will tell you it is a delight that they look forward to every week.

If you are interested in learning more about being a Reading Buddy, please talk to Pastor Holly or any of our other Reading Buddies—Lois S., Jane D., Karyla, Donna, Joyce—as we have some people who are interested in beginning as Reading Buddies for the Third Grade, but we need three more volunteers before we can make that happen!

This Valentine's Day, we brought goodies to the faculty dining room and left a note letting the teachers and staff know that Wyoming United Methodist Church thinks that they are awesome. Thanks to Janet R., Karyla P. and Donna K. for making the goodies!

"One Great Hour of Sharing" Now Called "UMCOR Sunday"

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Sunday is March 26. This offering helps pay for the administrative costs of UMCOR which alleviates human suffering in over 80 countries around the world. One hundred percent of the donations given to UMCOR during the rest of the year go directly to the place in the world where there is need. Because of this annual offering that covers all administrative costs, our donations to UMCOR can really make a difference. Consider giving to UMCOR Sunday and help this relief organization do its valuable work for another year.



March is Minnesota FoodShare Month

Since 1982, March has been selected as the month to FILL THE FOOD SHELF SHELVES. Donations are typically down during March so this is an opportunity for us to step up and help alleviate hunger. Sadly, for the first time in history over ½ of the public school students in America are from low-income families. Three out of four public school teachers report they see students regularly come to school hungry. Wyoming United Methodist Church (WUMC) has partnered with Wyoming Elementary School to provide funds and packing volunteers for weekend food to go home with students in need. If we collect funds during March for this program, the funds we raise will be doubled! Please be generous throughout the month of March so that your donations can go further. Mark your check (written to WUMC) or envelope with the word "Food" and it will be directed to this mission program. Your money will go a long way as the food shelf can buy 7-10 times more food than we can as they purchase their food from Second Harvest.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ~Gal. 6:9

Save the Date

April 20-22, Hosanna Lutheran Church in Forest Lake is again sponsoring a Feed My Starving Children MobilePack. Feed My Starving Children is an organization that literally saves children's lives every day. It runs largely through the help of generous donations and volunteer hours to make a difference in the lives of God's hungry children throughout the world. In partnership with Hosanna Lutheran and other local churches we are planning to pack 250,000 meals over that April weekend. Each meal's ingredients costs \$.22 so your Mission Team will be collecting donations from you in April to help defray the cost of the food. More info coming in April!

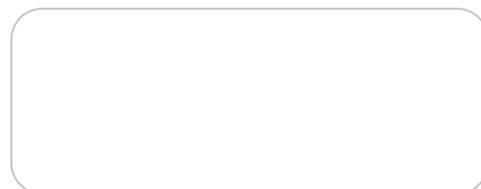


Many Thanks

Many thanks to the work of the Tuesday morning Spiritual Prayer Group for their coordinating and sending Valentine's cookies and treats to our college students. Lois S., Janet R., Carole A., and Diane D. helped our students remember that we love them and God loves them!

The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ~Psalm 103:8

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CLOSER TO JESUS
W A P O
TO I W I L A T I M E T O
Lent IS A TIME TO

Wyoming United Methodist Church
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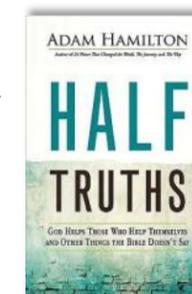
Wyoming United Methodist Church

Messenger



Lenten Study

You are invited to participate in weekly study sessions based on the book *Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say* by Adam Hamilton. Beginning on Thursday, March 9th and meeting every Thursday from 7-8:30 until April 6th, Pastor Holly will lead us in examining the simple phrases that sound Christian, that sound like they're from the Bible, but they're not. Phrases like "everything happens for a reason" or "God helps those who help themselves" sound like helpful truths, but, while holding some important truths, miss the point in sometimes painful ways.



You are invited to join in this DVD-based study and not only learn what the 'experts' say but learn what the Bible says and how that shapes your beliefs. Participant books are available at church. Please sign up in the nook and pick up a book and read the introduction and chapter one before our first session.

The Costa Rica Report

Sunday, March 5th we will host the Costa Rica Mission Team during worship and hear a report of their ministry as Short Term Volunteers in Mission. Following worship everyone is invited to the potluck (bring a dish to pass) and time to meet members of the mission team and ask them questions about their trip. Consider yourself invited and consider bringing a friend who might want to hear more about Costa Rica and Short Term Volunteers in Mission opportunities!

Ash
Wednesday
Service

March 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, which is the 40 days before Easter, not counting Sundays, and is a season of preparation for Easter. On Wednesday, March 1, we will have a brief, but meaningful service of worship with communion and the imposition of ashes on the forehead or hand. As we prepare for the season of Lent, you are invited to gather with your fellow travelers **this Wednesday** evening as we remember our mortality and anticipate our eventual reunion with God as we enter eternal life.

Worship Services in March

So many times we say things without thinking about their implications. Or we think we are quoting the Bible but the turn of phrase makes the quote say the opposite of the Bible's intent. We'll be discussing the well-meaning, but sometimes harmful things that people say, like: "everything happens for a reason" or "love the sinner, hate the sin" or "God won't give you more than you can handle" and discuss how they capture some element of truth, yet also miss the point in very important ways. You are invited to come and dig deeper as we together search for the whole truth.

March 5

Half Truths: Everything Happens for a Reason
Deuteronomy 30:15-20

March 12

Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves
Matthew 5:1-12

March 19

Half Truths: God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle
Romans 8:26-39

March 26

Half Truths: God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It
1 Corinthians 14:33b-35

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ~Jer. 29:13