

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

Our Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday on March 9. To honor and remember the occasion, we will gather for worship at an evening service, which features the Imposition of Ashes, the celebration of Holy Communion, along with special music, and extended prayers that invite us to consider what it means to be God's people. Lent is traditionally a time for reflection and repentance. It is a time for re-examining the priorities that are reflected in our choices and changing the patterns that are displayed in our behavior. For many in the Christian community, Lent has come to mean *giving up* vices that detract from our health, physically and spiritually. But Lent can also be a time for *adding to* the virtues that lift up attitudes and actions that make us better and our relationships stronger. In truth, faithfully engaging in the disciplines of Lent takes both, weakening the hold of certain vices over who we are and what we do, while also strengthening our commitment to the virtues that help us to love what is good, to will what is right, and then to do it.

Lent can focus God's call on who we are as individuals; but since we are talking about *our Lenten journey*, its focus is also on who we are as God's people. When I think of the virtues that can help Zion become stronger as a community and healthier as a congregation, the primary virtue that comes to mind is the resolve to show *mutual support*. This is a virtue at which Zion excels. It is evident in all that we do – in the friendships we form, the fundraisers we run, and the programs we oversee. Think back to the amazing results for such projects as the Advent Giving Tree and the Steve Dague Fund. Zion's Food Pantry is another great example of mutual support. There is, however, room for improvement here and there. As I think back to the last series of Sunday evening programs we scheduled, which was in December during Advent, it seemed to me that our mutual support could have been stronger. Attendance at these Sunday evening Advent services suffered a bit because too often only the group that hosted the dinner supported the evening with their presence. We need all of us supporting one another for our programs to succeed and for our church to grow stronger and healthier. This is true of big things like the operating budget. It is true of the ministries we oversee like the food pantry. It is true, as well, of these Sunday evening programs during Advent and Lent.

When the Men of Zion prepare delicious subs for the first of five light Lenten dinners on March 13, we would like to see our youth and their families, along with the women of Zion, Council members and worship leaders. When the Senior Choir and Praise Team prepare an evening of special music for Lent, as they will on April 3, we would like our congregational family to support their effort with your presence. It means a lot for the choir, and it means a lot for Zion, too. Lent is an important season as we focus on the disciplines that lead to spiritual growth, both as individuals, each blessed and called to be a child of God growing in Christ, and as a community called to be children of God in our life together as a community and congregation. Let's take full advantage of the Lenten season as we give up those vices that weaken our health, spiritually and physically, while we also make sure to strengthen our church by exhibiting a whole lot of mutual support at each of the Sunday evening services we've scheduled throughout the Lenten season. We will discover that growing stronger together makes each of us stronger personally, too. That's the mystery and miracle of the life that's ours in Jesus' name.

THE SEASON OF LENT BEGINS WITH ASH WEDNESDAY

March 9, Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Worship Service The Imposition of Ashes The Celebration of Holy Communion
<i>REMEMBER THAT THOU ART DUST, AND TO DUST THOU SHALT RETURN!</i>		
March 13, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Lent 1 , Matthew 4:1-11 (Real Doubt) Book of Romans in our Adult Class Dinner hosted by the Men of Zion Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>Taize</i>
March 20, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Lent 2 , John 3:1-17 (True Love) Children's Easter Play Rehearsal Book of Romans in our Adult Class Dinner hosted by the Church Council Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>ELW</i>
March 27, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Lent 3 , John 4:5-42 (Living Water) Children's Easter Play Rehearsal Book of Romans in our Adult Class Dinner hosted by the Senior Choir Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>Taize</i>
April 3, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Lent 4 , John 9:1-41 (Light & Sight) Children's Easter Play Rehearsal Book of Romans in our Adult Class Dinner hosted by the Church Council Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>ELW</i>
April 10, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Lent 5 , John 11:1-45 (New Life) Children's Easter Play Rehearsal Book of Romans in our Adult Class Dinner hosted by the Youth of Zion The Passion Narrative of St. Matthew
April 16, Saturday	10:30 a.m.	Easter Play Rehearsal in the Sanctuary
April 17, Palm Sunday	8:00 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Traditional Liturgical Passion Sunday The Book of Romans in our Adult Class Zion's Sunday School Easter Program

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Jim Fidler called our meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Juanita offered devotions. Our attendance included Dave Palumbo, Sue Heyard, Dale Jacobs, Beth Shaheen, Mark Votaw, Vicki Givler, Jim Dansizen, Tina Beaber, and Pastor Sherwindt. Chris Thomas and Cathy Harvey were absent. We were focused and busy, concluding our meeting with adjournment at 7:40 p.m.

After our big push in December to run such a large surplus for the month that we could bring our operating budget into balance, which we did, a look at January's financial facts constitute a wake up call, of sorts, alerting all of us to the fact that last year is past and a new year has begun. We were fortunate to have five Sundays in January; but we still wound up with a \$3,859 budget deficit. This deficit will widen in February, both because there are only four Sundays and because of the cold and snow of winter. Our heating bills and the costs of snow-plowing have been higher this year than last. We will really need a generous March to draw even for the year. We hope that generosity will be among the virtues that we work on as we grow in grace this Lent.

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS: JANUARY

Income for January	\$21,532.55
Expenses in January	<u>\$25,391.69</u>
January's Budget Deficit	(\$ 3,859.14)

January was a month where our income was average, and expenses were high, with the result that we started this year with a hefty deficit. While a stronger start would have been nice, nevertheless ...

We thank you for your generous support!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Property Ministry: The power outage in early February required that we purchase a gas-powered generator with sufficient power to keep the boiler going during times when we are without power. As it turned out, because of the service we provide with our food pantry, we are regarded as an emergency shelter. Our next project will be to create a system that will help us to make sure that members who are without power can get to the church should they need emergency shelter. We are ready to serve should the need arise!

Worship Ministry: The Lenten calendar is complete, awaiting only congregational support for the services we will offer. The Men of Zion will host our first Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner on March 13, with Council hosting our dinner on March 20, the Chancel Guild on March 27, with the Senior Choir & Praise Team taking their turn on April 3, and the Youth of Zion, with their leaders and parents, set for April 10. The Sunday School Easter Play is set for the 10:30 a.m. service on April 17; and Zion's Annual Easter Egg Hunt is between the services on April 24, Easter Sunday!

Parish Life: We continue in our quest to reform a Transportation Ministry that will help to coordinate rides for persons who would like to join us for worship on Sunday morning. Please contact Vicki Givler (or the Church Office) with your need for a ride, or your willingness to provide one. Also, the softball season is upon us, and we will need men and women to field a team this year. It is very important that those who would like to play help us find members and friends to join in the fun of this year's softball team. Contact Bob Lancashire with your interest.

COUNCIL NEWS (CONT'D)

Witness Ministry: Jim Dansizen welcomed Pamela Swiger as our newest team member of the Witness. It is great to see one of our newer members getting more involved in the life of the church. Our idea for sending *email-updates* to announce upcoming events on the Zion calendar made progress with the publication of our new telephone directory, which includes many email addresses. We extend our thanks to Jayne Schrader for her work on the directory.

Caring Ministry: Zion's Food Pantry and Clothing Closet continue to benefit from the strong support from members who not only contribute cash for the cause, but also show up on the first and third Tuesdays to provide the muscle and love that makes this ministry work. Thanksgiving and Christmas place heavy demands on our staff and supplies; but, as Shirley Cavender often says, hunger is not seasonal. It's happening all year long. So, please, continue to offer the support of your presence whenever you can.

Resource Ministry: We reviewed our great performance with our property renovation projects. We raised \$11,300.⁰⁰ and spent \$9,826.¹¹ on our Restrooms Renovation in 2006. In 2007, we raised \$19,225.⁸⁷ and spent \$17,973.³³ on the Sound System Renovation. In 2008, we raised \$32,165.¹⁷ and spent \$29,762.⁵⁸ on the Sanctuary Renovation. That left us with a cumulative surplus of \$4,079.⁰² for our first three renovation projects. This allowed us to begin investing in phase four, namely, the kitchen, which was timely because we needed to replace our heavy-duty refrigerator, which cost \$3,381.⁷⁵. The end result is that we raised as much money as we needed for these three projects, plus we have a surplus of \$697.²⁷ which is available when we resume with our next renovation project.

YOUTH OF ZION NEWS

2011 Souper Bowl of Caring: Tina Beaber and the Youth of Zion would like to thank the congregation for your generous support of this year's Souper Bowl of Caring. Our youth reached their goal by collecting \$400 on the nose, along with receiving a variety of food items. All food collected will go to Zion's Food Pantry. All money raised will be used by our youth to shop for shoes and clothing for children, which will be given to the charity called *Shoes & Clothes for Kids*.

Youth Lenten Dinner: Zion's Youth will host the Lenten dinner & service on **April 10**. We need to recruit parents and youth leaders to help with planning the menu and preparing the food. During the service, we will add our special touch to what will surely be a highly talented rendering of the Matthew's Passion narrative. In the meantime, our youth and their families should expect a call with details about dinner and assignments for the service.

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- Sunday, March 20:** Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.
Sunday, March 27: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.
Sunday, April 3rd: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.
Sunday, April 10: Youth of Zion host our Lenten Dinner and lead our Lenten Service
Saturday, April 16: Children's Easter Program Dress Rehearsal in the morning at 10:30 a.m.
Palm Sunday, April 17: Children's Easter Program during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Easter Sunday, April 24: Our Children's Easter Egg Hunt for all ages during Sunday School

SUNDAY SCHOOL: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

Our Sunday School classes continue this month with their studies of the Books of the Bible in our older classes and traditional Bible stories in our younger classes. The kids continue to learn and have fun each Sunday with great lessons, crafts, games and snacks. Please join us at 9:15 a.m. each Sunday! We will also start practicing for the Easter Program later this month. Look for those practices to begin March 20 during the Sunday School Hour.

This year's Easter Program will be on Palm Sunday, April 17th, at the 10:30 a.m. service only. We will have dress rehearsal on Saturday, April 16th, which will be followed by a pizza party to celebrate all of the children's hard work. We are looking forward to another great performance by Zion's amazing kids! Look for more details to come next month.

We are collecting Easter candy and small items that will fit into our plastic eggs for our traditional Children's Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday, which is pretty late this year, April 24th. Children of all ages are invited to go on our Easter Egg Hunt between the services beginning at 9:10 a.m. We typically hide over five hundred eggs. If you would like to donate any of these items, please leave them in the church office by Sunday, April 17th. We really appreciate your support.



A FINAL ACME RECEIPTS REMINDER

Thank you to everyone for bringing in your Acme receipts. We really appreciate your support! We have received more grocery receipts from Acme than any might have imagined. We are now in the process of tallying the receipts and will report what we earned for the youth next month. Last year we received \$144.94 through this *Community Cash-Back* program. Every penny adds up to better programming for our youth; for that, we thank you. This year's program has ended for the school year; but it will start again in the fall, and we'll look for your support.

MUTUAL SUPPORT IN ACTION AT THE FOOD PANTRY



Hi, Margaret, and Shirley, and Moe, and Audrey! Volunteers are in the kitchen sorting through some of the food items that will be distributed to the families we serve through our Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is open for service on the first and third Tuesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., but volunteers usually arrive by 9:30 a.m. so that we can get all the preparatory work done in time for the lines that form and the distribution that occurs.

Our preparations are complete, and the Food Pantry Crew breaks for lunch in the Resource Center. Here you can see Steve Dague in front on the right, and then there's Margaret, Becky, Barb, Rachael, with Mike and Shirley barely visible. We had some great food for lunch, when one of our member volunteers brought in some homemade ziti. If it's food that'll get you to volunteer, then join us any Tuesday, because the food is great, the company, better, and the work, gratifying.



The lines are forming, and our Pantry Crew is getting ready to draw the numbers that establish the order in which the families we serve are served. Each person who has come to Zion for help will be given a number, and then led from Luther Hall, where the families wait, to Memorial Hall, where the food has been set out on tables. The persons we help get carts, and they choose what they will take home with them that day. It's all very orderly, with everyone having a chance to receive what we can offer.

There's Loretta, who made the ziti! She's just to the left of the shopping cart. Thanks for coming, Loretta: thanks for the great lunch, and thanks for coming to help. Let's face it, without the volunteers who are so faithful in offering their help, we couldn't accomplish what the Lord has given us the will, and the resources, to do. We have effective leaders, faithful volunteers, and more and more families in North Canton that need the help we offer. We extend our thanks to all who help, all who give, all who share in the ongoing miracle of mutual support.



JAYNE'S ECOLOGY CORNER

Sustainable Products and Sustainability: these are things that I have been hearing about, and I must admit that I have been wondering what they actually mean. So, what defines a *sustainable* product? Well, the basics of the matter are that a *sustainable product* is one that protects the environment during its entire life. That is, from the moment the raw materials are extracted from their source to the time the final product is disposed of, there must be no permanent damage caused to the environment.

I did some research and found that it is often cheaper, at least in the short term, to produce a product with no regard for the environment than it is to produce something that is *sustainable*. However, *sustainable products* are becoming an ever more popular choice, especially when you consider that they often have a greater longevity than products that are created simply to sell for the cheapest possible price.

Sustainability means: (1) renewing resources at a rate equal to or greater than the rate at which they are consumed; (2) living within the resources of the planet without damaging the environment now or in the future; (3) creating an economic system that provides for quality of life while renewing the environment and its resources; (4) taking the long-term view of how our actions effect future generations and making sure we don't deplete resources or cause pollution at rates faster than the earth is able to renew them; and (5) making the attempt to merge ecology and economy into one system.

The planet is home to all of us, and we owe it to ourselves, to our children, and to future generations to make use of what we know about *sustainability* and *sustainable products*.

MEN OF ZION NEWS

After taking the month of February off, the Men of Zion are back at it in March. We will meet for our regular monthly meeting on March 2, when we will make plans for hosting the ***first Lenten dinner on Sunday, March 13***. It looks like our delicious sub sandwiches will be on the menu, along with chicken noodle soup and some great desserts. We will need all the help we can get in setting up for dinner, serving during the dinner, and cleaning up afterwards. We hope to engage all the men we can with phone calls and some arm-twisting. Our thanks to Dale Jacobs for the leadership he exhibits in the kitchen; and we are looking for a strong performance from Mark Votaw and Randy Cizek, too. Otherwise, prepare for excellence. When it comes to food, the Men of Zion take their role – and rolls – very seriously.

The Mother's Day Breakfast is still a ways away, May 8, to be exact; but it is not too soon to remind ourselves that we involved more than sixty men in this long-standing tradition last year, and we would like to improve on that this year. Of course, along with involving men, it is important to have a great representation of all the women we love, too. So, men and women of Zion, mark this date: May 8th, between the services, in Memorial Hall, our ***Ninth Annual Mother's Day Breakfast***.

Another nice tradition was brought to life by the Men of Zion last year, namely, our first Annual Father's Day Prime Rib Dinner. Last year, we sold ninety tickets and raised thousands of dollars for the new carpet we installed last summer. This year we have some great ideas to make this annual event every bit as good and every bit as delicious as our Mother's Day Breakfast. Stay tuned as details develop and our plan unfolds.

THE WOMEN OF ZION

This year's Bible study theme for the women of the church has been *The People of God: Unity in the Midst of Diversity*. This month's focus is on *Loving Relationships*, with the double-love command in Matthew 22:36-39 our featured verse. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And Jesus said, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"

In featuring our *Top Ten* love passages on the cover of last month's newsletter, this passage would have been Jesus' choice for number one. As he says in the very next verse in Matthew, "*This double-love command is the foundation for all the teaching found in the law and the prophets.*" All women in Zion are welcome (and encouraged) to join us in the Resource Center on Tuesday, March 23, as we take a look at loving relationships with our monthly *Women's Bible Study*.

Zion's Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, *March 10 & 24*, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. We really do need your help. You know the old saying, "Many hands make light work." So consider joining us as we enjoy coffee, conversation, and being filled with the feeling of knowing that we are helping others in need through the good that we do.

Zion's Chancel Guild meets on *Wednesday, March 2*, at 6:00 p.m. in the Resource Center. In addition to making plans for hosting the Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner on March 27, the leadership baton was passed from Edna Smith to Betty Tracy, who will now have the honor of overseeing the work of the Chancel Guild. We extend our thanks to Edna, and our congratulations to Betty.

THANK YOUS AND MORE

Dear Friends of Zion,

Many thanks to all of you. I don't know where to begin. Thank you for cards, phone calls, the Chancel flowers, Pastor's visit with communion; but most of all thank you for your prayers. Prayers brought progress to my hip replacement. All things were greatly appreciated. Please consider yourselves duly hugged!

*Love and blessings,
Helen Heller*

Dear Pastor and our Zion Church Family,

Thank you so much for all of your kindness and attention. I know it was a comfort to our Mom having you visit her at St. Luke's, and our Dad was comforted by your visits and by the Memorial Service. We appreciate all that everyone has done – the service, the soloists, and the luncheon afterwards. It certainly is true that "during times like these we realize how much our friends really mean to us. Your expressions of sympathy will always be remembered."

*In Peace,
The Spall Family*

AREA EVENTS OF INTEREST

Lenten Friday Fish Fries: Peace Lutheran Church will once again host their famous fish fries on Fridays during Lent. Beginning with the first Friday in Lent, which is March 11, and continuing throughout the Lenten season – March 18 and 25, April 1, 8, and 15 – the good folks at Peace Lutheran will offer dinner choices that include fried fish or shrimp, baked fish or chicken, or a fried fish and fried shrimp combo meal. Each meal also includes baked potato or hand-cut fries, with coleslaw, applesauce, a roll, dessert, and beverage. The price is \$8.50 for adults and \$5.50 for children under 12. A kid's meal will also be offered for \$3.50, which includes a choice of chicken fingers or hot dog, chips or fries, applesauce, dessert, and beverage. Peace is located at 3828 Cleveland Avenue SW. They have been doing this for years, and are quite good at it. Try them out this year. They will be open for service from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., or call ahead for take-out: 330-484-4400.

A Doctor in the House (no connection): St. Paul's Parish Nurse Ministry invites the community to join them for a *Health & Wellness Fair*, Saturday, March 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Micky Wolf speaks on *The Wholeness of Being* at 11:30 a.m., and Dr. Michael James, on *What Every Doctor Should Tell Their Patients* at 12:30 p.m. There are wellness screenings all day. Learn about how nutrition can help with disease prevention.

St. Stephen Martyr Lutheran Church (by the Mall on Fulton) has invited Dr. Michael Reid Trice, Associate Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations for the ELCA, to offer a presentation on *Ecumenism: What We Know, What We Need to Know and Why*. This will be an all-day event on Saturday, March 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please contact Pastor Sherwindt for more details.

SOME SYNOD NEWS, TOO

Jim Fidler and Pastor Sherwindt were invited by the Northeastern Ohio Synod to join the Bishop and her staff for dinner at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Stow to express their gratitude for our supporting the work of the wider church through difficult times for the ELCA. The March edition of *The Lutheran* observed that, statistically speaking, the ELCA had 10,816 congregations on its rolls in 2000, with 2,200 categorized as the smallest size, where average weekly worship attendance is less than 50. By 2008, the number of congregations had decreased to 10,396; and the number of smallest sized congregations had increased to 2,900. In other words, the ELCA had gotten smaller. Similar trends are true for our Synod. During this period Zion has increased our support for the work of the wider church, maintaining our fair share of support at just over \$20,000 these last three years, and contributing over \$100,000 to the Synod through benevolence over the last five years. All of this comes in addition to the support we offer to our Food Pantry, and any number of local causes that receive financial support in any given year, which collectively also exceeded \$100,000 over the course of these past five years!

On another note, Bishop Eaton will offer two **Spring Bishop's Gatherings** this month, one in Loudenville on Sunday, March 27, and another at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Brecksville on Monday, March 28. The theme is *Knock! Knock! Who's There?* Evangelism in the 21st Century focuses on relationships. Leaders from churches in Sharon Center and Lordstown will share their experiences with *porch visit evangelism* as a means for developing relationships with folks who live in our neighborhoods. It all begins with *Soup 'n Sandwiches* at 5:30 p.m.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DORIS SPALL

December 15, 1926 – February 18, 2011

As often happens when we are blessed to live into our eighties, those so-called golden years are often tarnished a bit with declining health, and, in Doris' case, with several strokes over the past decade that took a toll on her eyesight, with her mobility, and in any number of ways. This last stroke was the worst, with severe repercussions for her speech and any real independent movement. Her spirit was strong, and she embraced the challenge of recovery; but her body had been weakened by time and by a host of minor and major maladies. Progress, which began slowly, never gained momentum, and death's arrival came as merciful release. It saddens me to say this because death is never welcome; and when its arrival appears to be a sign of mercy, it is only masquerading as an angel because it is, as Jesus says, a thief and a robber that comes to steal away the persons we love. (John 10:10) Paul tells us that death is the final enemy (1st Cor. 15:26); and the affliction of multiple strokes, the reality of diminishing mobility and declining health, the piling on of layers of medical diagnoses that fill our golden years with all sorts of pains and every conceivable discomfort, these are death's servants, whose devilish job it is to make death look good, as if bringing merciful relief from pointless lingering.

But the Psalmist says it differently. "I lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help?" (Psalm 121:1) Not from the hills, and certainly not from the darkness of death. "My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. He who watches over you neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your keeper." (Psalm 121: 3-5a) The Lord is your helper. The Lord is a mighty fortress, our gentle savior, and the good shepherd. If there was a merciful side to Doris' passing, it wasn't death's arrival but God's promise that "there is nothing in the entirety of all creation that can ever separate us from the love of God," (Romans 8:39) – nothing in death or in life, nothing now or ever, not affliction or any combination of afflictions, nothing we've done or ever could do, again, absolutely nothing will ever come between God's love and the true life this love promises in Christ our Lord.

If we welcomed the moment of Doris' passing, it is only because of God's promise that she is now in a better place, in that place that the Book of Revelation describes as our heavenly home, where every tear has been wiped from our eyes, where there is no more crying, or mourning, no more death. "Everything that passes away has passed away. Behold, I make all things new!" (Revelation 21: 3-5) We are that new creation, baptized into Christ's death that we might become participants in the reality of new life, true life, God's eternal life, which is alive within us and among us, we who have been blessed to be God's people forever. These hopes are not death's doing but God's promises. They bring comfort, not because they help us avoid reality but because God is true to His word and keeps His promises. That's why we go through Lent and Easter.

Lent forces us to look mortality's curse straight in the eye. When the ashes of Ash Wednesday are applied to our foreheads, we hear the words, "*Remember that dust thou art and to dust you shall return.*" When you are eighty-four and your eyes don't work well, and your circulation is breaking down, along with just about everything else, you don't need to be reminded that we are made of flesh and blood, bound by our flesh to the limits of our mortality. That's sin's face, tying us to the curse of death. And that's where the Gospel comes in. In Christ God has done what we could not. Through the life he gave, the death he died, and the miracle of resurrection proclaimed with the celebration of Easter, Christ has burst the bars of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. That's God's promise, the hope we cherish, and the faith we share ... in Jesus' name.