

# The Communicator



First Christian Church, Russellville, KY March 2019

## Giving Up Something, for Lent

Ash Wednesday begins March 6 this year, the first day of Lent. For as long as I can remember, I have always heard that Lent is about what we should give up. I know of something that we all can and should give up - regardless of our denomination, faith or beliefs. But before I get to that, let's just review some basics of the Lent.

Lent is a time for Christians to undergo personal self-denial and sacrifice in commemoration of the absolutely horrible physical and emotional pain Jesus endured starting on a Thursday night in the Garden of Gethsemane. While in the Garden praying, he was betrayed by one of his original twelve disciples for twenty pieces of silver. From the Garden he was taken before two different judges, both of whom refused to pass judgment, with the second judge letting a mob make the decision to crucify Him. Then, on the way to Golgotha, the traditional place for crucifixions, Jesus suffered the torment of verbal and physical abuses from the chanting crowds along the way. Finally, he underwent the excruciating pain and humiliation of being crucified.

In the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches, Lent is the forty "weekday" period before Easter, starting with Ash Wednesday. Yet there are, forty-six days from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. So how do we account for the Lenten season being only forty days?

Christ's original disciples, who were Jewish, grew up with the Sabbath, the day of rest and worship, being Saturday, the seventh day of the week. But the Resurrection of Jesus was on Sunday, the first day of the week, and the early Christians interpreted the Resurrection of Jesus as a "new" creation. So they changed the primary Christian day of rest and worship to Sunday. The early Christians looked at every Sunday as a time to remember and celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, and fasting and other forms of self-denial were not permitted on Sundays. This held true for the six Sundays between Ash Wednesday and Easter, and they could not be counted as actual days of Lent. So why is Lent "forty" days? "Forty" has long had spiritual significance for Jews and Christians in regard to preparation. Moses was with God for forty days and nights on Mount Sinai in preparation for receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28).

But the primary focus for Lent is in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke telling of Jesus being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to fast and to be tempted by the devil for “forty” days. Taking into consideration how Jesus prepared for his ministry, “forty” was determined to be the number of days his followers should use in preparing for Easter.

Finally to my proposal of what all of us could and should give up during the Lenten Season focuses on behavioral changes. I propose giving up the practice of focusing on the faults of other people and, instead, looking for their good qualities. Our media and social media always seems to focus on tragic events: murders, thefts, sexual abuses, ISIS executions, fires, wrecks, divorces of famous people, and other sad situations. My proposal for Lent is that we have a major change in attitude.

How many times do we overhear someone say: “Just wait until I tell you about the most wonderful thing that happened to me”; or “I’m so excited about the extraordinary way I was treated”; and so forth. We seldom hear comments like that. Instead, we hear about the immoral, unfortunate, and sad things. But regardless of how miserable people can be, it is usually possible to find some good in them. The same holds true with tragic events: usually we can find something good to come out of them. By giving up our inclination to find fault with others, perhaps other people will reciprocate by treating us in the same way. That could make all of us a lot happier and life more productive. Let’s all give it a try during this Lenten season.

Pastor Bill

**March 6th** Soup/Bean Supper at 6pm,  
followed by Ash Wednesday service

**March 10th** Daylight Savings Time begins

**March 17th** Board Meeting after worship service

**March 24th** Installation Service for Pastor Bill  
with Rev. Beth Dobyms presiding.  
Lunch served after service

**First Christian Church**

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Secretary: Sharon Fuller  
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Moderator: Ray Clark  
Moderator-Elect:

Shannon Gorrell

Treasurer: Ellen Nealy

Secretary: Vicki Kemp

Accompanist: Shannon Gorrell

Sunday School: 9:30 am

Worship Service: 10:45 am

*Serving in March 2019*

**Elders:** Billy & Gayle Goley  
**Deacons:** Paige & Peyton Vanzant, Briley Gorrell  
**Greeters:** Volunteers

<b>Prayer Concerns:</b>			
Danny Anderson	Cheryl Oberhausen	Mike McCormick	Barbara Allen
Bob & Patricia Hedges	Donna Riley	David Hurt	Lauren Riley Stafford
Amy Varble	Ken Mercer	Sara Grayson	Shirley Yassney
Connie Brown	Shirley Hicks	Lori McClure	Russell Epley
Lana & Bud Lawson	Joe Schafer	Wayne Purvis	Denny Milam
Jean Gragg	Claire Wilson	Trevor Hesson	Cheryl Rogers