

MARCH

2023

COUNTRY CHURCH COMMUNICATOR

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Open Hearts

Open Minds

Open Doors

The people of the
United Methodist Church

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. (Matthew 4:1-2)

A message from Pastor Hae Seon Lee:

Greetings in Christ,

It feels we have just begun a new year, but it is already time to begin our annual Lenten journey. Lent is a 40-day period leading up to Easter. If one looks at the calendar and count the days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, that person might be confused, as there are 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, not forty. This is because we do not count Sundays to be part of Lent. Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, making every Sunday little Easters. So, if you decide to fast during the season of Lent, you are allowed to eat on Sundays.

Traditionally, Lent has been a time of training of the new inductees into the faith, who were to be baptised on Easter Sunday. Before the third century, this training period was three years long, modelled after Jesus training his disciples for three years. However, when Christianity became the state religion of Rome, under the emperor Theodosius, it was impossible for the church to train every single person for three years before baptizing. So, we arrived at this tradition of forty-day training for the new converts for baptism and confirmation for those who were born and raised in the community of faith.

So, following the tradition, I want us to go back to our roots and basics of our faith. It may have become second nature for us, but a reminder would do much better and no harm. We need to be reminded of our roots and what is at the basis of our faith. We need to be reminded of the first time we felt God's presence in our lives, and how God impacted us.

Traditionally there are two reasons for fasting. First is to experience and participate in the passion Jesus experienced. Of course, our act does not impact the salvific action of Jesus, but it is our act of deepening our understanding of Jesus' passion. Second is to clear up time for prayer. Before the time of agricultural revolution, most of time in a person's day was spent gathering and preparing food. By not doing so, gave a lot of time people could now instead use for prayer. During fast, I use hunger as a signal for prayer. Every time I am aware of my hunger, I take time to pray.

As we navigate the season of Lent together, I want you to spend this season intentionally. As the new converts into faith were trained, together, let us go back to our roots, remembering the basics of our faith. Also, if you decide to fast or give up something during the season, do not stop there, but pray. I bless your Lenten season to be filled with prayer where your faith is deepened in the grace of Christ.

Peace and Grace in Christ,

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Pastor Hae Seon Lee

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