



Chimes

Lent Edition 2015
Christ Presbyterian Church

It makes a difference what space we are “in.” I’m sure you’ve had the experience. You take space *in* another room to cool down from an argument. *In* the sunshine you feel the doldrums lift a bit. On vacation *in* the mountains, *in* the sea scented air, *in* a place where buildings and accents differ from those at home, life just feels more spacious. The difference doesn’t come from you but from the sense of where you are.

The church talks about Lent as a season we are *in*. Entering Lent’s forty days can be like entering different space. In the sanctuary, purple paraments and the music’s minor chords give worship a distinctive feel. Those who choose a fast or other Lenten discipline can feel to inhabit their bodies, or even their lives, in a different way.

Which leads us to the life that Christians say they are *in* all the time. As Paul said to the Corinthians, “You are *in Christ Jesus*” (1 Cor 1:30). Which is to say, you are inside of Christ’s life. You inhabit his grace. You dwell within the power of his death and resurrection for you. Paul is emphatic about the difference that being “in Christ” makes to our lives: “There is now no condemnation for those who are *in Christ Jesus*” (Ro 8:1). To hear Paul, it’s as though Christ is the air we breathe, the atmosphere we live in, the reality surrounding and upholding not only *our* lives but even all creation (2 Cor 5:19).

In worship this Lent we will listen for how Christ, who lived all things in God, brings us to live all things in him. As Paul describes it, living *in Christ* is not something we strive for. Our job isn’t to work toward getting inside Jesus’ good news life. It’s to embrace and respond to the reality that we are already “in” the Savior, Christ Jesus.

This is the unbelievably good news! In Christ, the love we seek is already there. The forgiveness we want is already given. The strength we seek in our weakness is as close as the air we breathe, for we are “in” the Savior as fish are in the sea.

This Lent issue of *Chimes* is full of suggestions and opportunities for responding to and embracing how God has brought us into Christ. Special worship services, Lenten Midweek Meals, study and spiritual practices—these aren’t just Lent “activities” but opportunities to learn appropriate response to the reality that our lives are really “in Christ.” Lent doesn’t invite us merely to *learn* something new in the faith but to *be* someone new by faith, to be the new creation we really are because we are *in Christ*.

I commend to you a full embrace of Lent, that we may know how fully the Savior embraces us—the Savior in whom we live and move and have our being.

✠ Lent 2015 ✠

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent, which comes from an Old English word meaning *spring*, has a long history in the church as a time for deepening life with God. Its forty days, excluding Sundays, begin on Ash Wednesday, February 18, and move us toward Jesus' cross and grave, and then to his resurrection.

In the ancient church Lent was a period of instruction and spiritual preparation for *catechumens*, people making ready for profession of faith and baptism at Easter. (We have some among us this year in our confirmation class!) These catechumens would learn and reflect on the church's prayers and creeds, filling their hearts and minds with the core things of faith in Christ.

Today's Lent remains a time for reorienting our lives toward Christ, reflecting on the core of our faith, and taking intentional steps to grow deeper into God. When we think on the cross, our need for a Savior, and our weakness and mortality it is not to beat ourselves up, but to lean all the more into the gracious arms of God who saves us in Christ. A holy Lent is marked by honesty and grace.

Do receive Lent as a holy time. Receive Lent as weeks set apart for living more open to God, looking further into yourself, and seeing a fuller picture of who you are with God in Christ. May this Lent be for us all a time of transformation by the God of the cross and of Easter hallelujahs.

WORSHIP

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday is the trailhead to the Lenten journey. This prayerful, reflective service brings us to the God who finds us in our sin and mortality, and leads us into the freedom of salvation by grace. Ashes imposed upon our foreheads mark us not only as people who return to dust, but also, especially, as those signed by Jesus' cross and mercy.

Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Sermon Series: *All Things in Christ*

As we live always amidst the air that we breathe, every part of our life is in touch with, even filled with, the gracious Savior, Jesus Christ. As Paul reminded the Romans, "you were baptized *in Christ Jesus*." Lenten sermons will look at how Jesus, who lived all of life in God, is the perfect Savior who transforms us who live all things in him.

HOLY WEEK

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 29, 10:30 a.m.

With palm branch processional and children's singing, we will remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem to crowds shouting hosanna and blessing. Then we will enter Scripture's story of Jesus' last week, when he gave us a Holy Meal and opened himself to betrayal, denial, and crucifixion for our salvation.

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

On the night before his arrest, Jesus took Passover bread and wine and made them signs of the life he would give for us. In this intimate service, we continue the drama of Holy Week by sharing the Lord's Supper in the presence of Jesus, the Lover who commands us to love.

Good Friday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.

The Friday Christians strangely call "good" is at the heart of our faith: dying our death, Jesus gives us life. This service of prayerful reflection on Jesus' death brings us into the depths of our rebellion against God, but also the infinitely deeper love and grace God shows in Jesus' cross.

Easter Sunday, April 5, 10:30 a.m.

Christ is risen, and risen indeed! With special music, the Lord's Supper, and the church's hallelujahs we will celebrate God's victory and resurrection life.

STUDY

Lent Study Feb 22 – March 29: Faith and Creeds

What do Christians believe? Why do we believe this? And what difference does it make? In *The Heart of Christian Faith* series by Alister McGrath, he explores the "big picture" of the Christian faith. Using the first study guide in the series, called *Faith and Creeds* we'll examine the significance and meaning of The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed as public visions of faith. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall by February 15th so we can order enough study guides. Led by Cory Keller.

FELLOWSHIP & SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Midweek Lenten Meals: Nourishment and Worship for God's Family

Wednesdays in Lent, February 25 – March 25, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Beginning the week after Ash Wednesday, we'll gather as the family of God for food, fellowship and prayer. At 6:00 p.m. we'll share a meal of hearty homemade soup and bread (and mac & cheese for the kids). Then from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. God's kids of all ages will share a simple,

interactive time of intergenerational worship. We'll sing, pray and talk around the following spiritual practices: *Encountering Scripture*, *Praying and Making Ritual*, *Giving Testimony and Witness*, *Discovering Gifts for Ministry*, and *Playing and Living Joyfully*. Led by Amber Balista, Elizabeth Goodin, Matt Reeves and others.

**Praying in Color Workshop,
Saturday March 7, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

Open to all ages, this workshop will explore how doodling becomes prayer. This active, visual, and meditative way to pray was first introduced by Sybil MacBeth in her book *Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God*. Childcare is provided for children ages 4 and younger. Register by February 26 in Fellowship Hall, online at www.christpcusa.org, or through the church office at (440) 729-1688. Led by Elizabeth Goodin.