



Lenten Edition 2014 Chimes

Christ Presbyterian Church

Dear Friends,

Spring is coming. More than our calendars, it is our eyes that will tell us as much. Soon, we'll see a crocus break snow-covered ground, a bluebird dart from a tree, buds once clenched against cold beginning to loosen with green. You don't need a calendar to perceive the coming of spring. Signs of burgeoning life pour into our eyes.

Lent comes from an Old English word meaning *spring*. Each year, as the seasons of spring and Lent coincide, the world around us and the gospel within us announce mark death's succumbing to life. As we look for bulbs buried in the ground to rise up with splendor, we watch for the Lord lying in the tomb to rise with unsurpassable glory. But we must wonder, all of us who are so good at spotting sprouting bulbs: how well do we spot the kingdom of the Crucified One whose rule is the life of the world?

This year, our church's observance of Lent will invite Christ and his kingdom into our eyes. In worship the sermon series "See the Kingdom" will ask what it means to live with a Savior who said, "No one can see *the kingdom of God* unless they are born again." A Lenten Wednesday "Bread and Broth" Bible study will gaze at the transfigured Lord over bread and bowls of soup. In Sunday School, adults will look afresh at spiritual disciplines. We will watch our children enact the good news through the drama, "The Three Trees." A ministry project, Picturing the Kingdom, will reorient us to our daily space as the place for seeing God's kingdom.

This year's Lenten observance invites us to lift our eyes to heaven by keeping them trained on the earth. Such was the life of Jesus who did not reveal the heavenly kingdom as an otherworldly realm, but as the rule of God's grace and mercy breaking in to the world before us now. It is not heaven, after all, that God saves in Jesus, but this world, with your life and mine. So it is true what they say, that seeing is believing. Only we don't believe because we see. We see the world, with God's life in it, because of how we believe.

And what we believe is that, in the One toward whose cross we journey in Lent, the kingdom of God has come near. It is a kingdom we can see, even touch and taste. It has to do with everywhere we go and everyone we see, for it is among us, even within us, enticing our eyes to stay peeled.

A blessed Lent to you all,



Lent 2014



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, March 5, 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. These would learn and reflect the church's prayers and creeds, filling their hearts and minds with the core things of faith in Christ.

Today, 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
March 5, 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: *See the Kingdom*

Jesus said, "No one can see the kingdom unless they are born again." The purpose of receiving new birth in Christ is more than just getting to heaven—it is seeing God's kingdom among us *right now*, and living in it *where we are*. With texts from the gospels, we will ask: How does Jesus see the world? How does Jesus see us? What happens when the sight of Jesus gets into our eyes? What happens is, we live in the world as people for whom the gospel is alive.

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday, April 13, 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. Palm Sunday also begins our weeklong journey with Jesus to the Supper Table, cross, and tomb.

Maundy Thursday, April 17, 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 18, 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 20, 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 Adult Sunday School: *Mudhouse Sabbath* Sundays in Lent, 9:30am - 10:15am, Fellowship Hall Led by Lindsey Russell

Based on Lauren Winner's book *Mudhouse Sabbath: An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline*, this study explores how spiritual practices of Judaism, which were formative for Jesus, can transform the way Christians live with God and in the world. It combines facilitator led group discussions with video clips of Rev. Dr. Winner, a professor of Christian Spirituality at Duke Divinity School, who shares her unique perspective growing up an Orthodox Jew before converting to Christianity.

Bread and Broth: Nourishment for the Whole Family Wednesdays in Lent, March 5 - April 9, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Bread and Broth begins on Ash Wednesday with a fellowship meal of hearty homemade soup and bread, followed by 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday worship. Then, for the next five Wednesdays of Lent, we will share a simple meal of soup and bread at 6:00 p.m., followed by study opportunities for adults, youth and children from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.

For Adults: *The Transfiguration of Jesus*, led by Rev. Dr. Aland Smith

Aland Smith will lead Bible study on the Transfiguration of Jesus, helping us see what that story reveals about sacrifice, sanctification, humility, obedience, and assurance of salvation. Children

ages 5 and up, as well as youth, will have a programming of their own, led by Elizabeth Goodin and Amber Bowers. Childcare will be provided.

For Children: *The Three Trees*, A Lenten Children's Drama, led by Elizabeth Goodin

The Three Trees is the classic legend about three young trees with big dreams for their future. They learn that nothing they dream could be bigger than God's plans for them. The children in grades K through 5 will spend time with Elizabeth Goodin hearing the story and then rehearsing for a **special performance to be held at 7:00 pm on April 9th**. Childcare for children ages 4 and younger will be provided in the nursery.

For Youth: *A Journey with Jesus in the Twenty-First Century*, led by Amber Bowers

After eating together at 6pm, youth will gather in the Youth Room while adults engage their own study in Fellowship Hall. In *A Journey with Jesus*, the students will think on teachings from Jesus, considering how to live them in today's world, in daily life.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

"Picturing the Kingdom"

The Season of Lent, March 5 - April 20

Your eyes are with you everywhere you go, and so is God's kingdom! In the weeks of Lent, peel your eyes for God's gracious activity at work, in your family, at play, in around town errands and everywhere else. Then "picture" what you see with your smartphone or other camera, by writing a short vignette or poem, or even painting or drawing. Send what you've captured of God's kingdom among us to Pastor Matt (matt@christpcusa.org) for inclusion in his Doctor of Ministry project, "Look Again." Submissions will be displayed at the church and included in Pastor Matt's thesis.