

March 2020

The Epistle

**Melcher-Dallas New Hope United Methodist Church
Pleasantville St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

Traditional Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a 40 day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

You are invited, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, giving, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

Let us commit ourselves by re-centering our lives on Christ, by focusing upon our relationship with God and others.

Almighty God during this season of preparation and reflection remind us of our need for your saving grace. Strengthen us to journey with Christ and one another in life and faith. Bless the spiritual practices we engage in that through them we may be drawn closer to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*Take a look at the
back page for a
list of upcoming
activities*

Look inside for the following:

- ◆ Scripture & Themes for Worship
- ◆ UMCOR Sunday
- ◆ St. Paul's World Day of Prayer
- ◆ St. Paul's Soup Supper
- ◆ New Hope's Wednesday Evening Prayer Service
- ◆ Spiritual Practice of the Month
- ◆ Discipleship

Scripture & Themes for Worship

Mar 1	Genesis 2 & Matthew 4	Selah—A Turning Point
Mar 8	John 3:1-17	Selah
Mar 15	John 4:5-42	Selah—An Invitation
Mar 22	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Selah—Difficult to Understand
Mar 29	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Selah—A Breath

What is Selah?

The United Methodist Discipleship website suggested that this Lent be a season of Selahs. Selah is an untranslated word found over 70 times in the psalms. According to the denominational website, *“While the word has not been definitively defined in scripture, the placement of the word suggests a shift, pause, break or interruption; it suggests exhaling or resting from routine activities.”*

This Lent for us will be a Season of Selah, an interruption in the routine of life that allows us space to breathe and reflect upon the grace and love of God.

UMCOR Sunday

March 22, 2020

*Compelled by Christ to offer signs
of extravagant grace
and hope throughout the world.*

The UMCOR Sunday special offering underwrites the “costs of doing business” for this life-giving ministry. While many non profit agencies charge 35 cents for each dollar raised, your support through this offering ensures 100% of gifts to UMCOR help those who need it most.

We can respond quickly to immediate needs and provide grants to support long-term recovery thanks to your support!

“I thank God for the resilience of people who come together to pick up the pieces and hope in the Lord to bring restoration to community and church life.”

*-Rev. Leslie Casupana-Dela Cruz
Camachile UMC, Philipines*

World Day of Prayer Service

March 6th at 11:00 a.m.
at St. Paul’s UMC



St. Paul’s UMC Golden Ladle Soup Supper Monday March 9 5:00 p.m. until gone

Enjoy a variety of soups prepared by community members! Vote for your favorite to win the Golden Ladle! Votes for the best soup will be tallied at 6:00 p.m.

Freewill donation to benefit repairs to the church building. To enter or for more information contact Sarah Thao at 848-3599.

Organized by St. Paul’s United Methodist Women

Volunteering At Bidwell-Riverside

April 4th 9:00 a.m.– Noon

A day has been scheduled for us to volunteer at Bidwell-Riverside in Des Moines. It will be a Saturday morning to allow those who work during the week to experience this opportunity to serve a wonderful mission. If you are interested in volunteering please let Sarah Thao know so we can figure out carpooling.

Spiritual Practice—Fasting

Do you want to fast this Lent?

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

-Pope Francis

Fasting from food, pop, television, social media, or any other activity all have the same goal, to draw closer to God. Fasting reminds us that we rely upon God for all things, as Jesus reminds us during his days of wilderness fasting.

Fasting makes greater space for God in our lives. Fasting helps us reset our priorities.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, fasted twice a week, believing that it was an important part of Christian living. For him it allowed more time for prayer and giving to the poor.

Discipleship

Following & Living Like Jesus Everyday

As we have been looking at various aspects of discipleship from Phil Maynard, let's look at how we are moving towards Christian perfection .

If you were going to describe your experience of Jesus and growth in his likeness, would it be:

- ♦ I find the life and teachings of Jesus to be intriguing.
- ♦ I am exploring the life of Jesus on my own by reading the Bible and trying out group Bible Study.
- ♦ I accept the call to follow Jesus and commit to the church; seeking to become like Jesus and serve others.
- ♦ I am beginning to daily apply the teachings of Jesus in everyday life.
- ♦ I partner with God and invite others to explore the life and teachings of Jesus.

Being a Christian, is a lifetime journey with Jesus. Everyday we decide to follow Jesus and be drawn closer to God.

**Evening Prayer Service
at New Hope UMC
Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m.**

On Wednesdays during Lent come and find a place for prayer and silence, scripture and song.

The service is intentionally short to allow people with busy schedules to stop in and connect with God. A time of prayer does not have to be long to be meaningful.

St. Paul's UMC

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P.O. Box 187
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515-848-5828



New Hope UMC

203 W Center St
P. O. Box 697
Melcher-Dallas, Iowa 50163
641-947-4141

*The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples
of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

Mark Your Calendars

- Mar 1-3 Pastor Jess is in Ames for BOOM Interviews
- Mar 4 New Hope's Evening Prayer Service 7:15 p.m.
- Mar 5 St. Paul's Admin Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Mar 6 St. Paul's World Day of Prayer Service at 11:00 a.m.
- Mar 8 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar 12 New Hope Admin Council at 7 p.m.
- Mar 22 UMCOR Sunday (special offering)
- Mar 24-25 Pastor Jess is in Ankeny for a Clergy Meeting

Coming Up

- Apr 5 Palm Sunday (Holy Week Begins)
- Apr 9 Holy Thursday Service at New Hope UMC
- Apr 10 Good Friday Service at St. Paul's UMC
- Apr 12 Easter Sunrise Service at New Hope UMC
- Apr 26 Native American Ministries Sunday (special offering)

Planning Ahead

- May 5 General Conference Begins
- May 10 Mother's Day
- May 31 Pentecost Sunday
- June 5-7 Annual Conference
- June 21 Father's Day

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39