





The ebb and flow of our church year which is populated by the weeks of the liturgical calendar exposes us to the highs and lows of celebration and of contrition. This tidal swing reflects the experiences that most of us walk through in our daily lives. The ups and downs whether shallow or deep propel us onward to the next encounter. Our church year works the same way, reflecting our rhythms of life. As we focus on the Lent/Resurrection cycle in this article, those rhythms propel us from one to the next.

“Lent,” a Teutonic word that simply means the “Spring season,” marks forty days of reflection, contrition, quiet, and preparation for the celebration of the Feast of The Resurrection of our Lord. It is often compared to Jesus’ forty days of desert deprivation and temptation after his baptism. The desert offers the environment of very few distractions in order to concentrate on what it means to be Son of God, and for us as a child of God. In the quiet and focus of lent we examine, in light of the Law of God, how our lives are lived, what priorities are present and who really is Lord. The reality of the end of our days, intoned from the words of our Ash Wednesday service: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return,” sharpens our concentration and examination. If I will become dust, and I will, how am I structuring my life today so that I live a life of meaning and fulfillment? If we are honest with ourselves, meaning and fulfillment are not found in the possession of stuff. They are found in the eternal relationship purchased and given by the blood of Jesus. It starts with the cross of Christ! So during these forty day, sans Sundays (!), we focus on the suffering and crucifixion of the Son of God for us and our response to such a sacrifice.

Traditions of Lent usually involve deprivations. Maybe no chocolate or desserts in general are what many do. Those are fine as long as the experience points us to Jesus’ suffering and death. Here may be another way to prepare and focus...how about reading one or two of the Gospels during Lent (I suggest John and Matthew), with quiet reflection as part of the mix. What better way

to prepare! Or maybe we pick forty acts of kindness to family, friends and yes even strangers, daily serving others as Jesus has served us.

Lenten preparation is the goal of this forty day season. Lent ends with the commencement of the *Paschal Triduum*, the three days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Contrition, confession and repentance (turning around and pointing to Jesus) push this preparation to its intended outcome—The Feast of the Resurrection!

Easter Sunday is the Queen of the Festivals of the Church, the apex of our church year! After crucifixion by the Romans, burial in a borrowed tomb, and the silence of death, the normal is shattered by the bursting of the sealed tomb and an alive Savior Jesus! The punishment for our sinful self-centeredness has been meted out on Jesus and now the verdict is life! He is the firstborn from the tomb and we are second! No wonder we gather to celebrate Christ’s resurrection because it is ours as well. Jesus has come that we might have life to the full and he freely, mercifully provides it. The preparation culminates with the words of the angels, “He is not here. He is risen!”

That angelic proclamation changes everything. We are now assured of an endless supply of life! Consequently, we step out in faith engaging the world with confidence. What can hurt us? We rejoice in proclaiming the resurrection of hopeless masses. We gather weekly to celebrate mini Easters on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, the day of Jesus’ resurrection. We willingly walk in the footsteps of Jesus, bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God in word and deed.

It is my prayer and sincere desire that your forty days and their culmination are spiritually challenging and fulfilling and that we celebrate the Resurrection together this year and in eternity!

- Pastor Ralph

If you are getting ready to start a new business, what do need to start? Of course, you start with an idea. You probably need some start-up capital. You might also bring in a partner or two. Maybe a few employees. Maybe you need a building to start your business. In order to start a business, you have to start with something. But what about God? When God starts something, He starts with nothing.

In Genesis 12:1-9 we read the call of Abram. God is going to give him land and make a great nation out of him. But from what? Some context here is helpful. In Chapter 11, Abram and his brother had just taken wives. And we learn that Sarai, Abram's wife, is barren. She can't have children. So how is Abram going to be the father of a great nation if his wife is barren? But this is the way our God works, creating something from nothing.

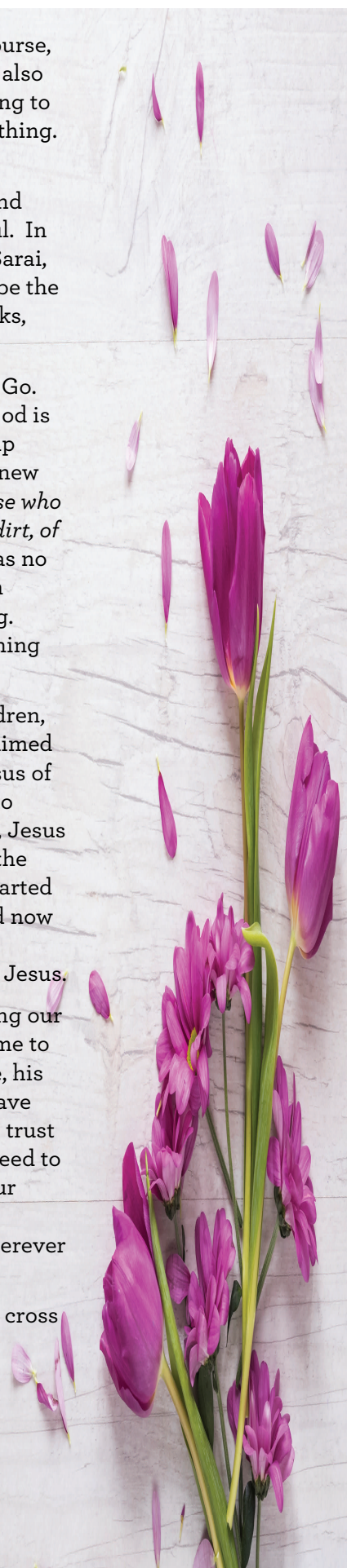
God told Abram, *"Go from your country...to the land I will show you."* Go. Leave your family, leave your home, leave your land, and leave your gods. God is going to start with nothing. How can you trust a God who asks you to give up everything? But God is going to show Abram something new: a new land, a new way of life. God tells Abram, *"I will make you a great nation. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth, of the dirt, of Adam, will be blessed through you."* That's a lot of promises for a guy who has no homeland, no extended family, and whose wife can't have children. How can Abram trust God to do this? But Abram trusted God and just started walking. Abram just began his new life and new journey – a life of faith – starting nothing but God's Word of promise

God continued to start with nothing. Elizabeth - too old to have children, yet God started with nothing to bring about John the Baptist. And he proclaimed the coming of another who started from nothing, a child born of a virgin, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus, a son of Abraham, and Son of God, left behind everything to become nothing, humbling himself to be a servant of everyone. Like Abram, Jesus followed God's Word. Jesus walked to Calvary to become literally nothing, the one upon whom the sin of the whole world is placed. The great thing God started from nothing with Abram, is fulfilled in Jesus as He rose from the dead. And now all the families of the world – including you - are blessed through Jesus. Forgiveness and eternal life, freedom from bondage to sin – it's all yours - in Jesus.

The life of faith is a life of loss. It is a life of denying ourselves, leaving our old sinful ways, and walking in faith. The Season of Lent is an intentional time to live this life of loss. Abram heard God's Word of Promise, left behind his life, his gods, and started walking. Maybe we need to take a cue from Abram, and leave our old gods behind – those favorite things of ours – those things we want to trust in more than our God. Lent is a good time to reflect on those things which need to be left behind. Lent is also a good time to start new things. Take a look at our Homepointe Kiosk and our Resource Center in the Grand Hallway for helps, suggestions, and information on things you can start as you follow Jesus wherever He leads.

God's promises are what make something from nothing. The promise of the cross of Christ are yours through faith in Him.

— Pastor Jon



Music Ministry

Why have music in church ?

What is the function of music in our worship services? Certainly this is a complicated question. I would like to try to answer it briefly.

Music has been a part of Christian worship from David's Psalms to the "hymn" at the Last Supper. But, why? Obviously, a portion of our worship is just that: worship. By singing hymns, psalms and songs, we worship God. We tell God how great He is, praise Him, thank Him and honor Him.

Of course, all of that can be done without music. Those ideas can be expressed internally or spoken. No music is required. However, music is often used because it adds another dimension of expression. The mood of the music often supports the mood of the ideas we are expressing. If you don't believe that, try singing "A Mighty Fortress" in soft whispered tones or "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" in full voiced vigor. It doesn't fit, does it? Even when there are no words, the music can still speak. The Pre-Service Music may set a mood of reverence and other-worldly awe. It can also build excitement and anticipation that something is about to happen. The Voluntary (music during the Offering) is usually at a reflective time shortly after the sermon. It usually promotes quiet reflection or perhaps serenity. So music can lead our mind and spirit to the proper mood for what we are experiencing in the worship service. When this music is based on hymn tunes that we know, it may also call those lyrics to mind and communicate a message without using words.

Music can also have a teaching function. Some of our more lengthy hymns might teach us things about God or His work in our lives. Hymns or songs might have scriptural themes or quotes. Catchy melodies help us to remember quotes or ideas and even memorize them. Music can also enrich and magnify the sacred actions which take place in worship (the reading of the Word, celebration of the sacraments, prayer, etc.)

Music can also be a form of Christian fellowship and up building. Many of the words we sing in church are directed not to God but to each other. We exhort one another to praise (*"O friends in gladness let us sing eternal anthems echoing"*) to serve God (*"Take the task He gives you gladly; Let His work your pleasure be"*) to share His Word (*"Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim"*).

It also seems appropriate to have music in church because our capacity to enjoy music (appreciate combinations of sounds) is God given. Music is part of God's creation. It is fitting that we return a portion of His gift to Him as an offering. Most of us experience and enjoy music outside of church. Shouldn't this gift be used also as a tribute to the Lord?

When we realize the exalted purposes for church music, we soon recognize that the music used in church should be the best we can offer. Much like we give our first fruits in our financial offerings, we give as we have been given. If you have a fine singing voice, use it to praise God (perhaps in a choir). If your voice is not so polished, use it to the best of your ability. If you can ring a bell (at the right time) or play an instrument, those can also be an offering to God and a blessing to those present.

As important as music can be in worship, we must never let it become the center of our attention. It's function is to turn us toward God.



Music Ministry

Join Our Sanctuary Choir “for the Season”

We have room in the balcony for many more singers, so consider joining us, especially now as we begin to prepare music for Lent and Easter services. You could even join us “for a season”. Choir is a way to use your talents to glorify the Lord and to enrich worship services for many others. Sanctuary Choir meets on Wednesdays from 7:30-9:00 PM.

Lent K-6 Children’s Choir Forming

We would like to form a Children’s Choir during the season of Lent. We will meet on **Wednesdays** from **6:00-7:00 PM**.

If that time does not work well for you, I can also meet with children at **12:15-12:50 AM on Sundays**.

We will prepare for two goals:

- 1 To sing in worship at Hope at 11 AM on **Palm Sunday, April 5**.
2. To attend a **Children’s Choir Festival**, joining with dozens of other children of Houston on **Sunday, April 26 at First Presbyterian Church**.

Like our *Lent* Children’s Choir, the festival is for grades **K-6**. Hope kids have appreciated attending these festivals for several years. The festival lasts from 2:00-6:00 PM. A skilled director (Dr. Sonja Sepulveda) will lead the children and a short concert is presented at the end of the event.

You can always review the details of our music program at the Hope website:

<https://hope-lutheran.org/ministries/music>

For questions or comments about our Music Ministry,

contact Director of Music Michael Kesar at mkesar@hope-lutheran.org or call the church office.



It's Island Time!

This year the senior high youth opted to change things up a bit so while our 6th-8th graders head west for spring retreat we will be heading south to Galveston! A generously sized beach house will be our base for a weekend that focuses on relationships and leadership. Space is limited so sign up soon for this weekend adventure, March 27-29 (same weekend as Confirmation retreat. Cost is \$115/person

Got Water?

Senior High ministry is looking for a place to host a cardboard regatta! Do you know of a great place where we can launch our cardboard ships and gather a crowd of onlookers? Contact Robin Groeper with your great idea for making this plan come to life!

It Starts at Home

Some research never changes-- in spite of society's shifting priorities, everything continues to point to parents as the number one influencer throughout the life of a child. Dr. Richard Ross shares in his book, Youth Ministry That Lasts a Lifetime, "Spiritually lethargic parents create spiritually lethargic kids. Spiritually alive parents produce spiritually alive kids." But how do we find time in all the busyness and resulting exhaustion to do one more thing? Join us in our Mosaic adult Bible study to learn practical ways to nurture faith at home. From little ones to teenagers to moms and dads and grandparents—everyone has a role in the faith growth of a family. Mosaic returns on Wednesdays after Easter (April 15), 6:00-7:30 in the Center for Faith Development.

Robin Groeper
Director of Student Ministry

Youth Ministry

Children's Ministry

Building Faith

If you and your family have been invited to attend any of our Faith Builders events here at Hope, you have read the words "Faith Builders is designed to assist you in fulfilling the baptismal covenant promises made at the baptism of your child. You are the primary faith builder for your child, and we want to support you in the process!"

We do want to support you in this process. Not only through our Faith Builders events, but with resources on campus to help you intentionally bring faith into your everyday life. If you have not already, please stop by our Homepointe kiosk located across from room 104. We have materials for everyone from single adults to families with small children, families with teens, and grandparents. These materials will be switched out periodically, so just because you stopped once doesn't mean you've seen everything that will be offered.

We also have a new resource center at the playground end of the Grand Hallway. This resource center offers books and other items you are free to take and use for as long as you'd like. Again, these books cover topics that are relevant to almost any age range, married or single, children or no children.

Finally, if you have not been able to join us for Mosaic Wednesdays, I would encourage you to come even if it's just to share a meal. Building relationships within your faith family, across all generations, will make a big difference in your child's faith formation. Mosaic will resume after Easter on April 15th.

What is Lent?

How do we explain the idea and meaning of Lent to the children around us? There are worship services at the church on Wednesday nights, the color on the altar is purple, and sometimes people give up special foods or things for Lent, but why?

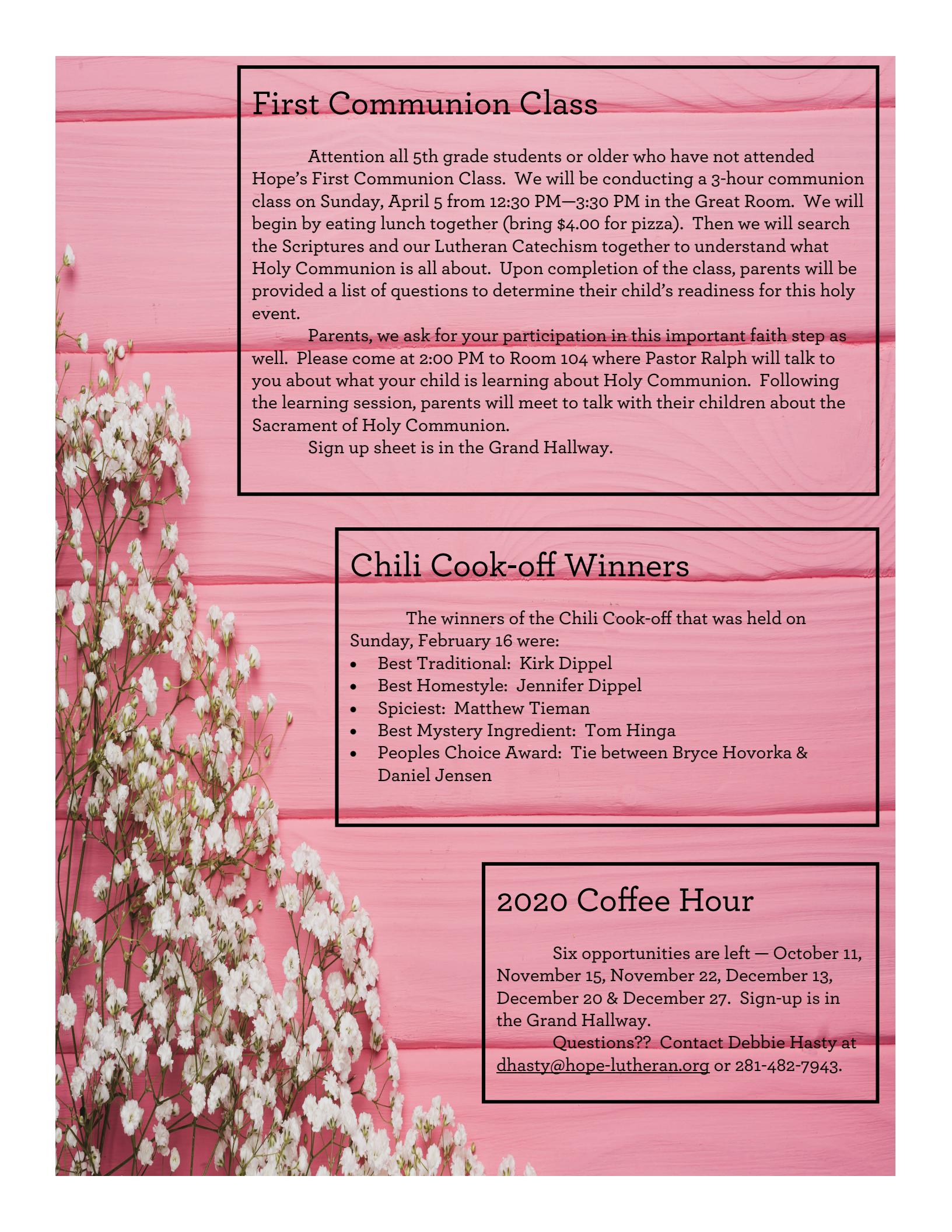
Lent is the time to help us prepare for the joy of Easter that comes because Christ rose from the dead. We take time to think about why Jesus had to die on the cross for us, and we remember that Jesus loves us SO MUCH that He was willing to do just that – die on that cross to save us from our sins.

The paraments are purple as a sign that we are sorry for our sins and also for royalty – that we should bow penitently before the King. Giving up food or special things during Lent is a personal choice. If giving something up helps someone feel closer to the Lord, or helps him or her better understand Christ's suffering, then that is a private choice for that person.

During Lent, take time to talk with your children about Christ's suffering and why it had to be, remembering to emphasize that because of that suffering, we are forgiven, and that on Easter, Jesus rose and is alive. Perhaps seek out a Lenten devotional to share as a family, or ask me about Lent in a Box if you did not receive one. Help your children understand and appreciate this season of the church, and your Easter celebration may be more joyful than ever this year.

Krista Beken
Director of Children's Ministries





First Communion Class

Attention all 5th grade students or older who have not attended Hope's First Communion Class. We will be conducting a 3-hour communion class on Sunday, April 5 from 12:30 PM—3:30 PM in the Great Room. We will begin by eating lunch together (bring \$4.00 for pizza). Then we will search the Scriptures and our Lutheran Catechism together to understand what Holy Communion is all about. Upon completion of the class, parents will be provided a list of questions to determine their child's readiness for this holy event.

Parents, we ask for your participation in this important faith step as well. Please come at 2:00 PM to Room 104 where Pastor Ralph will talk to you about what your child is learning about Holy Communion. Following the learning session, parents will meet to talk with their children about the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Sign up sheet is in the Grand Hallway.

Chili Cook-off Winners

The winners of the Chili Cook-off that was held on Sunday, February 16 were:

- Best Traditional: Kirk Dippel
- Best Homestyle: Jennifer Dippel
- Spiciest: Matthew Tieman
- Best Mystery Ingredient: Tom Hinga
- Peoples Choice Award: Tie between Bryce Hovorka & Daniel Jensen

2020 Coffee Hour

Six opportunities are left — October 11, November 15, November 22, December 13, December 20 & December 27. Sign-up is in the Grand Hallway.

Questions?? Contact Debbie Hasty at dhasty@hope-lutheran.org or 281-482-7943.

Wednesday Services

Lent

March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 2

11:00 AM and 7:00 PM

MEMBERSHIP —Class—

Sunday

March 8

12:30 PM

Room 104

Renewal Classes begin . .

Women of Hope & Friends

Save the Date!

The Ahhhhhhhh Spa:
Finding Contentment in a Culture of
More

*February 5 - 7, 2021
Retreat at Camp Allen*

Registrations taken in April & May



Easter Breakfast

April 12

6:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Family Life
Center

Free Will Offering



APRIL 12

Easter

6:00 am | 8:00 am | 9:30 am | 11:00 am

Holy Week Schedule

MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 9 | 6:00 PM Seder Meal
7:00 PM Stripping of the Altar

GOOD FRIDAY

TENEBRAE
APRIL 10 | 7:30 PM

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VIGIL OF EASTER

APRIL 11 | 7:30 PM

Spending Plan

Below is the proposed Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2020 (April 1, 2020—March 31, 2021) that will be presented at the Voters' Assembly Meeting, March 22, 2020 between services in the Great Room. Please plan to attend this important meeting. If you have any questions, please contact me at the church office at 281-482-7943.

Thank you, Katherine Kohn

		Current Plan FY 2020	Proposed Plan FY 2021
OUTREACH	<i>Missions, Advertising, Website Maintenance & Email Hosting</i>	\$76,896	\$76,896
EDUCATION	<i>Sunday School Materials, Adult Education, Confirmation, Teacher Support, VBS</i>	\$8,850	\$8,950
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	<i>Easter Activity, Christmas Program & Activities, SWAT</i>	\$2,300	\$2,300
YOUTH	<i>Junior High & Senior High Activities and Supplies, Subscriptions, Transportation</i>	\$10,700	\$10,400
ASSIMILATION	<i>New Member Receptions, Miscellaneous Supplies</i>	\$200	\$200
FINANCE	<i>Debt Payment, Bank Fees, Contingency Transfer</i>	\$46,505	\$46,505
PERSONNEL	<i>Salaries, Housing Allowance, Car Allowance, Medical, Retirement & Disability, Payroll Taxes</i>	\$658,552	\$671,584
MUSIC	<i>Adult Choir, Handbell Choir, Brass/Woodwind/Strings, Children's Choirs</i>	\$6,250	\$6,050
FACILITIES	<i>Insurance, Utilities, Maintenance Contracts, General & Property Maintenance, Janitorial Service</i>	\$216,650	\$217,525
OFFICE & WORSHIP	<i>Copier, Office Supplies, Printing, Offering Envelopes, Worship Supplies, Attendance Cards</i>	\$40,820	\$41,220
MISC. MINISTRIES	<i>Small Group, Stephen Ministry, Faith Builders, Christian Helping Hands, Meals on Wheels, D6/Family Ministry, Mosaic</i>	\$12,350	\$12,350
CONFERENCES & TRAINING	<i>Staff Training, Conferences, District / Synodical Conventions</i>	\$9,500	\$9,500
TOTAL		\$1,089,573	\$1,103,480





HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Friendswood, TX 77549

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Ralph W. Hobratschk, Senior Pastor

Jonathan E. Petering, Associate Pastor

