WORTHINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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TOWER TIDINGS

February 2021

LENT 2021: *Bless This Mess*

As we prepare for Lent 2021, we're very aware that the beginning of the COVID19 Pandemic coincided with last year's Lenten season. Maybe you remember the church sign that went viral: "I didn't mean to give up THIS much for Lent!"

Here we are, it's Lent again, and the Pandemic is still with us, threatening our wellbeing on many levels. Political division in our country is still with us, too, maybe worse than many of us can remember. Consequences of racism are still with us, some of us maybe realizing in a new way what a thorny, persistent bedevilment it is. It's Lent again in our world, and God knows, it's a mess.

The good news of Jesus Christ is that God knows it's a mess. God knows our frailties, how we mess up. Out of love for us, God in Jesus Christ joined us in this mess, to lift us from its grip on us. And in Christ God defeated the powers of sin and death, the forces which try to persuade us that the mess is all there is or ever will be.

Our Lenten theme video notes how the season of Lent coincides with the arrival of Spring. Spring and Lent are not the same thing. Yet, Nature's way of shedding the gray dormancy of winter with the colorful life of Spring does seem to illuminate God's way of shedding the dreary weight of sinfulness with the love, hope, justice, and light of the new life we have in Christ. Even if you're not a fan of tea or of coloring Easter eggs, we hope you enjoy the gentle invitation this theme gives us to lean into God's love in these next several weeks. *(Continues next page)*

Last year in Lent and during the shutdown, many of us cleaned drawers and closets, basements and garages, reducing some of the mess around us. Paying attention to a mess gives us a chance to reconstruct, to reset, to begin afresh. This is what the Lenten practices of prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, and service can allow: a time to confess what we have done and what we have left undone, a time accept that life is messy and at the same time to invite God to transform us and our world ever more toward the vision of light and love we see in our Savior.

God bless this mess. God bless this Lent.

Yours in Christ,

Julia

Julia Wharff Piermont, Senior Pastor

ASH WEDNESDAY ~ Livestreamed February 17th, 7 p.m.

Enter into the Lenten season this year with our Ash Wednesday service which is brought to us this year by our Youth Ministry. The service will be all youth-led and will include our new Youth Worship Team, who have been hard at work to make this Ash Wednesday special for the church. In addition, everyone will be receiving a 'bonfire' activity to do for Ash Wednesday if you would like to make your own ashes for the service. If you cannot make ashes, feel free to bring any substitute to the service.

IDEAS FOR ASHES AT HOME

Our Ash Wednesday will include an opportunity to make the sign of the cross with ashes on one's forehead or the back of one's hand. In lieu of ashes, you may want to prepare something else you have at home. Suggestions are dirt, clay, oil (baby, essential or cooking), makeup, finger paints or chalk. It is wiser to make the sign of the cross on your own hand (or forehead, if you have the coordination!), than to disregard social distance protocols with those outside your pandemic bubble.

A LENT PRIMER

Lent – The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word that means "spring" or "springtime". Taken literally, the word means that this is the time of the year when the days *lengthen*. This season of the church year is a time of preparation, reflection, growth and change. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (February 17th this year) and ends the moment that Easter begins (April 4th this year).

40 Days – Lent is designed to be 40 days of spiritual practices, such as prayer and fasting. While there are several examples of 40 days or 40 years being important to God's people growing in faith (e.g. Noah & the Ark, the Israelites in the Wilderness), the main story our Lent is based on is the time after Jesus' baptism, when he withdrew to the desert to fast and pray for 40 days before beginning his public ministry. (Matthew 4:1-2 and Luke 4:1-2) You may notice there are more than 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter; that is because we don't count Sundays. Sunday is the always the Lord's Day, sometimes called a "little Easter," and we don't fast on Easter.

Ashes – Ash Wednesday is the first day in the season of Lent. It is a day of fasting and prayer and a time we can confess our sin. Ashes are a visible sign of sin and a public request for forgiveness. Today, many churches hold special services where the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned and mixed with oil and used to mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of those attending. The ashen cross is a visible reminder of our need for repentance and forgiveness.

Purple – Purple is the color associated with Lent. Until rather recently, purple was a very expensive color to produce, so it symbolized royalty (i.e. the ones wealthy enough to buy it). Perhaps because the Roman guards mocked Jesus on the day he was crucified by dressing him in purple robes (Mark 15:17), the color purple for Christians also means repentance. Purple is often associated with spirituality, perhaps because in terms of light, purple (violet) is the most powerful visible wavelength of electromagnetic energy visible to the human eye.

Easter – The Season of Lent is "back-dated" from Easter, the festival day we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Easter is what is known as a "movable feast," a holiday that is not on a set date. Jesus' death and resurrection occurred around the time of the Jewish Passover holiday, so the Easter formula is designed to keep it close to the Passover celebration. As established for the western Church by the Council of Nicaea (325 CE), Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal (Spring) equinox.

> *The March equinox coincides with Easter Sunday and holidays that are related to it. These holidays do not fall on a fixed date in the Gregorian calendar, or the Julian calendar, which is still used by many Orthodox Christian churches. Jesus' death and resurrection occurred around the time of the Jewish Passover, which was celebrated on the first full moon following the vernal equinox. In 325CE the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the vernal equinox.* (Aren't you glad you know, now? Clear as MUD!)

"BLESS THIS MESS" for FAMILIES
Lent 2021

Happy Lent! It seems strange to say "happy" and "Lent" together. Lent is a season (6 weeks) of a quieter, more prayerful and reflective time. (Ash Wednesday, February 17th to Easter, April 4th)

Lenten Porch-drop off packets will be arriving at all CHILDREN and YOUTH front doors and porches over Valentine's Day weekend. The Lent packet has many activities and items to support and encourage your family to fully participate in Lent this year.

- Valentine's Day Card and treats (not Lent, just for fun)
- Fish Bank for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)
- Ash Wednesday Family Bonfire activity (and marshmallows) (Feb 17)
- 8 tealight candles and 5 weeks of cards with Bible study, family activities and faith in action ideas to try:
    - Week #1 (Feb 21) – Remember your Baptism (bowl for water to dip your fingers in)
    - Week #2 (Feb 28) – Transform your world (plants seeds to beautify the world a bit)
    - Week #3 (March 7) – Compassion and emotions (self-care Bingo, try to do at least 5 of the activities on your Bingo card)
    - Week #4 (March 14) – Give thanks (write a thank you note to your librarian, mail carrier, grocery clerk, restaurant worker or garbage truck driver)
    - Week #5 (March 21) – Anti-racism/poverty (Book list of diverse books and authors: children and teen recommended reads)

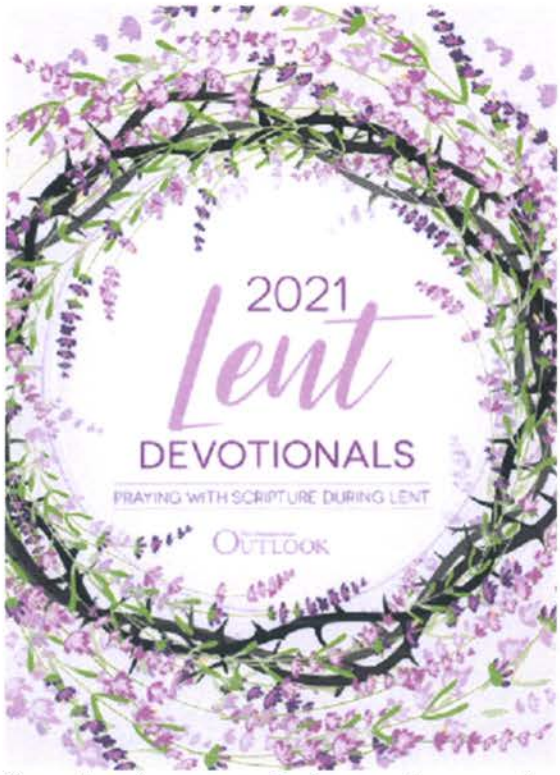
Week #6 (March 28) starts with Palm Sunday – a 2nd porch drop off with Palm Sunday, Last Supper Thursday, Good Friday and Easter activities.

Each week has several options for families. Start with the card that has the picture with a blue watering can filled with flowers. This card has candles, scripture, meditation and a blessing to start each week. Pick one, two or all the cards to do during the week, choose what works best for your family. The last card uses the phrase "Tea Ceremony". Please feel free to change the tea to hot cocoa or lemonade. It doesn't matter what you drink, the most important component is the ***discussion time together***.

*****We have extra packets for any church member who would like a packet. Contact Jenni Whitford to arrange for a pick-up (or a drop-off).**

2021 LENT DEVOTIONALS

Praying with Scripture During Lent



You will receive our Lent Devotions for this year in e-mails on February 16 (the day before Ash Wednesday) and on each Saturday of Lent. The themes for the weeks are: *Forgiveness Leads to Life; God is Our Creator and Shepherd; From Lost to Found; Dry Bones Come to Life; Freedom for the Captives; Transfiguration and Transformation;* and *You Are the Son of the Living God.*

Presbyterian pastor and author, Roger Gench, writes: "As a Lenten devotional discipline this year, you are invited to pray with Scripture as a way of discerning what God is calling you to be and to do during this season. John Calvin spoke of the Bible as the 'lens of faith,' likening it to a pair of eyeglasses that enables us to see the world with clearer vision... One of the ways we can 'put on' Scripture is by praying or meditating contemplatively on a Biblical text — slowly and contemplatively reading it as a prayer to God.

"Praying with Scripture in this way can be an aid – a focusing lens – to help us discern the movement of God in our personal lives and in the life of the world around us...You will be invited to pray with one passage from Scripture each day and prompted to reflect on what it is disclosing to you about movement toward God and movement away from God in your life."

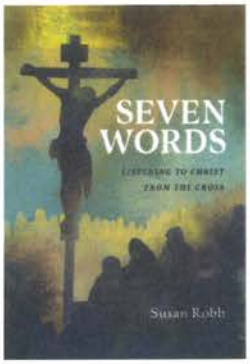
Join us this Lent as we "Pray with Scripture."

HYMN MEDITATION VIDEO FOR LENT

Our organist, Stephen Jacoby, continues his inspiring brief musical meditations this Lent in coordination with the Lenten Devotionals described above, "Praying with Scripture during Lent." Each week's devotions include a "Hymn of the Week." Join Dr. Jacoby and soloists from the Chancel Choir as we explore each "Hymn of the Week" and consider the history and meaning of each for our lives today. Video links will be available on our website and via our email messages.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross



Our Lenten Bible Study will be offered on Sundays (starting 2/21) at 9 a.m. and on Wednesdays (starting 2/24) at 7 p.m. on Zoom. The 6-week series will use pastor and author Susan Robb's book and video reflections. Each week will focus on one of Jesus' sayings from the cross: *Father, forgive them; Today you will be with me in Paradise; My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?; Woman, here is your son; I am thirsty; Into your hands I commend my spirit;* and *It is finished.*

You can sign up by contacting Pastor Tom Rice or by using this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4FA9AC2CA6F58-lenten1

Copies of the book can be picked up at the church office or let Pastor Tom know if you'd like one delivered to your home.

UNDIVIDED

Please keep this 6-week series and our participants in your prayers! Between February 15th and March 22nd we will have approximately 24 WPC members building friendships across racial lines with members of area churches, hearing about one another's experiences of race, and exploring opportunities for mission together. At least one third of the participants were required to be people of color. Undivided limits the class size and so we could not include everyone interested from WPC. We hope to offer this again, and we hope this series leads to important shared mission outreach opportunities.

One Great Hour of Sharing

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

We will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering on Sunday, March 28. In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

You can give by check (payable to Worthington Presbyterian Church, memo: OGHS) or by EasyTithe—anytime between March 1st and Easter. Thank you for your generosity.

CHOIR PLUS RESTART 2021 (Grades K-6th)

Choir Plus is our mid-week Children's music and Christian Education time. We will start to meet HYBRID style. We will meet in-person and on Zoom. Those who are ready for in person will gather in Fellowship Hall and those who would prefer to meet online, may join in virtually. February 11th – March 25th --- Thursday nights, 5:30-6:30 p.m. (No dinner, snack will be provided) We will wear masks, practice safe distancing and use hand motions, hand bells, ribbons and other non-singing musical teachings.

CLUB 56 – MOVIE NIGHT: Friday, February 26th:

We are renting the THEATER! We will have a whole theater to ourselves (limit of 20 people). $5/person, friends welcomed and encouraged. (Movie TBD)

CELEBRATION OF SOUND CONCERT ONLINE

On Sunday, February 21st at 2:30 p.m. our *Celebration of Sound Concert Series* will present *Power and Poetry,* an online performance by the pianist **Tianshu Wang.** Acclaimed by the press as a "superbly talented pianist" who plays with "prodigious technique and eloquent phrasing", she has graced the concert stages of the United States, China, Denmark, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, Korea and Taiwan. She is active in both solo and collaborative concerts and has performed with major orchestras in China and the United States. She has performed in Carnegie Hall and appeared live on CCTV as a soloist.

Dr. Wang is currently Professor and Head of the Keyboard Area at Capital University's Conservatory of Music. She received the *Praesantia Award for Distinguished Teaching* in 2011, the highest honor given to a faculty member at the university. Prior to Capital, she served on the piano faculty of Sweet Briar College in Virginia and was Dean of the Piano School at Shenyang Conservatory of Music in China.

Power and Poetry is a program of compositions by the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886). From the composer's original works Dr. Wang' selections will include "Dreams of Love", "The Bells of Geneva", "A Sigh" and others. There will also be several of Liszt's transcriptions, including "On Wings of Song" (Felix Mendelssohn), "Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto" (Giuseppe Verdi) and more.

Tune in and enjoy this marvelous concert! You will find it on YouTube by entering "WPC Celebration of Sound: "Power and Poetry" February 21, 2021 or on our website, www.wpcnow.org.

Blessings, David

Youth Ministry – FINDING BLESSINGS IN THIS MESSY TIME

We are sending a 'Lent-at-Home' delivery to our families this year to invite them to observe Lent from the safety of their own home.

Our Youth are also leading worship at our Ash Wednesday Service. Make sure to come start the journey to the cross and the tomb with us on Wednesday, February 17th.

We also have several other big events this season, including a ski trip right before Lent on February 14th, as well as a winter hike on March 8th and a bowling trip on March 21st. Even though we were not able to go to Camp Akita this year, we have been finding other fun and safe ways to connect with each other.

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

The WPC Session received four new church members at their meeting on February 1st. These four new members have been joining in live-streamed worship for months and were active before that. We look forward to service, worship, and fellowship together for many years to come. Please welcome:

Kate Lane cherishes memories of organ lessons and mission trips to Brazil through Park Presbyterian Church in Beaver, PA. She has taught middle school music and been a church organist. The Lane family spends summers on Lake Erie, where Kate is the organist. Kate is on the WPC Children's Ministries Committee and helps with VBS and Choir Plus.

Sean Lane grew up in Gallipolis. He is the founder of Olive AI. He has helped with marketing, communication, capital campaigns, and food service in previous churches. Sean has prepared Christmas dinners for Stafford Village residents. He and Kate are the parents of Mallory, SJ, and Amy, who are active in WPC children's activities.

Tiffany Scheer graduated from OSU with a degree in Logistics and International Business, and works for Abercrombie. A lifelong Presbyterian, she grew up in Deerfield, IL. She loves music and performance and has participated in church choirs and mission trips.

Gabe Scherer, a native of Bowling Green, graduated from OSU with a degree in aerospace engineering. He currently works for Airborne Maintenance and Engineering Services. He enjoys playing soccer and ice hockey. He grew up in the Roman Catholic Church. Gabe and Tiffany will be married in 2022.

BIRTHDAY SOCKS

If you were approaching your 97th birthday, what would you put on your birthday list? If you were Marilyn Lawless, you would ask your family and friends for SOCKS—socks for the homeless. Marilyn did ask, and last month, she received 68 pairs of socks! Marilyn says she has all she needs, so she gave all of the socks to our homeless brothers and sisters.

Marilyn's birthday socks join the almost 1,400 other pairs of socks generously donated. We are so grateful for Worthington Presbyterian's extravagant generosity.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ~ 1,000th HOUSE

On Saturday, January 23, Worthington Presbyterian Church and our Habitat for Humanity partners dedicated our 1,000th house! The hard work of our WPC volunteers, together with others, finished the house on Manchester Avenue in Columbus--safely in the midst of the pandemic--and the family received their keys, Bible and toolbox. Now we'll start working on the NEXT 1,000!

A great big THANKS for your usual amazing CARE Worthington Presbyterian donated MANY socks - almost 1,400 pairs! Deliveries to Faith Mission, Van Buren Center, Come and Go, the Open Shelter, and Huckleberry House have been made! Such a loving, generous congregation...You certainly make the grade! THANK YOU! *the Sock Sisters*

Lent 2021

A PRAYER A DAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			FEBRUARY 17 **We pray for the beginning of our Lenten journey.** ASH WEDNESDAY	FEBRUARY 18 **Today we pray for those who are lonely or alone.**	FEBRUARY 19 **Water is a precious gift. Say a Prayer of thanks for the gift of water today.**	FEBRUARY 20 **Today we pray for those who are sick or in the hospital.**
FEBRUARY 21 **Candle Prayer: Light a candle and say a silent Prayer.**	FEBRUARY 22 **We pray for peace in our hearts, our homes, and the world.**	FEBRUARY 23 **Today we pray for kindness. May we always be kind to others.**	FEBRUARY 24 **Breath Prayer: Breathe in peace. Breathe out worry.**	FEBRUARY 25 **Where does our food come from? Pray for those who grew and sold your food today.**	FEBRUARY 26 **Today we pray for those who are sad or worried. Give them peace.**	FEBRUARY 27 **Art Prayer: Draw or doodle your prayers today.**
FEBRUARY 28 **Gratitude Prayer: Name three things you're grateful for today.**	MARCH 1 **Today we pray for those who are grieving someone they have lost.**	MARCH 2 **Candle Prayer: Light a candle and name someone you're praying for.**	MARCH 3 **Pray for the future. What's one thing in your future you'd like to lift up to God?**	MARCH 4 **Pray for your family today.**	MARCH 5 **Today we pray for rest and sleep, and for those who need it most.**	MARCH 6 **Borrowed Prayer: Say a prayer someone else wrote. If needed, find a book or do a search.**
MARCH 7 **The Lord's Prayer is the prayer today. (Look online if you need the words.)**	MARCH 8 **Pray for those who need shelter today.**	MARCH 9 **Pray for someone in a different country today.**	MARCH 10 **Pray about letting go. Is there something bothering you? Write it down to God.**	MARCH 11 **Pray for those who are in danger today.**	MARCH 12 **Pray for those who live in a place where there is famine or war.**	MARCH 13 **Gratitude Prayer: Name three memories you are thankful for.**
MARCH 14 **Today's prayer is the Prayer of St. Francis. (Find the words online if you need them.)**	MARCH 15 **Gratitude Prayer: Name three people you're grateful for today.**	MARCH 16 **Pray for hope. What do you hope for? Tell God about it.**	MARCH 17 **Pray for your faith community today.**	MARCH 18 **Candle Prayer: Light a candle and name something you're grateful for.**	MARCH 19 **May the last thing you say tonight be a prayer. (And look at tomorrow's prayer.)**	MARCH 20 **May the first thing you say this morning be a prayer.**
MARCH 21 **Today's prayer is the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-12 in the Bible.**	MARCH 22 **Candle Prayer: Light a candle and pray for something you need.**	MARCH 23 **Pray for all the leaders in your country today.**	MARCH 24 **We pray for friends and friendship today.**	MARCH 25 **Gratitude Prayer: Look for three reasons to be grateful throughout the day.**	MARCH 26 **Today we pray for those who are anxious or afraid.**	MARCH 27 **Look outside and say a prayer for all of God's creatures and creation.**
MARCH 28 **Hosanna means "help," "rescue," or "save." What is your hosanna prayer?** PALM SUNDAY	MARCH 29 **Pray for your faith journey today. Ask God to teach you something new.**	MARCH 30 **Pray for the Holy Spirit today, that you might see where the Spirit is guiding you.**	MARCH 31 **Pray for wisdom today. How will you be wise in your faith?**	APRIL 1 **Today we pray for the oppressed, those whose voices are often silenced.**	APRIL 2 **We are called to pray for enemies. What prayers come to mind today?**	APRIL 3 **Practice silent prayer. Say a prayer in silence today for 30 seconds or one minute.**
APRIL 4 **Today we give thanks for the hope of Resurrection!** EASTER	Journey through Lent with a prayer a day. Let the short prompts inspire you, and don't worry if you miss some days. May God bless your journey of prayer this Lent.					

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WORTHINGTON
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
773 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085