

The Pastor's Pen Lent 2026

A quick look outside confirms we have had a cold and snowy winter. But know this, the warmth and light of lent is coming. In fact, our word lent is a shortened version of the Old English word for "springtime" which is lencten, and the literal meaning of lencten is "lengthening", referring to the lengthening of the day (daylight) as we progress through spring.

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th. As in years past, Soup and Scripture will be held in our Fellowship Hall at noon on Wednesdays during lent (except for Holy week). In the evening of February 18, our congregation will have the 'Agape Meal' (potluck) at 6:00 PM and the Ash Wednesday service with the Sacrament of Communion and imposition of ashes. During Holy Week we will have the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae on April 2nd at 7:00 PM. In this service we will experience the final week of Jesus and his crucifixion through scripture and response in song and music. We hope you are able to join us for other events during lent. Our next Friendship Supper is Thursday, February 26th at 6:00 PM and there will be a Praise and Worship Concert on Friday, March 20th at 7:00 PM.

I believe going on a week-long mission trip can be an extremely influential experience. It is not just an opportunity to help others but for us to grow in our faith and connect with other Christian congregations in other cultures both domestically and abroad. At the end of June our high school youth will be going to Woodbridge, VA, led by Dave Wilenta. There is an information meeting on February 25 at 6PM in the Upper Room regarding this trip.

I also believe that the opportunity to experience the growth and connection a week-long mission trip provides should not end once you are out of school. It is my goal that our congregation offers these opportunities at least every few years (if not every year) for young adults and adults of all ages. July of 2026 will be the next opportunity for such a trip to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, connecting with a church in the small coastal town of Telchac Puerto. After teaching at a pastor's conference in Merida, Mexico last May, I was invited to preach at the congregation in Telchac Puerto and I am excited to return with a team of about 10 people from our congregation this July. If you have any interest in participating in this please join me for an information meeting on Sunday, March 1 at noon (following the 11am service) in the Upper Room.

My wife Cindy and I offer our thanks to the congregation for your thoughts and prayers (and food!) during Cindy's health challenges over the last six months. Cindy has been battling an infection in her left kidney since August of 2025, resulting in admittance to the hospital in November and again in January. After additional tests were done, it was discovered that Cindy has renal cell carcinoma, unrelated to the infection, and in her right kidney. Cindy is set up with a team from Memorial Sloan Kettering and is scheduled for surgery at Sloan in NYC on March 16. We thank you all for your continued prayers and we are encouraged and expect all to go well.

Pastor Jim