

Presbyterians at the Crossroads

March 2006

Providence Presbyterian Church

Rev. Lisa Nance

www.providencepresb.org

Pastor's Paragraph

March 1 marks the official beginning of our Lenten journey. Although the history of Lent is rich and full, often, in our culture, it becomes nothing more than an opportunity to do a "check-up" on our New Year's resolution – did we resolve to eat better? Then during Lent, we will fast from caffeine, sugar, sweets, etc. Did we resolve to get better control of our finances? Then during Lent we will fast from overspending and use that tax rebate wisely. But this sort of "fasting" misses the point of Lent. Lent is so much more than just a second chance to get our secular resolutions right. Lent is an opportunity for genuine, faithful reflection, introspection and renewed commitment.

Lent gives us a chance to sit with God and look deeper into ourselves. When we pull aside the curtain of whatever we use to cover our deepest longing for God, whether it is constantly fussing about some member of our family, worrying about finances, berating ourselves for our lack of self-discipline, using alcohol or some other addictive substance – whatever it is that we spend more of our time focusing on, rather than stopping to first focus on God – when we pull aside that curtain, we find our true selves hiding inside. And our true self is longing to be closer to our God. When we begin to ask why we are hiding, we allow God to reveal deep truths to us – truths that can change our lives.

Lent is a very personal season that we share with God. As we journey through Lent, we focus on the life of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in a way that is different from the rest of the year. Each Sunday of the year we affirm our belief in Jesus Christ, but the days of Lent kept the sacrifice of our Lord in the forefront of our thoughts. In light of what Christ did for us, let us open our hearts and mind to our God, allowing Him to shape us, mold us and use us in whatever way He desires. For it is in this kind of fasting, fasting from our own personal agenda and accepting God's truth for our lives, that we glorify our Savior and find the true Spirit in our Lenten journey. Thanks be to God!

*In Christ,
Lisa Nance
Interim Minister*

Scripture Readings for the Month of March

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
March 5	Psalms 25:1-10 & Mark 1:9-15
March 12	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 & Mark 8:31-38
March 19	Psalms 19:7-10 & John 2:13-22
March 26	John 3:14-21 & Ephesians 2:1-10

A Little Lenten History

The actual word "Lent" originally meant springtime. Since the period of time before Easter Sunday always occurred in the spring, the word began to be used for the Church season as well. Even after the word no longer was used to mean springtime, it was still used by the Church.

Originally, the Church only celebrated Lent during the week before Easter – focusing heavily on contrition and confession. Baptisms were only performed once a year, on Easter Sunday. Therefore, the week before constituted a time for all who had come to the faith during the previous year, or for anyone who had fallen away from the faith but was returning, to really prepare their hearts. Over the centuries, the length of time was altered, finally coming to be established as 40 days (actually 46, but the six Sundays in Lent don't count!) This length of time reminds us of many Biblical stories, but most importantly, the 40 days Jesus himself faced temptation in the wilderness.

Fasting has long been a part of the Lenten journey. In the beginning, this was a part of our purification and preparation. During the Reformation, many took, a dim view of fasting. In our day and age, the message of fasting has changed from the strict view of fasting from food to include many forms of self sacrifice. In truth, this practice needs to be carefully evaluated in a personal sense. Only God knows what form of self-sacrifice will benefit us the most. Indeed, God might want us to "fast" from having a negative view of ourselves or from making excuses for not moving in a direction He is calling us. Rather than being something we do because of "habit", fasting should be something we decide upon in light of God's direction.

Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent. After a time of meditation and prayer, believers come forward in the church to have their foreheads marked with ashes (burned from last year's palm branches). The ashes are a sign of humility and repentance – it is an outward symbol of an inward commitment that, by the grace of God, we will walk through Lent with our hearts turned toward Him.

Lent prepares us for Easter Sunday. It is a time to remember the temptation, suffering, and sacrifice of our Lord. Most of all, though, it is a time to ready ourselves for the joy of Easter morning, as we prepare to meet our risen Savior, Jesus Christ!

Pleasant Grove Senior Center News

The Pleasant Grove Community Outreach Center started in August 1992. Six area churches came together for the express purpose of creating a Senior Center for the Pleasant Grove community and working to meet other needs of the senior citizens in our area.

In the last few years, two additional churches have joined the Pleasant Grove Community Outreach (PGCO). About three and a half years ago, PGCO entered an agreement with the Johnston County Council on Aging, along with Elevation United Methodist Church, to apply for an Eldercare Grant from the Duke Endowment Fund. The Grant was awarded to this group, and it has provided a respite program for the Pleasant Grove/Elevation communities. The respite program has given caregivers, ages 60 and above, some time away from their care-giving roles. Money from the Eldercare Grant will run out in the next couple of months, but the Johnston County Council on Aging expects the respite program to continue by way of state and/or federal block grant funding. This is certainly good news for caregivers and care recipients.

Currently, the Senior Center is delivering 7 homebound meals daily with about 12-15 individuals able to attend the Center. The van is available for renting by church members. If you are interested in renting the van, contact Roxie Lee at the Center. Also, the Senior Center (community building) is available for renting in off-hours. Contact Mike Langdon at 422.6946 if interested.

Roxie Lee is always looking for volunteer drivers to deliver hot meals. If you can help, please contact Roxie. If you have a question about this information, or the Senior Center, please contact Kent Walton at 772.8881.

Congratulations to.....

Heath and Heather White on the birth of Olivia Starr, born Saturday, February 4 weighing 8 lbs 13 oz.

Jeffrey and DeEtta Wood on the birth of Ava Elizabeth, born Thursday, February 2 weighing 7 lbs 13 oz.

Abigail Wood who received 1st place on February 25 for a statewide 4-H "Spring into Cotton Contest" for a pillowcase that she made and entered in the Clover Bud novelty category.

Nesselrodt Sunday School Class

The Nesselrodt Sunday School class now meets in the manse at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Sunday School. Anyone one who would like to join this class is invited. This class has moved locations so that their old Sunday School room can be renovated into a Toddler Nursery, which is already underway thanks to the Property Committee and Presbyterian Women. This renovation is taking place to make room in the nursery for all of the new babies that God has blessed us with, and to allow the Toddlers their own place to express themselves.

Words of Wisdom

Recently, as I was walking through the halls of a sister Presbyterian church in Raleigh, I saw a note hanging on the wall. Its words seemed quite appropriate for the days to come. It said:

During Lent....

Fast from fear; feast on faith

Fast from despair; feast on hope

Fast from depressing news; feast on prayer

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude

Fast from anger and worry; feast on patience

Fast from negative thinking; feast on positive thinking

Fast from bitterness; feast on love and forgiveness

Fast from words that wound; feast on words that heal

Fast from gravity; feast on joy and humor

Cub Scout Pack 210 Update

Cub Scout Pack 210 will host a Pancake Supper fundraiser on Friday, March 10 from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. in the Church Fellowship Hall. The cost per plate is \$5.00, which includes pancakes, sausage, juice, milk or coffee. The monies raised from this supper will go towards the funding of their year-end celebration "Sleeping with the Sharks" to be held at Myrtle Beach in May.

Pack 210 had their Pinewood Derby on Sunday, February 12 in the Fellowship Hall. There were 24 scouts participating and they had a fabulous time. After some serious racing, the results were 1st place – Matthew Flood, 2nd place – John Kessler, and 3rd place – Tommy Howard. These scouts will represent Pack 210 in the district race on February 18 in Clayton. After the scouts raced, there was an "Outlaw Race" for adults, and Marty Godwin was the winner of this race. Marty only wins bragging rights until next year's race. Congratulations to all scouts and adults who participated and THANK YOU to Pack 33 for providing Pack 210 with the user of their track and volunteers to run the computer software for the Derby.

Pack 210 will have their "Blue and Gold" birthday banquet on Saturday, March 25 from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This will be a pot-luck dinner.

Also, Pack 210 will participate in an overnight trip on April 7-9 at Camp Tuscarora. This camping event will be for the whole Council and the theme will be "The Great Tribal Pow Wow". They will be celebrating Indian heritage and each tribe will participate in Indian games and crafts.

Pack 210 is collecting Aluminum cans for recycling. If you have cans that you would like to donate, or questions about Scouts, please contact David Collier at 894.2785.

Youth Easter Celebration

Go ahead and mark your calendars for the Youth Easter Celebration scheduled for Saturday, April 15 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Refreshments will be served, and there will also be crafts, Bible lesson, and an Easter Egg Hunt for all to enjoy. If you have a grandchild or special friend, other than those who attend church regularly, please feel free to bring them to this celebration, but let Carolyn Stuart know so that the appropriate amount of crafts and refreshments can be provided. The Nesselrodt Class is organizing this event and are planning for 4-50 children. They are looking for donations to help with this event. If you are willing to donate the following, please contact Carolyn Stuart or any member of the Nesselrodt Sunday School class: Individually-wrapped candies (no peanut butter); Mini cup cakes (homemade or store-bought); and donations for crafts.

Presbyterian Women Yard Sale

The Presbyterian Women will hold a Yard Sale on Saturday, April 8 from 7:00 a.m. – 12 noon at the church. They will also be selling ham and sausage biscuits. The Women are looking from help from men and women to set up and work the yard sale. They are also looking for the following items to be donated.

Grocery bags, Clothes hangers, Seasonal clothes, Toys, Household items, and furniture. If you have these or other items to donate towards the yard sale, please begin setting them aside now in preparation for the sale on April 8. If you need help in getting your donations to the church for the Yard Sale, or would like to volunteer to help, please notify Kay Dry or Carolyn Stevenson.

World Day of Prayer

Providence will recognize the World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 3 from 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet will be posted to allow the congregation to sign-up for either a 30-minute or 1 hour time slot to pray. Also, prayer guides will be available to pick up on Sunday, February 26.

World Day of Prayer is a movement initiated and carried out by women in more than 170 countries and regions, and is celebrated the first Friday of March. Through World Day of Prayer, we affirm our faith in Jesus Christ, share hopes and fears, joys and sorrows and opportunities and needs. We are encouraged to become aware of the whole world and no longer live in isolation, be enriched by the faith experiences of Christians of other countries and cultures, to take up the burdens of other people and pray with and for them, and to become aware of their talents and use them in the service of society. We affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence in the world. For more information about World Day of Prayer, you can visit their website at www.worlddayofprayer.net, or contact Will Walls, Worship Committee Chairperson.

Liturgists are truly needed!

Before you ask, I really didn't choose that title because Will Walls is tired of asking people to help in the pulpit! Over the months that I have been at Providence, I have found that I truly enjoy having lay helpers with me in the chancel area. However, more than one has confessed to being uncomfortable. Therefore, I wanted to take a moment and explain why we ask people to help out in this area, as well as what I actually expect from someone who is helping me.

Many years ago, the Reformation waged a war against the idea that worship was too sacred for the common folk. Over the centuries, the service had come more and more removed from the congregation, to the point that many times, Mass would be performed, even if there was no congregation present. Things have changed greatly, and in this day and age, most churches encourage the laity to participate in as many parts of the worship service as possible.

There are many ways that individual members of the congregation participate each Sunday. In addition to the parts of the service that include congregational participation, the ushers, the acolyte, the choir, the organist, the pianist, the choir director, the one who shares the children's message, those who collect the offering and those who help distribute the elements during communion – all help make the worship service truly an experience for everyone.

Being the liturgist is just one more way to be an active part of the service of worship. It not only gives me a chance to relate one on one with more members of the congregation, it also gives you, as believers with many gifts and talents, an opportunity to serve God more faithfully. Not everyone has every gift, but if this is an area God had given you a talent for or an interest in, then I encourage you to step up and allow our God to use you.

And as for the logistics, I am fairly easy to get along with – I promise! Our primary goal each Sunday is to glorify God and help all come into a true and genuine worship experience. If you would like to help out, but want to go slowly at first, come join me and I will help you choose a part of the service you are comfortable with. There is no pressure to do parts of the service that intimidate you.

I would love to work with as many of you as God sees fit! May God open your heart to hear His calling if this is an area that best utilizes your talents. (And don't be surprised to find Will giving you a call, just to see if you are listening!)

Providence Youth Lock-In

On Friday, March 17 the Providence Youth (7th-12th grade) will have a Lock-In. This evening of fun will be chaperoned by Bob and Jenni Dry and Joanna Wiley. The youth will enjoy an evening of dinner, movies and activities. Go ahead and mark your calendars now to attend, and look for more information to come on this great time!

March Schedules

Infant Nursery

- 5 Laura Langdon and Gwen Walton
12 Crissy Porter and Elaine Wood
19 Mark and Pam Nelms
26 Jesse and Dawn Riggleman

Toddler Nursery

- 5 Kent Walton
12 Richard Jones
19 Carolyn Stuart
26 Kathy Wood

Ushers

- 5 Jeffrey Wood and Robbie Wood
12 Nell Franke and Beth Pickens
19 John Pickens and Ryan Nelms
26 Sandy Kopanski and Carolyn Stevenson

Acolyte

- 5 Adam Shelp
12 Joseph Phillips
19 Will Langdon
26 Haley Jones

Bell Ringer

- 5 Darren Shelp
12 Katie Rutherford
19 Nathan Ingram
26 Will Langdon

Children's Sermon

- 5 Lisa Nance
12 Mark Nelms
19 Carolyn Stevenson

Children's Church

- 5 Mark and Pam Nelms
12 Robbie and Kathy Wood
19 Randy and Ann Benson
26 Jim and Lisa Ingram

Prayer List

Rose Blasgow, Don Bullard, Josephine Byrd, Mickey Carroll, Carol Clifton, Vera Critcher, Lovie Dorman, Crystal Hamilton, Mary Hart, Lawrence Herron, Chris Johnson, Gary King, Bobbie Langdon, Betty Lou Lee, Lewis McLamb, Eloise McLeod, Julia Nales, Kenneth Ray, Sandra Rice, Mary Serman, Alice Stephenson, Bobby Stone, Margaret Walton, Jesse West, and Margaret White.

♪♪♪ Happy Birthday to..... ♪♪♪

- 1 Jason Parrish
2 Rich Somogyi
5 Courtney Walton
6 Sally Shelp
Alice Stephenson
7 Melvin Langdon
8 Sandra Lordi
17 Meghan Dees
20 Abbey Walton
21 Hervey Wagner
22 Jack Sherrill
24 Roxann Porter
Stephen Wiley
26 Jackson Parrish
27 Marilyn Johnson
29 Jane Pickens
Danielle Stephenson
30 Steve Nordan

If your birthday is in March, but is not listed above, please notify DeEtta Wood at 331.9046. Thanks!

March Upcoming Events

- 1 Ash Wednesday Service at 7:30 p.m.
3 World Day of Prayer beginning at 6:00 a.m.
5 Pioneer Clubs at 5:00 p.m. –**Safari!**
Providence Youth (7th-12th grade) meet at 6:00 p.m. in the manse
10 Pancake Supper – Boy Scout Fundraiser
14 Stated Session Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
16 Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
17 St. Patrick's Day!
17 Providence Youth (7th – 12th grade) Lock-In
19 Pioneer Clubs at 5:00 p.m. – **St. Patrick's Day!** Providence Youth (7th-12th grade) meet at 6:00 p.m. in the manse
21 Presbyterian Women Daytime Circle meets at 10:00 a.m., and the Evening Circle meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
26 Men's Fellowship Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall
26 Deadline for items to be given to DeEtta Wood for the April newsletter

March Birthdays