



A Message from Interim Pastor Diane Curtis

January – that month of the year that says “winter” to most of us, and not often in a positive way. It is the month when everything Christmas is put away until next year, leaving bare mantles and dead pine needles in the carpet. The cold temperatures usually settle in for a lengthy stay. When snow arrives, shoveling soon follows.

I know I am exaggerating a bit here as there are many who don't mind the winter or who actually embrace it. Sledding, snowball fights, and skiing make for great winter fun. However, it can be difficult to get excited about the first month of the calendar year.

Personally, I find January to be the best time to do a life inventory. I am not talking about the New Year's resolutions that quickly fall by the wayside. Instead, I like to set aside time, either a few hours all at once or, more often, shorter periods of time over the course of several days early in the month to reflect on the previous year and prepare for the one ahead. In my reflection time, I start by thinking about or writing down all the ways, both large and small, God has blessed me in the previous year. Over the years these blessings have included special family times, a new church congregation I have learned to love, flowers that I planted that actually grew, and a meaningful book I read.

My preparation for the year ahead is usually less specific. I don't set goals or write plans on my calendar (yes, I still use a paper calendar). Rather, I look at this as a time of spiritual preparation. It is a time of prayerful commitment; a time when I seek to reaffirm my relationship with God and remind myself that all I do is about him, not me. I read a few Psalms or favorite passages of scripture and listen to music.

Last month, Eric sang a hymn during the offering that I had not heard in a while. *In the Bleak Midwinter* is a Christmas hymn that really resonates with me, particularly the last verse. This verse sums up for me what I want my life to be about in the months between Christmases:

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart.*

Blessings in the New Year,
Pastor Diane



Children's Sunday School

Begins around 9:40 a.m.

You Can Help – Volunteer to Teach!

It's easy! The lesson is provided. There are suggested crafts, snacks and activities which are related to the lesson. Assistants are available to help. Please contact Kay Galberg, Erin Ford or Pastor Diane with any questions or to sign up.

Faith Church is Hosting the Presbytery

January 19th at 7 pm

Faith Church will be the host site for the January Presbytery meeting. The meeting will include worship and music and **all are invited to attend**. Fellowship snacks will be provided before and after the service.

- Contact Linda Mackey to volunteer to bring food.
- Contact Bonnie Halle to volunteer to help by greeting visitors or ushering.

Sleep Mat Workshops Begin January 9

Every Saturday, 10 to noon

January 9 through March 26

Join us this Saturday to make sleep mats for the homeless. Last year, we made **three mats**. Each mat uses 900 grocery bags! These amazing mats are **easy** to prepare but assembly requires some instruction. **WE WILL TRAIN YOU!** If you can flatten a plastic bag, you have the skills we need. If you have never joined us before, we need you!

If you attended the mat workshop last year, please come back. We will be training members of the Protestant Community Church so that they can take the ministry back to their congregation. Contact Bonnie Halle with any questions.



Ash Wednesday - February 10, 2016

An excerpt from the [*Companion to the Book of Common Worship*](#) (Geneva Press, 2003, 109-110)

The Lenten journey from the ashes of death to resurrected life begins on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, which signifies a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. This first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ. The first step of this journey calls us to acknowledge and confront our mortality, individually and corporately. In many traditions, this is symbolized through the imposition of ashes — placing a cross on one's forehead. During the imposition of ashes the words: ***“You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19)*** are repeated again and again. We are to remember that we are but temporary creatures, always on the edge of death. On Ash Wednesday, we begin our Lenten trek through the desert toward Easter.

Ashes on the forehead is a sign of our humanity and a reminder of our mortality. Lent is not a matter of being good, and wearing ashes is not to show off one's faith. The ashes are a reminder to us and our communities of our finite creatureliness. The ashes we wear on our Lenten journey symbolize the dust and broken debris of our lives as well as the reality that eventually each of us will die. Trusting in the “accomplished fact” of Christ's resurrection, however, we listen for the Word of God in the time-honored stories of the church's Lenten journey. We follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, fast, and proceed “on the way” to Jerusalem and the cross. Our Lenten journey is one of *metanoia* (“turning around”), of changing directions from self-serving toward the self-giving way of the cross.

Join us at 7:30 pm on February 10th for Ash Wednesday worship.

Volunteers Needed! Be an Angel and Help!

Panera Bread Pickup: Every other Sunday, Faith Church picks up all of the leftover bread at Panera on Centerton Road in Moorestown. A CCC board member who lives in Medford will come to your house Monday morning to take the bread to the CCC. This would **begin on January 17** and continue every other Sunday. Why don't you do it with a friend and each go once a month? The CCC has no employees living near Panera. Contact Bonnie Halle **ASAP** to volunteer so that the CCC doesn't lose this opportunity.

Fellowship Prep: We only have two volunteers to set up coffee and snacks for Fellowship. If you enjoy coffee and a cookie, **please volunteer** for this easy ministry! Contact Linda Mackey for details or to help.

Audio/Visual Team: We need help up in the loft! You will receive **expert training** on how to manage the microphones and display the hymns during worship. Please contact Mary Pauza for details or to help.



Lost and Found

The following items were recently found at church:

- 2 Bibles
- 1 Blackberry
- 1 pair of glasses

The lost and found bin is outside the church office door near the mailboxes.

Recipe Search!

Who made the green pepper soup at our last pot luck? Several requests have come in for that wonderful recipe. Please let Bonnie Halle or Ginny Hagan know!

