



A Message from Interim Pastor Diane Curtis

February always feels like the month that turns the corner into the new year for me. Maybe it is because January still has remnants of Christmas in it (such as Epiphany, decorations to put away, and a Christmas tree to dispose of), as well as pieces of the previous year to finish up with our household finances. In February, I can finally start fresh. Plus, February has a couple of fun holidays – isn't Presidents' Day your favorite? Seriously, who can forget Valentine's Day, especially with all the reminders in every store, in the newspaper, on the internet, and on television.

I think Valentine's Day is really God's holiday. It is the one day a year when we advertise what God is really all about...LOVE! You see, that is what our relationship with God and with one another is grounded in...LOVE! God created us and the world we live in out of love, and continues to be involved in our lives every day because he loves us. And, God sent his Son into the world because of the love he has for everyone and everything here.

Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength, soul and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Love is to be the basis of all our relationships. First with God. Then with ourselves and our neighbors.

God loves us so much that he gave us the most precious and valuable Valentine he had – his Son, Jesus Christ. God asks us to open our hearts to receive this Valentine, allow the love of Jesus to enter in, and change us from the inside out. Until we are willing to be vulnerable enough to let that happen, to let Jesus be Lord of our hearts, we can't model the unconditional love of God to the world around us. For to love those around us as God does means to see them with God's eyes; to accept them as God would; to love them as God does – without judgment, without fear, just as they are. Isn't it wonderful that God loves us that way! That is truly grace in action.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Pastor Diane



All About Ash Wednesday - February 10, 2016

Q: Excuse me, but why do you have dirt on your forehead?

A: Ash Wednesday is the day many Christians mark as the first day of Lent, the time of reflection and penitence leading up to Easter Sunday. Clergy all over the world dispense ashes, usually made by burning the palm fronds distributed on last year's Palm Sunday, making the sign of the cross on the bowed foreheads before them. As they "impose" or "dispense" the ashes, the pastor or priest reminds each Christian of Genesis 3:19: "For dust you are and to dust you shall return."

Q: Well, that's cheerful. Why would anyone want to start a workday on such a downer?

A: It isn't intended to be a downer. It's a reminder that our lives are short and we must live them to the fullest. Maybe it's a little bit of a downer. But there's a big party the night before Ash Wednesday. That's Mardi Gras or "Fat Tuesday," a secular observance that evolved out of "[Shrove Tuesday](#)," often marked by eating pancakes or other sweet foods – before the solemnity and penance of Lent set in.

Q: OK, so don't invite me over for dinner until Lent is over in 40 days.

A: Fun fact: Lent is actually longer than 40 days. There are 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter but most churches don't count the Sundays as part of Lent.

Q: I thought only Catholics marked Ash Wednesday?

A: Not anymore. It used to be true that Catholics were the majority of people celebrating Ash Wednesday. But today, most "liturgical churches" (those with a regular, calendar-based set of rituals and observances) mark the day, including Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Lutherans. Most evangelical and Pentecostal Christians don't observe the day and neither do Mormons.

Q: I don't remember reading about Ash Wednesday in the Bible. Where did the practice come from?

A: That's true. There is no mention of Ash Wednesday in the Bible. But there is a tradition of ashes as a sign of penitence that predates Jesus. In the Old Testament, Job repents "in dust and ashes," and there are other associations of ashes and repentance in Esther, Samuel, Isaiah and Jeremiah. By the 10th century, the monk Aelfric tied the practice to the period before Easter, writing, "Now let us do this little at the beginning of our Lent that we strew ashes upon our heads to signify that we ought to repent of our sins during the Lenten fast." By the 11th century, the practice was widespread throughout the church until Martin Luther threw the practice out in the 16th century because it was not biblically based. There's no Lent in the Bible though many Christians see it as an imitation of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and battling with Satan in the desert.

Q: When can you wash the dirt off your face?

A: No one is required to keep the ashes on his or her face after the ritual. Some Christians choose to, as a reminder to themselves that they are mortal and fallible, while others may choose to leave them on as a witness to their faith in the hope others will ask about them and open a door to sharing their faith.



Ash Wednesday Service

February 10th at 7:30 pm

Join us to begin the season of Lent with a time of worship and reflection.



Pot Luck After Worship 2/14/16

We love because He first loved us. - 1 John 1:14

Join us after worship on Valentine's Day to celebrate love. John Ford will provide an update on the Mission Study.

Food Ideas:

Salad	Quiche	Dessert
Breakfast entrée	Lunch main dish	Cookies
Soup	Fruit	Cake
Chips	Rolls and butter	Pie

- ✓ Please **RSVP to Linda Mackey** (snowwhite014@gmail.com) and let her know what you plan to bring. Your RSVP helps us to plan table set up and beverages. All are welcome even without an RSVP!
- ✓ Please **scan a photo** which represents one of your "loves":
 - Grandkids
 - Pets
 - Parents
 - Your wedding photo
- ✓ You can use a smartphone to take a photo of your picture and send it to Bonnie (b_halle99@yahoo.com) or bring your photo to church this Sunday. See Bonnie or Sandy Gustavsen to get it scanned. We'll show the photos at the pot luck. Get us the scanned photo **by Friday, February 11th** so we can create a slide show.



Together In Faith Update

Discovering God's Plan for Our Future

We continue to make progress on the mission study and report, which is a prerequisite to beginning the search for a new pastor. The following outline describes the steps that need to be taken and where we are so far:

- ❖ Pray for God's Blessing and Guidance
 - What is our Biblical and Theological understanding?
 - We are starting with "What We Believe" (Church Website)
- ❖ Collect Internal (FUPC) Data
 - Financial and Logistical – (we have 10 years of data)
 - History of FUPC – (collecting currently)
 - Description of Staff and Facilities
 - Current mission and programs
- ❖ Collect External Data (Surrounding Community, 10 mile radius)
 - Profile of the Community (we are 80% complete)
- ❖ Consider Comparison between our Congregation and the Community
- ❖ Survey the Congregation
 - Some different methods can be:
 - Traditional Survey, multi question (completed a short one)
 - Group Discussions
 - Individual Interviews
 - Pot Luck working session (one completed, 2nd on 2/14/16)
- ❖ Reflect on the Gathered Data to Discern our Opportunities and Challenges
- ❖ Provide Report (Data & Initial Reactions) to help guide the Pastor Nominating Committee

During the Pot Luck on 2/14, we will be giving an update on the data collected so far, and we will survey the congregation using a variant of the following three questions:

1. Is there anything you observed in the data that could help inform our mission?
2. What qualities do we need in a minister to further the mission of our church?
3. Imagine it is the year 2020, what does Faith Church look like?

Thank you for your prayers, interest and involvement in this discernment process. **We need as many people as possible to participate to help assure God's plan will be revealed.** If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to John Ford, Sandy Gustavsen, Brian Mackey, Cathy Hofmann or Bill Hamilton.



Sleep Mat Workshop Update

We had three fun and productive workshops in January. **We're blessed to be teaching other churches how to make the mats.** We've welcomed Lutherans, Quakers and members of the Protestant Community Church. **We will teach you how to help!** As our visitors learn, they will also leave to take the skills back to their church. We'll need you in February and March more than ever. Keep bringing your plastic bags for us. We use hundreds every Saturday.





Church Bulletin Board

Guest Preachers: We will welcome two guest preachers in February. **Debby Brincivalli** will preach on February 7th and **Rev. Dr. Scott Morschauser** will preach on February 21st.

Music Director Search: The search committee has received an applicant for Music Director and has begun the interview process. Please pray for us to be blessed **YET AGAIN** with a talented and dedicated director.

Prayers for Charlynn: Charlynn Caillaud notified us that her mother, **Charlotte S. Pirmann** died on January 15, 2016, at the age of 95. Her obituary appeared in the Courier-Post on January 20. Charlotte's obituary and memorial arrangements are available on www.buddfuneralhome.com.

Meet Our New Admin Assistant - Will Boer

Will Boer is the new Administrative Assistant at Faith Presbyterian. He graduated from Lenape High School and from Arcadia University. He is a member of the [First Presbyterian Church of Janvier](#), where some people have jokingly taken to calling him Maestro. He has no musical ability. The reason they've started calling him that is just because he programs the CD player they use with their CD Hymnal. Will currently lives in Mt. Laurel. **Stop by the church from 9 to 3 Monday through Thursday to meet Will.**

Volunteers Needed! Be an Angel and Help!

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.

DONE! Panera Bread Pickup: A **BIG THANK YOU** to Sandy and Mike Prescott, Sondra Carroll, Norm and Linda Mackey and their backup Dave Wood for volunteering to keep this mission alive!