

Shepherd's Staff

March 2024

We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.

"You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!"

Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m

A Word About Lent

Source: [Lent 2024 | Phoenix Christian Reformed Church \(phoenixcrc.org\)](https://www.phoenixcrc.org/)

Lent, popularly understood as a season of joyless custom and duty, carries almost too much religious baggage for some people. How then do we keep the gospel front and center in this season of shadows? The cross keeps our gospel focus clear. Lent is a season to journey with Jesus in his passion, to survey the cross, taking the measure of Christ's love in his suffering and death.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is the forty-day season leading up to Easter. (If you count all the days, there are more than forty, but the Sundays are not counted as part of Lent, as they are resurrection celebrations held throughout the season.) It begins with the stark reminder that "from dust you have come and to dust you will return" and leads toward Jesus' final week, marked by Palm Sunday and stopping short of the resurrection celebration of Easter morning. Ashes are a good emblem of Lent, a picture of our own mortality and spiritual condition, a sign of Lent's penitent spirit, and yet a hint of the hope of renewal.

Celebration isn't the word to use for our participation in Lent. It is a somber journey of spiritual preparation and renewal, marked especially by repentance and prayer. In our pain-averse culture, Lent stands apart by not shrinking away from suffering but cultivating in us the wisdom that growth often (some might say only) comes through suffering. In a time and place of religious freedom, where we mostly don't suffer for following Christ, Lent invites us to willingly identify with Christ's suffering through fasting or other forms of self-denial.

The spare and sober nature of Lent is healthy for the heart and true to the gospel, scrubbing away frothy spirituality by calling us to say no to ourselves in order to experience a greater yes in Jesus. It helps to imprint the form of the cross in our lives, recognizing that the news of the risen Lord Jesus is not good without the way of the cross. Lent prepares us to experience the reality of resurrection joy only by first recognizing the depth of our sin that pinned Christ to the cross.



From: Quest for Depth – Daily Bible Readings for Lent

Source: <https://www.reformedworship.org/article/december-1988/quest-depth>

Author: David Koll

SEEK THE LORD	
2/14	Isaiah 55:6-13
2/15	Hebrews 11:1-6
2/16	Psalms 105:1-4
2/17	Matthew 5:1-10

LOOSE CHANGE	
2/25	Matthew 26:14-16
2/26	1 Timothy 6:6-10
2/27	Mark 10:17-23
2/28	Matthew 6:19-24
2/29	2 Corinthians 9:6-11
3/1	Proverbs 3:1-14
3/2	Matthew 27:1-5

"OUCH! THAT HURTS!"	
3/10	John 19:16-19
3/11	Acts 2:22-24
3/12	Isaiah 53:6-9
3/13	1 John 1:8 – 2:2
3/14	Colossians 2:13-15
3/15	1 Corinthians 3:10-13
3/16	John 20:24-28

THE DAILY CHOICE	
2/18	Mark 8:34-38
2/19	1 Corinthians 1:1-25
2/20	Galatians 6:14-16
2/21	Philippians 3:17-21
2/22	Philippians 2:1-8
2/23	Colossians 1:15-20
2/24	Luke 14:25-33

A HEAVEN-SENT HEADPIECE	
3/3	Mark 15:16-20
3/4	Isaiah 53:3-5
3/5	Hebrews 2:9-11
3/6	Revelation 2:8-11
3/7	1 Corinthians 9:22-27
3/8	Revelation 4:9-11
3/9	John 19:1-15

ARE YOU THIRSTY?	
3/17	John 19:28-30
3/18	Isaiah 55:1-2
3/19	Psalms 107:1-9
3/20	John 4:7-14
3/21	Matthew 25:31-40
3/22	Romans 12:17-21
3/23	Revelation 22:12-17

THIS IS THE KING	
3/24	John 12:12-29
3/25	Psalms 24:1-10
3/26	Isaiah 6:1-7

3/27	Isaiah 61:10-11
3/28	Matthew 26:26-30
3/29	Matthew 27:45-60
3/30	1 Thessalonian 4:13-18

WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?	
3/31	1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Not Lucky But Blessed

Source: <https://faithfulprovisions.com/not-lucky-but-blessed/>

Author: Kelly Hancock

*Can you believe I won! What luck!
Boy, I just lucked out with that great deal!
I sure am lucky that I didn't get the flu this year!*

Have you ever heard yourself saying something like that? As a Christian, I don't believe anything happens by luck or by chance. In fact, I know it doesn't.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)

Up until a few years ago, I flippantly threw around the word "luck."

"Oh, it's just my luck!" I would moan.

Or on the other side, "I'm so lucky!" I would say with excitement.

We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall. (Proverbs 16:33)



And it didn't even dawn on me until I heard a particular sermon one Sunday. That's when I realized that I really view "luck" along the same lines as "chance," something that is based on coincidence. However, I've always said I don't believe in coincidence. I've always said that I believe in Divine Intervention: a Creator who choreographs our circumstances and cares about my life. If I believe that God has a plan, then I don't believe in any kind of luck, and I don't believe anything happens by chance. So that was when I decided that maybe I needed to change my vocabulary! And I did.

I don't know about you, but I hear the term "luck" most frequently around St. Patrick's Day. I think you will find it is quite interesting that the history of St Patrick's Day stemmed from a Christian tradition!

Moses said, "Who is like you among the gods, O LORD—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?" (Exodus 15:11)

If I think I'm lucky, or I think something in my life just coincidentally happened in a certain way, then I'm not giving God any credit for being who He says He is. I'm not acknowledging that He is present in a very real way in my life and in my everyday circumstances. He is just as real in the little things (like running into a friend who has been on my mind or snagging a great deal) and the big things (like walking through a family member's chronic illness or marrying the right guy).

Luck is for people who don't yet realize that God has a great and mighty plan for their lives.



The Sunshine Circle is collecting the bar codes from **BEST CHOICE** products that Brother's Market sells. Here are some samples of what we need. Make sure the words **BEST CHOICE** are on the bar code. We need 1000 bar codes to earn \$60. Thank you!



- 3/11 Kathleen DeGroot
- 3/15 Kay Swanson
- 3/28 Rhonda Meester
- 3/31 Patricia Pott



- 3/19 Pat & Deb Prier
- 3/21 Don & Annie Allspach



Do you have anything you'd like included in the newsletter? Email the information to wendymmulder@hotmail.com by the 20th of the month.



SPRING

T V Q G V S E L B A T E G E V S N Z Y D
 V Z O N G D H M P S M A R C H S G E A E
 S Q L U N X T T Z O S B B I B O L R L V
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1. RAIN
2. FLOWERS
3. MARCH
4. VEGETABLES
5. PLAY
6. SPRING

7. BIRD
8. WARM
9. SUN
10. FUN
11. LAMB
12. HAPPY

13. BEE
14. CHICK
15. BUGS
16. EASTER
17. GROW
18. BUTTERFLY

