

WILDERNESS WORDS

Editors

If there is anything that you would like to have included in the Newsletter: 218-388-9903 and dmc@chem.wayne.edu or pcoleman@chem.wayne.edu

This Sunday:

Leading:
Preaching: Carolyn S.
Presiding: Carolyn S.

Readings this week:

First Sunday in Lent

First Reading:
 Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm:
 Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Epistle:
 Romans 10:8b-13
Gospel:
 Luke 4:1-13

(Click on citation to go directly to the reading.)

Reflections:

by Sarah Stover

I have been reading about my fellow Michigan expatriates' pursuit of pączki (pronounced poonch-key.) For those who aren't familiar with these delicious calorie bombs, they are a Polish pastry, comparable to a prune jelly filled donut. (Some are filled with Bavarian cream. One of these typically clocks in around 430 calories.) They are traditionally eaten on Shrove Tuesday to celebrate the last of one's earthly indulgences before the Lenten season begins (Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, pączki day... whatever you call it!). Now, I'm not going to continue to wax poetic about donuts – I'm really not a donut person, to be honest. What this all brings to mind for me is the upcoming Lenten season.



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing
 Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

The Lenten season begins this Wednesday, February 10th. Paying homage to the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, Lent is traditionally a season of fasting and contrition. Most people I know tend to give something up for those 40 days, for reasons ranging from devotion, sacrifice, personal/spiritual development, and even mere obligation. Usually, it's something like chocolate, alcohol or television, something along those lines, with the goal to renew focus on one's faith and practice the art and discipline of sacrifice. Sounds difficult, right? Are there any alternatives to giving up chocolate or coffee (which is dangerous to the health and well-being of those around me?) YES. THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES!!

Another side to this Lenten season that seems to oft forgotten is the idea of adding a positive practice to one's life for those 40 days (in the wilderness we call modern life.) This could be adding the practice of daily prayer and meditation; this is a wonderful way to ponder the themes of Lent, to develop a closer relationship with God, and to change one's character. Reading scriptures or devotionals is another way to add a positive practice to your life during Lent – there are a number of great guides available. It could be adding charitable works to your spiritual practice – whoever thought buying a cup of coffee for the person behind you at the coffee shop could be a Lenten practice?! It could be taking up a healthy habit – weekly exercise, Meatless Mondays, a walk after dinner

I know that I have had greater success adding a positive practice instead of abstaining from something. Usually, the positive practice for me has a greater benefit spiritually for me. It still requires a sacrifice – in most cases, it has been a sacrifice of time. There's less of a sense of guilt attached, which makes me far more inclined to follow through, and has the added benefit of making it easier to pick up again if I fail at it for a period of time. Please don't get me wrong – I am

Save these Dates

Wednesday, Feb. 10th: Ash Wednesday Service @ Schmidt's house. See Notes.

Sunday, Feb. 14th: Forum after Church. Bob P. "Benedict of Nursia - a Realistic Spiritual Leader"

Sunday, Feb. 28th: Jeff Kidder will be our guest musician and will work with our musicians.

Sunday, March 6th: SOTW @ the Care Center.

Sunday, March 20th: Forum. Carol Mork on the Passion Narrative. See Notes.

Thursday, March 24th: Seder @ Howard & Bonnie Hedstroms' home. Hillary is facilitator.

Friday, March 25th: Good Friday Service @ the Dental Office.

Sunday, April 3rd: Forum after Church by Inger Andress (President of Kai-Zen Solutions LLC). Discussion of sexual predation by older men in Cook County.

not denigrating the practices of abstinence and fasting by any means. Both of those have their place in a healthy and mature spiritual practice.

This Lenten season, regardless if you give something up or take something on, I encourage you to do so with thought and prayer. Let others know how they can support you; ask how you can support others. After all, we are not alone in this journey.

-Sarah

Notes:

- 1.) Ash Wednesday: Ash Wednesday at Schmidts' home. 1633 Croftville Rd. Gather 5:30 pm. Start at 6:00 pm. Light Supper. Reflection. Communion. Done by or before 8:00pm.
- 2.) Carolyn notes that the Episcopal Relief and Development Lent Reflections are available on line at: <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/lent> By email or order booklet.
- 3.) Sunday, March 20 - Palm Sunday - Discussion of Luke's Passion narrative after having heard them in the reading at worship that morning.

Continuing best wishes to our very own Ella Hedstrom. She qualified for the Minnesota State Championship competition in Varsity Swimming in breast stroke and other events. Go Ella!.

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NOTE: During Mary Ellen's sabbatical leave Carolyn has graciously agreed to be contacted as needed.