

## Lent 2017

### *Restore us, Oh God*



As short winter days begin to lengthen in the northern hemisphere, we move into the season of Lent. The word *Lent* comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning *lengthen*, referring to the lengthening of daylight hours at this time of year.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday (March 1) and ending on Easter Sunday (April 16), Lent is that 40-day season (not counting Sundays) when the church commemorates the 40 days Jesus spent in solitude, in silence, and fasting in the wilderness.

**Our Lenten theme this year**, is a response to the world filled with many voices that call us away from God- *violence and fear, consumerism and materialism* just to name a few. We are not immune to our environment and the side effects which can leave us feeling afraid, filled with doubt and an inner restlessness.

This time will be a chance to step back, create space and reflect even as our days are filled with action and engagement. As we engage these stories and texts, we are invited to place ourselves in the moment and think about that which draws us close to God and gives us strength. We hope that you will find this season one where you can find orientation, refreshment, healing, and strength for the ongoing journey.

Music, scripture, worship rituals (communion, anointing, pouring of tears), and the visual environment will be our guides along this terrain. During second hour throughout Lent, we will be focusing on the embodied experiences of the weekly themes. This will include exploration of food and water insecurity, stories of healing, racism and immigration.

Along the way, you can enter the season more fully by participating in these special services & activities:

- *March 1, Ash Wednesday Services*  
*Family Service 6:30 PM at Mitch and Lora's; Contemplative 7:30PM, the Meetinghouse*
- *March 19, April 9 Family Book club, Noon, The Meetinghouse\*\**
- *March 26, Viewing of 13th a Documentary about mass incarceration about 7PM, the Meetinghouse\*\**
- *April 13, Maundy Thursday Service, 6PM, in homes*
- *April 14, Good Friday Service, 7:00PM, the Meetinghouse*
- *April 16, Easter sunrise service*
- *April 16, Easter Worship, the Meetinghouse*

*\*\*Descriptions for these activities can be found on the back of this handout*

During Lent you may want to take the opportunity to ***give up some practices*** and ***take on others*** as a way of cultivating and deepening love for God, neighbor and self. If you have interest, here are some ideas to get you started:

#### Adding:

- At the end of each day, or over mealtime, speak out loud three things for which you are grateful.
- Let yourself be awed by God's gift of creation. Pay attention to the sunrise, the phases of the moon, the stars. Watch birds. Look for the first signs of green.
- Carve out ten minutes a day for prayer, spiritual reading and reflection.

#### Subtracting:

- Use a little less gas. Walk or bike more.
- Buy a little less. Take a break from online browsing and buying.
- Keep a little less. Clean out a closet and find what's hiding in forgotten corners that could be shared with others.
- Eat a little less meat, as you remember those who eat very little of it.

## Lenten book study

During Lent the Pastoral Team invites the congregation to read and reflect together on race and racism in America.

For Adults and MYF: Author, academic, and ordained minister, Michael Eric Dyson, has recently written a highly praised and timely book, “**Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America**” (St. Martin’s Press: 2017). The New York Times Book Review describes it as “one of the most frank and searing discussion of race” ever written. It’s a “deeply serious, urgent book ... in the tradition of Baldwin’s ‘The Fire Next Time’ and King’s ‘Why We can’t Wait.’” Karl Shelly will convene up to three gatherings over Lent to reflect on our reading (time and place to be determined based on size and schedules of group). Let him know by March 5 if you’re interested in being a part of this.

For Families: All ages are invited to bring a bag lunch to the meetinghouse on March 19 and April 9. Jr youth and older elementary are invited to read and discuss **Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom**. It is memoir of the civil rights movement from one of its youngest heroes. It shows young readers what it means to fight non-violently and how it felt to be part of changing American history. Elementary aged children will read books together at the gathering.

## Film discussion

Separate, but in tandem with the book study, will be an opportunity to watch and discuss the documentary movie “**13<sup>th</sup>**.” Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary, its title refers to the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution (outlawing slavery, except as punishment for a crime). The film delivers “a stirring treatise on the prison industrial complex through a nexus of racism, capitalism, policies and politics. It sounds exhausting, but it's electrifying” (NY Times). Rolling Stone calls it an “incendiary, indelible and indispensable document about the myth of racial equality in America.” Mark your calendar for the evening of March 26.

## LECTIONARY TEXTS, THEMES AND PREACHERS

March 5	March 12	March 19	March 26	April 2	April 9
We Hunger	We Wonder	We Thirst	We See	We Breathe	We Hope
Anna Yoder Schlabach	Danny Aramouni	Lora Nafziger	Tobias Magatti	Tobin Miller Shearer	Kristine Regehr Bottorff
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11	Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17	Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42	1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41	Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45	Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Matt 21:1-11 Philippians 2:5-11