



## Lent: Reorienting Our Hearts Toward Love

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? - Isaiah 58:6-7*

Lent begins with this reading from Isaiah on Ash Wednesday. Many of us associate this season with fasting or restraint, or even taking up a new spiritual discipline. Some of us log off of social media; others forgo chocolate or sweets; still others may begin a daily devotion or donation project.

We may wonder what the purpose of all this is, why we bother with these traditions of discipline. What's the point of giving up my afternoon soda for 40 days, besides perhaps dropping a pound or two? Does it make a difference if I take a can out of my cupboard for the local food pantry every day?

Our habits and practices, the things that bring us comfort and joy, reflect our deepest desires. Often, those desires fail to align with the desires God sets forth for our lives. Some over-indulge or tend toward sloth; others ramp up our productivity or anxiety levels; still others of us are consumed with image or perfectionism. Any way you slice it, we all serve mini-gods in addition to the God we claim to love. Martin Luther once said, "Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your god."

Our fasts and devotions become a means of breaking the connection between our desires and the false gods that feed those desires. But not only that, these practices can reorient us toward our True Love, and our deepest desire, which is connection to the divine love that is God.

These small changes may seem trivial, but they can inspire us to the greater fast, the greater spiritual practices that God chooses for us in Isaiah. When we are released from serving our mini-gods, then we find the gratitude, generosity, and freedom to share our resources with the poor and underserved.



In his book entitled *You Are What You Love*, James K. A. Smith argues that we can't simply *think* our way into right relationship with God; we must practice it. "If you are what you love, and love is a habit, then discipleship is a rehabilitation of your loves. This means that discipleship is more a matter of *reformation* than of acquiring *information*."

Though your Lenten discipline may seem like a drop in the spiritual bucket, it can be a powerful way to reorient your internal compass toward the Creator. Imagine for a moment the mini-gods your serve, whether it's shopping or Instagram or that daily glass of wine. How do those things bring us comfort? And how could we turn away from a purchase or a post or a sip, and instead commune with God?

Lent isn't about either trying to become holy or feeling bad for the ways that we ultimately disappoint God and one another in sin. It *is* about reorienting our hearts toward Love. May your practices be fruitful, and your relationships with God and one another deepen as a reflection of your commitment during this time.

Peace – *Pastor Ashley*

Smith, James K. A. *You Are What You Love: the Spiritual Power of Habit*. Brazos Press, a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016.

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### ROAM March Meeting

ROAM will meet on Wednesday, March 4th at 12:30 pm in the Fellowship Lounge. Please bring a covered dish to share. All Irish will be our theme. Wear something green! We will have some Irish entertainment. Hope to see you there.



Save the date of April 1st. Our own Ed MacFarland will present the program - check our weekly bulletin for the topic.

— *Pat Morris*

## Junior Choir to Sing at Choir Festival

Carmel's Junior Choir has been invited to sing in Center City Philadelphia on Saturday, March 14, with other area church Junior Choirs for a Choir Festival. The Festival will be held at Arch Street Presbyterian Church located between the two Comcast skyscrapers in Logan Square. The choirs will meet to rehearse at 9:00 AM in the city and then give a performance at 2:00 PM at Arch Street Presbyterian.

The choir has been rehearsing for this event all Fall and Winter. All of the music that they have been singing at Carmel will be sung in a mass choir directed for the day by Tom Shelton. Mr. Shelton has conducted festivals and honor choirs for elementary, middle school and high school students in 20 states and abroad. His compositions are published by more than seven publishing companies. The choir will be singing one of Mr. Shelton's pieces at the Festival. Mr. Shelton is associate professor of Sacred Music at Westminster Choir College/Rider University Princeton, NJ. Everyone is invited to come and hear the performance at 2:00 PM. We hope to see some familiar faces in the audience. We are all so excited about this event.

—Abby Palmisano



## Session Notes

The following items were among the reports and business conducted during the Regular Meeting of the Session in February:

The 2020 Vacation Bible School curriculum is *Knights of North Castle* by Cokesbury.

The Nursery School Advisory Board for 2020 are Katey Schuyler, Chair; Jan Heckman, Christian Education Committee; Julia Lohoefer Kozak, Congregation; and Karen Bogle, Property Committee liaison.

Once again Carmel will support the "Stamp out Hunger Day" food drive from the Abington, Willow Grove and Fort Washington Post offices by providing storage space in Carmel Hall for the donations. The food drive will take place in May.

Congregational Life events for 2020 include Easter Breakfast on April 12, Advent Event on November 29 and Christmas Brunch on December 6.

The Deacons will provide a monetary donation to Heide Miller's mission trip with CHE.

—Nancy Pinkowicz, Clerk of Session

## Celebrate Easter - Join the Festival Choir



You are invited to join our Sanctuary Choir to help form a special Festival Choir for our Good Friday and Easter services. It is just a commitment of five weeks. Carmel members and friends who cannot make that weekly Thursday night commitment throughout the academic year, but would like to sing in a choir, are invited for these special services. Anyone who can match pitch and can smile is welcome to sing.

Rehearsals for Easter begin on Thursday, March 12, at 8:00 PM in the choir room. Rehearsals will run for five weeks: Thursdays, March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2 and Wednesday, April 8 at 8:00 PM. We will be singing for the Good Friday service on April 10 at 7:30 PM and the 10:00 AM Easter service on April 12.

Please contact Abby Palmisano and let her know that you can come, or just come to as many of the rehearsal dates as you can make. If you have any questions please call Abby at 215-887-1074 (press #3). Hope to see you then!

— Abby Palmisano

## refuge

We had a great time on Feb 12<sup>th</sup> – Special Person's Night – sharing a meal, appreciating each member of our group, creating a blanket for a young girl and preparing our treat for all of you! We hope you enjoyed our 'know that you are loved' chocolate.

We also partnered with Oasis in leading the Ash Wednesday service.

K-8 youth...Carmel Hall is the place to be on Wednesday nights. Join us as we practice KINDNESS for Lent.  
—Joyce Kornfeld

## Refuge Spring Outing

Refuge will hold an outing at Urban Air in Willow Grove on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>! Mark your calendars for this fun and energy-burning event. We'll be there from 7-9 PM, and rides can be arranged from the church. Please contact with Pastor Ashley with your interest!



## Property Improvements

The results of the hard work of Carmel's Property Committee during 2019 to improve Carmel's entrance areas and make them much more appealing are evident. Be sure to check them out if you haven't already.

The newest improvement is the refurbished, brighter, modernized main entrance lobby, which features lighter walls, comfortable couch and chairs, a new rug and attractive new wall decorative items. (Have you noticed the clock?) Lynne Schutt, Karen Bogle and Nancy O'Brien led this Property Committee project.

Meanwhile, cherished parts of Carmel's legacy are still present in the new lobby—the Carmel quilt stitched by past and a few present women of the church, the important Food Cupboard to hold donated non-perishable food items for the Inter-Faith Food Cupboard, and the Children's Worship bulletin board display.



Continuing beyond the lobby in the hallway leading to the Library, the Nursery, and the Fellowship Lounge is attractive new hallway flooring of wood-look vinyl plank in a natural oak finish.

If you have parked in the rear driveway to attend Refuge or an event in Carmel Hall or perhaps a choir rehearsal, you enter past the lovely Carmel Hall mural of an apple tree with fruit on the exterior wall of the kitchen. The mural was painted by talented mural artist and Nursery School mom Nicki Kohler. Karen Bogle spearheaded this effort to make our lower entrance much more attractive and welcoming. The entrance vestibule was also spruced up with paint, new lighting and a new door.

Members of the Property Committee for 2019 were Lynne Schutt, chairperson; Dick Thomas, Gary Moll, Karen Bogle, Nancy O'Brien, David Rice, and Gene Morris. Thanks to all of them for their work and efforts to beautify some key and very visible areas of our building.

-Janet Simon



## Daylight Savings Time

Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 8th. Don't forget to "Spring Forward" and set your clocks ahead one hour!



Thank you for the beautiful flowers and for the letter with all the members' signatures—I was impressed and pleased to be remembered. Also for the phone calls and offers of meals. Carmel is a very caring church and I'm pleased to be a part of it!

~ Joyce Young

I want to thank you for the lovely flowers that Melissa brought the other day, and also for the letter signed by everyone. It brought tears to my eyes at the mention of my family, especially my Dad, who everyone called "Elder Berry." They joined in the 1940's and loved Carmel Church!

~ Gwen Posante

Thank you for the flowers delivered to me by Cindy Keshishian. They were beautiful and I was able to enjoy them for 12 days!

~ Kay Bauer

Thank you for the letter of appreciation signed by the congregation. It is such a pleasure to work in such a welcoming environment!

~ Mary Kate Nolen

## One Great Hour of Sharing

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by **One Great Hour of Sharing** – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People – all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. **In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.** OGHS gifts have helped following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in 2017 and Florence, Michael, and Pacific Typhoons in 2018.

The OGHS collection is taken throughout Lent as long as I can remember. Instead of giving something up for Lent, we can add something for Lent. Envelopes will be in the pews beginning March 1. Dedication of the offering will be Palm Sunday, April 5.

—Anne Newman, Stewardship Chair



## Sunday Lectionary Readings



### March 1, 2020 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalms 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

### March 8, 2020 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalms 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

### March 15, 2020 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalms 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

### March 22, 2020 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalms 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

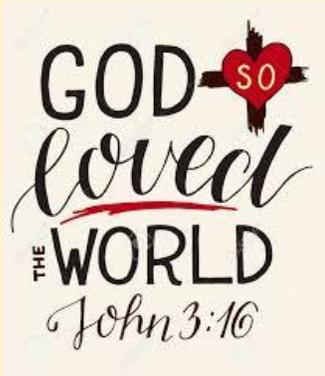
### March 29, 2020 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalms 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45



## Remembering Harry Gutekunst

Longtime Carmel member Harry Gutekunst passed away on February 12. Harry and his late wife Floss cooked delicious homemade soups for Carmel's Ash Wednesday dinner for many years and also cooked meals for Red Cross Blood Drive volunteers when the Deacons sponsored blood drives at Carmel.

Harry was also a chef for Carmel's Mens' Breakfasts and did setup for the handbell choir, which Floss played in. Please remember the Gutekunst children Linda, John, and Kathy, and their families in their time of mourning. —Janet Simon

## O B E I N G | Civil Conversations Project

*Speaking together differently in order to  
live together differently.*

Our third Civil Conversations dinner will be held on Friday, March 6th, in Fellowship Lounge. We gather to listen to a portion of a podcast, eat a delicious potluck meal, and discuss what we've heard as a group. You can come to any conversation without previous experience — each discussion stands on its own. Members of the community are welcome to join us!

—Pastor Ashley



Very happy birthday wishes to **Nancy Phifer**, who will turn 93 on March 21st! Enjoy your day, Nancy!

## Change of Address

**Rodney and Arlene Hackman** have moved to  
Ft. Washington



Please keep **Steven Kucera** and his family in your prayers as he continues his recovery. Get well soon!

## Piano Needed

The baby grand piano in our church choir room is over a hundred years old and is in need of repair. We have been told that it is not worth putting any money into it. If anyone has a small baby grand piano that they no longer need or use please let Abby Palmisano, organist and Director of Music at Carmel know. Thank you so much. — Abby Palmisano





Peace, love, and blessings from the Board of Deacons! This past month we have introduced our new and returning board members to the missions that we will continue to oversee while being called by Christ, including general church duties, member care, and mission outreach.

We sent out a number of care cards to members of our Carmel family who are unable to worship with us on a regular basis. We also provided Meals in a Moment services to a family in our congregation.

The Deacons are proud to help support Heide Miller on her trip to Nicaragua with Community Health Evangelism. This will be Heide's 10<sup>th</sup> year traveling with CHE, and she will be teaching sewing projects in two different communities during her mission.

The hoagie sale held benefitting the intergenerational mission trip to Appalachia was a great success, with over 130 hoagies sold. Thank you to all who helped support this fundraiser.

The deacons would like to encourage you to show your support for Danny Miller at his upcoming performances with the Harmony Theatre, which is celebrating 25 years of harmony and magic. Shows will be held May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM, as well as May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM at the Church of the Messiah located at 1001 DeKalb Pike in Lower Gwynedd.

Is Christ calling you? Do you have an idea for one of our outreach missions? Is there something you're feeling inspired to be a part of? Do you have a question about what we do? Please feel free to reach out to us with questions, ideas, and feedback.

*Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Deacons. —Jedediah Smith, Vice Moderator

### Wall of Money Mission Trip Fundraiser

The Appalachia Service Project (ASP) Mission Trip Team will be holding a *Wall of Money* fundraiser during the month of March. This fundraiser offers Carmel members a unique opportunity to contribute directly to the mission trip at any amount. Have \$15 to spare? Pull down that envelope! Spare change in the car worth \$2? Even kids can participate. Any amount that you can offer would be incredibly helpful as we begin pooling funds in earnest.

Our team has been meeting and preparing both logistically *and spiritually* for this endeavor! While not everyone can contribute financially, you *can* contribute with prayer. We ask your blessing for the safety and success of this trip, and most especially that we can connect meaningfully with the people of Appalachia.

Thank you again for the many ways in which you have already supported our team. We can't wait to see what Virginia holds for us, and to share our experiences with you when we return. — Pastor Ashley



## BAPTISM

**Finnley William Powers** received the Sacrament of Baptism during worship on February 2nd. Finnley is the son of **Ryan William Powers** and **Kimberly McKay Powers**.

Welcome to the Carmel Family!



Members of Carmel's Sanctuary Choir and Junior Choir sing a joint anthem in worship. Photo courtesy of Annette Lin-Ralph.

## Mission Update Charles and Melissa Johnson (Zambia, Africa)



Charles and Melissa Johnson, who are mission co-workers serving in Zambia at the Invitation of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Zambia Synod, visited Carmel on July 23rd to present their missionary experiences and how they are responding to God's call to serve special needs children and their families, and foster community development, food security and improved health. Carmel supports the Johnsons' mission work through annual contributions to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This year, in response to their presentation at Carmel, the Deacons made a second-mile contribution to support their efforts to purchase a tractor.

Melissa recently sent this update about their mission work:

*Charles and I are excited that we are about to head back to Zambia. We've been in the U.S. for almost 6 months, but Life in Lundazi has been going on without us and that's the way it's supposed to be. The CCAP Health Department Coordinator, Richard Willima, along with Emily Teerink, second year Young Adult Volunteer serving in Lundazi, created the very first CCAP Health Department Newsletter so you can read about all the exciting developments this past year and to thank you for being a part of this partnership and helping to make these developments possible.*

Read Charles' and Melissa's Newsletters by visiting:  
<https://chasjohnson78061.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4bfa2c2f321ee582a149c0447&id=27b2d0bf02&e=aff45536fd>



The nursery school is selling Gertrude Hawk chocolate for our spring fundraiser. Look for flyers in the church office or order on line. Candy from the Gertrude Hawk sale will be delivered the week of March 30th . It will be just in time to fill Easter baskets. In the classrooms, the children will be learning about the Easter Story, making beautiful Easter bonnets, and having egg hunts before our spring break.

The nursery school families will also be taking this time to help replenish the local food cupboard by having a food drive. We were informed that at Thanksgiving and Christmas they are overflowing with contributions but at other times of the year there are fewer donations. We will meet with each class and discuss "hunger and helping" and accept their generous donations. We are hoping we can help some families in our area!

On Thursday, March 19th, each student will invite a special person in their life to come celebrate together at Carmel Nursery School for Special Persons Night! They get to show this person (who may not normally be available) their classroom, their teachers, their friends and maybe get a little look at what a day is like in Nursery school!

This month the children will also be visiting the planetarium at Sandy Run Middle School. We will have a visit from The Tooth Buddies, a fabulous puppet show that teaches about healthy eating and brushing habits.

Registration has begun for the 2020/2021 school year. Carmel Nursery School has programs for children ages two to five. Each program is geared toward that age group while catering to the needs of the individual child. Carmel offers a structured morning of learning and active play. To enhance the learning process, field trips and many in school programs are included. If you are interested in any of the programs that Carmel!

—Leslie Arrowsmith



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