

TAKING UP THE CROSS

“He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Mark 8:34

The Gospel that is ours to share the 2nd Sunday of Lent speaks of taking up our crosses as we follow after Jesus. The cross that Jesus invites us to take up is not an abstract thought, nor does it denote religious faith, no matter how devout. The cross in Jesus’ day was not a logo or a metaphor. It was not a kneeling bench on which believers felt holy. The cross was an instrument of pain, shame, absolute loss and death. It was a real weapon; the only way to “take it up” was to become its victim. What can it mean to “take up our cross” but to suffer it? It means to be in solidarity with those who are oppressed, to be one with those who are condemned, to carry in your heart the sorrow of those who suffer, and to pray and to act on their behalf. It is to live for the sake of the least of your sisters and brothers. To take up your cross is to let go of your ego, your willfulness and your desires, and be led wholly by God’s self-giving passion for the world, especially for the poor and the powerless. It is to be willing to suffer for the sake of the world, to work and even endure loss for the sake of the community’s gain. You do this not out of duty, or belief that you ought to be miserable so others can be happy, but you do it out of joy, pure joy in the gift of life, and pure love. To take up your cross is to give your life for the life of the world because that is your delight, trusting that as you empty yourself of your one small, lone life for the sake of compassion, the One who gives life gives it to you abundantly—infinately and eternally, and still full of joy, overflowing with joy, radiant with divine, immortal joy.

As we journey together during Lent, let us be mindful that taking up our cross means doing all we can to shield others from unnecessary pain ---- especially the vulnerable among us. More often than not though, most of the time, I have found that for me it means getting myself out of the way and quietly standing with others as they walk the path put before them, taking up the cross that is theirs. Many days it's the hardest thing I do.

- What does it mean to you to 'take up your cross' and follow Jesus?
- What unexpected gifts have you received when you have 'taken up your cross' and followed Jesus?
- Are you ever tempted to deny others the 'cross' that is theirs to take up? Why or why not?

Blessings,

Rev. Ricardo Ramos-Diaz

LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

March 1

Genesis 17:1-7,15-16; Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

March 8

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19
I Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

March 15

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3,17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

March 22

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 29

Liturgy of the Palms
Mark 11:1-11; Psalm 118:1-2,19-29

Liturgy of the Passion
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15,47



HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAY TO:

<i>Jeffrey T. Scott</i>	2
<i>Steven Curtin</i>	7
<i>Andrew Moore</i>	8
<i>Lois Burns</i>	9
<i>Joseph Cocco</i>	9

<i>Leona Parker</i>	11
<i>Nancy Jane Baldwin</i>	16
<i>Kenneth Long</i>	19
<i>Laura Schickel</i>	19
<i>Cynthia Mannino</i>	21
<i>Christopher Beyer</i>	22
<i>Leonard Parker</i>	23
<i>Christopher Cocco</i>	26
<i>Keith Burns</i>	27

.....AND MANY, MANY MORE!!

A REMINDER TO ORDER YOUR EASTER LILY FOR THE SANCTUARY ON APRIL 5TH



The cost will be the same as last year - \$7.50. Please fill out the form below and put in the offering plate, give to Doris Stamer or call her, 908-925-0469

PLEASE ORDER # _____ EASTER LILY AS FOLLOWS:

_____ In Memory of

_____ In Honor of

_____ Given By

Don't forget to enclose the \$7.50. Thanks!



ASH WEDNESDAY – Feb. 18 in sanctuary

MAUNDY THURSDAY - April 2
Communion in our sanctuary

GOOD FRIDAY – April 3 – Sanctuary will be open from noon to 4:00 p.m. for prayer, Meditation and quiet time

EASTER SUNDAY – April 5

8:30 a.m. – Early 1/2 hour service in the Memorial Garden

9:00 a.m. – Light buffet breakfast in Aldersgate Hall

9:30 a.m. – Choir Rehearsal

10:30 a.m. – Easter worship service in our sanctuary

PLUS

The Interfaith Council will be sponsoring Lenten Bible Study classes on Sundays in our Aldersgate Hall at 3:00 p.m. on the following dates.

- FEBRUARY 22
- MARCH 1
- MARCH 8
- MARCH 15
- MARCH 22

Pastors and members of various churches who are part of the Interfaith Council will be

leading in the discussions. Please reserve these dates and plan to attend and bring your friends. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet members of the local churches of Linden and to prepare ourselves for the Easter season.

Light refreshments will be served.

PLUS

Our own Bible Study classes held every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. will continue to meet in the Youth Room in the Education Building. They will concentrate on the Lenten season for the 5 weeks leading up to Easter. You are all invited to attend.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



The United Methodist Women did not meet during January and February this year. It's a good thing those plans were made ahead of time because the winter snows would have prevented the meetings anyway.

This month, on Tuesday, March 3rd at 12:00 noon they will resume their meetings for 2015 in Aldersgate Hall. Please bring a sandwich and plan to attend.

Plans will be made for programs and events for the balance of the year. If you have not paid your yearly donation to the United Methodist Women you can bring \$15.00 to the meeting and MaryJane Koslosky, the treasurer, will be pleased to accept it. Hope to see you on March 3rd.

BITS AND PIECES

Doris Henel's grandson, Alec Henelsmith (son of Julie and John Henel) has been attending the Culinary Institute of American in New York State and starting in early February, he will have an externship in a lovely hotel in Florida for his next semester and working in their highly recommended kitchen. It was more convenient to stay with his grandmother then fly back to his home in California and then to Florida. He has been staying with Doris for about 3 weeks and will return to school on June 10th and graduate in January, 2016. He loves all the wonderful things he is learning and his grandmother has enjoyed some of the meals he had served her during his visit. Part of the Culinary Institute's program includes visits from top rated restaurants to interview students and hire for them for an externship in place of one of the semesters.

Ethel Steiniger would like to thank her friends for the many sympathy cards, telephone calls and notes that she received at the sudden and unexpected death of her daughter, Joan Steiniger Lucas in Turkey, N. C. It was such a shock to the family and friends, and the communication she received from so many people, helped knowing how many people cared for the family and shared in their loss. Thank you so much!

We just heard recently that Mildred Ebert had a sudden gall bladder operation. She is in a rehab location in Livingston which is near her daughter. In talking with her today, she said she will not be coming home from the rehab but will be trying out an assisted living residence in South Orange for a month and if she

likes it she will move there permanently. You can reach her at 908-208-2193 which is her cell phone number. We will certainly miss Mildred but each one knows when it is time to move on, and for Mildred, this must be the time! Good luck to you, Mildred! We have lots of happy memories of good times and hope we will still have enough drivers to visit you on occasion.

Marie Dziamba made another trip to Boston with her daughter, Diane, to visit Diane's daughter, husband and their baby. They want to make sure that even though they live a distance away, that baby is going to KNOW the grandmother and great-grandmother! Good for them!!

WHAT A HAPPY SURPRISE!!

It seems that the obituary column in the Star Ledger on November 14, 2014 that listed the death of Ethel Bethea, was NOT our Ethel Bethea! Someone else in the church had also read the same article and told the minister and he announced her death during a Sunday morning worship service.

So the article in the December Messenger and the announcement in church were both wrong – and we are happy to be able to tell you that now!

The article in the Ledger was so similar to Ethel's background that it was easy to make that mistake.

We were made aware of this by a telephone call to Doris Henel from one of our previous ministers, Rev. Betty Horne, who was visiting someone in a nursing and saw Ethel, spoke to her, and knew she was certainly alive after the article in the paper. She just confirmed this a few days ago when she saw her again. She took a few pictures and sent her present address. This info is on another page of this Messenger. She loves receiving cards.

ETHEL BETHEA'S PICTURE & ADDRESS



STRATFORD MANOR
787 Northfield Avenue
West Orange, N. J. 07052

For a woman well over 100, she still looks great. Best wishes from the UMC of Linden, Ethel, and continued good health.

AUDITING TIME FOR OUR FINANCES

Our Financial Chairperson has asked that our church treasurers prepare their books for the annual audit required by our Conference. Every bank account in the name of the United Methodist Church of Linden must submit the records, statements, cancelled checks, etc., by the treasurer or chairman of that account. The following accounts were the ones listed by our auditor as required last year with 2 additional accounts that were opened since our last audit.

- Current Expense – Kathie Horsch
- Building Improvement Fund – Bob Carhart
- Endowment Fund – Doris Henel
- Memorial Fund – Doris Henel
- Scholarship Fund – Kathy Curtin
- U.M.Women – MaryJane Koslosky

New accounts added since last audit:

- UMC of Linden Robert J. Bauer Family Foundation – MaryJane Koslosky
- UMC of Linden Robert J. Bauer Family Foundation – MaryJane Koslosky
- MaryJane will be in touch with all of those listed when she needs the records you have been keeping since our last audit.



We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Leonard Parker, who passed away on Feb. 12, 2015 at Genesis Elder Care in Westfield, N. J.

The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ramos on Wednesday, Feb. 18th at Werson Funeral Home at 10:30 a.m. with interment at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Linden.

Visiting hours were on Tuesday from 4 to 8 p.m.

Leonard was from the 3rd generation of 5 generations of the Parker family involved in our church. He was a lifelong resident of Linden and retired from Lyondell Chemical Company, Edison in 2011 after 25 years employed by them.

He also served on the Linden Volunteer Ambulance Corps for 10 years with his deceased first wife, Connie, and proudly served his country during the Vietnam War. He is survived by his loving wife of 25 years Carol Pakulski-Parker, his children Louise (Donald) Beyer, Alison (Jason) Klett, Debbie (Allen) Loiselle, Frank (Maryann) Pakulski, John (Jane) Pakulski and Annmarie (Kevin Conti) Pakulski. His siblings, Doris O'Bryan, Leona Parker and Catherine Bebbington (George) and his brother-in-law, John (Patricia) Lyszczarz and eight grandchildren, Christopher, Brooke, Arielle, Madysen, Ava, Leonard, Matthew and John.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Friends of the Linden Animal Shelter, P.O. Box 2151, Linden in his memory would be appreciated.

MARCH 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1</p> <p>9:20 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30-Worship Service 3-Interfaith Council Lenten Service Aldersgate Hall</p>	<p>2</p> <p>7:00 Board of Trustees 4:30-9:30Fencing Sch.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:30 Lenten Bible Study 12 Noon U.M.Women 4:30-9:30 Fencing Sch.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>World Day of Prayer Mt. Morriah Ch. So. Wood Ave. 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:30- 1:30 Fencing School</p>
<p>8</p> <p>3-Interfaith Council Lenten Service Aldersgate Hall 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service</p>	<p>9</p> <p>4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:30- Lenten Bible Study 4:30 -9:30 Fencing Sch.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:30-CHURCH COUNCIL 4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>5:30-8:30 Champion Youth</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:30-1:30 – Fencing School in gym</p>
<p>15</p> <p>3-Interfaith Council Lenten Service Aldersgate Hall 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service</p>	<p>16</p> <p>4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>17 SHROVE TUESDAY Reformed Church Potato Pancake Supper –All welcome 4:30-9:30-Fencing School 10:30-11:30 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>18</p> <p>4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5:30-8:30 Champion Youth</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:30-1:30 Fencing School in gym</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9;30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30-Worship Ser. 3 PM-Interfaith Lenten study Aldersgate Hall All invited!</p>	<p>23</p> <p>4:30-9:30 Fencing School</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:30 Lenten -Bible Study 4:30-9:30 Fencing School</p>	<p>25</p> <p>4:30-9:30-Fencing School</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>5:30-8:30 Champion Youth</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:30-1:30 Fencing School</p>
<p>29 Palm Sunday 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service</p>	<p>30</p> <p>4:30-9:30 Fencing School</p>	<p>31</p> <p>4:30 -9:30 Fencing Sch</p>				<p>:</p>