

LENT

2008



St. Paul's
United Church of Christ
5739 Dunham Rd.
Downers Grove, Illinois

*“Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding
in steadfast love.” (Joel 2:13)*

SAVE THIS LENTEN BOOKLET FOR FUTURE REFERENCE!

FROM THE PASTOR

GOD'S POWER...

<i>Gives us courage</i>	<i>Protects us</i>
<i>Opens us to others</i>	<i>Opposes unfairness</i>
<i>Dispels our fears</i>	<i>Warms our hearts</i>
<i>,</i>	<i>Encourages us</i>
<i>Strengthens us</i>	<i>Renews our hopes</i>

I came across the above acrostic recently when I was at another church. It was on a poster in the room where we were meeting. It gave me the idea for this year's Lenten theme at St. Paul's UCC which will be "Power for Life's Living."

Power relates to so many aspects of our life, though few of us are very willing to admit that we really are on a quest for power. Here's a thought-provoking paragraph about power, lifted from my reading on the subject of power as I prepared for this year's Lenten sermons.

Many of us speak of the adventure of making money or finding useful employment. We speak of the joy in keeping physically fit and attractive. Most of us make much of putting our knowledge and influence to wholesome purposes. But these are gentle evasions; they are only symptoms. As often as not, it is power that we really want.

These words may sound strange to some, though they are undoubtedly true. They seem strange because much of the time most of us feel quite power-less. One of our troubles may be that we too often rely on the wrong kind of power. Lent provides us with an opportunity to reconsider and reclaim the power of God, a power that can strengthen and renew us in remarkable ways.

This booklet lists many events being offered at St. Paul's UCC in February and March that can empower your life. The hope is that you will figure out what is most do-able for you and your household, given the busy schedules all of us keep, and then make a personal commitment to participate in at least some of what is planned.

May this Lenten season bring to all of us a special blessing, as together we seek the power of God in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Yours in His love,

REV. PHIL

HOLY WEEK

March 16 --PALM SUNDAY – 10 A.M. Worship

A reenactment of the first Palm Sunday processional by the children of the church will be a highlight of this service as we sing “*Hosanna, Loud Hosanna!*” and “*All Glory, Laud, and Honor.*” Palm branches will bedeck the altar and palm crosses will be given to all who are present that day.

This is also Confirmation Sunday, when five of our young people will affirm the Christian faith and officially join the membership of St. Paul’s Church. There will be a reception in their honor in Fellowship Hall after the service, with hot-crossed buns prepared and served by our Sr. High C.H.R.I.S.T. Youth Group.

March 20 -- MAUNDY THURSDAY

(So named because on this night Jesus gave the mandate,
“*Love one another as I have loved you.*”)

11:00 A.M. Communion Service in the Sanctuary
for those unable to come in the evening.

7:30 P.M. Communion and Tenebrae Service in the Sanctuary

Recapture the events and feelings of Jesus’ last week of earthly life. Through narrative, music, and the gradual extinguishing of candles, this beautiful contemplative service paves the way both to the sorrows of Good Friday and the joys of Easter morning. Communion will be served in remembrance of the Last Supper that Jesus instituted on the Thursday night before he was crucified.

March 21 – GOOD FRIDAY – 1 P.M. Community Service

held at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital Chapel.

March 23 – EASTER SUNDAY –7 A.M. Communion Service

10A.M. Celebration Service with the “Living Cross”

Sermon: “*The Triumph Song of Life*”

Easter Breakfast will again be served in Fellowship Hall between services for those who make reservations ahead of time!

Lenten Gatherings For Fellowship and Learning

Saturday, February 23: *Men's Lenten Breakfast*

Now in its eighth year, this annual breakfast during Lent usually features a representative from one of our church-related institutions or agencies who brings us an update about what is happening in their work and how we can better relate to and support it. This year we'll meet at 8:30 a.m. at the beautiful dining room at Fairview Village High-rise Residency Dining Room (6603 Fairview Ave.) in Downers Grove. The cost is \$10 per person. The speaker will be The Rev. Jonathon Knight, UCC Fox Valley Association minister, who will bring us news about the many things happening in our UCC Illinois Conference. There will also be time to talk about some of the upcoming men's projects at St. Paul's Church. Sign up at the information table in the Narthex.

Sunday, February 24: *Pancake Breakfast*

Sponsored by the C.H.R.I.S.T. Youth Group each Lenten season, this breakfast will be served in Fellowship Hall immediately after worship. It is one of the major fund-raisers of our youth program. Tickets will be available in the Narthex on the Sundays beforehand, or may be purchased at the door. Come and enjoy a great meal. The cost is a very reasonable \$5 for adults, \$3 for children under twelve, or \$20 per family. The breakfast theme this year is "Under the Sea," and we can expect the same fantastic decorations and service from our youth group members and their parents – an outstanding visual and culinary experience!

Friday, February 29: *A Carnival of Caring*

This is the third time this special event has taken place at St. Paul's Church. It originally was sponsored by the Christian Education Committee and intended to be a way for the children of our church to help raise funds for the One Great Hour of Sharing special Lenten offering. Now it is an all-church event co-sponsored by the C. E. and Benevolence Committees with lots of different games, crafts, and other activities. There will also be a display of material about this year's OGHS appeal. A minimum \$7 donation at the door will buy unlimited games and prizes. It all starts at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. This is a wonderful time for the generations of the church to mix together. Come and have some fun for a great cause.

Sunday, March 2: Annual Talent Showcase

While not specifically a Lenten activity, this event will once again allow the members of St. Paul's Church to display their talents in music, drama, poetry...whatever! Many of our young people perform as part of the Illinois solo and ensemble competition each winter, and this Showcase affords them the opportunity to "show their stuff" at church. This year the venue is being expanded and an invitation is extended to all ages of performers. An Ice Cream Social will be held immediately afterwards. Donations will be accepted at the door and will help to underwrite some of the youth activities. Gwen Box is currently soliciting participants. Contact her for further information at 220-0671. It all begins at 2 p.m., and the whole church is invited to enjoy this special program.

Saturday, March 8: Women's Lenten Breakfast

All women of the church are invited to this annual event which will be held once again at the Village Greens Restaurant (1575 W. 75th St. in Woodridge) beginning at 8:30 a.m. The focus theme this year is "Blessed Hands" which is meant to inspire everyone to remember and give thanks for the many things we create with our hands, hopefully "at the impulse of God's love," as the hymn text puts it. A free-will donation will be collected to help cover expenses. Sign up at the information table in the Narthex any Sunday in February or early March to reserve a spot...and invite your friends! A longer overnight retreat is being planned for May 16-18 at the UCC Tower Hill Camp and Conference Center in Michigan. Watch for more information about this latter event in upcoming *Scroll* newsletters.

Saturday, March 8: 8th Grade Confirmation Mini-Retreat

Our 8th graders will meet for their final session with Rev. Schairbaum on Saturday afternoon from 1-4 p.m. Their time will be spent looking over the confirmation materials they have collected over the last two years of study, reviewing the Sunday morning Confirmation curriculum they have used, writing their personal faith statements, and rehearsing for the confirmation service. Specific information about the confirmation ceremonies on Palm Sunday, March 16, will be sent to all students and parents. There are five students in this year's class, a smaller number than usual, but they are a fine group whom we want to honor and support as they become full members in St. Paul's UCC.

Sunday Morning Worship

We will continue to worship on Sundays at 10 A.M. each week in the sanctuary. The overall Lenten theme around which the services are being planned is “*Power for Life’s Living.*” Rev. Schairbaum will preach a series of sermons on this theme.

February 10

Sermon: “*Practicing the Presence*”

Scripture: Mark 1:9-15 and Romans 8:18-27

February 17

Sermon: “*The Discipline of Self-denial*”

Scripture: Matthew 23:1-11 and I Corinthians 1:19-25

February 24

Sermon: “*Fellow Workers with God*”

Scripture: Ephesians 2:4-10 and John 3:14-21

March 2

Sermon: “*Using Our Troubles Creatively*”

Scripture: Hebrews 5:7-10 and John 12:27-36

March 9

Sermon: “*On Taking Moral Risks*”

Scripture: Matthew 16: 21:27 and II Timothy 4:1-8

Wednesday Bible Study

Each Wednesday evening at 7:15 p.m. a group of about fifteen meets at the church to study the scriptures and engage in thoughtful discussion. We are currently reading and discussing the Gospel of John. A weekly outline through May is available in the church office. Here is a great opportunity to enter into a special Lenten Bible study. One need not be present every week to participate. Passages we will be discussing during Lent are:

2/13	John, Chpt. 6	Jesus, the Bread of Life
2/20	John, Chpt. 7	Jesus, the Light of the World
2/27	John, Chpt. 8	Jesus and Controversy
3/5	John, Chpt. 9	Jesus and Judgement
3/12	John, Chpt. 10	Jesus, the Good Shepherd
3/19	John, Chpt. 11	Jesus, Victor over Death

Ash Wednesday, February 6

11:00 A.M. Morning Communion Service

This abbreviated mid-day Service of Communion will be held in chancel area of the sanctuary for those who are not able to come in the evening. Prayer, scripture, and simple music will be the main components of this reflective service. The optional imposition of ashes either on the forehead or hand will be available.

Home Communion will also be brought to the hospitalized and homebound during the afternoon hours by Rev. Schairbaum.

6:30 P.M. All-church Soup Supper

In keeping with the tradition of trying to simplify our lives during Lent, we will gather in Fellowship Hall for a soup supper, along with a variety of bread, cheese and fruit. Coffee, tea, and milk will also be available. Place settings and tableware will also be provided by the church. Those who want something more or different (particularly children or those with special dietary needs) may want to bring other additional food with them. A freewill offering basket will be on the serving table to help defray expenses.

7:30 P.M. Evening Communion Service

After supper we will join others who wish to come to the sanctuary for the evening Communion Service. Interspersed in the liturgy will be special choir selections, scripture readings, and a short reflection by Rev. Schairbaum. As in the morning service, the optional imposition of ashes will be available.

Lenten Devotional Aids

The Upper Room offers thoughtful paragraphs and prayers for each day. It is available on the Care Table in the Narthex.

Daily Bible Readings for each day of Lent highlight the life of Christ. These are available at the information desk in the Narthex.

The Church Library on the upper level of the church has many fine selections for personal reading and reflection during Lent.

Lenten Mission and Outreach

*To search our souls, to meditate, will not suffice for Lent.
To share the cross, to sacrifice, these things God also meant.*

Jane McKay Lanning

While the ways that we can reach out and help our fellow human being are almost endless, St. Paul's Church will focus on several outreach efforts again during this year's Lenten season.

One Great Hour of Sharing

In more than eighty countries around the world, including our own, compassionate ministry happens throughout the year because of OGHS. Our gifts help to provide shelter, food, bedding, and other assistance to people when disaster hits. This annual offering will be received at St. Paul's UCC on Sunday, March 2. Special OGHS envelopes will be in the bulletin that Sunday. Checks should be made out to St. Paul's UCC. However, gifts can be given through Easter morning. See also the *Carnival of Caring* in the Lenten activities section of this booklet.

St. Paul's Blood Drive

The date for this year's Blood Drive is Monday, March 3. The equipment will be moved into the church midday and donors can give blood from 3-8 P.M. Appointments for a specific time can be made by calling Pat Weichle at 357-3293 or seeing her after church on Sunday.

A powerful connection of this project to the Lenten season is the remembrance of the One who "shed his blood for us." Can we give a pint of blood for someone else? Think about it...then call Pat!

Lenten Coin Folders

This is a good daily self-discipline, which also helps to fund scholarships that send students to Confirmation Camp each summer.

These folders will be available on the Narthex information table. It's amazing how much a quarter a day placed into these folders adds up over the weeks of Lent. Why not try this discipline this year, perhaps using it with a reading from the Upper Room Daily Devotional booklet.

Peace Corps Picture Exchange Program

During the Lenten season our C.H.R.I.S.T. Kids will also be participating in a special project which has them exchanging original drawings of their families and surroundings with children in Mali, Africa. This was encouraged by Peace Corps volunteer Laura Schairbaum during her visit to St. Paul's Church over Christmas.