



Buffalo United Methodist Church

February 2021

1000 30th Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



Pastoral Letter

This month we mark the start of the Lenten season on Ash Wednesday, February 17. Many of us think of Lent as a dreary, depressing time filled with remorse and contemplation. But what if we flip it around and look at it with different eyes? What if Lent were a time for new accomplishments, adventures of the soul and spirit?

We find the story of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness following his baptism by his cousin John in the 4th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. I recommend reading it in several translations, which are easily found on the BibleHub website. Sometimes a different word or phrase gives us a new understanding of Scripture. I personally like the Common English Version (CEV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), and The Message (MSG), which is a less exact but often a revealing retelling of the Bible.

Jesus' wilderness time was not an adventure, but a torturous testing of his spirit and commitment to the task that God had set for him. But very few of us can go without eating or drinking for an extended time, nor are we prepared for face-to-face conversations with Satan. Fortunately, God has lower expectations for us humans! You might decide to follow a fasting practice, either as a one-time experience or as a regular practice. If you choose to do this, be sure to stay well hydrated and to consider any health implications before you start. Many decide to give up one small thing (like chocolate or beer); others eliminate certain meals once a week. The trick is not just in the denial: you must replace it with something worthwhile, such as prayer, Scripture reading, or a good work. Perhaps giving up fast food and donating the \$10 saved each week to charity is a good fit for you.

Many people find the project of adding a new discipline to be the right challenge. Last year I challenged you to read one book of Scripture that you were not

familiar with during Lent. I wouldn't recommend starting with some of the Old Testament legalistic books, but The Book of the Acts of the Apostles reads like a genuine novel, complete with plot turns and surprise endings.

Perhaps working through a classic devotional book might be the right adventure for you. I can recommend "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence, or one by John Woolman, an early Quaker abolitionist. Maybe a brief focus on church history is right for you. If this appeals to you, I would be glad to help you select something from my library that would ignite your curiosity (and your heart).

Whatever you choose to do, make it an act of joy. Celebrate the chance to try something that is new and challenging for you. Keep a journal about your experiences and share it with the congregation or your friends. You might find that it's a habit you want to keep up permanently!

Blessings on your "experiments" during Lent 2021.

~Pastor Kathryn

The Imposition of Ashes

We will celebrate the Imposition of Ashes to mark the beginning of Lent on Wednesday, February 17 at 1:00 p.m. I will have a brief, socially distanced service in the Sanctuary. In addition, from 1:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. I will be offering **Drive-By Ashes** in the parking lot. If you are concerned about virus transmission or operating on a tight schedule, check it out. I will say a brief prayer with you, put the ashes on your forehead, and give you a devotional handout to read--without you needing to leave your vehicle! I have always wanted to try this, and this is the year! Let's pray for fairly warm weather.

~Pastor Kathryn

The Art of Possibility

One of my favorite books on leadership is *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life*, by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander (2000). Leadership is an art of possibility, according to the Zanders, who draw on their experience as teachers, communicators, and as the conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra (Ben) and family therapist and consultant on conflict and transformation (Rosamund).

The Zanders are convinced that the conductor/leader is not a dominator but a conduit of possibility. We lead by making others powerful, by never doubting the capacity of the people we lead to fulfill the dreams that we encourage and that they claim for themselves. The book is full of brilliant insights about how leaders empower others to become their truest and best selves. The following are some of the leadership lessons that the Zanders believe evoke the art of possibility in all of us.

- Step into a world of possibility. As leaders, we are called to set before people a vision and then become the possibility ourselves. “Enlarge the box, or create another frame around the data, and problems vanish, while new opportunities appear.” Great leaders create new pathways.
- Give everyone an “A.” We lead best by reminding those we lead that they are all “A” students. Giving others an “A” from the beginning is a possibility to live into rather than an expectation to live up to.
- We can lead from any chair. We need to communicate that every person has the power to make a difference from whatever chair they occupy in the orchestra/congregation. Every person can lead.
- Downward spiral talk excludes possibility. Negativity speaks of scarcity rather than abundance and creates a false picture of how things are going from bad to worse. We are called to inspire others to stretch beyond their known capacities.
- Don’t take yourself so seriously. When we lighten up our childish demands and entitlements and peel away our pride, we move away from our calculating self to our central self, which is focused on others.
- Give way to passion. Performance is not about perfection but passion. It’s about letting everyone’s unique voice sing. Passionate leaders take people beyond where they would normally go.
- Light a spark. When our hearts burn with faith and fervor, we light sparks of possibility in the lives of others.
- Take responsibility for all that happens in our life. Admitting mistakes keeps our spirits whole and frees us to choose again.

• And then there are the shining eyes. Zander asks the question in a brief video, “Have you ever noticed that the conductor of an orchestra never makes a sound?” The conductor depends for his or her power on the ability to make others powerful. How do we know when we, too, have awakened possibility in others, whether it’s our children, our students, or our colleagues in ministry, whether laity or clergy? By looking into their eyes. If their eyes are shining, they have become a vessel of the Holy Spirit.

As we continue to lead and learn during this time of COVID-19, the possibilities for experimenting, adapting, and imagination are endless! All I know is that everywhere I go, I see shining eyes.

- Knowing that the orchestra conductor does not make a sound but depends for power on making others powerful, how do you lead? Do you lead by controlling or by becoming a servant leader and empowering others to lead?
- Do you and the Committee on Lay Leadership in your church encourage people to lead from any chair in the orchestra (congregation)?
- What might happen if you gave everyone in your church an “A” before they “earned” it? Might this be what we call “grace”?
- Do you train and encourage others to be conduits of possibility: to identify gifts and equip others for ministry rather than do all the hands-on ministry yourself?
- Can you quiet the voice in the heart of individuals and congregations that says, “I can’t do this”?
- Do you minister out of an attitude of scarcity or abundance?

~Bishop Laurie Haller

[The complete text of the Bishop’s January 25 blog posting is available on her website *Leading from the Heart*.]

Baptism

On Monday, January 25, Donald Lee Fish was baptized into our community of faith at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. The congregation was represented by his father, Bob Fish, and his sister, Susan Fish Sanchez, who acted over the phone as his sponsors. Please be in prayer for the entire Fish family as they struggle with Don’s health challenges. He recently suffered a stroke.

Financial Statements

Financial statements have been mailed or put in your church mail box. If you have questions concerning your statement, please contact Chris Gochenouer, 363-5000.

February 2021

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
American Heart Month Black History Month	1	2 Candlemas Ground Hog Day	3	4	5	6
7 8:45 am Worship Service	8 Buffalo Gals Church Cleaning Committee (9:00 am)	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 8:45 am Worship Service Valentine's Day	15 President's Day	16 Cookie donation for First Nations due tomorrow	17 Ash Wednesday Administrative Board Meeting (4:00 pm)	18 UMW Meeting (9:00 am)	19	20
21 8:45 am Worship Service First Sunday of Lent	22	23	24	25	26 Purim—the most festive of Jewish holidays; in honor of Esther	27
28 8:45 am Worship Service	The Iowa Annual Conference has designated the second Sunday in February as Disability Awareness Sunday . An offering will be collected to help celebrate “the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities” and to ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. Donations support educational opportunities and provide grants for local churches to assist in removing architectural and attitudinal barriers to accessibility.					

February Birthdays: 3 – Mary Lou Stepanek 4 - Luke Kelley
 6 – Margie Marrs 10 – Marlene Himes 11 – Christine Gochenouer
 11 – Marilyn (Marlee) Carpenter 17 – Carla Lindball 19 - Becky Durand

Candlemas is the last holiday of the Christmas season, celebrating the Feast of Purification of the Virgin Mary. It also celebrates the annual blessing of candles used by the church.

According to Jewish customs, women were considered "unclean" after the birth of a child, a period lasting 40 days after the birth of a son and 60 days after the birth of a daughter. At the end of this time, the woman was brought to the temple and "purified." After the birth of Jesus, the Virgin Mary was purified on Candlemas or the Feast of Purification.

On Candlemas, candles used during the year are blessed. The candles represent Jesus Christ as the light, the truth, and the way.



Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Christian season of Lent and has traditionally been a period of fasting and penitence. The Lenten season lasts for 46 days. On Ash Wednesday, Christians receive ashes on their foreheads in the sign of the cross and a reminder of the Biblical passage "ashes to ashes and dust to dust": our earthly bodies came from dust and to dust we will return. In some churches the ashes you receive are from the palms used in the previous year's Palm Sunday service.

The Buffalo Gals

Spic & Span Church Cleaning Committee

This month's meeting will occur on Monday, February 8, beginning at 9:00 a.m. No experience or prior training is necessary. One and all are welcome.

Summer Rummage Sale

As you do your spring cleaning, please save items for a summer rummage sale. No specific date has been set for the rummage sale, but we will be aiming for a Thursday and Friday once the pandemic has been curtailed. The church can now accept some rummage sale donations but no electronics or large items.

World Day of Prayer 2021

This year's program was written by the women of Vanuatu, an island nation 1,000 miles east of Australia. Although the official date for the World Day of Prayer is March 5, this year we will celebrate this special day at our UMW meeting on Thursday, February 18, beginning at 9:30 am. Pastor Kathryn will be responsible for the lesson.

Buffalo Web Site with Recipes

There are wonderful recipes to enjoy on the Buffalo website—and be sure to visit the Bison Blog for inspirational messages. <http://buffalounitedmethodist.weebly.com/>

Administrative Board Meeting

Please contact Margie Marrs, Administrative Board Chair, if you have items that need to be addressed by the Board at its February 17 meeting.

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RADA Cutlery

The United Methodist Women's group will not be ordering RADA cutlery in the future. The current inventory is available for purchase and on display in the Fellowship Hall: paring knives, peelers, dish cloths, etc. A list of available items can be obtained from Barb Crawford (826-2468) or Marlene Himes (393-3374).

First Nations Food Baskets

Baked goods for the First Nations food baskets should be brought to the church by noon on Wednesday, February 17. Put 6-8 cookies in a package with the cookies labeled. Diabetic baked goods are much appreciated.

Outreach Suggestions

- The Little Library: please consider donating books or cash donations, which can be given to Judy Hackney.
- Send cards to our church members who are in care facilities or staying at home. If you need names and addresses contact Barb Crawford (826-2468).
- A donation box for the Mission of Hope is available as you come into the sanctuary. Canned meats, fruit, vegetables, soup, cereal, and toiletries are always appreciated. KCRG recently reported that the Mission of Hope shelves were bare.

