

From the Pastor's Desk ...

In the Financial Peace University, Dave Ramsey discusses the need to get control of your finances, preparing a budget, saving, etc. In order to be able to do so, he emphasized a word that is unpopular for the majority of people - discipline. Discipline is a word that I've come to appreciate and respect.

After Karen's resignation from being Head Librarian, she began the discipline of regaining her health through diet and exercise. I joined her (more with the diet than with the exercise). I have to admit that neither dieting nor exercising is one of my first loves. But there are blessings and benefits to the disciplines such as feeling better and finding clothes that fit.

We have added another discipline by leading and working the material for the Intimate Life classes on Sunday afternoons. It requires that we set up times to meet and work through the homework and to plan and prepare for the next class. Once again – discipline. And once again, as we meet with other couples, we too are receiving the benefit of growing closer in our relationship.

No matter what area of life where we want to grow, it requires discipline. Most people are not excited about taking classes. To help encourage participation in the Small Groups (Growth Groups), they are set up with a beginning and an ending date. The classes have a start and finish, short term gatherings.

February 22 is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. It is a 40-day period (excludes Sundays) of preparation. It is a short period for learning and growing. There is a beginning (Ash Wednesday) and an end (Holy Week). We add a mid-week service during the days of Lent. It requires discipline to add the extra service on our schedules. It is a time to set aside for growth, growth as disciples.

The word 'disciple' comes from the word, 'discipline.' It is a student that is disciplined to learn and grow. Jesus Christ invites us to grow in our discipleship. "Come follow Me." "If you continue in my Word..." that is, being intentional about the discipline of reading, meditating upon, learning and maturing in the Christian faith and walk. "If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples (disciplined ones) and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31-32).

This year, we will be looking at 40 Days of Purpose. We do not exist for ourselves. God created each of us for a purpose. As we have been discussing in the past weeks, God is looking around the whole world to find those whose hearts are fully committed and fully engaged with Him. "The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him." (2 Chronicles 16:9)

One of the practices during Lent has been to give up something during the 40 days. It's important to understand that the purpose for giving something up is to fill that space with more of God. The idea of giving up something which may also be a type of fasting is in

order to free oneself from that which we have allowed to have a power over us. It is something that is hindering a closer walk with Christ. Are you ready for Lent? Are you ready to give something up in order to grow closer to Christ? Are you willing to enter into a 40-day discipline to exercise your spiritual life? Are you willing to fast/diet from something for 40 days in order to draw closer to Him?

You are invited to come. Prepare time for prayer. Set aside time to read Scripture. It is God's purpose that we grow closer and become healthier in our relationship with Him and with one another.

Remember – Ash Wednesday begins on February 22.

Pr Jerry

THE BELL

I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12)
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)
I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)
I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)
I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)
I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)
I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3:20)
I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor. 5:17-21)
I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)
I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom 8:35-39)
I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21-22)
I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)
I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12)
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)
I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil. 1: 5)
I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)

I belong to God

Do you know

who you are?

Keep this bell ringing ...

I hope you enjoyed the many Advent and Christmas musical offerings from our singers and ringers, and also the children. Everyone worked hard – a huge thank you to all!

I came across this essay by Robert Bridges and would like to share it with you. It says so well what I strongly feel in my heart music should be. Each time I read it I think “WOW!”

ON THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH

*And if we consider and ask ourselves what sort of music
we would wish to hear on entering a church, we should surely,
in describing our ideal, say first of all that it must be
something different from what is heard elsewhere;
that it should be a sacred music devoted to its purpose,
a music whose peace should still passion,
whose dignity should strengthen our faith,
whose unquestioned beauty should find a home in our hearts,
to cheer us in life and death;
a music worthy of the fair temples in which we meet,
and of the holy words of our liturgy;
a music whose expression of the mystery of things unseen
never allowed any trifling motive to ruffle the sanctity of its reserve.
What power of good such a music would have!*

Robert Bridges-Collected Essays, XXII

To God be the Glory,

Elaine



“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

*O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, full be.*

George Matheson (1842-1906) wrote the words to this much-loved hymn while feeling intensely lonely and afraid.

Years back, his fiancée had broken their engagement upon learning he was going blind. Despite that challenge, Matheson had followed God’s call to a fruitful pastoral ministry — with his sister’s assistance. Now his sister was getting married, and Matheson worried about who would take care of him and if anyone would ever want to marry him.

Amid such despair, Matheson later shared, God gave him all four verses of this hymn in five minutes. It’s a poignant reminder that God’s love sustains us even when human love falls short.

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VALENTINE BREAKFAST

*Sunday, February 12
8:30 am—9:30 am*

*Menu - Bacon
Eggs—cooked to order
Hash Browns*

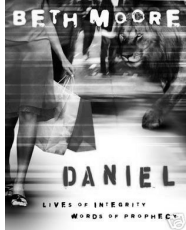
*Sweetheart Pancakes
Fresh Fruit
Coffee/Juice/Milk*

First Tuesday Concert - February 7

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church Canticle Ringers under the direction of Nancy Krause, are known throughout the city for their outstanding skills. Sacred and secular works will be presented.



Women's Ministries



*It's so nice to be back at Bible Study. Those who are used to meeting weekly, we sure do miss that when we aren't meeting. We have begun our new study - **Daniel: Lives of Integrity; Words of Prophecy**. We all knew the Bible is relevant to us today, but I don't think any of us thought of the Book of Daniel as incredibly relevant and in your face as this book really is. Babylon was a city full of excess and indulgence. Sound familiar? This book will be speaking volumes to us this semester.*

Happy Valentine's Day (Feb. 14, 2012)

Happy President's Day (Feb. 20, 2012)

Ash Wednesday. . . Lent Begins! (Feb. 22, 2012)



Valentine's Dinner

*February will bring Valentine's Day. A **Valentine's Dinner** will be on **February 12th, Sunday** evening. Tickets are **\$25 per couple** and should be purchased in advance. It will be lots of fun. See you there. Tickets can be purchased at Church. ☺ If you have any questions, or want to get a ticket, be sure to talk to Gary Jo Lee.*