

# The Lyons Community Church

## Mid-Week Message

Tuesday, March 4, 2014



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### *An invitation to the edge*

Dear brothers and sisters,

I wanted to get the Mid-Week Message out early this week to be certain that everyone hears that we have cancelled our Ash Wednesday service this Wednesday. I hate to cancel, but for those who were in church on Sunday, you saw that I've come down with a bug, and heard how painful it is for me to talk. That's especially excruciating for an extrovert like me! ;-) We'll try again next year, I promise.

Despite the cancellation, this week is host to Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Lenten season (or just Lent, for short). You may see friends and neighbors walking around with a dark mark on their foreheads, and some even fast on Ash Wednesday or on each Friday of the season. And who could ignore the global parties in Brazil and New Orleans? Mardi Gras, which culminates on Fat Tuesday (this week) is the "end" of the party season and the beginning of Lent.

Why smudge? Many churches burn the palm fronds from last year's Palm Sunday celebration and put a mark or smudge of ash on the forehead. The pastor or priest often says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" when placing the smudges. This whole ancient ritual is to usher in a time of quiet, inner reflection - ashes have always been a sign of humility and mourning, reminding us of our human mortality. In the early church, smudging was an act of penitence (or repenting of sin), which showed that someone was trying to right the wrongs they had done.

I'm not asking you to wear ashes or even to fast during the upcoming season, if that's not what you feel called to do. But I would like to invite you to the edge of your comfort zone during this important season of Lent. The 40 days (not counting Sundays) that begin on Ash Wednesday and end on Easter Sunday are an invitation to reflect on your life, how far you have come, and how your journey continues to unfold before you.

Even more important than birthdays, anniversaries or New Year's celebrations, Lent is an invitation to reflect. We talked about mountain-top experiences on Sunday, and Lent offers just the opposite - a journey down, deep into our own lives and the meaning we are making. During Lent, we will be studying Encounters with Jesus, starting this Sunday with the reason for the season: Jesus's 40 days of fasting, praying and temptation in the wilderness.

### Sunday, March 9

**Sermon:** *Life's Tests and Our Winning Strategies*

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-11

**Reader:** Carol Pranschke

**Greeter:** The Shaws

**Flowers:** Bella Medkour

**Refreshments:** Mark Boys

### After church on Sunday,

Regis and I had 14 youth at our home for pizza and games.



They came up with many ideas of things they'd like to do together, and we look forward to a planning meeting for Youth Ministry as soon as I have a voice again. Please be in prayer about how you can support our teenagers!



### *Pastor's Message* (continued)

So I invite each of you to the edge of your own wilderness, to meet God in ways that you may never have done before. You don't have to give up chocolate or swear to go to the gym everyday - but if you do decide to try any changes during the Lenten season, please be sure they are fueled by humility and a desire to connect with the Divine (rather than a join-the-crowd or look-how-religious-I-am mentality).

Hope I'll have more of a voice for this Sunday - won't be talking much until then, so send me an email if you need me. I'll be home resting (guess God did tell me to go back to bed?!?).

In joyful anticipation of the Lenten season,

*Pastor Emily*

### **Healing prayers for...**

Ray with hospice care at home and Jeanne and the family caring for him, Steve's 15-year old nephew Levi diagnosed with Krohn's disease, Donna West (Monica's neighbor) and her daughter Connie, Robyn's grandmother Margie (Marguerite) who passed away

### **Rejoice over our joys...**

Grace's win (see below), Carol's performance art piece, the 14 youth who attended Sunday's pizza lunch, and prayers for youth and new ministry leaders to emerge

### **Concerns...**

Nancy & Robyn's baby son Paxton - continued healing and a long-term placement with their family, the Iowa farmers traveling to Lyons soon to donate trailers

**US JOAD Indoor National Championship.** Grace was 15 points from 2nd. She got 3rd place and was pleased with her performance in New Mexico this weekend, as she should be!! We're proud of you!

