

COVENANT CHRONICLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR COVENANT CHURCH PCA OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Pastor's Note

Dr. Paul Sagan

Lenten Reflections

“What are you giving up for Lent?” is a question many of us hear on Ash Wednesday. First of all we might ask, what is Lent? It is a tradition in the Roman Church that many other communions follow as well of fasting and self-denial leading up to the celebration of Easter and the resurrection. The 40 days corresponds to the 40 days of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness before He began His public ministry. The word “Lent,” is simply a derivation of the German word for Spring, we get our word length from the same word because the days get longer in the spring. The better question for us should be, “Should I observe the season of Lent?”

I purposely do not emphasize Lent because I think it takes our focus off of the Gospel and causes us to focus on our own performance rather than on Christ's righteousness for us and in us. Paul warned the church of Colossae of this danger,

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to

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*Our purpose is to glorify God by
loving Him and loving people.*

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Christ ... If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations-- "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things that all perish as they are used)-- according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh (Col 2:13-17; 20- 23 ESV)

I believe the problem with religious observances like Lent is that they take our focus off of the Gospel. Penance is to be a way of life for the believer not just a seasonal event. Every day we are to deny our self, take up the cross of Jesus, and follow Him. Fat Tuesday is not a day where we get a license to sin. We have the ordinary means of grace available to us every day. A regular keeping of the Sabbath of worship with fellow believers; the remembering and improving on our baptism into Christ by being disciplined and using our gifts and talents to build up Christ's church;

practicing self-examination and repentance every time we prepare to come to the Lord's Table; studying and applying God's word on a daily basis; and praying privately, in families, and with fellow believers, constantly about all things agreeable to the revealed will of God are all the ordinary means of grace that God uses to draw us closer to Him.

I don't want to sit in self-righteous judgment over anyone's observance of Lent. Indeed, there may be great spiritual blessings for some who do observe the day. The apostle Paul makes clear what our attitude should be in these cases,

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. (Rom 14:5-6 ESV); and, So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1Co 10:31 ESV)

Easter Choir

Lee Mekkes

Singers that participated in the Mission Conference choir have requested that an Easter Choir be assembled for this year's Easter Sunday service on April 20. In response to this request, signup will begin late in March with Wednesday rehearsals beginning Wednesday, April 2 at 7 PM.

With at least 40 known singers--teenage and above--in the Covenant family, the size of the Mission Choir could easily double for Easter if those on this singer "watch list" choose to participate.

Planning for the first Easter Choir rehearsal includes obtaining the required quantities of music. Signup is requested in order to help in this planning. So, sign up as soon as possible so you will have your own copy of the music.

The music planned for the Easter Choir includes one selection arranged specifically for our choir, and will be performed for the first time this Easter by the Covenant Church Choir.

Camera Club

Lee Mekkes

The Camera Club has completed their ELEMENTS OF CREATION photo shoot. Working with Pete Golden, the group spent an afternoon photographing samples of chemical elements that he has collected during his educational career.

Elements that were photographed were those that are photogenic and offer a chance for the club members to try various techniques to show the unique characteristics of that element. Obviously, the Camera Club could not photograph all 112 elements. Some would have been fatal,

which would have a deleterious effect on the Camera Club.

Enough of the elements were photographed to provide two photo exhibits--the first of which will soon be on display in the church parlor.

The next regular Camera Club meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 16 at 10 AM. The photo subject assignment for that meeting is "A LOT OF". A peer review of these photos will be done in preparation for a future exhibit.

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