

# The Stidham Story

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## MARCH 2017

### MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MIKE

We are approaching the highest time of the year for Christians: Easter. Without the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no Christian faith. His triumphant resurrection is at the center of our individual lives and all the ministries. Virtually everything the church does revolves around Easter and how it changes lives. Easter is a time of great joy and celebration because the great enemy of all (death) has been destroyed. We receive new life because of Easter.

Lent is the season used to prepare for the Easter celebration. The origins of Lent lie in preparation of converts for baptism, which occurred on Easter. Ancient writings such as *The Didache* and *The Apostolic Tradition* inform us of how the early church taught and prepared the converts for baptism. The time of preparation in Lent comes from biblical teaching associated with the number forty. Moses spent forty years preparing for his mission. The Israelites spent forty years wandering in the desert in preparation for entrance into the Promise Land. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness in preparation for His earthly ministry. It is 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

During the Lenten Season Christians are encouraged and asked to take inventory of their soul. It is a time for renewal of spiritual disciplines, which bring the presence of Christ both to a church and an individual Christian.

Our United Book of Worship has an invitation to the observance of Lenten Discipline which instructs us.

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation. During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: By self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

For my first Lenten season as your pastor here at Stidham I have chosen to preach and teach on grace and then on the means of grace. The means of grace essentially are spiritual disciplines that God uses to help us grow to full spiritual maturity. Each week during Lent we will look at different means of grace. You may be familiar with some of them. You may have heard about one, but not tried it. You may not be familiar with some of them. This will be a new and fresh perspective on growing in our faith.

I am looking forward to revisiting these with you. My goal is to help us prepare for a glorious Easter celebration. If you have any questions, feel free to talk with me about it.

Blessings,

Pastor Mike

## THINGS GOING ON IN THE CHURCH FOR MARCH 2017

Communion Sunday March 5

Helping Hand Sunday March 5 (Please mark the pew envelope "Helping Hand")

Bible Study Monday Nights March 6,13,20,27, 6:30pm

Bible Study Tuesday Mornings March 7,14,21,28, 10:00am

R.O.C.K. Wednesday Night Ministry Program March 1, 5:30-7:00pm (Meal furnished)

Choir Practice Wednesday Nights March 1,8,15,22, 29

Lighthouse Prayer Group– Thursday Mornings, March 2,9,16,23,30

Song Fest Sunday March 12, 4:00pm Come listen to the beautiful music and fellowship as other churches join us.

Daylight Savings Time starts on Sunday March 12. Be sure and set your clocks forward on hour on Saturday Night March 11.

### FOOD PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED FOR OUR GROCERY CART EACH MONTH

JANUARY– CASH DONATIONS

FEBRUARY–CANNED MEAT OR TUNA

MARCH–SPAGHETTI SAUCE OR NOODLES  
(NO GLASS JARS)

APRIL–PAPER PRODUCTS

MAY– CASH DONATIONS

JUNE–CANNED FRUIT

JULY– MACARONI AND CHEESE

AUGUST–PAPER PRODUCTS

SEPTEMBER–CASH DONATIONS

OCTOBER– PEANUT BUTTER

NOVEMBER–SOUP & CRACKERS

DECEMBER–OATMEAL OR CEREAL

**ARTICLES DUE FOR THE APRIL NEWSLETTER  
NEED TO BE IN THE OFFICE BY**

**THURSDAY MARCH 23.**

# Lent

I looked at the calendar month of March in search of the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday fall on March 1<sup>st</sup>. For six weeks, I prepare myself for Holy Week and Easter Sunday on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Why? Holy Week is very hard for me. I need six weeks to build my mind to create strength to walk with Christ in spirit and relive the cross and its agony. The pain and confusion that pierces my heart never gets any easier to bear.

I know I can't have the resurrection and eternal life without the persecution, death and the grave. The one so horrible, the others so beautiful and fulfilling. I must face the times I have denied my Christ and ask for forgiveness. I must acknowledge the times I forget to thank him for being there for me. I especially remember when I tried to walk alone and not listen to his voice. I don't have event changing decisions to make. I am not responsible for rearing a young family. There are ways I can be of help, I can make a difference. I pray for those I know are in crisis, I give them to Christ for protection and pray for those suffering from physical issues.

When I pray do I only pray if I have a need or do I pray a prayer of thanksgiving when I have been cared for and blessed? I pray for God to intervene and change the direction my life is headed if or when it is needed. I'm guilty of being an 'asker' and I work to be a 'thanker'. That is the preparation I engage in during Lent. To become a better thanker for the multitude of blessings that have been bestowed on me. I have the privilege of walking with Christ to the cross. I ask him, hold my hand and lead me through his agony and his triumph. He loves each of us completely. I have a dear friend that, on occasion, would comment when we saw someone in trouble, "There but for the grace of God go I. I say amen. He is so good to me."

I don't know what is on the church calendar for March. I do know the prayer group will reconvene after two-month hiatus. I missed the coming together each Thursday morning. I prayed for people on the prayer list and for each of the pray-ers. The gathering of people in prayer is a good thing. This group is not a 'gated community'! We welcome all that will come and join us. Please don't be fearful. We are not asked to be what we are not able to be. All of us are beginners in our prayer life. A good fellowship evolves, we care about each other. We didn't meet in January and February, fearful of the winter weather. We look forward to new hands around the circle. Come be a part of the prayer group. Let us be a part of your new approach to the six weeks before Easter Sunday.

Paul encouraged the followers of Christ to pray often. In 1 Corinthians 14:15 he explains, "Praying with his spirit and his mind; how he sings with his spirit and his mind." The book of James, 5:16 asks us, "To confess our sins, pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

Lent is a special time in our Christian life. A special time for prayer.

Love and prayers,

Betty Greene



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MARCH 2017

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



2- Brue Rose  
5- Carol Rose  
Steve Plantenga  
10-Mary Ezra  
15-Judy Henderson  
16-Cindy Stuart  
Jim Walters

19- Mary Butler  
22- Jeannie Plantenga  
30- Marcy Helms

27- Ed & Lucy Keller

31- Bruce & Cheryl Parker

### PRAYER LIST

Dear Heavenly Father,

We ask that you be with all that are on our prayer list, those who are going through health, issues, personal struggles, and other worries they may have.

Let us show our faith and our love to one another each and every day. Amen

Carol Rottier, Ray Coogle, Marjorie McGlothlin, Bud Dillon, Sue & Mike Biery, Jean Biera, Don & Jan Plantenga, Jane Vandeventer, Tom Sosbe. Pat Baugh, Mary Bulter, Bill Sullivan, Millie Vonstein, Al Cummins, Lucy Keller, Patricia Tooley, Sandy Kukman, George & Doris Carlton, Karen Fridlin, Our Military and Our World Leaders and those who are prayed for silently.



### THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Jesus Christ can change ordinary into extraordinary.  
I will praise the Lord no matter who is watching me.  
My prayers are meaningful even when words fail.  
Silence allows me to hear God's voice.

## LIGHTHOUSE PRAYER GROUP NOTICE

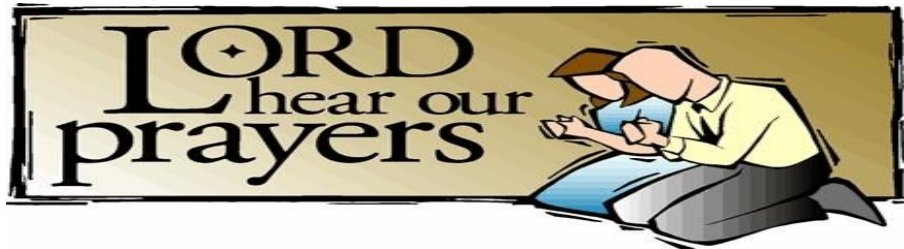
Prayer group will be back on the church calendar, Thursday March 2, 2017.

We will resume meeting on Thursday morning's at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall.

We need new prayers. Consider joining us during the Lenten Season.

We are a fellowship of people that care very much for our church family, and the community, our nation and the world as a whole.

There is a sheet on the table in fellowship hall to put the name of the person you want prayer for. Please be sure and tell how you know them.



THE CHURCH STAFF WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
THE CONGREGATION FOR OUR LOVE GIFTS.

2016 MISSION REPORT IS AT THE END OF THE  
NEWSLETTER ON THE 2- SIDED YELLOW SHEET.

THANK YOU TO ALL FOR  
A GREAT YEAR!!

OPAL & JOY



## BLESSINGS

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS INSTEAD OF YOUR CROSSES,  
COUNT YOUR GAINS INSTEAD OF YOUR LOSSES,  
COUNT YOUR JOYS INSTEAD OF YOUR WOES,  
COUNT YOUR FRIENDS INSTEAD OF YOUR FOES,  
COUNT YOUR SMILES INSTEAD OF YOUR TEARS,  
COUNT YOUR COURAGE INSTEAD OF YOUR FEARS,  
COUNT YOUR FULL YEARS INSTEAD OF YOUR LEAN,  
COUNT YOUR KIND DEEDS INSTEAD OF YOUR MEAN,  
COUNT YOUR HEALTH INSTEAD OF YOUR WEALTH,  
COUNT ON GOD INSTEAD OF YOURSELF.

