



PARADE STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

7 Parade Street, P.O. Box 30, Union City, PA 16438

Office Phone: (814) 654-7102

Website: paradestreetumc16438.org

Pastor's Cell Phone: (412) 496-5308

Pastor's Email: jimcannistraci@gmail.com

James A. Cannistraci, Pastor

PASTOR JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS - MARCH 2017

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe Christmas is over and Easter is right around the corner. March 1st, is Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent begins. Lent is the time in the year when Christians focus on prayer, simple living and fasting in an effort to draw closer to God.

As I get older I realize Lent is one of my favorite times of the year. It's a time I'm really focused on my relationship with God and think about the powerful meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus. After this special time of thought and prayer, Easter Sunday has a deeper meaning for me.

Years ago I attended a community Ash Wednesday Worship Service and the preacher invited us to focus on three questions each day of Lent to help us deepen our relationship with God. Ever since then, each Ash Wednesday I pull those three questions out of my files and begin answering them every day of Lent. Let me share them with you:

- Am I searching for something more meaningful in life?
- What is God telling me the purpose of my life is at this time?
- Am I living my life with purpose and passion?

How about you, are those questions you would be willing to explore during this season of Lent as you draw closer to God?

I remember going to visit a friend in the hospital a few years ago and seeing a poster on a bulletin board outside of an intensive care unit. The words on the poster really started me thinking about the purpose God has for me. I wrote the words on a paper in my pocket: ***God didn't add another day in your life because you needed it; He added it because someone out there needs you.*** Friends, if the most significant purpose in our life is to love God and accept Jesus into our heart, then once we invite Jesus into our heart, we are changed and we want to live like Jesus. I think God wants us to live for Him, and when we do that, we're committed to being God's personal representative here on earth to share His love with others. ***I wonder, who will you meet today who needs you to be there for them, and share God's love?***

Friends, the more I think about life, the more I realize how easy it is to get caught up in the drama of our relationships, our work and our family. I also realize how easy it is to allow ourselves to be caught up in the distractions of the world they take us away from our living for God. If we're not careful, we stop thinking about the big questions in our lives and end up far away from God.

Perhaps Lent is the time when all of us can live more simply, pray more often, and move closer to God. May we all be blessed with a deeper relationship with Jesus and God and God's people. I hope to see you in Church on Sundays and see you at our Community Ash Wednesday Service and our Community Lenten Services.

Love and prayers, Pastor Jim

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of the United Methodist Church