



# Congregational *Connections*

Monthly Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | March 2024

## “MARCH”ING THROUGH LENT

Most Christians worship on Sunday because in the ancient world, Sunday was the first day of the week. Followers of Jesus began to gather in their homes on the first day of the week because it was the day of resurrection. On the traditional Sabbath, Saturday, they would have worshipped in the synagogue with their Jewish brothers and sisters.

Once a year the group of believers would celebrate a great day of resurrection that we know as Easter. Often times new converts to “the way” would be baptized on Easter after participating in a 40-day time of preparation (not counting Sundays). Their preparation time itself was modeled after Jesus’ time in the wilderness as he prepared for his public ministry and witness to the gospel. Fellow believers would join the newly converted in this time of preparation - a time of fasting and prayer, to support and encourage the new disciples. By the time of the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, Lent was an established practice of the whole Christian Church.

We continue this ancient practice today. During Lent there is a renewed calling to spiritual practices like daily devotions and regular prayer. The scripture passages for the Sundays in Lent focus on how we might live out our sense of discipleship - following Jesus in the choices we make and the way we care for our neighbors. Many Christians will practice a form of fasting, by giving something up for Lent. Unfortunately, this “giving something up” can be trivialized and becomes rather marginal in actual practice. Giving up chocolate is probably not a deep spiritual exercise. But giving up something like judging others can help us think about how we interact with others, inviting us to view the world in new ways.

I often write in a prayer journal, but this Lent I am trying to write every day and I’m using a Lenten Devotional from one of my favorite authors. Join me this month as we “march” our way through Lent toward the celebration of Easter. Give something up or add something new to your spiritual practices. Together we will prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Peace,  
Pastor Scott