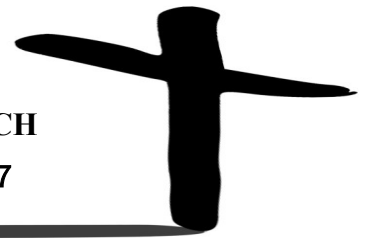


The Crosswalk

First Christian Church
2501 N Park Lane
Altus, OK 73521

MARCH
2017



What is Lent Anyway?

As of March 1st, the season of Lent officially began. I grew up in a Christian Church much like this one. So, the liturgical calendar has always been a somewhat foreign concept for me. I don't think I even knew what Lent was until High School when I saw some of my friends walking around with ash on their foreheads. Since a lot of us may be unfamiliar with what Lent is and why some churches practice it I wanted to take a moment to talk about some of the pros and cons of this tradition.

Lent is a time set aside to prepare us spiritually for the biggest event on the Christian calendar, Easter. How long should we spend preparing ourselves for this? Well, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting and praying as he prepared for his ministry. So let's spend 40 days (thus, this year March 1). How do you prepare yourself spiritually for something? When John the Baptist was trying to prepare Israel for the coming of the Messiah he told them to repent. To be cleansed of their sin so that they would be prepared for what the messiah would do. So, Lent is 40 days of introspection, repentance, prayer, and maybe even fasting.

At least, that's what it's supposed to be. A lot of the time the ideal gets mistreated by people's attempts to put it into practice. That's how something like Mardi Gras can be connected to the Lent season. People say, "Well, I'm not supposed to do all of this sinful stuff for the next 40 days so let's live it up while we can!" So they use this time of repentance, introspection, and fasting as an excuse for drunkenness, sexual immorality and a whole host of other who knows what. There was a movie in the early 2000's where a man gave up sexual immorality for Lent. That's not what Lent is about! Lent is not a time where you stop doing something sinful with the intention to pick it back up once the 40 days is over. That's not repentance. 1 Cor. 15:34 plainly says, "do not go on sinning." That is in the context of the resurrection, by the way. We do not fast from sinful behavior, we repent of sinful behavior and we stop living in that way. Period.

Like I said, our church tradition doesn't strictly follow a Christian calendar. Lent is nowhere discussed in the New Testament and therefore is not necessary for the church to practice. But just because it's a man-made tradition doesn't make it evil. There are plenty of ways to celebrate this time of year in a way that will make your celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord all that more meaningful 40 days from now.

Introspection- Psalm 139:23-24 says "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That should be our prayer throughout this season. As we begin to turn our minds and thoughts toward what Christ did for us on the cross and what His resurrection means for us it should stir up heartfelt sorrow for our sinful behaviors, leading us to repentance.


Fasting- Fasting is an area that we don't do well in the American church. But it is a common feature in Lent. Fasting is simply practicing self-denial for the purpose of drawing closer to God or hearing from him. Jesus assumes that his followers will do this (Mt. 6:17). Most commonly this is done by giving up food for a period of time. Though, technically, it could be abstaining from anything; a type of food, drink, or even activity. The idea is that I'm sacrificing something to gain time with God, or if not to gain a quantity of time with him to at least increase the quality of the time given. Food is often used because the hunger gives you a constant reminder of what you are trying to do (draw close to Him, focus on Him, etc.)

Discipline- This is also a good time to develop some good habits in your life and practice some new spiritual disciplines you haven't done before or at least for a while. Spend some regular time in solitude with God, practice the Sabbath day with your family, keep a spiritual journal, find some service projects you could do or help with, and of course reading your bible and praying. Find some activity that helps you grow in your relationship with Christ and try it out for the next 40 days. You might not like it, it might change your life, but hopefully it will help you focus on Christ and what he accomplished on Easter.

Lent is not a tradition that we should dismiss out of hand, nor is it one that we should be legalistic about. But if you spend 40 days meditating upon, training, and sacrificing it can't help but increase your appreciation of the death and resurrection of our Lord. And that's really what we're going for; to draw closer to the one who drew near to us so that we might be saved. That we might remember and *know* not only that he died for us, but that He is risen!

In Him,
Ben

MARCH 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 LBS 9:30AM F/ S&A MTG ABS/Prayer 6:15PM	2 WORSHIP MTG 6:30PM	3	4
5 GS 4:00PM SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	6	7 ADMIN MTG 6:00PM EDUCATION MTG 6:30PM	8 LBS 9:30AM ABS/Prayer 6:15PM	9 ELDERS 6:00PM DEACONS 6:30PM BOARD 7:00PM	10	11 PRICE/SIRMONS WEDDING MOVE CLOCKS FORWARD
12 FELLOWSHIP DINNER SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	13	14	15 LBS 9:30AM ABS/Prayer 6:15PM	16	17	18
19 GS 4:00PM SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	20	21 FSG 6:00PM	22 LBS 9:30AM ABS/Prayer 6:15PM	23	24	25 SPELLING BEE 
26 SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	27	28	29 LBS 9:30AM ABS/Prayer 6:15PM	30	31	



Serving In March

March 05

Meditation: Lloyd Colston
Com Servers: Bob McGuire, Carol Carson
 Wendi Noon, *?
Nursery: Don Skiles, Sarah Skiles
Children's Church: Kristen Partin
AV Booth: Robert Crawford
Greeters: Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Com Prep & Clean Up: Phil & Ruth Carson

March 12

Meditation: Doug Dalton
Com Servers: Doug Tritle, *Iris Felix
 Jane Clark, Matthew Palmer
Nursery: Mark Morey, Rebecca Cullen
Children's Church: Sarah Skiles
AV Booth: Robert Crawford
Greeters: Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Com Prep & Clean Up: Phil & Ruth Carson

March 19

Meditation: Jim Jones
Com Servers: Tara Coffman, *Wanda Jones
 ? ?
Nursery: Kristen Partin, Wendi Noon
Children's Church: Nicole Stanfill
AV Booth: Robert Crawford
Greeters: Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Com Prep & Clean Up: Phil & Ruth Carson

March 26

Meditation: Randall Coffman
Com Servers: Brenda Gibson, Jackie Morey
 *John Signorelli, Robert Crawford
 ? ?
Nursery: Jessica Buxton
Children's Church: Robert Crawford
AV Booth: Robert Crawford
Greeters: Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Com Prep & Clean Up: Phil & Ruth Carson

In Our Prayers

Jerry Partin - recovering from surgery
 (Ben's dad)

Carl Harris - cancer
 (Lloyd Colston's brother)

Dale Martin - bladder/lung cancer
 (Lloyd & Judy Colston's friend)

Jo Parnell - inoperable lung cancer
 (Lee Barnes' son-in-law's mother)

Yudell Barton
 (Brenda Risner's friend)

Debbie Cleland - cancer
 (Christina Barnes' co-worker)

Mike Chase - colon cancer
 (Jimmy Geigle's friend)

Laurie Cullen - salvation/early onset
 (Shawn Cullen's sister) Alzheimer's

Periodically the Prayer List will be updated. If we remove someone that you still want on the list, please let us know and we will be glad to put them back on.

If you have a prayer need or know of any changes, please contact the church office.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

03/07 Bettie Peters

03/10 Joe Price

03/04 Carter Partin

03/12 Jackie Garland

03/16 Matthew Palmer

03/22 Kalyn Cullen

03/26 Lucas Buxton



Sunday Services

Sunday School 9:30 am
 Worship Service 10:30 am

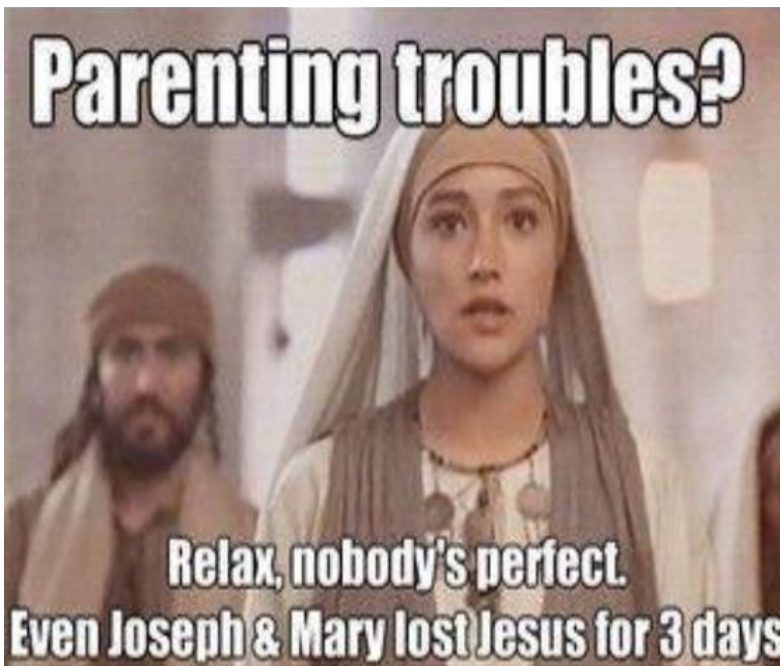
Wednesday Night

Prayer Hour 5:30 pm
 Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm

Secretary's Report

February 2016

Average Attendance	60.25
Average Visitors	1.75
Total Average Attendance	62
Total Offerings	\$9,239.00



Your Elders

Phil Carson, Randall Coffman, Doug Dalton
 Gene Drechsler, Jerry Gibson, Jim Jones

Your Deacons

Richard Barnes, Crystal Crawford, Brenda Risner
 Wanda Jones, Matthew Palmer, Brenda Risner

SATURDAY, MARCH 11TH

Spring
AHEAD!

**SET CLOCKS AHEAD
ONE HOUR BEFORE BED
SATURDAY NIGHT**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MARCH 12TH

**POTLUCK DINNER AFTER THE
WORSHIP SERVICE.**

**A SIGN-UP SHEET WILL BE
PASSED AROUND.**



WITH A



**THE "GRATE"
ALTUS**

spelling

BEE



MARCH 25TH

9:00 AM

WOSC