

Falls Fellowship



What is Lent?

The six weeks before Easter is called the “Lenten Season.” It is a time to focus on the suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus died, and thus paid for our sins, we have life. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we too will rise and enjoy heaven forever.

- The word “lent” means “lengthen” and stands for that time in spring when the days grow longer.
- The original period of Lent was 40 hours. It was spent fasting to commemorate the suffering of Christ and the 40 hours He spent in the tomb.
- In the early 3rd century, Lent was lengthened to 6 days. About 800 AD it was changed to 40 days.
- Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 40

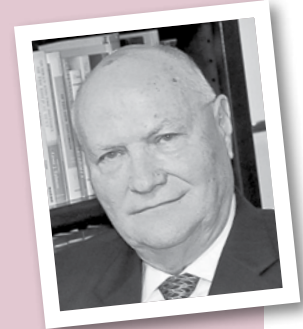
days before Easter.

- Sundays are not included in those 40 days.
- Those 40 days correspond with Christ’s 40 days in the wilderness.
- Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, is celebrated in many parts of the world with feasting. The French call it “Mardi Gras.” The Germans call it “Fausching.” The feasting comes from the custom of using up household fats prior to the 40 days of Lenten fasting, when no fat is used.
- Shrove Tuesday takes it’s name from “shriving” or forgiving sins.
- The word “carnival,” in relation to Mardi Gras means “good-bye to meat.”
- During Bach’s day, often the organ

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We Still Have the Steeple

Bill Leonard, founding dean of Wake Forest University’s Divinity School, in an opinion in Baptist News reminded me of a bit of doggerel I learned as a child in my church’s preschool:



*Here is the church,
Here is the steeple,
Open the doors,
And there are the people.*

You remember this and even the hand gestures that went with it. For many churches, the first part of this is still applicable — we still have the steeple.

Where are the people? As I wrote in this space last month, church attendance took a nosedive over the last ten years. This led to churches closing their doors. The steeple is still there; but the people are gone.

I am reminded of our steeple and the sound of

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Steeple cont' ...

chimes which emanate from it during the day. We are still here — both steeple and people. Our numbers are smaller than they used to be, but by the mercy of God, we are still here, being the church on the hill on Fonville. As I promised you last month, here are some suggestions for going forward.

Prayer: I believe in prayer and its attendant results. The Bible is filled with the evidence of answered prayers. One of my favorite stories of answered prayer is in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi. At midnight they started singing and praying. Luke says in verse 26, “Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains were unfastened.” Our God still hears prayers and answers prayers.

Hope: I have been reading the Exodus Story of God’s people. He sent Moses to lead them from Egypt to the Promised Land. It was not an easy journey; sometimes the people despaired. Moses, however, never gave up; he remained filled with hope. Why? Because God had revealed himself to him. Moses was not presenting the word of an abstract God, like those of the Canaanites. He had personally encountered the God for whom he spoke. He stood on the mountain top at the end of his life and looked across Jordan into the Promised Land, the fulfillment of Israel’s hope. Don’t lose hope. God is still at work through Falls. He has not abandoned us, and we must not abandon him.

Basics: Before we launch into a new direction for our church, let’s reaffirm some of the basics which have

gotten us this far.

(1) The Bible: At the center of our church’s life is the Bible, reading it, praying over it, and applying it to the living of our days. The Bible is the inspired Word of God. If you want to hear God talk, go to the Bible. A consistent, and I think daily, reading of it is formative to our lives as Christians and life as a church. The structured Bible teaching ministry of the church, what we call Sunday School, is essential for a spiritually healthy congregation. We cannot ignore the Bible to promote our opinions. Though I have been reading the Bible ever since I learned to read, I feel like I have just begun to hear the word of God that is found in the Word. The Bible must be essential to the life of the church. It must drive our Sunday School, our times of prayer, our worship services, our ministry plans, our fellowship as Believers in Christ and our ultimate outcomes as a church. It is to be our guide for all the decisions we make as a church. First then, let’s keep the Bible at the center of all we do, God’s Word and not our opinions.

(2) Missions: We focus on missions through giving to mission causes. That’s wonderful. You are generous in giving to our mission offerings such as Baptist on Mission. You bring food for us to distribute through the Tri-Area Food Ministry. Where I think we are weak is in “hands-on missions.” By that I mean engaging in mission causes — putting our money and hands into missions. I don’t know how to change this; but I’m praying about it

(3) Evangelism: When is the last time you shared your testimony with love for a lost person? As in missions, we leave that field work, the “grunt” work, as someone put it, to the paid staff and the professionals. When Jesus said “Go into all the world” he was not just talking to me and my ministry buddies; he was talking to you, too. Reluctance to share the Gospel with other people calls into question one’s own salvation. A natural response to the joy of genuine salvation is the desire to talk about it, to bring other people to the living Savior. I am remiss here, too. As I write these words, I am trying to remember the last time I intentionally and individually talked with someone about Jesus, his love, his forgiveness, and the penalty to neglect Him. This is serious business. I purpose to do better with this basic task.

March Birthdays

1	Junior Jackson
12	Kevin Barham
13	Diana Harney
15	Derick Foster
16	Rich Harney
19	Alice Tate
22	Geneva Holste
26	Billy Chappell



These are my basics. Can you accept these? Do you disagree with what I have said? That's all right, but you must show me where I am wrong and show me a better way. Otherwise, I assume you will accept these basics as the foundation of our church's life and ministry, and you will busily engage in carrying out these basics. Remember the old hymn "Work for the Night is Coming."

Every week I receive e-mails from organizations offering the tools to "remake" our church. There are some good ideas out there. Some of the articles suggest renewing the church requires a change in our identity. We are a traditional church with traditional patterns of worship and ministry. I've been assured by some of the articles I review that if we become a contemporary church and lay aside our traditional trappings, we will prosper. That seems to me like having a lobotomy to attract new friends. We, however, must not become stagnant. We must review what we believe, and how we practice what we believe. There's the rub.

— Tom Jenkins

symptoms have disappeared.

2. Maintain six-foot social distance except for family members living in the same household.

3. Use furnished hand sanitizer or wipes as you enter the church.

4. Pew Bibles and hymnals have been removed. Order of service and hymns will appear in your individual program bulletin.

5. Use your own face mask if you desire or disposable masks will be available for those wishing to use them.

6. Pews will be cleaned before and after each service.

7. Boxes to receive tithes and offerings are placed at the doors so we do not have to handle offering plates.

Some members fall into the category of having underlying conditions which make them uncomfortable to be in groups. We understand they may not be willing to attend now. Hopefully, this pandemic will soon pass and we can truly get back to normal worship services. During the month of March, Wednesday Bible study will be in the Fellowship Hall at 6 PM for supper and continue on Zoom at 7 PM for those who can not attend in person. If you plan on attending for supper please sign the sheet each week in the vestibule.

Mission Donations

We are still collecting non-perishable food during the month for Tri-Area Ministries, our local food bank. Please leave food in bags in the vestibule.

We collected 235 pounds of food for December and January for a total of 995 pounds since September.



Worship Precautions During March

The church is taking several precautions to make attendance as safe as possible during this Covid-19 pandemic. Even though we are not aware of anyone in our congregation who has the virus, we are aware you could have the virus and be without symptoms. Therefore, we are requesting that all follow these guidelines:

1. If you are ill, please do not attend until all your

Deacons

Kevin Barham, Chairman	919-618-4214
Hubert Jenks, Vice Chairman	919-270-8765
Alan Watkins, Secretary	919-793-5548
Mike Harris	919-746-5697
Victoria Neal	919-880-1888
Bill Upton	910-358-7303

Lent cont' ...

and choirs were silent during Lent.

• In early England, women of the parish traditionally spent Holy Week scrubbing the church, so it would sparkle for the Festival of Easter.

I. THE LENTEN SEASON IS THE TIME OF PREPARATION

The Lenten season is intentionally set aside for examination, instruction, repentance and prayer. This season is one of preparation for all the people of God.

Galatians 6:3-5 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.

II. THE LENTEN SEASON IS THE TIME FOR PENITENCE AND DISCIPLINE

Lent is the time for mourning, solemnity and sadness. In the Lenten season, self-examination is crucial. An individual's response to the call for purposeful reflection on one's need for God is an important factor in choosing a discipline with which to actively observe Lent. For some, fasting is a means of self-examination and denial; yet, fasting is not an appropriate discipline

for all people. The purpose of a Lenten discipline is to strip away those things which clutter one's life or impede one from being in relationship with God. It is also a time for people to experience and reflect on the sufferings of Jesus, in light of personal sin and unrighteousness.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

— Wayne Searls

Please pick up 2022 Offering Envelopes

Members should pick up their offering envelope boxes in the vestibule if you have not already done so. Please see Kevin Barham if you have any questions.



9700 Fonville Road
Wake Forest, NC 27587
www.fallsbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Tom Jenkins, Pastor
(919) 812-6675



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