

Dear Easter People,

Before we celebrate Christ's resurrection, there will be a season of preparation, which will begin on March 5 with our 5:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated, and ashes will be imposed. You will be invited to observe a Lenten discipline, and we begin the journey toward Easter together. I hope that you will plan to attend this service and to invite your neighbors to join us.

The Lenten sermon series will be based on Lectionary readings from the gospels. This series will be called "On Being Human". Among the themes we will explore are self-awareness, assertiveness, suffering, celebration and extravagance.

After all of the services leading up to Palm Sunday, we will gather in the fellowship hall to allow you to discuss the sermon's contents. I will guide each conversation with a set of prepared questions and open up the floor so that you may ask questions of your own. Think of this exercise as similar to what happens in the theater when actors and the director come out after a performance to discuss their work with the audience. These gatherings will be like "talkback sessions" after worship.

Of course, all of us are performers in the context of worship. I have always loved what 19th century Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard says about worship. He says that God is the audience, members of the congregation are the performers, and the sanctuary is the stage.

Please mark your calendar for Holy Week services, which will begin with Palm Sunday on April 13 and conclude with the beginning of Easter on April 20. In between, there will be a Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service on April 17. I will say more about Holy Week in my next column. Plus, I'll provide you with a sneak peek into the Easter cantata that has been set for Easter's Second Sunday April 27.

As we continue to move through the series of firsts that make up the first year, I give thanks for God's call to this church and pray that you and I will serve together for many years to come!

Blessings, Ron