

# The Sugar Beat



## **SUGAR GROVE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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### **From the Pastor**

Lent is Here!

Lent can be compared to the Advent season. They are both times of anticipation and a time of getting prepared. It has been my experience that many churches have embraced the Advent Season with openness. Here at SGCPC, we light the Advent Wreath and each Sunday we hear sermons concerning the Advent Season.

Lent has not caught on as well as Advent in many churches. Just as Advent is not mentioned in the Bible, neither is Lent. But the early church adopted these traditions as times of preparation. Advent marks the beginning of the Christian year looking back to the coming of the messiah and looking forward to the Parousia (second coming) of Christ. Lent was a time of preparation of new converts. Lent was a time of study to prepare the new converts for their baptism. It was also a time for all believers to examine their journey of faith. As Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days and fasted as a time of preparation for His ministry, the church invited Christ's followers to join with Him in forty days of preparation. Lent is a forty day period beginning with Ash Wednesday. The Sundays in Lent are not included in the forty days because every Sunday is a little Easter and should celebrate the resurrection.

I want to invite you to participate in the season of Lent by examining your spiritual journey. It is an opportunity to take determined steps to grow in your relationship with God. I will be sharing the spiritual disciplines during the Lenten season, to encourage you on your journey of faith.

**Bro. Gary**

## The Meaning of the Ashes by Rev. Frank Schaefer

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season which lasts for forty days until Easter Sunday. Lent is a time for repentance, introspection, prayer and meditation. The Christian believer is invited to follow Jesus' example of withdrawal into the "wilderness" for forty days. Just as Jesus fasted in the wilderness, so we are encouraged to fast during this season. According to document fragments such as the Didache we know that "Lent" originated in the early second-century of the Christian community. It was then primarily a preparation time for Easter—a time for repentance, recommitment, and a time for instructing and preparing proselytes (new believers) in the faith to prepare them for baptism.

Note that the forty days before Easter do not include the Sundays because the Lord's Resurrection is supposed to be celebrated on each Sunday. This is also why the first day of Lent is a Wednesday. The wearing of the sign of ashes on one's forehead is a custom that precedes the early Christian community. Our Jewish forbears observed periods of fasting and repentance that were accompanied with signs such as the wearing of ashes on their foreheads. The Hebrew Scriptures give reference to this custom in 2 Samuel 13:19, Job 42:6, Jeremiah 6:26, among others.

IN the Christian tradition, the ashes represent the believer's attitude of repentance and humility before God, as well as the realization and confession of our human sinful state even after our conversion and baptism. The ashes usually come from the burning of a few of the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration. They are mixed with olive oil, not merely because this way the ashes will stick better to people's forehead, but because the olive oil symbolizes God's intention to restore us to wholeness.

The good news about wearing the sign of the ashes is that we believe in God's grace and forgiveness when we confess our sins and show true remorse over our sins. The bottom line is that God is good! All the time! +++++

We will observe an Ash Wednesday Service this Wednesday, February 6th. If you do not want to participate in the imposition of Ashes, please feel free to abstain from that part of the service.

**Easter** is March 23rd. The church has postcards that you may mail or give to friends inviting them to the Easter Service. The cards will be available at **Information Station**.

**Bro. Gary** will be offering two unique opportunities in the near future. One is for men, we will be exploring the secret of a Man's Soul. It will be based on the book Wild at Heart. This will be offered at night on a week day. The second opportunity is for married people or the soon to be married. It will be based on the book Fighting for Your Marriage. This will probably be offered during Sunday School. If you are interested please let Bro. Gary know.

### Idle Time Thinking

Write what you think SGCP can mean.

Super Gary Carlton the Preacher

Showing God's Compassion for People.

Some Generous Cool People

Some of God's Children Praying

Write down your ideas and give them to Bro. Gary.

## Thank You Card Received

Dear Gary,

Please thank your church family for their gracious hospitality Wednesday night. Thank you all for helping TITOW Ministries in all the ways they participate. We hope to see you and others in Mexico soon and allow us to serve you as we all seek to lead the lost to Chris. Thanks again.

David Garza

## Spiritual Disciplines

Hebrews 12:11 states: No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (NIV) Most people do not like to be disciplined. As Hebrews states, it is painful. Many people however, know that discipline is necessary for us to learn and to grow into maturity.

Spiritual disciplines help us to grow in spiritual maturity. Many of the disciplines practiced by the early church are never mentioned or much less taught in the church today. I believe this is very unfortunate for today's Christian.

There is a real disconnect for many Christians from what they read in the Bible and how it plays out in their life. If Christians value their relationship with God, shouldn't they strive to make the relationship stronger?

I believe many Christians are asking some questions about their relationship with God and how to really allow God to become a daily part of their lives.

I will be sharing about spiritual disciplines during Lent. If you want to go deeper in your relationship with God, get ready for your life to be changed!

## Prayer List

<u>Pray For</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
Phyllis Blake	Doris Fritts' sister
Johnny & Tiffany Blaz-	
LeAnn Blazina	
Elizabeth Browing	Claudena Travis
Sue Browning	Karen Ordway
Stephon Cozart	Caitlyn Chandler
Becky Dufrene	Keith Hart
Barbara Heady	Johnnie Travis
Ruby Jean Hodge	
Kenneth Kirk	Donna Crider's dad
Daniel McKinzie	
Herman McMMain	
Jo Nelson	Tommy's aunt
Rev. John Phelps	Lucille
Melinda Roberson	Tommy Roberson's step mother
Gordon Rodell	Valerie Hart's brother
Jan Shelby	Heather Spitzer's aunt
Shawna Stevens	Paulino Impastato's step sister
Chris Smith	Steve Crider
Donna Teague	Johnnie Travis
Ted Thompson	Eddie Rudolph
Shirley Turner	Sunny's sister
Judy Tyner	Steve Crider
Geraldine Wallace	Judy McMMain's sister-in-law
Kenneth Winn	Madeline

## Members of the Military

Mark Boaz	Josh Jackson
Cody Brandon	David Jones
Brandon Carlson	Rev. Curtis Pruitt
Valerie Edwards	Joey Shirey
Keith Finney	John Venable
T K Guess	Johnathon Taylor
Kevin Householder	John Watson
Scott Hurley	Troy Woody

Be in prayer for the Bethpage United Methodist Church

## Gaither Homecoming—Evansville April 25th

Tickets are \$36.50, \$28.50, \$19.50. Additional information is on the bulletin board.