

From the Pastor...

Happy Lent!

For forty days we try to learn something new, miss something old, and change some habits.

Unfortunately, even as Easter eggs are turned into deviled eggs, a lot of our Lenten habits can get "deviled" as well.

Yet Lent should not be an Ash Wednesday grind.

What if instead of thinking about "getting through" Lent we look at these next forty days as a journey towards a miraculous destination — Easter Sunday.

And doesn't everybody like to go on a road trip every now and then? What do you "like" about your annual journey to Jerusalem? What makes the Lenten trip to that empty tomb so awesome?

It might be difficult to come up with a "like list" now-a-days.

Our culture doesn't seem to like "like."

I mean, all you have to do is listen to the news or surf a few websites and Facebook or the like to discover that commenting on what you "like" is not part of our twenty-first century communication culture. Instead, it is all too easy to find thousands of "hate sites." There are sites dedicated to

hating political parties, to hating politicians, to hating religious preferences, to hating religious leaders, to hating racial groups, to hating the rich, to hating the poor. There are sites devoted to hating a certain individual, and sites devoted to hating whole countries.

Hate is an easy sell. Vitriol is, shall we say, a "sustainable substance."

And THAT is a great tragedy.

William Allen White (1868-1944) was one of the greatest journalists of his time.

He was also known for his constant and clever defense of the honor of his native state: Kansas. During a banquet at which Mr. White was the principal speaker, the Master of Ceremonies was from Missouri. In introducing Mr. White, he said he was reminded of the little girl who was told by her parents that the family was leaving Missouri and moving to Kansas.

Whereupon the little girl looked up at the sky and said, "Goodbye God! We're moving to Kansas."

When Mr. White got up to speak, he said the story was true, but the emphasis was wrong. What the little girl really said wasn't "Goodbye God! We're moving to Kansas" but "Good! By God, we're moving to Kansas."

It's time to move from "Goodbye God!" to "Good! By God."

Officially it is almost Spring. But there are still a lot of dark mornings, snow days, and cold, wet nights before "Spring" is actually sprung. The switch to Daylight Saving Time on March 8 just means more morning blackness for those who already have big time winter. But Daylight-Saving Time is still a sign that Spring, that new season of life, is coming. Don't allow the "DST" blahs get you down. Take those darkened mornings as a sign of a new day that is fast approaching. Lent, and too early Daylight Savings Time, is the signal to our souls that something miraculous is on the way.

Let us celebrate Lent as a season of "like." There is plenty in the world that is frightening and possibly going wrong.

But during Lent we have a long-distance, focused view of the ultimate "right." From Adam to Jesus.

From death to eternal life. From inescapable sin to the free gift of eternal life.

So, what's not to "like" about Lent?

Lent is a beautiful time of growth and opportunity. It's prime time for the rediscovery of everything that makes life meaningful and good. After all, Jesus did not offer himself on the cross to offer us a life of nastiness, backstabbing, hatemongering, and subsistence. What awaits us at the end of Lent is Jesus' gift of new life, a life that is filled with "awesomeness" in its very everydayness. The journey of Lent is an everyday journey among everyday things and everyday holiness. It is the journey Jesus took to Jerusalem and to the cross in faithful obedience to an "Awesome God."

So, my family in the faith, here's to an "awesome Lent!"

And, of course, see you in church!!!

Pastor Fogle