

# FIRST PRESS

## Lent | Holy Week | Easter

### Important Dates

Ash Wednesday Worship  
2/14, 7pm

Sundays in Lent  
10am

“Palms to Passion”  
3/24, 10am

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae  
3/28, 7pm

Good Friday Worship  
3/29, 12pm

“The Seven Last Words  
of Christ”  
3/29, 6pm

Easter, 3/31  
Morning Prayer, 8am  
*continental brunch served  
from 8:30-9:45am*  
Traditional Worship, 10am



I’ve been a victim of techno-creep. Well, maybe not a victim as much as a willing participant. Techno-creep is the way technology inevitably invades our lives. Phones, tablets, computers, gaming systems, television...the list goes on and on. These devices have become essential to every day living, yet they are deceptive. We might think that having access to everything and everyone is a benefit (and it certainly can be), but the actual effect is that we are more disconnected than ever before. I don’t have a solution, or a bunch of facts and studies to hit this point home, but I do have an invitation: let’s observe a holy Lent.

‘Lent’ comes from a Middle English word meaning ‘springtime’ and ‘lengthening of days.’ Lent became a part of Church practice in the 5th century as a way to mark the return of spring and longer days of sunlight. As Easter is a Spring holy day, Lent also became a time in the Church for spiritual discipline in preparation for celebrating Christ’s resurrection. In its earliest form, Lent was a time of fasting and prayer for those being baptized on Easter (the only day the church observed the sacrament for many centuries). Over time, and as practices changed, Lent became a ritual practice for the entire



## Special Congregational Meeting

FPC's Session has called a Special Congregational Meeting for Sunday, March 3, following worship for the purpose of discussing the church's finances. The church's finances are no more or less complicated than any other organization's, but it is important that members of the church fully understand how the church generates revenue and how that is used for operations and ministry. It is also important, this year in particular, that members understand and participate in decision-making on the funding of upcoming capital projects.

All members and friends of FPC are invited to attend and we encourage you to bring questions. A packet of information will be distributed prior to the meeting for your review.

*Lunch will be served, but we need your help: see the sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall!*

Church. Easter is a big moment and Lent draws us into a deeper contemplation of its meaning, similar to how Advent opens us to the miracle of Christmas. And it is Biblical: Lent is observed over 40 days—the same amount of time that Jesus spent in the wilderness at the start of his ministry.

Lent offers us what technology cannot: intentionality. I know I need more of that in my life, and maybe you do, too. Whether fasting from certain foods, or taking up a new hobby or interest or service to a neighbor, Lent invites us to do something, anything, to live more intentionally and in greater awareness of ourselves, of God, and of creation. This is what the prophet Joel proclaims when he says, "*Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God...*" (Jl. 1:14). This is a common reading on Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, because it reminds us of how God calls us to be connected, to God and to one another, and to choose daily what practices will and will not guide our lives. I don't find fasting beneficial. But I do like the idea of contributing more time and energy to a project or ministry that benefits someone else. Whatever it may be, join me in observing a holy Lent this year and in doing something that brings you closer to God and your neighbors.

40 days is not a long time. But experts have said that habits are formed only after doing something a handful of times. What you practice in Lent, either good or bad, won't stop at Easter...it will become a part of your spiritual life. So let's use this time wisely and faithfully, so that when Easter dawns we can fully embrace the new and eternal life won for us in Jesus Christ!

*Lord God, in this season of Lent renew in us anticipation and joy, that as we walk with Christ to the cross and the empty tomb we might once again be filled with hope. Amen.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross above the letter 'A'.

## Tenebrae: A History

**Tenebrae** (/ˈtɛnəbreɪ, -brɪ/[1] —Latin for "darkness") is a religious service of Western Christianity held during the three days preceding Easter Day, and characterized by gradual extinguishing of candles, and by a "strepitus" or "loud noise" taking place in total darkness near the end of the service (like the sound of nails being pounded into wood.)

Tenebrae was originally a celebration of matins and lauds of the last three days of Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday) in the evening of the previous day (Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday) to the accompaniment of special ceremonies that included the display of lighted candles on a special triangular candelabra.

Congregationalist versions of Tenebrae service, particularly on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, often contain readings from the gospels which describe the time between the Last Supper and the Passion of Christ.



### Palm Sunday, 10am

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, March 24, with “Palms to Passion.” This worship service of Word and music takes us through the final week of Jesus’ life, from his entry into Jerusalem to his death on the cross. The service will feature FPC’s entire music ministry team, special music, and poetry and prose.

### Maundy Thursday, 7pm

‘Maundy’ is Latin for ‘mandate.’ On Maundy Thursday, March 28, we remember Christ’s ‘mandate’ that we love one another as he loved us. We act out this love in worship through prayer and song, foot washing, and the sacrament of Holy Communion. This service also features a Tenebrae, which is a gradual lighting and extinguishing of candles to mark Christ’s life and death.

### Good Friday, 12pm & 6pm

Good Friday is called ‘good’ because it is the day on which God’s love wins out against the powers of sin and darkness. But it does not look like that, at least not initially. The Good Friday service at 12pm is a solemn marking of Christ’s final hours. At 6pm we will gather for a presentation of Haydn’s *The Seven Last Words of Christ*.

### Easter, 8am & 10am

We greet the dawn of resurrection on March 31 with two worship services, a brunch, and a baptism! A sunrise-type prayer service with communion will be held at 8:00am on the labyrinth, followed by a continental brunch from 8:30-9:45. Then at 10am we gather in the sanctuary for festive Easter worship and the baptism of James Cornell Wright.

## Music Dedications

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### ***Have you heard music in our sanctuary that touches your heart?***

Sourcing new music for worship is vital to bringing our faith and the message of the Bible alive! Now you have the opportunity to gift a piece of music to our church. Below are three pieces that the choir will sing during Lent. If you are interested in dedicating one of these pieces in honor or memory of a loved one, or would like to make a gift for the purchase of new music, please see Sara Gleason. Sara can also give you a listening preview so you can choose the one that means the most to you!

*Tender Mercy*  
by Lee Dengler  
\$73.75

*God's Promises*  
by David Schmidt  
\$62.50

*Promise After Promise*  
by Cameron Pollock  
\$52.50

## *The Seven Last Words of Christ*

music by Franz Joseph Haydn

Friday, March 29  
6pm

*The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross* (German: *Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze*) is an orchestral work by Joseph Haydn, commissioned in 1786 for the Good Friday service at Oratorio de la Santa Cueva (Holy Cave Oratory) in Cádiz, Spain. Published in 1787 and performed then in Paris, Rome, Berlin and Vienna, the composer adapted it in 1787 for string quartet, approved a version for solo piano in the same year, and finally adapted it in 1796 as an oratorio (with both solo and choral vocal forces).

Haydn's masterwork will be presented by musicians and friends from FPC and the Watertown area, featuring the church's newly restored Steinway grand piano. Each 'word' is explored in musical form, with poetry, prose, and scriptural readings interspersed throughout.



## **A Word About The Church Office**

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After evaluating current phone and foot traffic during the week at FPC, Pastor Andrew has decided that the church office will remain open by appointment. If you have a need, or simply want to visit, please call or email Pastor Andrew (andrew.long1085@gmail.com / 410-916-1673) or Stacey Bristow (stacey.wfpc@gmail.com / (315) 783-3635).