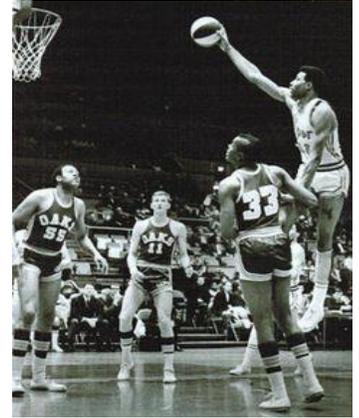




Dear Harvesters-

I love basketball. I grew up playing basketball. We had a basketball hoop on our driveway. I played in high school. I played intramural games in college. I played in church leagues. I played on teams in graduate school. I helped out at basketball camps when our kids were young. I love basketball.

Growing up in Minnesota, I would watch the Harlem Globetrotters when they came to town. I was also a fan of the local ABA teams with the funky uniforms and the red, white and blue basketballs. The Minneapolis Muskies and then the Minnesota Pipers, featured Connie Hawkins, my favorite player as a kid. When I moved to California, I remember going to Warriors games over the years. In high school the Warriors were really good, and won a championship. Since then, they have fallen on hard times. Until the last few years.



Connie Hawkins

At the moment, the Golden State Warriors are the best team in the NBA, and they are a joy to watch. And I love to watch good basketball. There is nothing worse, for me, than watching one player on the team try and score all the



points. That's boring. But the Warriors are a passing team. They lead the league averaging 30 assists a game. I have seen plays where an open player passes up a shot to pass to a more open player, who passes up a shot to pass to an even more open player! The "Dubs" play good defense, and play unselfishly, and with a lot of joy.

Often in church life, there is a desire to do things together. But usually, it winds up that one person takes responsibility for a task. I have heard stories of dedicated volunteers who teach Sunday School for years by themselves. I am not sure they asked for help, or whether they just wanted to do it themselves. But in the end, it got to be too much, so they not only stopped teaching, they stopped coming to church.

I know I am guilty of this sort of behavior. Asking for help is not in my DNA. But working in a team is part of my DNA. Working alone is not healthy, nor is it much fun. It is much better to do things in teams, with other people.



With that in mind, Cyndy Cawley has tried to recruit people to teach the children's Sunday School. Because of our insurance company's requirements and our own policy, there must be two people with the children at all times. It is so cool to watch the children open up to God, and to learn about God. We'd love for you to help for a month. If several people do a month at a time, it spreads the work and it spreads the joy.

You may have also noticed that there is a rotating crew operating the sound board and the PowerPoint slides. The sound board is slightly complicated, but operating PowerPoint is as easy as pushing a button. Would you be interested in helping out one Sunday a month?

We also need people who can greet others once a month. Can you say “hi” when people enter the church? Can you smile at them? You can be a greeter! One Sunday a month is all we ask! You don’t have to have been around a long time in order to greet people.

We have discovered that to be a healthy church, each member must function, using their own gifts and talents for God’s glory and the good of the church.

Working together, learning together, serving together, is a lot of fun! And the rewards are eternal. Please consider volunteering for the children’s ministry, and for the sound/slides operations on Sunday mornings.

One of the great joys of this past year has been the arrival of the Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel congregation. They have been great partners for VBS, for Trunk or Treat, and for Work Days. They are currently a church plant, and are being commissioned as a full-fledged church on February 28th at 2:00 p.m. They have invited us to join them, along with members of their denomination, for a service of worship, dedication, and celebration.

As we move into Lent, let us be mindful of not only our own sins, but also the great love of God in Jesus Christ.

SDG



Upcoming Dates

February 7- Communion Sunday, and Congregational Meeting

February 10- Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

February 20- Scott Meyer and Kelly Yoder Wedding @ Tenaya Lodge near Yosemite (Pastor Jim officiates)

February 28- Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel Commissioning Service, 2:00 p.m. in the Worship Center

February 29-March 3- Pastor Jim at the Kaleidoscope Conference in San Antonio, TX

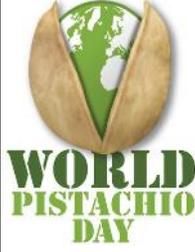
March 20- Palm Sunday

March 27- Easter

April 7-8– Pastor Jim at Board of Pensions Gathering in San Diego, CA

FEBRUARY 2016



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<p>1</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	 <p>GROUNDHOG DAY</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:30 a.m.— Alpha Circle</p> <p>5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Choir</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9:00 a.m.— Stockton Presbytery, Geneva</p>
<p>7</p> <p>10:30 a.m.— Worship</p> <p>Annual Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>8</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	 <p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p>	<p>11</p> <p>5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Choir</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> <p>12:00 p.m.— Deacon's Meeting</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>10:30 a.m.— Worship</p> 	 <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:30 p.m.— Session, Youth Room</p>  <p>Random Act Of Kindness Day</p>	<p>18</p> <p>5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Choir</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Mariners</p> 	 <p>LOVE YOUR PET DAY</p> <p>February 20</p> <p>3:30 p.m.— Soroptomist DYW Practice</p>
<p>21</p> <p>10:30 a.m.— Worship</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Choir</p>	 <p>WORLD PISTACHIO DAY</p>	<p>27</p> <p>3:30 p.m.— Soroptomist DYW Practice</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:30 a.m.— Worship</p> <p>11:45 a.m.— Potluck</p>	 <p>Leap Year</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>					

Lenten practices 101

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent. People in the pews may be asking questions. Why do Presbyterians participate in Ash Wednesday? Isn't it a Roman Catholic rite? What is the purpose of Lent in the Reformed tradition? Are we supposed to give up something for Lent? Congregations, increasingly called to welcome seekers and new Christians, are aware of the importance of defining the language of faith and interpreting the traditions of the community. A basic guide to Lenten practices may be helpful.



Lent

The season of Lent leads up to the most holy of Christian days, Easter Sunday. The forty days of Lent begin Ash Wednesday and end at dusk the Saturday before Easter, not counting the Sundays in between. The Sundays during Lent, like every Sunday, are considered weekly celebrations of the resurrection. Many denominations encourage disciples to renew and strengthen their faith during Lent. Plans are made for community-wide Lenten preparation through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, fasting, and service.

This preparation is a historical model from the early church. New believers were mentored in the Christian faith weeks before Easter, preparing for their baptisms at the Great Easter Vigil. The idea of giving something up for Lent came out of this tradition, when fasting—abstaining from food as an act of discipline in solidarity with others in the community—was used to raise one's spiritual consciousness and empty oneself before God. Fasting or giving up something for Lent can be a good way to explore a deeper expression of faith, if not adopted as a show of piety, martyrdom, or moral righteousness. Presbyterians may find it meaningful to give something up for Lent, but it is not required. Some disciples may find a more valuable spiritual exercise in taking something on during Lent—a more Christ-like attitude toward others, a humble spirit at work, or a feeling of gratitude in the midst of scarcity. Whatever spiritual disciplines and preparations are embraced during Lent, they can help us prepare for or renew our baptisms as part of the resurrection celebration at Easter.

Ash Wednesday

Reclaimed by Reformed churches in the last few decades, Ash Wednesday is the entry point for Lenten preparation. It is a service rich in ritual and symbolism. Palms waved at the previous year's Palm Sunday service are saved and burned to create ashes for the next Ash Wednesday. Participants on Ash Wednesday come forward for a minister or elder to mark their foreheads with the sign of the cross in ashes, saying the words, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return," from Genesis 3:19. With these words, disciples are reminded of their mortality and, when combined with the sign of the cross, they are also reminded of the hope of the resurrection.



Christians do not receive the sign of the cross to attract attention or to be noticed by others; they receive the sign of the cross to focus on who they are as human beings, bound in death and life to Christ. Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent provide time to explore the mystery at the heart of the gospel that being a Christian means a new life through Christ.

Maundy Thursday

The Thursday before Easter Sunday is the day to commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples. The story of Jesus breaking and blessing bread at the Passover meal, as a reminder of his life given freely for all, is told in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This Passover act became the sacrament of holy communion in the Christian church. Celebration of communion is usually the centerpiece of a Maundy Thursday service.



Another element of a Maundy Thursday service may be the act of foot washing. Many scholars believe the term *maundy* is taken from the Latin word *mandatum* or *mandate*. John's Gospel does not tell about the institution of communion at his last Passover meal; it highlights the story of Jesus girding himself with a towel, taking a basin of water, and washing his disciples' feet. John 13:34 includes Jesus' words, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." The observance of foot washing is practiced in some Presbyterian churches as a reminder of the kind of love and servanthood Christ asks of his disciples today.

Good Friday

The Friday before Easter is the day to remember the crucifixion and death of Jesus. Many wonder why this day is called good. This Friday is sometimes called Holy or Black Friday, but the term *good* reminds us of Jesus' blameless, good, and pious life. Churches sometimes have a special worship service between noon and 3 p.m. to represent the hours that the sky turned dark as Jesus suffered and died. Many congregations base Good Friday worship on Jesus' last words from the cross.

Tenebrae

One other Lenten practice often observed during Holy Week is Tenebrae, Latin for "shadows" or "darkness." The unique feature of this worship service is the extinguishing of one candle after each reading until the room or sanctuary is totally dark. The darkness reminds those present of the days Jesus spent in the tomb. This service can be held on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday. Scripture for this service usually consists of Gospel readings describing the Last Supper through the crucifixion, including the last words of Jesus from the cross. The end of the service is usually marked by the lighting of one candle, reminding those present that the darkness does not overcome; the light will shine again. Easter is coming!

Making the Most of Lent

Some wonder whether Reformed Christians (the family Presbyterians belong to) should participate in Lent. Lent is often seen as a Roman Catholic practice about giving something up, about sacrifice.

But recently, many Presbyterians have taken up the practice of Lenten disciplines, and benefited from them. It helps us be in touch with Jesus' sacrifice for us. But there are other spiritual disciplines we can exercise during Lent. My friend, Mark Roberts, wrote this a few years ago about Lent.

Harvest Mariner's, February 19th

For the Mariners February meeting, we will be having Lee Heim, a child of Harvest Presbyterian Church, speak to us on good financial practices for the New Year. Don't miss it! Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m.



Instead of or in addition to fasting during Lent, you might add a spiritual exercise or discipline to your life. If your church sponsors a Lenten Bible study, you might choose to join this study. Or you may want to participate in some act of kindness, such as feeding people at a homeless shelter.

I like to add something that I can do every day. It needs to be realistic, given my nature and patterns of life. So, for example, it would be a bad idea if I decided to get up at 5:00 a.m. to pray for an hour each day of Lent. This would stretch me so far that I'd surely fail. But I could take on additional Bible reading. Some years I've read one chapter of a gospel each day of Lent, taking it in slowly and meditating upon it. Other years I've used a Lenten devotional to focus my thought.

If you have no idea what to do during Lent, let me suggest the following. Set aside some time of quiet to ask the Lord what he wants you to do. See if the Spirit of God guides you to something. If nothing comes to mind, I'd recommend that you read a chapter of a gospel each day. If you start with Mark, you'll have time to read all of Mark plus all of one other gospel during Lent.

Perhaps some of my readers would like to suggest Lenten disciplines that they have tried in the past, and how they have experienced God's grace through these exercises.

So, as we enter the season of Lent, I am grateful for the saints who have gone before me, some of whom discovered the blessings of giving up something in Lent, while others grew in their faith by adding a Lenten discipline. No matter what you do during this Lenten season, I pray that God will draw us closer to him, and prepare us for a fresh experience of Good Friday and Easter. May God's peace be with You! <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts>

These are good and helpful words. May you ponder them during this Lenten season.



12—Rosemarie Bulkley; Randi Rogers
 19—Staci Edwards; Cheryl Lew
 28—Darien Arias

14—Bill & Mae Dell Dingwall
 15—Terry & Anette Arias; Mike & Fatima Royer

If your birthday or anniversary has not been listed, please call the office and let us know.

Regular Prayer List

Assisted Living:

Mabel Cronan— *The Stratford Place*
 Donna McRae— *Golden Age Home Care, (memory care)*
 Dorothy Nelson— *Turlock Residential*
 Mildred Vine— *Paramount Court*

Health Issues:

Patti Arbizu (knee)
 Florence Bloemendaal
 Cyndy Cawley (ankle)
 Virginia Irons
 Margaret Kuglin (eye)
 Roger Morrow
 Bill Sperry
 Alice Visser (English Oaks)



Stockton Presbytery Prayer List for February 2016

February 7—Geneva Presbyterian Church
 Pastor: Joshua Trautmann
 AND: Sam Casiano, HR

February 14—Finance Committee, Stockton Presbytery
 AND: David McCulloch, HR
 AND: Wm. Nishimura

February 21—Nominations/COR Committee, Stockton Presbytery
 AND: Al Opdyke, HR
 AND: Julia Leeth



February 28—Healthy Congregations Committee, Stockton Presbytery
 AND: Steve Hanna

Ceres School's Prayer List for February 2016

February 7—Teresa Guerrero, Board Member 2019, Clerk

February 14—Valli Wigt, Board Member 2017

February 21—Faye Lane, Board Member 2019

February 28—Jim Kinard, Board Member 2019



Mission Statement ~ With God in control, the mission of the Harvest Presbyterian Church is to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture the faith of our church family.

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