

## An Invitation to Lent 2010 at Christ Lutheran Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 17. A traditional part of Ash Wednesday worship is an invitation by the presiding minister, to the assembly, into the disciplines of the season. These, or similar words are used: *“I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent-self examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving, and works of love-strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.”* (ELW Leaders Desk Edition pg. 617)

Lent has many connotations. For some, it conveys a dreary season where we give up things that we like in order to truly appreciate the goodness of God. Although self-denial can be an important part of the season, it is not the central purpose of Lent. The word “Lent” itself comes from an Old English word for spring. Just as spring is a season for renewal and regeneration, the forty days of Lent, and the disciplines of the season that go with it, are an invitation to us to renew our lives, both individually and as a community.

As many of you know, a task force has been working for the last few months to help our community to grow passionate about our spirituality. In our Natural Church Development Survey, the congregation reported a desire to take our faith beyond Sunday morning and into our daily lives. It was decided that Lent would be an ideal season to work on this and four simple Lenten invitations will be extended to all of the members of our community. They are...

1. **40 Lenten Labors of Love (LOL):** Forty small service opportunities, supporting five local service organizations or ministries that we already support, will be made available to members of the congregation. These can be completed at varied times before Holy Week by individuals or families. They will be posted on Valentines Day in the narthex.
2. **A Common CLC Lenten Devotional:** Nancy Beyers is putting together a Lenten Devotional with daily readings with simple questions related to our congregational mission statement. These will be made available each week at church and on line at the [clcaruora.org](http://clcaruora.org) website. The purpose is to have the whole community working through common texts each day and asking common questions about what God is up to in our lives. We will invite you to talk about them with one another as well.
3. **“Stuff We Love” Education Hour:** During the Sunday education hours in Lent, we will gather together to look at bible translations, devotional resources, online resources, study methods, and varied approaches to bible study and personal prayer. If you have tools that you have found helpful or resources that you couldn’t do without, come and share them with the rest of us.
4. **Sharing our Stories (SOS) at Lenten Worship:** At Wednesday evening Lenten Worship, specific members of the congregation will be invited to briefly (about

five minutes or less) share stories about times when God has been at work in their lives. Worship will be held in the fellowship hall (downstairs) this year to help facilitate a more relaxed atmosphere for this story telling. By modeling this sharing, we hope to become more comfortable sharing with one another what God is up to.

You are invited to participate in each of these four tangible ways of growing in faith and renewing your hope in Christ this Lenten Season. Welcome to Lent!

Peace,

Pastor Craig