

Tidings of Peace



March

2026

Newsletter of Peace Memorial EPC

From the Pastor

Lent: A Season of Repentance and Renewal

From the Pastor's Study

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited into forty days of reflection, repentance, and renewed faith in Christ. While Lent is not commanded in Scripture, many churches in the Reformed tradition have found it to be a helpful and orderly way to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the resurrection on Easter morning.

A Gospel-Shaped Season

From a Reformed perspective, Lent must always be grounded in the gospel of grace. We do not observe Lent to earn favor with God, to add to Christ's finished work, or to engage in spiritual performance. We observe it, rather, as a pastoral aid—an opportunity to examine ourselves in light of God's Word and to cling more firmly to Christ alone.

The Reformers were rightly cautious about abuses that turned seasons like Lent into systems of merit. Yet they also affirmed the value of repentance, self-examination, and disciplined prayer. Properly understood, Lent is not about self-improvement; it is about returning to the Lord.

A Time for Repentance

The forty days of Lent echo several biblical patterns:

- Israel's forty years in the wilderness
- Moses' forty days on Sinai
- Elijah's forty-day journey
- Christ's forty days of fasting and testing in the wilderness

In each case, the number forty marks a time of testing, dependence, and preparation. Lent invites us to confront our sin honestly—not vaguely, but specifically. In Reformed theology, repentance is not merely sorrow over consequences but a Spirit-wrought turning from sin to God. It is daily, continual, and rooted in union with Christ.

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As we confess our sins, we do so with confidence. Our assurance rests not in the depth of our remorse but in the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death.

A Time for Self-Examination

Scripture calls believers to examine themselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). Lent provides a structured opportunity to ask:

- Where have I grown spiritually complacent?
- Where has my love grown cold?
- Have I neglected prayer, worship, or mercy?
- Is there hidden sin that needs to be brought into the light?

Such questions are not meant to drive us to despair, but to drive us to Christ. The law exposes; the gospel restores.

From the Pastor (cont.)

A Time for Spiritual Discipline

Historically, Christians have practiced fasting, prayer, and almsgiving during Lent. In the Reformed tradition, these practices are never ends in themselves. They are means of grace only insofar as they direct us to Christ and His Word.

Fasting, for example, is not about asceticism but about training our hearts to hunger for God. Setting aside comforts—whether food, media, or other distractions—can help us become more attentive to Scripture and prayer. Yet we must remember: spiritual disciplines do not produce grace; they position us to receive it.

A Time of Hope

Lent is a sober season, but it is not a gloomy one. It moves steadily toward resurrection. The ashes of Ash Wednesday remind us that we are dust, but they also remind us that Christ has borne our sin. The purple of the sanctuary speaks both of repentance and of the coming King.

Each Lord's Day during Lent remains a celebration of the resurrection. Even in a season of reflection, we gather on the first day of the week to proclaim: *Christ is risen.*

Preparing for Easter

Ultimately, Lent prepares us to rejoice more deeply at Easter. When we face the seriousness of sin, we better understand the wonder of grace. When we walk through the wilderness, we more fully appreciate the empty tomb. May this season lead us not inward in self-absorption, but upward in repentance and faith. May the Holy Spirit use these weeks to conform us more closely to Christ. And may we arrive at Easter with hearts freshly humbled, renewed, and filled with gratitude for the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)

Let us walk this Lenten journey together—under the cross, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

March Birthdays

<i>12th</i>	<i>Jim Eiman</i>
<i>22nd</i>	<i>Rodney Todd</i>
<i>28th</i>	<i>Vickie Zeller</i>

March Anniversaries

Sunday Social Time:

SUNDAY
Social

A reminder that in each odd numbered month (Jan., March, May, etc.) on the fourth Sunday the congregation at large has the opportunity to serve in the kitchen for the after Worship social time.

For those who would like to do this and are not familiar with the routine please check with one of the Deacons and we'll get you plugged in.

MISSION MEMO:

"The best thing for the inside of a man, is the outside of a horse." Who said that? Was it Twain? Reagan? R.F. Delderfield? Churchill? Doesn't matter, because it's a universal truth. And it is a truth Solid Ground Equine Assisted Services puts into action.

Solid Ground takes its name from Psalm 40:2 (NLT): "He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on **solid ground** and steadied me as I walked along." The mission of Solid Ground (as found on their website, is "to inspire and empower individuals by equipping them with the skills necessary to enhance their ability to overcome challenges and improve wellness through equine-centered activities." They have several programs designed to accomplish those goals:

- Therapeutic Riding Programs- developing new skills and confidence working with gentle horses in a supportive environment;
- Ground Connection- non-riding program fostering personal growth and inner calm;
- Summer Horse Camp- immersive horse camp for children, kindergarten through 5th grade;
- Farm Camp- interacting with a variety of farm animals while developing responsibility and empathy, for children 4-10 years of age;
- Veteran Program- physical, emotional and mental healing and reintegration for military veterans;
- Equine Assisted Learning- to develop essential life skills, team building, and leadership development.

Peace Memorial EPC has long designated Solid Ground as a local mission program. It is a great joy to support a program that recognizes that "all creatures of our God and King" glorify Him and are His gifts to us.



PEACE MEMORIAL EPC SCHOLARSHIP FUND



In October of 2025, Session approved the establishing of a college scholarship fund. These funds would be made available, through application, to any member of our church furthering his or her education. We are in the process of pinning down the who's and how's with a great deal of help from Kathleen Walker-Henderson. At the moment, monies for the fund are through donations made directly by congregation members. A special category has been established through our Money Market account. If this is something you feel called to support, simply make a donation separate from your regular giving and mark it "Scholarship Fund." Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could start awarding scholarships come the Fall 2026 term?

And since we are at the beginning stage of how and what the procedures will be - will this be part of a standing committee, or will a new committee be formed- you might prayerfully consider if you would be willing to serve once the dust settles. We are blessed to have many in our congregation who have a background in education, have been involved with scholarship programs, and/or have been gifted with discernment.