We Are Here!

Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make.

So begins a hymn that illustrates the idea of Lent as a journey. This month, indeed, this week, we begin our annual pilgrimage through the Forty Days of Lent and into the Fifty Days of Easter. Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday with intentional reflection on our lives and our God ‘telling the truth about ourselves and telling the truth about God.’ That’s not to suggest that the rest of the year is somehow ‘fake,’ but to provide us an opportunity to take off our masks and come face to face with ourselves over the course of these 40 days. Psalm 51 says that the sacrifice that God desires is a broken heart – Hmmm. That brings up all kinds of images: heartache, heartburn, heart disease. What does God want with a broken heart? Consider the parched, desert ground – covered with a hard crust of dirt, having calcified over the months without rain. Then consider how the first rains wash right off of that hardened earth. Rather, it’s the broken earth that is able to soak up the water, replenish itself, and bring forth life. How will this Lent be, for you, a time of opening, receiving, and bringing forth?

Pastor [Name]

University Church: [www.Unichu.org] + Worship Time: 10:00 am, Every Sunday. You Are Welcome Here.
Retreat! Retreat!

I’m trying something new.

And you can join me.

During Lent, I’m going to go away for a weekend, to a monastery – and I’m not going to bring my computer!

Idea: It’s during our most busy times, when we can’t imagine not working, that we are often most in need of retreat. To that end, I invite you to join me for a retreat. Not a ‘working retreat,’ which just ends up being ‘a meeting somewhere else.’ But a real, honest to goodness retreat. Quiet time. Good meals. Daily prayer. Space to walk. Time to sit. Room to pray. Sounds nice, huh?

Details: I’ll announce the time and place sometime in the next few weeks. We’ll go together, but we won’t really be ‘on retreat together.’ I’ll do my thing and you’ll do your thing. It’ll cost a bit ($50 or so), but I won’t let that keep anyone from going.

Meanwhile: Pray about it and discern how you might make use of this opportunity.

Preview of Holy Week: Focusing on Jesus’ Life, Death, and Resurrection

**Maundy Thursday:** We’ll celebrate an Agape Meal
7:00, April 1\(^{st}\), UniChu Sanctuary

**Good Friday:** A service of Adoration of the Cross
7:00 pm, April 2\(^{nd}\), UniChu Sanctuary

**Easter Vigil:** A longer service of lessons, hymns, baptism, & the first Eucharist of Easter.
8:00 pm, April 3\(^{rd}\), Old Union Courtyard

**Easter Sunrise Service** at the Dish at (...) Sunrise! (6:30)
**Easter Breakfast** on the UniChu Green at 8:00.
**Easter Festival Eucharist** at 10:00 at UniChu.

Bread and Belonging!

Our weekly Bread and Belonging gathering is for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. We meet on Tuesdays at 5:30, typically in the Common Room of the Old Union (3rd Floor). Check out the “calendar” page on our website for a schedule.

Attention Cooks: If you would like to bring a vegetarian dinner for 15-20 people for Bread and Belonging, contact Pr. Greg – we love to have guest chefs!

**Things for the Calendar:**

**21 February** – Dr. Jane Strohl will be our guest preacher and Adult Education teacher. Dr. Strohl is professor of Reformation History and Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

**26-28 February** – Snow trip! Sign up in the church office for the ELCM/UniChu Snow trip! We go up on Friday - no set time of arrival. We ski, board, cross-country, snowshoe, throw snowballs, drive around the lake, whatever on Saturday. Saturday night we have evening prayer and dinner and then play board games and such. Sunday morning, you can hit the snow again or head back to the Farm. We sleep on the floor (bring an air mattress, if you like) at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Tahoe City. Cost for lodging and food is ~$40 for students - what a deal!

**7 March** – Congregational Mtg! Details to follow, but mark your calendar now!

**1 April** – Maundy Thursday – this year’s service will be dinner at church; stay tuned!

**3 April** – Easter Vigil – not to be missed.

**4 April** – Easter Sunrise Service, Easter Breakfast, and 10:00 am Festival Worship.

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**The Church Council** tends the administration of this community, but all of us are the workers. If you have a ministry idea or something else to share with Council, contact the entire council ([unilucouncil@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:unilucouncil@lists.stanford.edu)) or

- Christian Education & Spiritual Development: [Dana Backman](mailto:dbackman@stanford.edu)
- Fellowship and Hospitality: [Mary Bay, Sonja Swanson, and Erik Donhowe](mailto:marybay@stanford.edu, sonjaswanson@stanford.edu, erikdonhowe@stanford.edu)
- Social Justice: [Rachel Dowling and Sondra Murphy](mailto:rdowling@stanford.edu, sondramurphy@stanford.edu)
- Outreach and Evangelism: [Brian Sakai](mailto:bsakai@stanford.edu)
- Property: [Phillip Neumann, Pete Lovely, & Sara Michie](mailto:philipneumann@stanford.edu, petelovely@stanford.edu, saramichie@stanford.edu) or [Prop. Mgr. Duan Bay](mailto:propmgir@stanford.edu)

Or, the officers: [President Julie](mailto:presidentjulie@stanford.edu), [Vice President Eve](mailto:vicepresidenteve@stanford.edu), [Secretary Brian](mailto:secretarybrian@stanford.edu), [Treasurer Steve](mailto:treasurersteve@stanford.edu), [Pastor Greg](mailto:greg@stanford.edu)

*Remember, this is God’s work, our hands.*
ESP: Especially for Students Page:
(but the rest of you can read it, too)

What are you giving up for Lent?
Here we are, back at the point in the church year (see the graphic at
the top of p.1) where we reflect on the passion, death, and resurrection of
Jesus. One of you asked me about the practice of "giving something up
for Lent." Since it's one of those multifaceted bits of piety for which each
person probably has a different explanation, I thought I'd share some
thoughts with you.

On one hand, it's symbolic of Christ's sacrifice - if Jesus can die, I can at
least give up chocolate for a few weeks. There's some merit in that as a
practice, I suppose, as it invites us into reflection on the idea of sacrifice.

Another idea is not so much about denial but about keeping time – every
time I want a piece of chocolate, I should pray instead. Not a bad time-
keeper, I guess, for when life gets so busy that our prayer starts to suffer.

Some people (myself included) find it makes for a more meaningful Lent
to ADD something to the daily routine, not subtract from it. For example,
you might decide to pray through your Facebook friend list. In this way,
Lent is set apart as a time in which we deepen our spirituality by
intentionally adding something, not depriving ourselves of something.

To me, Lent has a meditative quality that invites all kinds of responses -
more prayer, less waste, more charity, less consumption, etc. It's a time
to 'tell the truth about ourselves and about God.' In our lectionary, the
lessons for the Sundays of Lent spend a lot of time pointing to the grace
of God this year - something students can't have emphasized enough in
the context of a competitive place like Stanford. At the same time,
individual confession and absolution can be very powerful in Lent.

My hope is that Lent is a time of deepened awareness for you. Peace.

A Prayer for Lent: Merciful, God,
accompany us on our journey
through these forty days of Lent.
Renew us in our life as your
beloved, that we may provide for
those who are poor, pray for those
in need, fast from self-indulgence,
and find the life that you have
given to us in the gift of your son
Jesus, whose way was not easy,
but whose willingness was strong.
Amen.

More Connected? Have you been
looking for a way to be more connected to ELCM/UniChu as a
congregational community? During Lent, consider these:

There’s a strong tradition in Christianity to celebrate baptisms
at Eastertime. This year, we’ll celebrate our baptisms at the
Easter Vigil – Saturday night, April 3rd – in the fountain outside
the Old Union. Contact PG for more information.

Or, if you’d like to join UniChu (by transferring your
membership or joining a congregation for the first time),
contact PG about that, too