

Dear Bethany:

As you receive this letter you will find yourself in the midst of the Lenten season. Lent was originally a time of preparation for the early church, as new converts fasted, discerned in prayer and followed in Jesus' footsteps a pathway to Easter, an experience of resurrection. Over time Lent has become a different kind of experience, the church was for many years not only a pathway to Easter/resurrection but also a social and civic institution that largely supported the state. Given this conflicting message it is not surprising the radical approach of discernment leading to a new life in Christ was transformed into a personal, pious, and familiar time of devotion, most often made manifest as giving up chocolate, foul language, a pledge to remain from any dishonestly. While these changes have a noble quality to them they hardly challenge us to look at our lives differently, look at the world differently, look at each other differently. With the church losing its institutional power and privilege we find ourselves not so much a threat to the state but rather irrelevant to the state we can ask "what is Lent for?"

I like the quotation I have included at the top of this letter, Pascal's words speak to a hole inside us and our hunger to fill it. Lent seems like the perfect time to consider how we fill this "God-shaped hole", what we typically fill it with, what we might consider filling it with on a new day. In my many conversations with you I often hear the echoes of the past, a lot of nostalgia and waxing eloquent about what once was. If you listen to me you will hear a lot about plans, ideas for tomorrow and next week, working ahead, even thinking of retirement. What is missing here? I think we fill ourselves with a steady diet of yesterday and tomorrow but not much focus on today. What if we filled ourselves with today, with the present, with now? I am pondering that need this Lent and inviting you to do likewise. Whether it is acts of social justice, the building of community, practicing mindfulness or just being kind and grateful, there is more than enough in today to fill us.

God is present here at Bethany. I see it in our programs, in our worship, in our studies, in our support of one another, in our partnerships, and in our meals. I hope you see it too. And when you see God please tell me, tell others and fill that hole that makes us who we were meant to be.

Lenten & Easter blessings, Kevin



There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.

- Blaise Pascal

Holy Week & Easter

Sunday, April 5th, 2020 - Palm Sunday

Friday, April 10th, 2020 - Good Friday

Sunday, April 12th, 2020 - Easter Sunday

Monday, April 13th, 2020 - Easter Monday

Worship services times and dates will be assessed and announced via various communication methods over the coming weeks in response to:

COVID-19 BUC Emergency Plan.

Be well. Be safe.

You are not alone. God is always with you.