

Pastor's Greeting

Greetings to the Family of God at Avoca UMC!

March 2019

We are ready to begin Lent, the season of preparation for the highest day of the Christian year—Christ's resurrection on Easter! Many people give up something for Lent as a practice of discipline. We might give up alcohol, a particular food, time-wasters like Facebook or Pinterest, or some things from our over-stuffed closets. We might start some new habits such as volunteering, reading the Bible daily, donating unused items, etc. There are many suggestions online if you get stuck.

AUMC prepares for Lent by “cleaning out the cupboard” of all the goodies we won't eat during the season. Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras, kicks off the season with pancakes and every topping you can imagine. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday with soup and sandwich (at Mitchellsville) followed by the introduction to our Wednesday night study on Simon Peter and the imposition of ashes. If you want ashes, but can't attend that evening, let me know and we can make arrangements.

Sundays during Lent we will be meeting some of the people Jesus met. Satan, the woman at the well, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and several others will help explain the events of the season and leave us with some food for thought.

March will also bring news from the Special Session of General Conference, which is preparing to meet in St. Louis as this is written. This session was called with one purpose: to discern a way forward for the United Methodist Church revolving around the issue of human sexuality. Three main proposals have been put forward: 1) maintain our denomination's current policy (all people are of sacred worth; the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching; no self-avowed, practicing homosexual can be ordained; no same-sex marriages can be performed by a UMC pastor or on UMC property), 2) realign current regional conferences into three connectional conferences (maintain missions and retirement systems together, but chose a CC based on this issue) and 3) remove all language prohibiting homosexual marriage and ordination (and allow individual churches and pastors to decide whether or not to perform or host such weddings). Any proposal will undoubtedly be amended and remolded during the session.

Urging you to stay connected to God and His Church during this busy season,

Pastor Barre