

Long Beach Presbyterian

BEACON

LONG BEACH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

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PASTOR'S CORNER

Reflections on faith, work, and worship for today's world

The History of Lent

The Season of Lent is the forty days before Easter not counting Sundays. Sundays are not included because they are considered feast days when the resurrection of Christ is celebrated.

Most Protestants, except for the Episcopalians, hardly even mention Lent. If they do, they focus on Holy Week with special services on Thursday night, the night Jesus gave the gift of communion to the Church, or on Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified on the cross.

Lent has a history in the life of the Church. Lent is one of the oldest observances in the history of the Church, older than Advent and Christmas. If you remember I wrote about them in last month's Beacon. The purpose of Lent has remained the same since it began in the Church. It was to be a time of self-examination and repentance.

In the latter half of the second century in Gaul (modern day France) Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian in Northern Africa set the time of fasting to be forty hours, the presumed exact amount of time Jesus was in the tomb. By the mid third century the fast had become six days in length, perhaps the days it took for creation to unfold. At some point the Christians in Rome were keeping a fast of three weeks. Only following the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. did the length of Lent become fixed at forty days.

Not only did it take a few hundred years to sort out how long Lent should last it also took a while to decide how long a penitent had to fast for. Originally only one meal was taken a day, near the evening. At that meal no meat, fish or animal products could be eaten. By the 800s Lenten practices were being relaxed. At first Christians could eat after 3p.m., By the 1400s the time you could eat was moved up to 12 noon. In 1966 the Roman Church only restricted fast days to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. A classic case of wait, do nothing and it will get better.

With all that history and hearing the clarion call for self-examination and penitence I must confess that I have never given up anything for Lent. Maybe giving up chocolate, sweet tea or cauliflower is the trick but I have some suggestions. What do you need to give

up for Lent? Have you held a grudge too long and when you examine yourself find that it needs to go? Are there attitudes that you hold that make you feel "better than" the next person, so in self-examination you know that attitude needs to be replaced by a spirit of humility? Have you been dishonest with others or yourself for so long it is hard to remember what the truth is and as you repent find that honesty, even if it hurts, should be restored? Have you fallen into a spirit of ingratitude that needs to be replaced by an ability to see what you have to be grateful for?

What do you need to examine in your life to come to a time of penitence? After all, Lent is not about what is on your plate but about what is in your heart and it is the same with me as well.

So Happy Mardi Gras to you wild and crazy Presbyterians. On Ash Wednesday remember "you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Go into Lent looking inward at your heart and by Easter Sunday you may come out of your tomb to new life!

Faithfully,

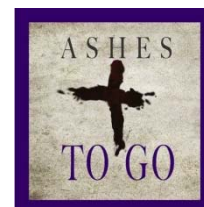


Mitch Blakeney – 3rd
Bobby Thomas – 2nd
Bill Blackman – 13th

Katie Shifflett – 20th
Vivian Paniku – 23rd
Michelle Blakeney – 24th



On Ash Wednesday morning (Feb. 14th), our Pastor will again be joining with several other local religious leaders in a drive-up Imposition of Ashes at the Long Beach Pier from 6:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. All are welcomed to stop by to receive ashes or simply to say hello and show our support for the Church. We may not hold all the same beliefs but we are all of the same people and this kind of outreach serves to foster a sense of unity within our Community.





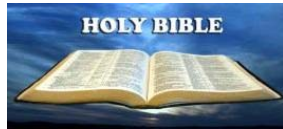
Each week we send a generous donation of food to the Long Beach Community Food Pantry but just imagine the difference we could make by using the number of days in Lent as a goal. We typically send one very full bag to the Food Pantry each week which probably contains an average of 20 items per week. Let's come together this season and give the less fortunate in our community the option of giving up hunger for Lent.

Our current annual average is almost 40 people on each Sunday and if each person brought just one item on each of the six Sundays in Lent we could easily double our typical weekly contribution.

Needed items include but are not limited to peanut butter, jam, rice, dried beans, stews, canned tomatoes, baby foods, snacks, fruit juice, raisins, soda crackers, cereal, tea, coffee, baking items, flour, honey, salt, pepper, spices, sugars, ketchup, mustard, relishes, spaghetti sauce, dry pastas, canned meat, canned fish, canned fruit, canned vegetables, soups, puddings, cake and cookie mixes, cheese whiz/Velveeta, macaroni and cheese, diapers and formula.



Our readers for the month of February are:



4th – Bobby Thomas 18th – Steve Dees
 11th – Jackie Blackman 25th – Tal Flurry



Please remember the following in your prayers:

Barnett Family	Matthew
Boswell Family	Tom, Regina
Cono Caranna & Family	& Isaac McCarty
Corcoran Family	Jamie
Alice Gaston	Ken Pell
Billie Holzweissig	Peterman Family
Marta Halliburton	Ramsay Family
& Family	Mikey Sawyer
Alan Harlan	Becky Schruff
Joe Holloway	Stacey Stone
Cheri Jung	Mary Westmoreland



Confirmation Class is open to anyone who is over the age of 13 and has been baptized but not yet confirmed in the Church. The classes start on Feb. 4th at 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 a.m. and will continue on Feb. 18th, Feb. 25th, March 4th, March 11th, March 18th and March 25th.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated on Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018 during the worship service.



Clerk's Remarks from January 21, 2018

Rev. Hightower has been here a little over 3 years now. During this time, our attendance has increased from an average of 15 during 2014 to an average of 39 during 2017. We now have an average attendance that is more than double the average attendance in the year before Rev. Hightower arrived. Our membership has increased from 37 at the end of 2014 to 48 at the end of 2017. We gained 9 new members during 2017.

Two of our members passed away during 2017, Hilda Jo Salyards (6/16) and Art Holzweissig (8/17). Two baptisms were celebrated during 2017 – Wyld Lee Strahan IV and Mitch Blakeney.

As our membership and Church attendance has increased, we have also enjoyed an increase of our participation in Church activities. It seems like more may truly be better -- at least in this instance.

We now have both an Adult Sunday School class and a Children's Sunday School class – thanks to the efforts of Bobby Thomas and Amanda See.

The Women of the Church meet regularly on the second Tuesday of each month.

The LBPC was honored to be the “host church” for the February 2017 meeting of our Presbytery. Keith Cox and Ruth Lewis put a lot of time and effort into the preparations for the Presbytery meeting.

The LBPC missions program continues to make generous contributions to the Long Beach Food Pantry and the Long Beach Outlook organization. During late 2017, the Session also authorized making regular contributions to Rebekah's House as a part of our local missions program.

We have continued our practice of having monthly Fellowship Coffees which have been held on the last Sunday of the month. They have been well attended and everyone seems to enjoy the opportunity to visit with each other.

During 2017, the LBPC participated in community services by joining with several other local religious leaders providing Ashes to Go for Ash Wednesday and hosting the 2018 Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service.

We continue to enjoy having a Church newsletter again - thanks to the efforts of Keith Cox.

Our Church Financial picture has changed for the better. During the year 2014, the Church had total receipts of \$32,776.10 and total expenses of \$54,054.26, for a negative cash flow of \$21,278.16. (We were going down the “financial drain.”) We are now experiencing a positive cash flow. During the fiscal year 2017, the Church had total receipts of \$78,881.07 and total expenses of \$54,392.13, for a positive cash flow of \$24,488.94. There are many factors behind this change including an increase in our tithes and a marked increase in Church attendance, but the main factor is that we now have a “part-time” instead of a “full-time” minister.

If any of you would like to share your ideas or thoughts on how to improve our Church, please know that we would like to hear them. If you would like to meet with the Session, we will be happy to include you at any of our meetings! Also, if you have ever wondered what goes on in a Session meeting, please know that the meetings are open and you are always welcome to sit in and observe.

Finally, if you are not already a member and you are interested in joining the Long Beach Presbyterian Church, just let us know, we will make it happen, and we will welcome you to our Church membership with open arms!!

Terry Dill, Clerk of Session



It is with sadness that we announce the retirement of our long-time organist Scharlotte Saxon effective January 28, 2017. She will be dearly missed at our church.

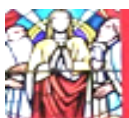


At the same time it is with happiness and gratitude that we also announce that Susan Littell has agreed to be our new keyboardist. For now she will be playing the piano during our worship services while she works to learn to play the organ.



The Women's Circle is starting a new outreach project to try to help the homeless in our area. They will be preparing kits containing hygiene and other necessary items, some customized for men and others for women. The kits will then be distributed through King's Kitchen in Bay St. Louis. We will be directing funds from our monthly Outreach Offering to assist with this cause.

The Women's Circle meets monthly at 9:30 a.m. in the church dining room on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.



Session

- Our Christmas Joy Offering was collected during the Christmas Eve Candlelight service and totaled \$655.00 which was forwarded to the Presbyterian Church USA. Those funds are used to provide assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and help develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.
- In January we collected a total of \$433.14 for our Outreach offering which was forwarded to Rebekah's House.
- Ken Pell is still recovering after falling and sustaining injuries to his shoulder, elbow and hip. He has been hospitalized due to those injuries which were complicated further after he developed both the flu and pneumonia. He was in intensive care for a few days but has improved and has now been

transferred to Boyington for rehab. He seems more alert recently and has joking around and acting more like himself. Please pray for his continued recovery.

- On January 28, 2017 in a Called Session Meeting, it was decided that going forward our monthly Outreach Offering would be divided as follows: 40% to Long Beach Outreach, 40% to Rebekah's House and 20% to the Women's Circle to fund the creation of Hygiene Kits for the homeless.
- The Session is currently looking into renting out one or more of the empty rooms in the church to generate additional income. The activities of any prospective tenant will have to be in accordance with our church's morals and beliefs.
- The next Stated Session meeting will be on Sunday February 18, 2018.

Treasurer's Report

	Income	Expenses	Difference
December 2017	\$ 18,659.11	\$ 5,430.62	\$ 13,228.49
FYE 2017	\$ 78,881.07	\$ 54,392.13	\$ 24,488.94



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PLEASE send us information to include in the Beacon

- By email: Lbpcusa@outlook.com
- By hand: Place in the collection plate at Sunday Worship.
- By phone: Leave a message on the church answering machine at 228-863-7633. (Phone messages are checked on Saturdays)



To receive the Beacon by email, please send a request including your name and email address to Lbpcusa@outlook.com. Please note that this will be maintained as a private email list and only used for Long Beach Presbyterian Church communications.