



Woodside World

CHURCHNEWS of CONGREGATION and COMMUNITY

Rev. Dr. Deborah DeMars Conrad, Pastor

FROM THE PASTOR...

Last week, amidst the house projects, I reverted my fireplace to woodburning. And later this spring, I hope to put a firepit in my back yard. There's just something about a fire that draws me.

There's also something about fire that scares me. Namely, that it can destroy homes and decimate memories and livelihoods.

Then there's the fire that takes down cities and changes neighborhoods forever, a fire fueled by social unrest, by a certain fed-up-ness with a deathly status quo.

Fire is complicated. So let's talk about something else.

I'm seeing that most of the Christmas decorations are finally down in my neighborhood. Which is probably a good thing. Christmas has 12 days, and we know that because we sing a song. Some people celebrate the 12 days leading up to December 25; in the church's calendar, they actually start that day, so the 12th day is January 5. That's my target date for decoration storage each year. This past Tuesday, February 2, was, in the ancient church, a festival called Candlemas, the day when even the most diehard Christians finally observe the end of the Christmas celebration. So, Christmas is done. What's next?

We've been in a post-season called Epiphany, which is about to be over as well. This Sunday is called the feast of the Transfiguration, and some of you will remember the story of Jesus going up the mountain and seeing God. We'll hear that story this Sunday. Others of you will remember it as the day Pastor Deb lit a fire in church and filled the place with smoke. Can you believe it's already been a year. We'll do that this Sunday, too, but with a less smoke-producing material.

What's next, then, is Lent, and the idea of a fire to get us from one season to the other is appropriate, symbolic. Lent is the time that takes us to Easter, to the festival of resurrection, new life. A fire, well-managed, can be a great way to prep for that. Think farmers burning off the fields. Or rangers letting forest fires burn in a controlled kind of way. Burning makes way for new growth.

Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. (Tuesday is Mardi Gras, "fat Tuesday.") Wednesday, we'll gather for worship at 7 pm, and, among other things, we'll mark our foreheads with ash and oil, as we hear the

words "remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." In Lent, we ponder mortality, humanity, divinity, and meaning. We try to clear the way for the new life of Easter.

The ashes have to come from somewhere. Last year, we burned the palms from the previous Palm Sunday, which is an old tradition in churches impervious to smoke inhalation. We at Woodside this year will burn whatever is between us and God's gift of life. In our worship Sunday, as part of our offering, we'll have a reflective time to jot notes – notes to God, notes to self, notes of our demons and failings and griefs. Then, we'll toss them in a fire. A controlled burn on the very uncontrolled table of grace. And those are the ashes with which we will mark our foreheads to begin our journey to Easter's resurrection.

There's a lot going on in our world. Water distribution and primary elections and congressional investigations. Civil wars and stealth missions and constants threats to any sort of peace.

There is a lot going on in our lives as well. Things that would keep us distant from the sacred.

Lent is a wonderful time to face intentionally in the direction of God, to refocus on things of the spirit, even in the midst of the political and the economic, the critical and the mundane.

Fire can be devastating and it can be life-giving. Maybe the difference is beloved community. Join in worship as we start this journey through Lent to Easter together.

With you on the journey, *-pastor deb*

ABOUT OUR ALTAR...

We hope you've noticed that our altar has taken on seasonal themes lately. Candles for advent, water for baptism, the "scales of justice" for these weeks of epiphany. And each season, the cloth itself has been a sort of mish-mash, remnants of other projects in the seasonal color: blue for Advent, white for Christmas and Epiphany. As we've read the scriptures, we've heard again that we are a "remnant people," that God gathers us from wherever we are and joins us in beloved community.

With Lent, it's time to change the table again. Starting Wednesday, we'll have purple for these weeks before Easter. If you have remnants of any purple projects and want to add to the collection, please bring the cloth on Sunday and see Karen Eaton.

FAITH EXPLORATION CLASSES FOR ADULTS

- ◆ *Living Our Faith in the World* class led by Jay Cummings.
- ◆ Linda Angus leads a discussion of the weekly lectionary (the readings we'll hear in worship)
- ◆ Carol Higgins' group is reading the book, *God Not One: eight religions that run the world* by Stephen Prothero. Check in the office if you need a copy.

WATER NEWS

WATER UPDATE—If you need a filter, or if it is time to replace the cartridge, (water running slowly is a good indicator) call the church office. If you need water, take what you need from the lobby. If you know of a home-bound person you could distribute water or a filter to, please feel free.

WATER ON THE WEB — we've now created a page on our website (woodsidechurch.net) for all things related to water, including Woodside's response. This will certainly grow as more information gets shared. Bookmark the page, and like us on Facebook. Two great ways to stay up to date.

WATER CRISIS COURSE—UM-Flint is offering a water course, open to the public. More info; <https://www.umflint.edu/pubhealth/flint-water-crisis>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Saturday and Sunday Canvassing, starting at 2pm at St. Michael's Church, (609 E 5th Ave). Data entry help is needed beginning at 5pm (please BYO laptop). Show up, or contact Art Reyes III at artreyesiii@gmail.com.

AND READ THIS FROM THE US EPA

(ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY):

Pregnant women and children under 6 are urged to use **only bottled water** until their tap water has been tested for lead. Flint residents may pick up a free water test kit at any fire station. We also have several at Woodside. Check in the office.

THIS WEEK AT WOODSIDE 2/7 - 2/13

- SUNDAY:**
2/7 9:30 am **Adult Classes**
 11 am Worship
Coffee and Conversation hosted by the Christian Education Committee
- MONDAY:**
2/8 Office Closed
 7 pm Chime Choir
- WEDNESDAY:**
2/10 6:30 pm Women's Folk Choir?
 7 pm Ash Wednesday Worship Service
 After worship—Chancel Choir?
 7 pm Rental *Art at the Market*
- THURSDAY:**
2/11 7 pm Daybreak Worship

SUNDAY HELPERS THIS MONTH

- 2/7—Ushers/Greeters**— Team C: Carol Higgins and Pat Perrine, Sharrie Creasey and Shannon Loesel Thorpe, Jim Hazen, Cliff Turner **Counters:** Donna Fry and Jim Abbott. **Nursery:** Geoff Neithercut **Liturgist:** Sheryl Cope.
- 2/14—Ushers/Greeters**—Team D: Jim Richardson, Sharon and Ted Bolander, Joe and Laura Eufinger, Ron Fader and Jeff Springgay. **Counters:** Virgil Cope and Shannon Loesel Thorpe. **Nursery:** Karli Leffel and Ashley Dietz.
- 2/21—Ushers/Greeters**—Team E: Virgil & Sheryl Coper, Mike & Linda Thompson, Linda R. Lee, Corinna Johnson & Kathleen Reid. **Counters:** Jim Richardson and Dave Pinchock. **Nursery:** Geoff Neithercut.
- 2/28—Ushers/Greeters**—Team A: Jim Abbott, John Crouch, Jay Cummings, Al Nickens, Don Harbin & Liz Perkins-Harbin. **Counters:** Carol Higgins and Reid Sanders. **Nursery:** Geoff Neithercut

MORE NEW MEMBERS

We are planning for new members again at Easter! If you're interested in joining Woodside Church, you are welcome to sit in on informational classes with Pastor Deb. We'll gather Sundays at 9:30 am, for 5 weeks of Lent (beginning Feb 14). See you then!

NEW YARD SIGNS—We will be ordering some different yard signs soon. If you have an old one, keep the metal frame and we can give you the new sign to attach. We'll let you know when they arrive.

FUN TRIP—On Sat, Feb 20, at 12:30., join us at Woodside to carpool to the Flint Farmer's Market for lunch (Or meet us there). After lunch we will go to FIA for the African-American Quilt exhibit from the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Sign up at the table.

INTERESTED IN A CRAFTER'S GROUP? We're gauging interest for a once- or twice-monthly gathering at church. Whatever your craft, sign up at the table by the office with day and time preference.