

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Have you ever noticed the drama associated with worship? In past years, folks would get up before dawn to join the women going to the tomb on Easter Sunday. On Christmas Eve we stay up late to welcome the Christ Child as did the shepherds! Sundays we again remember the resurrection story. When our Lenten season begins with **Ash Wednesday**, our weekly routines are disrupted as we gather for worship to remember the drama of the Passion and Last Supper of Jesus. During Lent we will gather on Wednesdays to remember the drama of the season. This year we will alternate worship space with Zion, so watch for the time and location. During Sunday worship we hear for the first time or again the stories of faith in Holy Scriptures. Our choir offers prayers, praises and stories of the God we worship. Baptisms and funerals are drama stories that tell of our faith.

Again on **Maundy Thursday** we will gather to celebrate the Holy Eucharist both as a remembering of the Passover meal and the story of the exodus of God's people as they prepared to leave Egypt. Congregations often re-enact the Last Supper with a Seder meal. Last year our Sunday school classes gathered to remember and experience the meal.

As with any drama, there is much behind the scenes planning and preparations. The worship and music committee carefully makes sure that the hymns sung each Sunday are known and appropriate for the texts. (Notice that we don't sing Christmas carols during Lent!) The committee also arranges for appropriate decorations, for the communion table to be set up before worship, monthly 3rd Sunday fellowship meals are planned. My thanks to all who help with the behind the scenes preparations as well as participation in the drama as ushers, acolytes, communion assistants, lay readers, choir members and worship assistants get ready for worship. Baptisms and funerals are also carefully planned and arrangements completed by many before those special worship services. My thanks to all of you for your diligence and attention to details that sometimes go unnoticed or unappreciated. You all assist with orderly worship.

This year Lent begins after we already experience the lengthening of the days. We look forward to partnering with Zion as we prepare for the Christian celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our Wednesday theme is "Renewing Hope." We hope you can join us on Wednesdays as part of your Lenten discipline. Yes, we will usually feed you great homemade soup. Since daylight savings arrives earlier now, March 10th this year [translation, maybe a longer day but definitely a shorter night!] our **Good Friday** drama won't exactly be experiencing the diminishing light as in past years. However, we will be hosting the Good Friday service for St. Paul and Zion as we again experience the death of Jesus, whose dying is the gift of forgiveness for all of us.

So the dramas continue as we gather to worship and omit hymns of praise during Lent. We will continue to depart after worship to go into the community to serve the Lord. We will prepare for the Passion, Death and Resurrection and of our God. We at St. Paul look forward to your continued presence at worship as we remember the life, death and resurrection of our God.

May we all continue to experience Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness for us each day because God is Love.

Shalom,

Pastor Bev +

