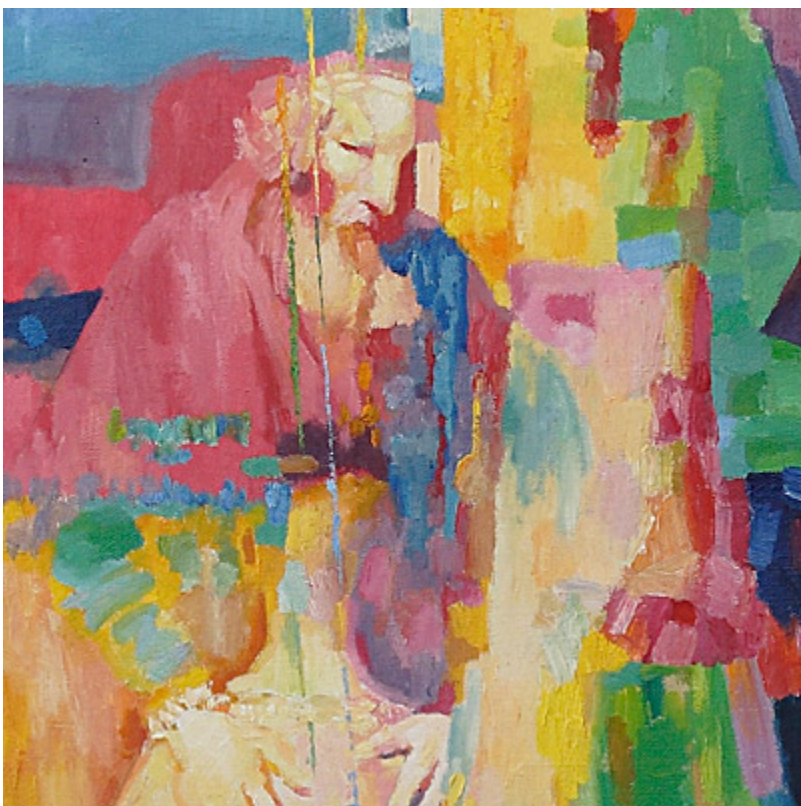


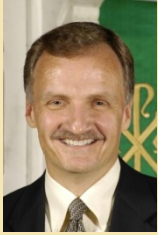
# LENT

2010



NORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
WHERE SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS MEET

# LENTEN MESSAGE



*prod-i-gal*

1. *recklessly extravagant*
2. *having spent everything*

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the best known stories in the Bible. Two sons: One who kept the rules religiously and one who broke them all. One Father who loved both lost sons beyond anything they could imagine.

How many books have you read or films have you watched that retell this well-told tale?

How often have you found yourself in the place of one of the brothers? Or, of the father?

This Lent we'll read with fresh eyes this familiar story. We'll focus particularly on how the story guides us to live as a forgiven and forgiving people. I like the way Timothy Keller describes how the Prodigal Son story reminds us of our resistance to practicing forgiveness:

*Here, then, is Jesus's radical redefinition of what is wrong with us. Nearly everyone defines sin as breaking a list of rules. Jesus, though, shows us that a man who has violated virtually nothing on the list of moral misbehavior's [the elder brother] can be every bit as spiritually lost...sin is not just breaking the rules, it is putting yourself in the place of God. (**The Prodigal God**, pg. 43)*

Relationships shatter when we're more concerned about being right or protecting our dignity than seeking out the one who is slipping or has slipped away. In this parable,

Jesus is speaking directly to the religious community, the temple-goers. He invites them to consider why he is doing the very thing they as elder brothers and sisters should have been doing all along.

In practical, everyday ways, we'll listen to this parable during Lent and ponder how we – as individuals and as a congregation – can find that home God tries to give us rather than the home we often try to create for ourselves.

Tuck a bookmark in Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32 and read this memorable passage. Imagine being among the crowd who first heard the story. Remember a time when you've been the younger brother, the elder brother, or the anxiously waiting father. Where is this story true to your experience? Where do you see the story living again in your family, community, or in our world?

The parable of the prodigal son is about every one of us seeking the hope we call home. Not a home we've created for ourselves, but a home that has been made for us and has a chair at the table waiting for us to sit down and join the party.

The Lenten brochure points the way toward the place at the table set for us. I hope you'll join in that journey and invite others along with you.

Shalom,

*Kevin*

# WORSHIP SERVICES

**February 21, 2010**, First Sunday in Lent  
“The Prodigal God”

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11, Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is one of the most familiar tales in scripture. A younger son whose recklessness separates him from his father, an elder son whose righteousness is the source of separation, and a father who loves them both. Most of us know something about all three characters. This Sunday we'll introduce the story as part of our Lenten series on forgiveness and reconciliation.

**February 28, 2010**, Second Sunday in Lent  
“Running Away”

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18, Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

Home is more than a physical location. More than a shelter from harm or a gathering place for friends. Home is where our most important “stuff” dwells but also where our deepest relationships abide. The younger son in Luke's story was eager to leave home; even more eager to create a new life apart from the old home place. He essentially says to his father: *I want what you've got but I don't need you.* We'll explore the homesickness many of us feel in a well-wired but often-disconnected world. And, we'll imagine how the church can be a haven for today's runaways.

Taizé Prayer Service  
5:00 p.m. in the Chapel

**March 7, 2010**, Third Sunday in Lent  
Holy Communion  
“Regret”

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

Isaiah 55: 1-9, Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

The King James Version of Luke's story records that the younger brother “came to himself” when he realized what life was like away from home. *Confession* is sometimes another way of saying the same thing. Without acknowledging and naming the regret of words or actions that separate us from God and one another, there's little chance for new beginnings. Expressing regret is more than wallowing in guilt or groveling for acceptance. It's the first step toward home.

**March 14, 2010**, Fourth Sunday in Lent  
“Resentment”

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

2 Corinthians 5: 16-21, Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

The “good” brother in this story – the one who stayed home, obeyed the rules, and toed the line – is furious when his younger brother is welcomed home. Who hasn't experienced the fury of doing the right thing while the reckless are rewarded or the rule-breakers go about their way? Naming what is unfair, unjust, and unreasonable seems, well, reasonable. Paul urges us, however, no longer to regard others from a human point of view. Really? How do we move beyond resentment to reconciliation?

**March 21, 2010**, Fifth Sunday in Lent  
“Returning Home”

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

Psalms 126, Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

Ever notice how many songs and films are about looking for home, finding home, returning home, or making a home? For the younger brother in Luke's story, home was where the weight of his father's head could be felt on the young son's neck. Home was a place made for him, not just a place he created on his own. When relationships are restored and where broken places are rebuilt, we begin to experience home. Where are the homes we are being called to as individuals and as a congregation?

**March 28, 2010**, Palm Sunday  
“Crossing Paths”

Lisa D. Schubert, preaching

Luke 19:28-40, Isaiah 50:4-9a, Luke 22:14-23:56

Today we cross paths with Jesus twice – once in a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the second time in a shameful trail to the cross. We'll explore how these encounters with Jesus changed the path of our world forever and continue to shape our lives today.

Taizé Prayer Service  
5:00 p.m. in the Chapel

# WORSHIP SERVICES

## April 1, 2010

Holy Thursday (7:30 p.m.)

Service of Holy Communion and Foot Washing

Brian K. Williams, preaching

Scriptures: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Holy Thursday recalls the night of Jesus' betrayal into the hands of authorities that seek to take his life.

Betrayal is a difficult act to forgive, but Jesus does so with love. Through him a community of faith remembers humility and receives strength and sustenance to love others. Join us for a service of Holy Communion and foot/hand washing.

## April 2, 2010

Good Friday (noon)

Mid-North Church Council Community Service

Location TBD

Good Friday (7:30 p.m.)

Christ's final moments on earth, musically set by Theodore Dubois are presented by soloists: Kathy Miller, soprano, Chadwick Barton, tenor, and Ron Berry baritone, along with the Cathedral Singers, and Martin Ellis, organist. Meditations by the pastors precede each movement, adding to this very moving and inspirational Lenten experience.

The Seven Last Words of Christ is presented in eight movements: an introduction for soprano and orchestra followed by a movement for each word of Christ from the cross. Composing for the Catholic church, Dubois used traditional texts from the Roman Catholic Holy Week liturgies to add meditations on the scriptural account. The opening soprano solo is the *O vos omnes* traditionally sung at *Tenebrae* services. In the Third Word, Christ's words to Mary, his mother, are combined with the 13th-century sequence *Stabat mater dolorosa*; in the Fourth Word, Christ's anguish at being forsaken by his Father is combined with the liturgical text *Omnes amici mei*. At the end of the Seventh Word, Dubois concludes his sacred cantata with a hymn-like setting of the medieval antiphon *Adoramus Te, Christe*. This serene hymn, much like a chorale at the end of an 18th century cantata provides the listener with a foretaste of the resurrection after the compelling drama of the Passion story.

## April 3, 2010

Easter Vigil (Time TBD)

Broadway United Methodist Church, 609 E. 29<sup>th</sup> St.

An evening service of Scripture, prayer, song, and Holy Communion shared with the congregation of Broadway.

## April 4, 2010

Easter Sunday

8:30 a.m.: Holy Communion

11:00 a.m.

Kevin R. Armstrong, preaching

Congregational singing of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" concludes both services

## Notes about Sunday Worship Services

- ✚ Alternative worship for children – 11:00 a.m. Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to participate. Children leave part way through the service for their own worship experience.
- ✚ Childcare for infants and preschoolers is available during worship services and Sunday School.
- ✚ Sunday School classes for age two through adults begin at 9:45 a.m.

# EVENTS

## Mardi Gras Party

*Laissez les bons temps rouler!* (Let the good times roll!)

Tuesday, February 16

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Pancakes Prepared by Staff

Tom Mullinix and the Naptown Strutters Dixieland Jazz Band

Fun for all ages! See you there!

Questions? Willing to help? Contact Jan and Andy York ([York.aj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:York.aj@sbcglobal.net); 571-0376)

## Family Retreat

March 20-21

Camp Tecumseh

A fun-filled family weekend at Camp Tecumseh.

Look for sign-up information in February. For more information, contact Joel O'Neil at 926-6623 ([joelo@forumcu.com](mailto:joelo@forumcu.com)).

## Reels of Reconciliation

*Prayers for Bobby*

Sunday, March 21

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

This year's Reels of Reconciliation will focus on forgiveness as we watch *Prayers for Bobby*, the powerful true story of Mary Griffith, whose staunch religious beliefs separated her from her gay teenage son. The youth will join the Leaven group in hosting the movie, meal, and conversation following this film. Please RSVP to the front office by Sunday, March 14. Contact Becky VanVoorhis ([rvanvoor@iupui.edu](mailto:rvanvoor@iupui.edu), 841-1020).

## Children's Easter Retreat

An EGG-STRA-ORDINARY Day!

Saturday, April 3, 2010

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

K-5<sup>th</sup> grade

It's an Easter EGG-STRAVAGANZA! Plan to spend your morning following the footsteps of Jesus during his last week. It's an EGG-SELLENT way to spend your day! We will re-enact some of the events that happened to Jesus and you can use your imagination! What was it like to gather round a table with the disciples at the Last Supper, to come to the courtroom where Jesus was tried, to stand around the cross where he died, and visit the garden where he rose from the dead? Let's imagine together!

What does this have to do with Easter eggs? Kids will hear all about it and enjoy some egg-sellent art activities! Don't forget lunch, too! Prepare for some EGG-STRA-ORDINARY surprises! Registration begins March 14 and ends March 29.

Watch for more details about this EGG-TREMELY fun celebration!



# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## Can You Hear Me Now?

Parents, Teens and Forgiveness will be offered as part of our Lenten studies. Youth and their parents will meet separately for 2 evenings, and together for a third evening to share our joys, frustrations and hopes during these high-energy teenage years. How would you complete this sentence? *I wish my parents \_\_\_\_\_* or *I wish my teenager \_\_\_\_\_*. Can we learn how to live more at peace with each other and be in touch with God's purpose for us? All parents of teens and pre-teens are invited to join.

Registration is appreciated, but not required (email [amoman@northchurchindy.com](mailto:amoman@northchurchindy.com)). Lisa Hamilton and Anne Moman to facilitate on Sunday, Feb. 14th, Feb. 28th and March 7th. Shared meal at 5:30, conversations 6-8 pm.

## Adult Sunday School – 9:45 a.m.

Sojourners (Room 005): Learning Forgiveness: A Lenten Study. *Repentance is at the heart of our Lenten journey. Can we learn to forgive with open hearts?* In this six-session study, we'll consider the various aspects of forgiveness, a concept perhaps more central to Christianity than to any other religion. Christians differ widely in their interpretations of how forgiveness should be practiced. Some urge forgiveness as a Christian duty under all circumstances, while others argue that certain conditions must be met before forgiveness can be meaningful or effective. How do we sort through such competing claims and interpretations? And how do we get past some of our emotional barriers to real forgiveness? These are the kinds of the questions we will explore together in this study of a theme particularly well-suited to the season of Lent, but fit for any season of our lives.

## Children Ages 4-3<sup>rd</sup> grades are invited to Alternative Worship to Learn about Forgiveness

Each Sunday in Lent children in Alternative Worship will hear Bible stories about people who forgave others: Joseph forgave his brothers, the father forgave his son, Jesus forgave Zaccheus. Jesus taught about forgiveness when the woman anointed his feet and when he told parables. God loves us and forgives us, too. Kids will talk about how it feels to be forgiven and to forgive. They will also learn about the meaning of Lent. Why is purple the color the church wears during Lent? What does it mean to give "me?" Alternative Worship meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month.

## Family Lenten Devotional Materials

Children in Sunday school will receive materials designed just for them beginning February 14 and will be available on a first-come first-serve basis. Beginning with two year olds, each child will receive an age appropriate calendar or devotional booklet with stories and activities that help guide them during Lent. Enjoy using these special materials as a family!



3808 North Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208  
317-924-2612 Fax 317-924-5161  
[www.northchurchindy.com](http://www.northchurchindy.com)