

# The Union



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## Some neat helps for Lent.....

### Starkness of Lent



...dormant or dead branches...  
See article on second page

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I thought you all might like to see a couple of articles that we received on our Resource Center Director's Ecunet site. Very timely and interesting. See page two for more.

Would you like to engage members of your congregation in Rick Warren's study, "40 Days of Purpose"? Many Lutheran Congregations have begun this 40 Day journey and are sharing their perspectives and help. Pastor Jay Hilbinger of First Lutheran in Greensboro, North Carolina has prepared a "Lutheran Guide to The Purpose Driven Life." He has written a short paragraph on each day. He also has developed a Lutheran facilitator guide for the guiding group sessions. You may ask for both these guides by emailing him at [HYPERLINKmailto:Jay.Hilbinger@ecunet.org](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:Jay.Hilbinger@ecunet.org) or go to [HYPERLINKhttp://www.firstlutheran.com/](http://www.firstlutheran.com/HYPERLINKhttp://www.firstlutheran.com/) Pastor Eric Burtness of St Matthew Lutheran Church, in Beaverton, Oregon seems to be the Lutheran expert on Purpose Driven Life and 40 Days of Purpose. If you'd like to see lots of things he's done check out [HYPERLINK "http://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/purposedriven/purpose.htm](http://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/purposedriven/purpose.htm) Scroll down to the sermon series listings, and you can see the texts he chose. His sermons for the 40 Days series can be found on streaming audio at [HYPERLINKhttp://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/wermoms.htm](http://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/wermoms.htm) He also did a daily email based on the book which he invites people to cut and paste and call your own. It's at [HYPERLINKhttp://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/fddp/fddp.htm](http://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/fddp/fddp.htm) Pastor Burtness just finished teaching a KAIROS class at Luther Seminary about Purpose Driven Church/Life.

One thing to think about is what you will want to do after completing 40 Days. Pastor Burtness and St Matthew's congregation did a follow-up series called "Dare to

Dream" which led people on to the dreams for their lives that God has placed in their hearts. Then they did a Ministry Fair to take it to another level. For a "Dare to Dream" series outline, go to [HYPERLINKhttp://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/ddpc/ddpc.htm](http://www.stmatthewlutheran.org/ddpc/ddpc.htm)

If you'd like the best links to other Lutheran churches who have done 40 Days of Purpose, check out [HYPERLINKhttp://www.gracelovespark.com/lutherans/](http://www.gracelovespark.com/lutherans/) by Robert Driver-Bishop. This site has been set up to enable Lutheran leaders to share ideas and check out ways Lutherans have adapted the program. Also at this website, you can find feedback from congregations that have done the program, ideas and articles from many authors pertaining to Purpose Driven Life, information on the Seminary course that is offered, links to relevant papers that have been written and digital resources. A huge website that is of much help!

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A late addition to the above article—this is for kids stuff:

...go to the website for [www.kidskountpublishing.com/home.html](http://www.kidskountpublishing.com/home.html) and then click on "40 Days of Purpose"

You will get a registration page and once you submit it you can go to the download. Kids Quest is their "version of Sunday School" and "Kid's Church" is "second hour church".

## Two meaningful ways to see/think of Lent.....

Hi Karen-I am writing to thank you for your wonderful idea that you submitted to Seeds for the Parish, in the Jan-Feb. Issue. We, at Good Hope, with the help of our new Theme Team, have transformed our Sanctuary into a Lenten Garden. It actually gives you goose bumps when you walk in. Pastor Ralph wanted the entire Sanctuary to be transformed so that is exactly what they did. I hope that we can get some pictures to send to you if you wish. But I just want to thank you so much for the awesome idea of a visual reminder for this Lenten season. When I read it in the Seeds I knew right away what our Sanctuary would look like. And it is more wonderful than I could have ever imagined. If you are ever in the North Lima area during Lent, please come and be our guest. We would love to see you. Thank you again for your many, many ministries to us all. Peace to you, Rita Perrico, Secretary at Good Hope in North Lima (From the Northeast Ohio Resource Center—Director, Karen Kaufman at Cuyahoga Falls).

### Read on for more good stuff.....

I have to add here my passion for Lent and the ways we celebrate this season. Last night, three of us who work with "art and environment" in our congregation transformed our worship space (large and in the round) with burlap paraments, black ashy-looking overlays on the pulpit, table, and at the baptismal font, rough rocks strewn by the font (at the entrance to the sanctuary). Tomorrow night after the imposition of ashes and holy communion, the water will be

removed from the font and we'll place rocks and sand in it until new life/water comes at the Easter Vigil!

But the most dramatic visual in the sanctuary is a collection of eight 15'-20' dead trees (branches and trunks that are weather-worn and barren looking.) Holden Evening Prayer in this grim setting is so incredibly powerful and "speaks" Lent in very meaningful ways. I can't wait! Julie

Lent is a season "for the minor key". Lenten time is about reflection and contemplation, a time to examine ourselves—some even would say, a depressing time. The journey we are called to make in Lent is to confront our own mortality, our own frailty and brokenness, our deep need for redemption and resurrection.

So in Lent we journey to the cross. Along the way, our worship space reminds us of the harshness of life. The sanctuary is stark, simple, spare. It reflects "the minor key," the diminished things that speak of death and dying.

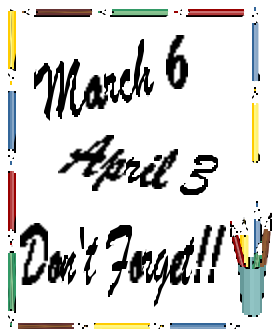
The baptismal font has been emptied of its life-giving waters. In the journey of Lent, we go to the font to find a dry bed of sand and stones. We are invited to notice rough cloth, dormant or dead branches, broken rocks. They remind us of our own parched lives, our own rough edges, our own emptiness.

Together with the liturgy, music, and spoken words, the environment of our worship space serves as another lens—a way for us to see—and a way for Lent to "speak" its meaning to us.

All from Julie K. Ageson-Eastern North Dakota RC Director at Fargo

**Remember the great Lenten calendar with devotions, pictures, ideas, and is reproducible. It is under "Recent Additions". This is something so wonderful for families or individuals. Make use of it!**

**Don't forget to call in your registrations for these two dates, March 6/April 3. Phone number:715-833-1153. I hope you are promoting both of them like crazy!**



**Remember secretaries, this publication is NOT for your eyes only! Don't forget to pass it on to others - staff/leaders - who need to know what's goin' on at the Resource Center! Make copies if you can't BEAR to give up the original!**