

# CROSS & FLAME

FEBRUARY 2012

WPAUMC.ORG

## What Are Your Plans For Lent?

Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, but not really living life with direction, purpose or passion?

It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of relationships, family, work or classes. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God.

Lent is a great time to "repent" – to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40-day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart.

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 22. It includes the 40 weekdays between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Sundays are excluded, treated as mini-Easters.

Start praying and planning now to see what you can do to realign yourself with God during Lent. You might try one of these practices:

**FASTING:** Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, TV, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like worry or reality TV to spend time outside enjoying God's creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do?

**SERVICE:** Some Christians take something on for Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend every day of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

**PRAYER:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

Christians from many different traditions celebrate Lent. How will you use the time to grow closer to God?

*Excerpted from Lent 101 by Penny Ford on UpperRoom.org/MethodX*



## BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

Join United Methodists throughout Western Pennsylvania in studying these Bible passages from the Revised Common Lectionary and praying for these congregations and pastors.

**FEBRUARY 5 - 11, 2012**

*FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY--GREEN*

**READ:** Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, 20c, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

**PRAY FOR:** † **Valley Chapel Charge**, Franklin Dist., Earl Dykes, pastor  
† **Jacob's Creek and Owensdale UMCs**, Connellsville Dist., Kimberly King, pastor  
† **Wattsburg and Phillipsville UMCs**, Erie-Meadville Dist., Russell Hixson, pastor  
† **Jefferson Avenue & West Washington UMCs**, Washington Dist., John Hoffman, pastor  
† **Westover: Grace and East Ridge:Harmony UMCs**, Johnstown Dist.,  
Matthew Blake, Sr., pastor

**FEBRUARY 12 - 18, 2012**

*SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY--GREEN*

**READ:** 2 Kings 5:1-14, Psalm 30, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Mark 1:40-45

**PRAY FOR:** † **Conemaugh: First UMC**, Johnstown Dist., Cleo Carr, pastor  
† **Bairdford UMC**, Butler Dist., Jerry Pawloski, pastor  
† **Claysville: First and Zion UMCs**, Washington Dist., Rico J. Vespa, pastor  
† **Latrobe and New Derry UMCs**, Greensburg Dist., David J. Henderson, pastor  
† **Clairton: Pine Run UMC**, Washington Dist., Judith E. Winston-Thomas, pastor  
† **Youngsville: Evangelical UMC**, Kane Dist., Annette V. Gerber, pastor  
† **Knox UMC**, Franklin Dist., David S. Coul, pastor

**FEBRUARY 19 - 25, 2012**

*TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY--WHITE*

**READ:** 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20), Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51

**PRAY FOR:** † **Bethel First UMC**, Pittsburgh Dist., Sandra Marsh-McClain, pastor;  
Deborah Dennick-Ream, associate  
† **Wilmore: Lilly UMC**, Johnstown Dist., Valerie Conrad-Dembinsky, pastor  
† **Somerset: St. Johns UMC**, Connellsville Dist., Janice McLay, pastor  
† **Bradford: First UMC**, Kane Dist., Thomas R. Verner, pastor  
† **Coal Center: Grace UMC**, Washington Dist., John K. Smith, pastor  
† **South Greensburg UMC**, Greensburg Dist., Edwin J. Herald, pastor

**FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 4, 2012**

*FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT--PURPLE*

**READ:** Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15

**PRAY FOR:** † **Templeton/Kellersburg/Widnoon Charge**, Indiana Dist., Jason E. Schweinberg, pastor  
† **Bradford Area Parish**, Kane Dist., R. Max Miller, pastor; Fred J. Moore, associate  
† **Hollisopple: Hopewell UMC**, Connellsville Dist., Wilma G. Homer, pastor  
† **Waterford: Asbury UMC**, Erie-Meadville Dist., Dennis A. Fetter, pastor  
† **Valencia UMC**, Butler Dist., Robert L. Martin, pastor  
† **Harrisville UMC**, Franklin Dist., Ronald L. Hankey, pastor