In the previous issues I promised to use this space to encourage you to embrace a holy season of Lent focusing on “Three Things Lent Can Mean.”

- Lent can be about living the Gospel every day.
- Lent can be a time when we redefine what sacrifice means.
- Lent should be a time for spiritual “Spring cleaning.”

Piles of garage junk stored up all winter sits by the curb. The guy across the street on a ladder washing windows is serenaded by the roar of his spouse with the Dyson, cleaning the carpets of their home. It is spring and everyone is cleaning.

Few other times do you see cleaning embraced with such zeal. Whistling while the winter residue is swept out of the garage, gleefully getting lawn mowers to run, while the whole neighborhood exists under a cloud of Lysol. It’s spring in Iowa and it’s time to CLEAN.

We all know that this annual ritual is a part of our knocking the winter out of our lives. Some of us like the first snowfall – few like the last. Some love the piles of snow that accumulate in our neighborhood – none like the piles of road sand they leave behind. No matter, that is all behind us for now – it is spring, so we clean!

We clean the yard furniture, we wash windows, we clean cupboards and even stuff we have been cleaning all winter. We clean with extra vigor because it is spring! Praise the Lord!

So, now that the snow is gone and completely gone; now that we have had a good gully washer to get a lot of the sand out of the streets; now that our neighborhoods buzz with the sound of lawn implements and are perfumed by cleaning solutions, let us take the ideal of spring cleaning from that which is around us to what is in us.

Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word lencten, which means “spring.” The season is a preparation for Easter. Historically, Lent has been a period of fasting and repentance – that is, such as it were, a spiritual spring cleaning. My mind can wrap around that. This whole period (40 days plus 7 Sundays) is designed for us to take stock in who we are and recalibrate or reorient our lives to the way of Christ.

The traditions of fasting (or more broadly giving something up) and repentance (or more colloquially transforming or walking away from a behavior) are both cleansing. One purifies our body for the new to come in and the other rids ourselves of the less than useful – regardless, both are cleansing.

Lent will be over this weekend, but it is never too late to start a spiritual cleaning. Let the call of Easter not be a symbol of “I missed my chance” but rather “This is my chance” to really evaluate my spiritual life. Look at the smudges on your spirit, look at the vacancies in the rooms of your spiritual life that should be filled with God, examine the stuff in the garage of your soul that needs to be hauled to the curb and then START CLEANING.

Obviously, while I am part of the “spring cleaning team” at my home, that should not warrant any space in this esteemed and historic publication unless I turn this towards your spiritual lives. Allow me to do that.

The majority of the Protestant Church follows a calendar for the Christian Year. Among the seasons are Pentecost, that celebrates the power of the Holy Spirit, Advent, that leads us towards the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, Christmastide, which celebrates the birth and adolescence of Jesus, the Epiphany, during which we celebrate the eyes opened to Jesus as the Messiah and Lent, which comes in the spring.

Lent can be a time when we redefine what sacrifice means. Lent can be about living the Gospel every day. Lent can be a time when we redefine what sacrifice means. Lent should be a time for spiritual “Spring cleaning.”

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Pastor Mike
**TV Broadcast**

Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcast on Mediacom or ImOn Channel 4 at 7:00 PM on Monday evenings. There is a multi-week delay between when a sermon is preached and when it airs on TV.

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**Youth Mission Trip**

The 4:12 Student Ministry will be going to the Unite Work Camp on June 18-21 this summer! The students will be painting houses in the Clinton area. This is going to be a great opportunity for a service project for the students. For more information and registration form please go to http://marionmethodist.org/learn/youth

For any questions please contact Kelsie DeReus kdereus@marionmethodist.rog or 377-4856

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**Registration is open**

Summer Games University is a Christian Summer Camp for students who have completed 6-12 grades. This one-week camp is an experiential, relationship-focused camp where students will have the opportunity to learn more about who Jesus is and build relationships with other Christian students.

July 8-12, 2019 at Grinnell College

Register at www.sgu.camp

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**Ringing into Spring**

A Spring Handbell Concert
Sunday, May 5 at 4:00pm
Marion Methodist Church
5050 REC Drive, Marion

Reception immediately following
No Admission charged
Bring a canned food item to benefit the Marion Food Pantry

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**New to Marion Methodist?**

Hello my name is

Newcomer

Don't miss our next Newcomer Orientation where you can find out who we are, what we do, and how you can get connected!

April 21 at 9:15 AM

Administrative Office at the Church
Our next New Member Class will be Sunday afternoon, April 28. We invite you to join us for lunch at 11:30am in Room W10, followed by a fun-filled and informative class. We end the afternoon with our Membership Service at 2:45 pm. Please register for the class by Monday, April 22.

Contact Karen Schmitz at kschmitz@marionmethodist.org or (319) 377-4856. Childcare is available upon request.

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**Summer Worship Intern**

Hi! I'm Mara Louk and I'm a songwriter and worshipper. I'm currently in my freshman year at Visible Music College in Memphis, Tennessee. My dad is a Pastor in Cedar Rapids and I graduated from Prairie High School in 2018.

I am very excited to work at Marion Methodist this summer so that I can gain experience in my intended career field. I am hoping to learn more about what it takes to be a worship leader, including the preparations, the responsibilities that I will be taking on, furthering my relationship with Christ, how to be a good leader to bring others to Him, and ultimately have this wonderful learning experience.

**Summer Ministry Intern**

Hi, my name is Tyler Hungate, and I am excited to be the Summer Ministry Intern at Marion Methodist! This opportunity is especially important to me because my entire faith journey started as a member of the 4:12 Youth Ministry in eighth grade. I am currently studying religion and philosophy at Simpson College in Indianola, and I plan to pursue a career in ministry as a pastor or chaplain. I grew up in Marion as a teenager. I later accepted Christ into my life at Summer Games University. As a high school student at Linn-Mar, I was involved in 4:12, FLY, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Best Buddies, and I was a member of the football and track teams. Some of my favorite things to do are bike, play basketball or soccer, and spend time with family and friends.

This summer I am looking forward to being a part of the excellent ministry team at Marion Methodist. Working alongside our staff to facilitate spaces for the congregation to experience Christ together, will be an inspiring and educational experience. I am equally excited to assist in the summer programming of our youth ministry 4:12 both at home and at Summer Games. Mike and Kelsie, along with the entire congregation, have been very influential in helping me discern my call to ministry, and I am blessed to spend the summer growing alongside you all in our faith journeys.

**Are You Ready to Become a Member of Marion Methodist?**

Our next New Member Class will be Sunday afternoon, April 28. We invite you to join us for lunch at 11:30am in Room W10, followed by a fun-filled and informative class. We end the afternoon with our Membership Service at 2:45 pm. Please register for the class by Monday, April 22.

Contact Karen Schmitz at kschmitz@marionmethodist.org or (319) 377-4856. Childcare is available upon request.

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**Meals Schedule:**

- **Powerhouse**
  - Every Wednesday. From 5:45 pm to 6:15 pm, we have a Family Meal (Free Will Offering) and from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm we have activities for all ages.
  - **Preschoolers:** Kids may forget what you say - but they remember what they discover on their own. Get them “Hands On” with God’s Word. (Room E30)
  - **Kindergarten - 5th Grade:** Meet a Jesus that is real and relevant in your everyday life! Discover Jesus in you. (Room E10 & E60)
  - **4:12 Youth Group:** Junior High Worship 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sanctuary). High School Worship 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm (Sanctuary).
  - **Adult Classes:** Come for a midweek boost. Check out classes at www.marionmethodist.org
  - **Nursery:** Offered in the Nursery

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**Providing Spiritual Care**

When you or someone you love is receiving medical care, your pastoral staff endeavors to provide the best in Christian love and spiritual care through personal visits and prayer support. The hospitals are endeavoring to protect your personal information, and for that reason, the intake process has changed significantly in the past few years. More times than not, we learn of a hospitalization when someone has already gone home, which diminishes the spiritual care that we truly desire to offer. In order to provide that high level of care we must have your assistance. When you have been admitted or if you are scheduled for surgery please do the following:

Upon registration make it very clear to the person taking your information that you are a member of Marion First United Methodist Church and would like to have your pastoral team notified.

When a hospital chaplain visits you, re-iterate that you are a member of this church and would appreciate a visit from your pastors or ask to speak to one of the hospital chaplains and explain to them that you would like to have your church notified.

Have a family member or trusted friend call the church office at 377-4856, or email the Director of Pastoral Care, Vicki Standley, at vstandley@marionmethodist.org.

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**Conditions of Your Membership**

As you get ready to become a member of Marion Methodist, we ask that:

- You indicate your intention to enter into membership in Marion First United Methodist Church and would like to have your pastoral team notified.
- You appreciate a visit from your pastors or ask to speak to one of the hospital chaplains and explain to them that you would like to have your church notified.
- Have a family member or trusted friend call the church office at 377-4856, or email the Director of Pastoral Care, Vicki Standley, at vstandley@marionmethodist.org.

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**Marion Methodist is Praying for:**

Prayer is a powerful way of caring for each other in our Marion Methodist family. There are several avenues open to everyone – the prayer cards on Sunday morning and the prayer wall which is available 24/7, are two that are used most often. You can have a more active part in entering into prayer for each other. Check out the prayer wall frequently as prayers are submitted there often.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ this Easter, we pray that all will hear the message of Jesus’ triumph over the grave. May we pray diligently for all the world to know the depths and riches of the love and grace that is waiting for all who believe in God and the redeeming love of Jesus Christ.
**Meet the Staff**

Jen Digmann, Director of Adult Christian Education and Discipleship

Jen's role and responsibility deals with organizing adult discipleship, such as Bible studies, small groups, and the Women's conference. She is also in charge of Newcomer Orientation and PowerHouse meals.

On Wednesdays she’s in the office. Later in the day you would find her at our Church in the kitchen or in the classrooms. On Sunday she can be located in our Church Center. Jen’s office times are Monday and of course, Wednesday.

Jen's favorite part of her job is meeting all the people. She enjoys getting to know them and to help them get connected to the right classes and small groups. She also loves the Newcomer Orientation.

Jen would be the perfect person to ask any question about adult education. She could help steer you in the right direction for discipleship learning.

During Jen's 'free time' she enjoys being with her husband and 3 children. They love to play games, go camping, cook and bake together and play with their pets.