

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

February 22, 2023

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

TEMPTED. “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be *TEMPTED* by the devil.” (Matthew 4:1). We live in a time of contrasting *TEMPTATIONS* that entice us to make choices. While watching the Super Bowl recently, even though local teams did not make it into “the” game, watchers made a choice as to who they thought should win. There were some who were only interested in the half-time show with all of its razzle-dazzle and many who did not have any interest in the game.

Christians have begun another journey into the Lenten Season: 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter, not counting Sundays. It is a time of self-reflection about one’s faith in Jesus Christ and how to live that faith in covenant with spiritual communities and the world. So much is said about “*Giving up something for Lent.*” However, what is overlooked is the deeper faith issue of “*What is going to be received as a Lenten lesson.*” *TEMPTATION* draws us away from being faithful followers of Jesus Christ. In some ways it is easy to give up chocolate or broccoli during Lent and then after Lent is over to indulge in them again. The “*giving up*” is meant to self-reflect on those things that make life precarious and detrimental to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Lent is a time to give-up those habits that make us less than what God would want us to be and choosing God’s love in word and deed. It is receiving God’s Spirit to live the abundant life with gifts and graces from God to share with others. “*There is persistent hope in working to create a community based on belief in a loving God.*” (from Heidi Haverkamp’s “*Search: A Novel*”).

Notice in the text that “*the Spirit*” led Jesus “*into the wilderness to be TEMPTED by the devil.*” Comic Flip Wilson famous line is, “*The devil made me do it.*” Yielding to *TEMPTATION* is a personal response usually when we are most vulnerable. It was not until Jesus had fasted for forty days and was famished, that Jesus encountered the *TEMPTER*. At Jesus’ most vulnerable time, He faced making choices that could affirm or deny who He was and whose He was. Jesus chose to be faithful and God’s grace was triumphant. May we, also, chose to be faithful. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*