

March 5, 2025
Association Minister Message
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REMINDER. The Lenten season is a *REMINDER* that life is a journey with unlimited possibilities, transitions, and temptations. We begin Lent on Ash Wednesday; Lent *REMINDS* us of how mortal we are by hearing the striking words “*Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust.*” Even though life has beginnings and endings, the gift of eternalness overcomes the limitations of the world. It is what happens between the beginning and end that is filled with mystery and possibilities. Birth affirms God’s artistic handiwork in creation’s kaleidoscope, a mixture of simple to the complex. Birth is a *REMINDER* that our lives are connected, webbed together, interconnected, and needing others and the creation to have a productive and constructive life. Death’s power ends with the gift of the eternalness of resurrection.

As we begin our Lenten journey, we are *REMIND*ED of temptations and wilderness experiences. “*Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted (tested) for forty days by the devil.*” (Luke 4:1-2). Temptations from forces around us or from others are easy to blame for why we do evil or have troubled lives. However, we are *REMIND*ED that our own desires, wants, and narcissistic actions produce evil, disharmony, and sins to ourselves and others. We are tempted to be powerful, rich, physically fit, influential, and popular by any means. Lent *REMINDS* us as spiritual people that what we have is really not ours but are gifts to us from God to be caretakers/stewards of our lives and God’s creation..

“*Ashes to ashes, dust to dust*” *REMIND* us of and symbolize that we are mortal, not gods, and it is God who transforms us to be godly people. Lent is a season of self-examination, a period of correction (forgiveness) and affirmation as having both human and divine gifts. We are *REMIND*ED of all the brokenness in our lives and that God promises to make all things new now and forever. Healing and forgiveness from God enable transformation and a renewed life of a “*new heaven and a new earth*” over and over again and again. Scripture *REMINDS* us, “*After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from (Jesus) until the next opportunity.*” (vs. 13). With God’s help, we can find *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*