

## FROM OUR PASTOR:

As we enter into this Lenten season we should remember what it is that Lent means to us. The word Lent is derived from the word “Lencten” which means Spring and “Lectentid” which means Springtide and March.

Lent wasn’t something practiced in Jesus’ time, nor even in the early church. Rather, Lent began in early 300 A.D. Originally the time was set aside to remember your baptism or to prepare for your baptism. It was a time to purify yourself and to prepare you for Easter.

Today during Lent we put a lot of emphasis on sacrifice, giving alms, and prayer. We place a lot of our thoughts toward the journey to the cross. The church tends to make worship a little darker. You don’t rejoice or say “Alleluia” during Lent; nothing upbeat or “fun” is to happen during Lent!

I don’t think I agree with all of that. While, we do tend to keep the “Alleluia” out, I don’t think Lent needs to be a time of total darkness and sadness. We have Holy Week for that! Lent is, however, a time for us to look inward, to see ways we may have gotten off the path. Maybe we’ve gotten away from prayer, or away from study,

or away from church all together. Lent is an opportunity, given to us by the early Catholic church, and then picked up and broadened by many other faith traditions, to do our own “spring cleaning”. We will be preparing ourselves to be ever present and completely ready for Easter.

On Wednesday nights at 4:30 or at 6:30 during Lent, we will offer a class called “What Wondrous Love, Holy Week in Word and Art”. It is a program created by Emory’s Candler School of Theology, which looks at the story of Holy Week. There will be video of world-renowned biblical scholars and celebrated professors of preaching offering their expertise in discussions of how the gospel texts of Jesus’ last week on earth are brought to life in the artwork of John August Swanson. I look forward to some great conversation.

Our Sunday services during Lent will focus on “Old, New and Now”. What the Old Testament told us to prepare us for Easter, what the New Testament told us about the time leading up to Easter, and what that all has to do with us now.

I look forward to a special time this “spring” as we explore together Lent and how we can live Easter here and now.

~ Cheryl

### A Different Approach to Fasting

Christians often commit to a Lenten fast to commemorate and honor the 40 day fast that Jesus undertook during his time in the desert. Fasts have a tendency to be oriented toward things like giving up food or television. But there are many other creative ways we can welcome Jesus’ healing touch.

Here are some suggestions you may want to consider:

1. *Fast from anger and hatred.*

Give your family an extra dose of love each day.

2. *Fast from judging others.*

Before making any judgments, recall how Jesus overlooks our faults.

3. *Fast from discouragement.*

Hold on to Jesus’ promise that he has a perfect plan for your life.

4. *Fast from complaining.*

When you find yourself about to complain, close your eyes and recall some of the little moments of joy that Jesus has given you.

5. *Fast from resentment or bitterness.*

Work on forgiving those who may have hurt you.

FROM OUR **ASSOCIATE PASTOR:**

2015 is off to a fantastic start. Plenty of planning and prayer and preparation have us on a roll right now. If you have a few minutes, I'll tell you what I mean.

Snow Day, our first big event of the year, could not have been better! People laughed, played, visited, asked about our church, and thanked us.



I've heard all kinds of guesses (I imagine you have too) at how many people were here that day. It's safe to say the most people I've ever seen at our place showed up that day: 700? 1000? Seriously, A LOT! Watching you greet and serve, welcome and love our neighbors, seeing the diverse crowd—every color and size, strangers really, acting like family, enjoying each other—even waiting in that long slide line, made me think—more than once, how close the Kingdom of Heaven must be. Right there in front of Teague Chapel through your hands, and heart I felt your love for God and ALL of God's kids. Our neighbors did too. Many told me so. I hope they told you too. Thank you, thank you and thanks be to God.

Two weeks after Snow Day, you reached into your own pockets to feed people

on the street here in Austin through the Souper Bowl of Caring offering. Together we raised \$815.50 for God's Family Dinner, a mission of Micah 6 of Austin and University Baptist Church that feeds 150-200 of our Austin neighbors each week.

Fifteen minutes later, about thirty of us were at



Dart Bowl enjoying lunch and bowling together, kids of all ages, from 2 to 76. I heard several of you say, "We've GOT to do this again!" We will.

Two weeks after that, 104 kids & leaders from our camping association met at

Highland Lakes Camp on Lake Travis for the MidWinter Retreat. This past Sunday we welcomed 30 youth from a camp church, their chaperones, youth pastor, & pastor in worship. After church we all had a special lunch together in Sapp Hall and generations of folks made fleece blankets for children in recovery.



Two weeks from now, March 1st, we'll be a part of the CROP Walk at Camp Mabry to help raise funds to fight hunger locally, nationally and globally. It's

fun and close.

Our youth have just finished six weeks of study in Sunday School, taking a critical look at some of our core beliefs as followers of Christ and at some of the ripples those beliefs have on our living—kind of a Baptist confirmation class. And that leaves us looking for ways to heat the water in the Baptismal font.

What else is going on? The parsonage renovation is being finished up by Jim Nuckols and his crew, after several weeks of demo work by our youth and college crew. John & Charles Osgood are giving us the new air conditioner and heater.

We're hoping that we'll have a new tenant in there in March, and the rent will go to making God's Kingdom a nearer reality here.

It's a pretty darn good start for the first two months of the year, don't ya think? I sure do.

Peace, Kevin

FROM OUR **DIRECTOR OF**  
**CHURCH OPERATIONS:**

Highland Park operations are running smoothly and our building continues to be a lovely space for growth in our community.

Huntington Surrey School had a wonderful first semester in their new home: our building. Our staff was invited to their special Thanksgiving potluck and enjoyed both delicious food and stories of academic success. HSS has now been able to introduce a National Honor Society chapter at their school and will proudly induct three students into NHS on Friday, February 20.

Beginning this week, seven 8-week sessions of Lifetime Learning Institute classes will begin in our building, helping over 100 seniors to learn new languages, study poetry or books, write personal memoirs, and more. After room rentals were suspended at a nearby church, we have been able to welcome four new anonymous groups into our building.

Highland Park receives endless thanks for this hospitality and support.

The Property Ministry is hard at work to keep our building a beautiful, special place for groups of all kinds to meet each week. We invite you to help in this effort by participating in the Church Workday on Saturday, March 28, one week before Easter.

The Communications & Technology Ministry and Membership/Stewardship Ministry are both hard at work to refresh the church's website, contribute to the HPBC blog, and keep all informed of the wonderful activities at HPBC. If you'd be willing to help by being a web monitor, contact John Hastings.

The Personnel Ministry reworked the schedule for our church custodian, John Guerra, to four days a week, including Sundays, and this update is going very well. In January, Brian Pettey joined the HPBC staff as the Music Coordinator. Finally, on January 31st, I happily celebrate four years alongside the wonderful folks of HPBC.

Thanks for all you do for me, for Austin, for the world, for God. Let's keep it up. ~ Kelley

**Upcoming Wednesday Weavings Schedule**

Wednesday night is the time when friends and members of HPBC meet for fellowship and study. There's nothing like a hearty meal, prepared by our own church members to bring our community together during the week for a relaxed time of food, fellowship, and fun. So that we might best prepare the dinner, please give your RSVP to the church office by marking the pew register on Sunday morning or by calling or emailing before Tuesday at noon. All are welcome.

**February 18:** Dinner by Team Dee Dee at 5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30 p.m.

**February 25:** "What Wondrous Love" Lenten Art Study at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Dinner by Team Nancy at 5:30 p.m.

**March 4:** Roundtable Ministry Meetings during dinner by Team Alana at 5:30 p.m.

**March 11:** "What Wondrous Love" Lenten Art Study at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Dinner by Team Dee Dee at 5:30 p.m.

**March 18:** *Spring Break...no dinner or program*

**March 25:** "What Wondrous Love" Lenten Art Study at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner by Team Nancy at 5:30 p.m. and Quarterly Church Conference at 6:15 p.m.

**(Thursday) April 2:** Maundy Thursday Seder Service with dinner at 6:00 p.m. (No Wednesday event)

**April 8:** Roundtable Ministry Meetings during dinner by Team Roy at 5:30 p.m.

**April 15:** Dinner by Team Dee Dee at 5:30 p.m. *Activity to be announced...*

**April 22:** Dinner by Team Alana at 5:30 p.m. with an Earth Day presentation by Walt Shelton at 6:30 p.m.

**April 29:** Kerygma Course on the book of Jonah at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Dinner by Team Nancy at 5:30 p.m.

**May 6:** Kerygma Course on the book of Jonah at 4:30 & 6:30 p.m.  
Roundtable Ministry Meetings during dinner by Team Roy at 5:30 p.m.

**May 13:** Kerygma Course on the book of Jonah at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Dinner by Team Alana at 5:30 p.m.

**May 20:** Kerygma Course on the book of Jonah at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Dinner by Team Dee Dee at 5:30 p.m.

**May 27:** Dinner by Team Nancy at 5:30 p.m. and Quarterly Church Conference at 6:15 p.m.