

# ELCA

## Living in God's Amazing Grace

**Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world**

## HOPE LUTHERAN

*We Care, Share, and Prepare so that all experience the Love of Jesus Christ*

### LENT AND PMC

PMC?

What's that?

Lent?

What's that got to do with PMC?

Some may know what PMC means but most probably don't. It stands for Partnership for Missional Church. For the past year Hope has been involved, along with 14 other Lutheran Churches in the metropolitan area, preparing to live in our community in some new ways. A core group has been faithfully preparing to begin implementing new things (just when you were hoping things we going to calm down!). This new thing won't happen quickly and we don't even know what it will be. I do know it will be exciting. I know this new thing will need you and your gifts to make it happen. I am convinced it will make a difference. When 2010 has come and gone, Hope will have become even more of what Hope already is:

A God-centered, biblical community with a clear vision for mission

- † Having a greater sense of God's activity in our congregation and community
- † With more of you owning Hope's mission
- † Discovering more of our members are committed to and capable of making disciples
- † Possessing both a vision for mission and a practical action plan to achieve it
- † Developing deeper relationships with other PMC congregations and partners in the broader community

It will begin with doing our best to determine where God is already busy in our community and then figuring out how God wants to us join in. I don't know where it will end. I do know it will be a magnificent journey.

But what does this have to do with Lent?

I believe Lent is our opportunity to stop and step back for a few moments. For many reasons, Lent is not my, and I think many others, favorite season. It seems to be a dark and dreary focus in a dark and dreary time of the year—a double whammy. I know of few who get great joy out of spending 40 days in self reflection, being reminded that from dust we have come and to dust we shall return. Having just celebrated a joyful season of gift giving and getting, what's so great about spending the next 40 days giving up something important to me? I can get depressed just writing this!

So what does PMC have to do with Lent?

PMC and Lent possess a common characteristic. We can be so busy with what we are doing, we forget who we are and whose we are. Days become consumed the demands of daily living. Our lives begin to feel out of control as we react to the urgent and important—and the urgent and unimportant. With little time to reflect on what really counts, we can easily find out lives shaped by what may be urgent. Some things are important and urgent and we need to sprint, at least for a while. If all we do is sprint, ultimately our only predictable accomplishment will be fatigue. The urgent ultimately robs us being able to have our lives shaped but what is important but not urgent.

Allowing our lives to be shaped by the important doesn't just happen. I find it is hard work because it forces me to have to stop doing and spend time just being.

This is what PMC and Lent have in common. They are God's gift of stopping so we can remember whose we are. Only then can we know who we are. It is opportunity to stop long enough to rediscover just what shapes our decisions and forms our character. It is another chance to put out of our lives whatever may be getting in the way of remembering whose we are.

It's a different kind of giving up for Lent. It's not a demonstration to God of how we are a bit more worthy and acceptable because we are able to resist chocolate for 40 days. PMC and Lent are gifts from God, to provide space in our lives so God can remind us whose we are and who we are. It is opportunity to remember one more time—it is our baptism, not our work or our hobby or our status, that determines our worthiness.

PMC and Lent are gifts of reflection, of allowing space in our lives, of stopping the busyness in our lives long enough to listen and reflect and learn.

Maybe Lent is not so dark and dreary. Maybe PMC is not one more thing to interfere with our busy lives. Maybe—just maybe—Lent and PMC are gifts from God so God can remind us we can let God shape our lives around the important. Maybe it is just the time and space we need to allow our lives to be shaped and molded and energized and ordered by a God who anxiously waits for us to make room for God in our busyness so we might be given the gift of the peace that passes all understanding.

*Pastor Lundin*