

Lyons Muir Church
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“The Blue Healer”

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I do choose. Be made clean!” (Mark 1: 40-41)

The other day I was walking in our neighborhood and I passed by a woman walking a blue healer. I knew that’s what kind of dog it was, because blue healers have a distinctive coloring: a seemingly random mixture of browns, blacks, grey and whites. Along with those distinctively perky, pointy ears, and the way a healer always seems to be smiling, there was no mistaking this dog. As we came towards each other on the sidewalk, the dog looked up and me and made as if to say hello. So I knelt down on one knee and held out my palm in condescension to the sniff test. I said to the woman, “What a beautiful dog.” “Thank you,” she said, “I got her from a rescue. I couldn’t believe they were going to put her down. But her time was up. So even though I was looking for a Boxer, I came home with her. There wasn’t even much wrong with her. She’d been underfed and had some worms, but all that was easily sorted out.” “Enjoy your walk,” I said, having gotten a full dose of doggy snuggles. “Thanks,” the woman replied with a wide, warm smile. She obviously took real pleasure in how well her dog was doing, and how she had been in the right place at the right time to give life to this beautiful creature.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- SUNDAYS Worship on the
 Lord’s Day, 11
- MONDAYS No regular events
- TUESDAYS Office Hours, 9-12
- WEDNESDAYS
 Bible Study, 6:30-7:30
 Ionia First UMC, Cafe
- THURSDAYS Office Hours, 9-2
 Bible Study, 12-1

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Board of Governors meeting
Monday 4-11 at 7 P.M.
- Sunday 4-17
Potluck after Church

I thought about my encounter with that dog for the rest of my walk. What if that lady hadn't rescued that dog? What if I had decided on that Tuesday, that because the weather was akin to yesterday's pea soup, it would be better to simply continue reading theology? What if I had just nodded a greeting as they passed, instead of kneeling down on the wet cement to find out if that blue healer smile was genuine? If any of those things had been true, that dog and her story would not have filled my life with hope.

The choices we make in the small moments of our lives matter. In fact, these are the most important choices of our lives. We think otherwise though. We suppose that who we choose to love, or what job we choose, or whether we go to college or not, or whether and/or how many kids to have, or whether we've chosen the right religion to be saved... etc. We suppose these to be the life-altering choices that will irrevocably shaped the rest of our existence. But it isn't true. These choices have significant consequences, but they do not define *who we are*. Rather, each one of us defines who we are in the tiny, almost-imperceptible, split-second decisions we make every day to be either open or closed.

Jesus always chose to be open. And it defined who he was... it defines who he is. Even when Jesus was wasted with fatigue or aggravation (see Mark 7 for dramatic and pointed examples), he always found his big ideas being overridden by his love, the same love he had received from the One he called Father. As we enter into the season of Lent -- a season meant to draw us closer to Christ in the recollection of his Passion, Death, and Resurrection -- let us not give up things because we think that doing without something that makes us happy will someone provide us with an understanding of Christ's experience and ministry. You can give up cheese burgers or chocolate, or scotch and cigars, or what have you... You'll be no better a Christian after 40 days. That's because

these big decisions don't matter in the end. Rather, in all the moments when despair comes to crush your heart, let it go. When grief comes to cut your faith to shreds, give it up. When anger and self-righteousness are robbing you of sleep and peace: give them up for a Holy Lent. And if you feel powerless, like the leper in the passage above, the come to Jesus and ask him: "Lord if you choose, you can take away my despair... my shame... my sin.... my grief... my self-righteousness... my self-deprecation... my hapless lethargy... my unfulfilling trust in things... Lord if you choose, you can make me well." Say that to Jesus, and see if he doesn't speak directly into the deep places of your hearts with the simple words: "I do choose." Trust him, brothers and sisters. Put your whole trust in his grace. And in your small choices then, become like him as you open yourself to the joys and agonies of the world.

In his Name, and for the sake of his Love,
Pastor Jonathan



4 Ways to Observe Lent

Lent is a season of focus and preparation. It aligns our hearts with God's heart as we approach Easter. The following are just a few ways to focus and prepare.



Give It Up

Consider giving up something that distracts from your important relationships: like too much time on Twitter or Clash of Clans.

Maybe cut out screen usage for several hours a day.

Take a day of true rest: let go of toil for 24 hours.



Plug In

Consider adding in something that helps you connect to God.

Read a book of the Bible, a devotional, or practice Lectio Divina on a daily basis.

A LENTEN HISTORY LESSON

Though the date of Easter varies, the majority of the Lenten season occurs during March. In fact, the word *Lent* comes from the Anglo-Saxon words *lenctentid* (meaning “March”) and *lencten* (meaning “spring”).

The first reference to Lent dates back to 325 AD, in one of the 20 canons decreed at the council of Nicaea. By the eighth century, Christians started observing Lent, and a 10th-century monk named Aelfric connected the use of ashes and “the Lenten fast” to the pre-Easter period.

Lent lasts 40 days to represent Jesus’ time in the wilderness, when he was tempted by the devil. The six Sundays that occur between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday aren’t counted as part of Lent; instead, as the traditional day of worship, they’re considered “mini-Easters.”



Don't forget to set your clocks forward on Sunday March 13.

COME LORD JESUS
ODE FOR BLUE CHRISTMAS

He's old, this one I've come to know.
Pops they call him, so I do too –
though his name is Charles...
crinkled 'round the eyes,
long mustache at odds with his mouth,
tobacco stains on the whiskered white,
selling papers to save his life,
haltingly, on this Memphis curb –
a child of God, but
every minute a moment of strife.
Why should it be so?
this one in suffering so far from my image
of the One who made us –
Does God look like this? I cannot think it...
I know it must be true.
O Son of God come down!
Come down Jesus!
Since you're really there... come quickly.
Do not be far from us. Do not delay.
Here we are. Here we weep
and do not understand...
I do not understand.

You are silent –
though I hear you softly singing the blues
as you take my coins and look at me.





PUZZLE

MAKE MUSIC TO THE LORD

 People of the Bible used many different instruments to worship God through music. 

Directions: Using the clues, unscramble the names of instruments found in Psalm 150. Then write the circled letters in order in the spaces below to complete verse 6.



A type of horn	___ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/>	MUR TET P
Played by King David	<input type="checkbox"/> _ _ _ _	PR HA
Plucked to make sound	_ <input type="checkbox"/> _ _ _ _ _	IG SN STR
Similar to a tambourine	_ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> _ _ _	MR BEL IT
A type of harp	_ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/>	EL RY
Blown through to make sound	_ _ <input type="checkbox"/> _	EP PI
A percussion instrument	_ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> _	YBL AC MS

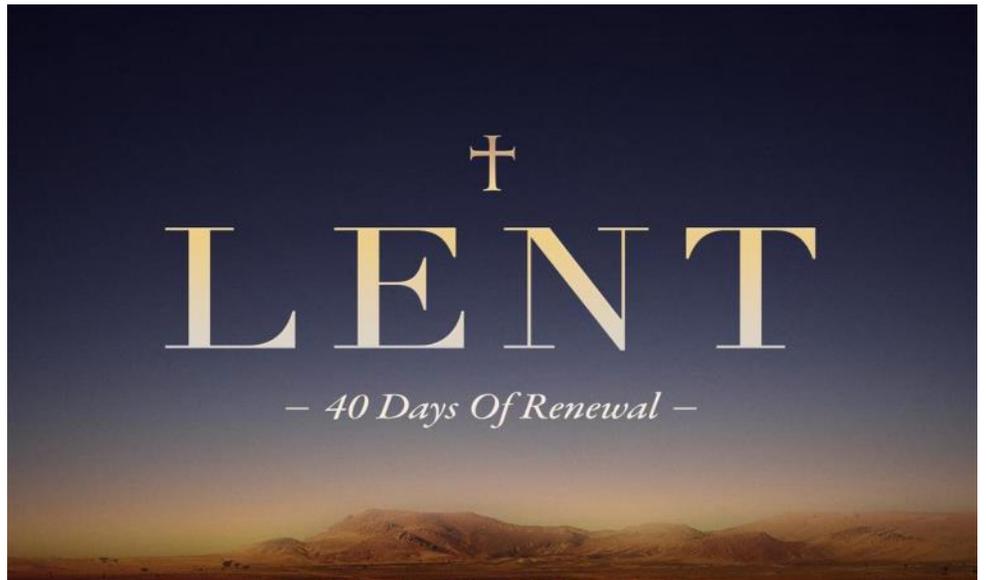
Le_ everyt_ing tha_ has _r_ath
_raise the _ORD. Psalm 150:6, NIV

Answer: trumpet, harp, strings, timbrel, lyre, pipe, cymbals; Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Psalm 150:6, NIV



MISSION STATEMENT

The Lyons-Muir Church is called to be God's healing and hope-filled congregation, and to make followers of Jesus Christ for the positive transformation of our community through lives of prayer, love, forgiveness, honesty, acceptance, and trust.



SCHEDULE OF LENTEN SERVICES

March 13: 2nd Sunday of Lent

March 20: 3rd Sunday of Lent

March 27: 4th Sunday of Lent

April 3: 5th Sunday of Lent

Holy Communion

April 10: 5th Sunday of Lent

Palm Sunday

JOINT HOLY WEEK SERVICES

April 14: Maundy Thursday

6:30 p.m. IOFUMC

Holy Communion

April 15: Good Friday

12 Noon IOFUMC

April 16: Saturday

Easter Egg Hunt at 10 a.m.

April 17: Easter Sunday

Hot Breakfast at 9:30 a.m.

Worship at 11 a.m.

