**Fasting for Lent 2021 Ash Wednesday February 17 to April 4 Resurrection Sunday**

**Christian Fasting - What is it?**
Biblically, fasting is abstaining from food, drink, sleep or sex to focus on spiritual growth. Specifically, we humbly deny something of the flesh to glorify God, enhance our spirit, and go deeper in our prayer life.

**Christian Fasting – An Invitation to Focus Deeper on God**
Christian fasting isn't some kind of a "work" that's commanded by Christ or required by Scripture. However, that doesn't mean that fasting isn't recommended as a part of our spiritual growth. The Book of Acts records believers fasting before they made important decisions (**Acts 13:4; 14:23**). Fasting and prayer are often linked together **(Luke 2:37; 5:33).** Too often, the focus of fasting is on the lack of food. However, the purpose of fasting is to take our eyes off the things of this world and instead focus on God. Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God and to ourselves that we are serious about our relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

God has again called ***Lincoln UMC*** to go into a season of fasting during the season of Lent. This Fast will focus on spiritual growth and physical health while helping us to discern God’s plan for our life as we obey His Word: ***1 Samuel 15:22***

I invite you to Daniel Fast, which allows for certain items to be eaten during the day. For more information: <http://daniel-fast.com/>

**Take the time that you would eat to spend in prayer. Our prayer focus for Lent 2021 is:** [**https://youtu.be/TXbLl7DhlJ8**](https://youtu.be/TXbLl7DhlJ8)

* To be grateful for the gift of salvation and to seek ways to share the Gospel with loved ones
* To align ourselves with the will of God through prayer, study, worship and services
* To add a daily discipline that helps us grow spiritually, physically, mentally or emotionally
* ***To see the eradication of the COVID-19 virus as soon as possible***
* ***To build up ourselves, Lincoln UMC and our community***
* To strengthen the relationships within our families. Marriages, parenting and other relationships
* To eliminate the spirit and practice of racism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia from the Church and community

**Over the Next 40 Days our challenge is to 4-3-2-1**

**4**0 Days (46 including Sundays) to be faithful to the fast

**3** days a week do 30 minutes of exercise to improve physical health

**2** books on spiritual renewal and growth to be read during this season

**1** act of changing lives through love that will help transform someone’s life

***John Wesley*** practiced fasting 2X a week, connecting it to Prayer as an important means of grace

**Means of Grace** – process in which God provides grace; enhanced by Scripture, Prayer, Fasting – **Ezra 4:2, Matt 4:2, Acts 13:3**

**Reasons for fasting:**

1. Express sorrow for sin
2. Special sign of penitence for the sin of indulging in excessive food and drink
3. Assist in praying, creates more time, substitute meal preparation and eating with prayer

**Fasting Deny yourself - Enhance spiritual relationship with God**

* Strengthen our prayer life
* Fasting is recommended not commanded. Importance of choosing to fast
* Fasting is necessary for important decisions **Acts 13:4, Acts 14:23**
* Link between prayer and fasting – **Luke 2:37, Luke 5:33**
* Switch focus from material self to spiritual self
* Fasting can include things other than food –(**1 Cor 7:1:5)**
* Fasting should not be punishment but a source of renewal
* All believers have the capacity to fast and should take advantage of the opportunity
* **Isaiah 58** – true fast will align with your lifestyle
* Lifestyle of prayer, worship and fasting
* Humility servant ministry humbling the flesh pleases God. We should not take pride in our fasting
* Harmony with God Fasting opens our ears to the voice of God
* Fasting is a spiritual discipline used by Moses, Jesus, Elijah
* Fasting does not make God answer prayer. Fasting is making correction to come into alignment with God
* Fasting builds up patience and endurance – **Romans 5, James 1**
* Fasting is part of discipleship – **Matt 6**
* Guided by the Holy Spirit fasting is a process of physical and spiritual detox
* Fasting provides self discipline
* By concentrating on God, Fasting can be a wake-up call to our need for and dependency on God.