



March 2017

Dear North East District Family,

Today begins the season of Lent. I look forward to Lent (which may sound odd) because it always helps me to think about those places in my life and faith journey where I need to work. I think of it as a kind of “spring cleaning” in my soul to prepare myself for a deeper faith journey and to celebrate Easter in all its glory in 40 days. I think about the things I need to give up so I can be a better follower of Jesus. I also think about the practices I need to add.

I’ve been thinking about that quite a bit this week and the thought occurred to me, “What if churches used Lent to look at their own collective souls to see how they can deepen their faith journey and mission?” Collectively as the church, when we’re baptized or confirmed, we promise to resist the powers of evil. We repent of our sin and turn towards following Jesus with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. We promise our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the mission of Jesus. What would it look like if our faith communities took the next 40 days to intentionally think about how we’re fulfilling those vows? What might our churches need to give up so we can better make disciples? What do we need to start doing or add so we can be more effective?

Perhaps your church council or leadership team could ask: how are we doing with our church’s collective prayer life? What strategies do we need to employ to improve? How is our faith community doing with showing up for worship and being generous? How could we encourage one another to do better? How might we be better engaged with our community in relational ways that meet people at their point of need and offer them Jesus? How are we being intentional about proactively sharing the Gospel message that Jesus loves us all and came to save us from our sins?

It’s a leadership exercise that’s worth exploring. We might just emerge from Lent not only with our individual souls in better shape, but together we might be better prepared to live out the mission of the church by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

God bless you during this Lenten season. I’m available to help if I can!

All God’s love,
Jay