

## **What God Requires: Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly**

The season of Lent is a time for intentional self-reflection, preparation, and a commitment to deep, faithful, living. We fast and pray. We give up our old self-centered ways and strive to make God the center of our lives. We follow Jesus' example of love and self-sacrifice. We anticipate God's promise at Easter... that God can raise up new people, faithful people, powerful people capable of extending and expanding God's Kingdom throughout creation.

This Lenten season, at St. Andrew UMC, we will take up the call for justice. Throughout the Old and New Testaments God's primary and unwavering call upon all people is to submit fully to God in faithful obedience and to remember God's mighty acts of love, liberation, and salvation. God's call in this is unmistakable:

God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Ash Wednesday 2/14:            Broken in Every Way            2 Samuel 12:1-7

Justice and injustice exist in the context of personal relationships. When we treat others poorly we sin and grieve God. We need to lift our hearts to God and ask God to make them clean.

Sunday 2/18:                    True Fasting                    Isaiah 58:2-9

God reminds us that the most important spiritual disciplines are justice and mercy. We can get caught up in doing 'spiritual' or 'religious' things while neglecting God's first, most important desire.

Sunday 2/25:                    Remember Your Slavery            Exodus 3:7-8; Deuteronomy 24:17-22

God set people free... AND God asks in return that we act on behalf of the poor and oppressed, the orphan and widow, and act with justice and mercy.

Sunday 3/4:                    On the Backs of the Poor            Amos 5:10-13; Amos 5:21-24

The rich get richer. The poor get poorer. The vulnerable are exploited. Our responsibility is to confront corruption with justice and mercy.

Sunday 3/11:                    Good Company                    Luke 6:20-26

Jesus central teaching is a reversal of worldly expectations. We need to remember that we do not gauge our success or well-being by the standards of this world... but by the extent to which we are obedient to God's justice and mercy.

Sunday 3/18:                    Extravagant Justice                    Matthew 20:1-16

In Jesus, God's justice is extravagantly generous. We are called to remember that God treats us better than we deserve.

Palm Sunday 3/25:            The End of the World            Psalm 118:1,2, 19-29; John 12:12-15

When Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday two worlds are about to collide cataclysmically. The injustice of the world collides with perfect the justice and mercy of God, something has got to give.

Holy Thursday 3/29:            Darkness Before the Dawn            Luke 6:27-36

During the Last Supper Jesus makes God's new promise... by his sacrifice God opens a way for all people to be forgiven, reconciled, and redeemed. It's the greatest embodiment of Jesus' life: love that exhibits extravagant and generous justice and mercy.

Easter Sunday 4/1:            Arise!                            Mark 16:1-8

While injustice seems to be 'locked in' to our experience of the world throughout history... it does NOT have the last word. It's shocking, bewildering, and amazing! Jesus is alive! And, with him reigns justice and mercy for all.