



Quakertown United Methodist Church

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Visit our website at www.qumc.com

Share Christ Grow in Christ Serve Christ

February 2010

LENT



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17, and ends on the Saturday before Easter. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means “spring,” the time of lengthening of days. Lent lasts forty days, not counting Sundays.

In earlier times, Lent was a solemn season. People ate no meat, fish, cheese, butter, eggs, or milk and used no lard in cooking. Until 1863, England had a law forbidding these foods during Lent. Violators could be fined or imprisoned. Only the sick and infirm were excused. Brightly-colored clothes, games, parties, and festivities were forbidden. But the days just before Lent were another matter!

For many European countries the time before Lent was carnival time with parades, dances, games, sports, antics and wild revels. *Mardi Gras*, literally “fat Tuesday,” was a feast day before Ash Wednesday. Now *Mardi Gras* is a pre-Lenten carnival celebrated in parts of Europe, Latin America, and North America. New Orleans is famous for its *Mardi Gras*. Just after Epiphany, January 6, festivities begin with balls and parades and continue until the early hours of Ash Wednesday morning.

Shrovetide is the English name for the three or four days before Lent. The name comes from the word *shrive*, to confess one’s sins and receive absolution. Christians were expected to prepare for Lent by being shriven. But Shrovetide was also a time to clear the house of foods forbidden during Lent.

On Collop Monday small pieces, or collops, of meat were eaten. On Shrove Tuesday pancake meals and pancake contests used up butter, eggs, and milk. In Russia the Monday before Ash Wednesday was Clean Monday. Pans were scoured to remove any lingering hint of forbidden meat fat. In some rural areas of the United States, people cleaned the church on the Monday of Holy Week.

Why not use this time of Lent to discover the meanings of other traditions and customs of Lent, using the resources in the church or public library?

Further on in the newsletter you will find information on the Lenten Sunday sermons. Wednesday evening worship services following Ash Wednesday will be led by Jack Ross, Brad Leight, Tim Stewart, Mike Lehr, and Pastor Josh Meyer.



Nancy's Nook



As I sit here writing this column, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, is a few weeks away. Lent has traditionally been a time of reflection and giving up of some material thing. I would like to continue the tradition of reflection and take a journey through the wilderness as I dwell on the awe and wonder of the approaching Easter. But instead of “giving up” something, I want to “put on” something!

I want to put on the “armor” of Christ. (*Eph. 5:11,13-18: Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes...Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*)

By putting on the armor of God, I will find strength and courage, a deeper faith, and allow the Holy Spirit to work within me as I take the time during this forty days of Lent to reflect upon my faith, my ministry, and my Lord. I look forward with joy to this time.

In verse 19 Paul also writes: “*Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel...*” This, too, I ask of you, as I prepare my Lenten sermon series, “Journey of Stones.” But, I too, pray this prayer for you as the ministry continues through you here at Quakertown United Methodist Church. May Lent be a time of “taking on” for you as we journey toward Easter! Amen.

Blessings and peace,

Confirmation Mentor Program

Youth in the upcoming confirmation class will work with lay mentors, building a relationship with an adult, who is a faithful Christian. (The mentor may not be a relative.)

Youth can look over their mentor’s shoulders to see what it means to be an involved and participating person of faith. Students and their mentors will meet at mutually agreed upon and convenient times to:

1. Read the gospel of Luke together.
2. Attend worship together.
3. Study the congregation’s budget to find out where offerings go and how to decide on making a financial commitment to the church.
4. Attend together any one of QUMC’s administrative board, trustee, COM, or financial board meetings.
5. Work through the book Claim the Name, Talk Points for Mentors & Youth.

Mentors will be selected by the students themselves. **If you would like to be a mentor, please let Pastor Nancy know so that a list may be given to the students to help make his/her choice.**



Lenten Worship

February 17 **Ash Wednesday - A CALL TO A HOLY LENT, A Journey of Stones**

Scripture: Exodus 32:1-14
Exodus 32:15-24

Theme: Have you ever made promises - agreements that have significant and far-reaching consequences - and then gone back on your word? Promises that, if broken, turn the world upside-down?

Title: "Written In Stone"

February 21 **First Sunday in Lent**

Scripture: Psalm 118
Mark 12:1-2

Theme: It's a terrible thing to be rejected. Rejection can transform us into caring, sensitive, and compassionate people; or it can leave us cold, judgmental, and angry.

Title: "Rejected Stones"

February 28 **Second Sunday in Lent**

Scripture: John 8:1-12

Theme: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me." We know from our own experience that criticism can hurt us deeply. Maybe we should say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can sting like anything."

Title: "Sticks and Stones"

March 7 **Third Sunday in Lent**

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Theme: "Come to HIM, a living stone, though rejected by mortals, yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." -Peter 2:4-5

Title: "Living Stones"

March 14 **Fourth Sunday in Lent - Communion**

Scripture: Luke 11:37-52

Theme: Who in the world did the Pharisees and scribes think they were? These religious men of means of first-century Judaism continually confronted Jesus with roadblocks of reason, while Jesus confronted them with building blocks of justice and love.

Title: "Hearts of Stone"



March 21 **Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Scripture: Matthew 16:12-20

Theme: Do we give answers without listening to or thinking about the question?

Title: "Upon this Rock"

March 28 **Passion/Palm Sunday**

Scripture: Luke 19:29-40

Theme: The journey has finally come to its illogical conclusion. After three years of preaching and teaching and helping and healing, Jesus arrives in the city of Jerusalem and is met by screaming crowds. We still have a week to go in the season of Lent, but today marks the beginning of the "end" for Jesus.

Title: "Crying Stones"

March 29 **Holy Monday**

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9, Philipians 2:5-11, John 12:1-11

Meditation: "The Correct Lens"

March 30 **Holy Tuesday**

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 71, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Meditation: "Living the Good Life: Even When All Seems Lost"

March 31 **Holy Wednesday**

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 71, Hebrews 12:1-3, John 12:20-36

Meditation: "The Cross: An Ornament or An Imprint"

April 1 **Maundy Thursday**

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

Theme: Service of Basins with Communion

Title: "Stones to Bread"

April 2 **Good Friday**

Scripture: Matthew 27:60

Theme: *It is finished!* But what is "it"?

Title: "The Final Stone"



April 3 **Easter Vigil - Holy Saturday**

Scripture: Matthew 27:24-66, Mark 15:16-47, Luke 23:24-56, John 19:1-42

Theme: “It’s over.”

Title: “Thoughts of Peter: The House in Jerusalem, Early Morning”

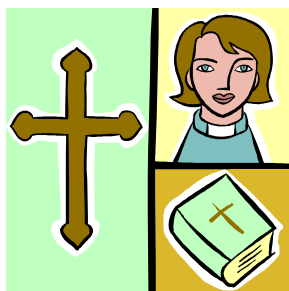
April 4 **Easter Sunrise Service**

Easter Traditional Service - 8:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Theme: Resurrection

Title: “He’s Alive!”



From the Pastor

During Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, I will be preaching a series of sermons with the theme “A Journey of Stones: A Journey of Prayerful and Honest Repentance.” The sermons promise a journey not only of prayerful and honest repentance, but also of celebration, of grace, of awe at the miracle of the empty tomb and the promise of life.

Along the way, we will confess our faith, we will weep with sorrow, we will tell the truth about ourselves, and we will eat and drink bread and wine. We will stand together at the foot of the cross, lay out stones — and our sins — down, and leave in wonder. We will together journey through Holy Week and together proclaim the resurrection. The journey ends with the joyous invitation to be free, to be alive in Christ!

I pray that as we lay our stones, our sins, our tears at the foot of the cross the Holy Spirit will meet us there and we will be changed.

In this newsletter you will find the scripture readings, theme, and title of each week’s sermon. I encourage you to prepare for worship each week by reading the designated scripture and letting it speak to you. In each week’s bulletin will be two or three discussion questions, appropriate to the scripture and sermon, for you to think about during the week. (If anyone would like to meet after church for an informal discussion group using these questions, please let me know.)

It is my prayer that you and your family have a blessed time of reflection, repentance, spiritual growth, and love during the season of Lent and that Easter joy is yours all year long!



Just For Kicks !!!

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Translation: God is with the religious doubters, the seekers, and those who have more questions than answers. God's dreams for the world include you.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Translation: God is with those who grieve the loss of a loved one, those whose parents have split up, those whose relationships are strained. God's love, peace, and presence extends to you.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Translation: God is with those whose voices go unheard, whose self-worth has crumbled, those who no longer feel comfortable in their own skin. You are made in God's beautiful image and are welcomed members of God's new world that is already-but-not-yet.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Translation: God is with those who long for the world to be made right, who seek the end of poverty, homelessness, disease, hunger, and all forms of injustice. You will find hope and freedom in the good news that God is putting the world back together.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Translation: God is with those who offer second-chances and forgiveness, even to their worst enemies. In doing so, you will be reminded that in the same way God has offered you new beginnings and fresh starts.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Translation: God is with those who do what is right when no one is looking, who tell the truth even when it hurts, and who have rightly ordered their priorities in this life. God will reveal himself to you in particularly sweet and meaningful ways, though often in the most unexpected of places and people.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Translation: God is with those who choose peace over violence, love over vengeance, and grace over retaliation. You have indeed understood what it means to be called God's people in the world.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Translation: God is with you when you have been laid off, cut from sports teams, excluded from crowds, rejected by supposed friends, abused by those claiming to love you, misunderstood and gossiped about, even for your commitment to the Way of Jesus. You are not alone and will find joy in the Resurrection parade of the Messiah and the movement of the gospel.

It's easy to read the Beatitudes and turn them into a list of religious rules and self-help steps that guarantee our entrance into heaven. "Be humble. Be meek. Be a peacemaker. Be merciful. If I do these things, then I can get into heaven." But as I've been learning, such a mindset reduces and ruins these powerful and subversive statements. At their core, these are statements of blessing, not another set of rules to be kept.

First and foremost, Jesus is making an announcement, a proclamation, that God's kingdom has come into the world through him, and the good news is that God's love and blessed assurance is that we are all welcome, especially the ones who are often the most excluded and shoved aside by the world.

The beatitudes, then, are an invitation to receive the good news that Jesus has invited you, in all your weakness and struggle and confusion and pain, to participate in the Kingdom. They are also an invitation for us to have our eyes and hearts open to those Jesus calls blessed, and for us to discover fresh and beautiful ways to be present with and invite them into the way of Jesus.

You're invited. God is with you. Invite others. Be with them. Accept and extend the grace and mercy of Jesus. Blessed are...



Bits & Pieces

Disciple Bible Study will begin on **Monday, February 8**, at 7:00 p.m. This Lenten Bible Study is an eight-week series on the Book of Psalms. If you plan to attend this study, please contact Pastor Nancy (215.536.4992 or pastor.nancy@yahoo.com) as soon as possible so that a book can be ordered for you.

“Honey, I Love You ...but do I really know you?” This will be the theme of the Annual Valentine’s Party, to be held on **Friday, February 12**. Space is limited to 20 couples. Sign up in the narthex. Contact Steve or Janet Finch (215.538.0835) with any questions.

A Visioning Weekend is being planned for **February 19-20**, to see where QUMC is as a church, identify our strengths, and learn how we can move forward. The weekend will be led by the Reverend Charles C. Cole, a recognized leader within the church conference and senior pastor at Paoli UMC. Although this event is designed especially for chairpersons and committee people of the church, all are welcome to attend. The location is yet to be determined. Lunch will be served. For more information, contact Pastor Nancy (215.536.4992 or pastor.nancy@yahoo.com).

QUMC’s Boys of Sudan will soon be moving into a new apartment. They are in need of a sofa and a chair or two. If you have either of these items in gently used condition, contact Ed or Carol Pertuit (610.346.6713). Many thanks!

Last Call !!



Deadline for having your picture taken for the updated Church Directory is Sunday, February 28. To have your picture taken, go to the church parlor following any of the worship services.

Previously taken pictures, if they are available, will be used again for the directory if new pictures are not taken. If you have questions, call Liz Cole (215.536.2046).



Whodunit??

Most of us love a mystery. If you do, mark your calendar for Saturday, April 17. Assignment Chile team will be hosting a mystery dinner. More details to follow.



Rethink Church



A big thank you to all the folks who have responded to the needs listed in the bulletin inserts and during our presentations to the Sunday school classes. A few bits of information: Rethink Church is a campaign of the United Methodist Church to invite both members of the church and those unchurched to become more outwardly focused, ready to engage the community and the world. Inspired by the campaign, our church has started a small group that meets to discuss ways we can push back the darkness with the light of Christ by serving those in need. We have partnered with the Bucks County Opportunity Council to provide birthday boxes for children who otherwise would not have a birthday party. We have also partnered with the Milford Shelter to provide gas cards and are currently planning a dinner out for the moms there. It is our desire for this small group to be a place to come up with and share ideas as well as to connect needs with resources. We have been meeting during Sunday school in Miller Hall, but may be moving to a different location soon. Please stop in and join us or look for more information on alternate meeting locations and times.

Please keep our small group and our congregation in prayer that God would show us what He has in store for our community through us and that we would be faithful to serve Him by serving others.

The following is a list of our current needs:

Birthday boxes filled with the following: cake mix, party favors, balloons, invitations/thank you cards, candles or items individually (deposit in box below Rethink Church bulletin board in narthex)

Gas cards for Milford Shelter (deposit in Rethink Church mailbox in office)

Small pots and frying pans

Women's clothing...XL-XXL tops and XL bottoms

Storage area (needed to store donated items for families that are transitioning from a local shelter to their own apartment). If you know of someone who has access to a storage facility or can lend us some space in yours, let us know.

For more information or answers to questions, contact Mike Lehr (267.374.1051 or mikel@althousejaffe.com).



Important Reminder

Deadline for each month's newsletter submissions is the 15th of the previous month, unless otherwise specified. Please put everything for the newsletter into Mary Schwer's mail slot in the office. Directing your information somewhere else just delays the process.

We apologize for the lateness of the newsletter's arrival every so often. Sometimes it's because we were a bit slow and sometimes the post office is the culprit. Extra copies are always available in the narthex just outside the small conference room. Also, the newsletter can be found on the church website.



Put Your Faith To Work

Miller Blood Bank - Give blood at QUMC on Monday, March 1, 2:00 to 6:40 p.m.

Nonperishable food and paper products for the local Food Pantry may be brought to the church on any Sunday.

Recycle your rinsed out, stomped flat aluminum cans. Put them into a plastic bag and bring them to the barbecue pit at the rear of the church. Also, recycle paper. Large bins for the paper are at the lower end of the church parking lot. Reminder: **no plastic or cardboard.**

The recycling not only helps the environment, but also benefits the missions supported by the church.

Annual Spaghetti Dinner to benefit missions is scheduled for Saturday, March 13. Spaghetti and meatballs, salad bar, delicious desserts. Circle the date on your calendar!

Thanks, Thanks, and More Thanks!



Thank you to George and Ethel Setman for their generous gift to the Christian Education Wing Fund.

Thanks to all who brought in toys, books, and games for the children served by Red Bird Mission in Kentucky.

Thanks for the outpouring of generosity in response to the appeal for funds for the work of United Methodist Committee on Relief in Haiti. Because all administrative costs of UMCOR are taken from apportionment funds given to the General Church, every penny of the offerings for Haiti will be used for relief and rebuilding.



Christian Education News

Join Gail Schadler for the return of a Christian Home Class! From Adam to Jesus: A Study of Selected Biblical Families will take an in-depth look at the families of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Saul, Lazarus, and Jesus to discover how God wants us to live in the world He has created. Although mankind has constantly disappointed God, He has never given up on us. See how in every covenant He made with man from Adam to Jesus, God has told man what to do in order to live the life He planned. (Meeting place will be determined.)

Also, the Sunday school program is still in need of a **substitute** Sunday School secretary to occasionally collect offering and attendance sheets. If you could serve in this position, please contact Kim Kyra at 610.691.5263.



Update from Missionary Helen Sheperd

Dear Friends,

Joy, hope, and peace to you from Mongolia!

While on Home Assignment in the U.S. for 4 months, I was the recipient of so much kindness and gracious hospitality, and also had a few months to look more objectively at the work we are doing here in Mongolia. As I returned in November it was with weariness, but joy. It was so important for me to get away from Mongolia for a change of scenery, but I am so happy to return to friends, work, and my own bed!

Here is the situation in the UMC Mongolian Mission now:

1. Two young women - Mission Interns sent by the UMC Mission Board, Holli Vining and Erin Eidenshink - have brought some fresh air to our mission community and are settling in well, having arrived only mid-October. We are really blessed as they are offering themselves, their faith, their enthusiasm to the communities in which we already serve in Ulaanbaatar.
2. Batkhoo, our GBGM accountant, has had another year in which to serve God through his skills in finances and through his constant Christian witness. Please keep praying for him as his condition (a terminal blood disease) is not at all stable.
3. A weekly Bible Study group of young women whom I enjoy so much. The fellowship and their enthusiasm to grow in their faith is very encouraging and of course I look forward to teaching the 4-6 year old Sunday School class. There have been no gatherings of these groups for one month due to the government imposed quarantine. 1,000 cases of H1N1 have been reported with 20 deaths from this flu.
4. The Senior Citizens' fellowship groups at each of the two UMC Centers are a joy with which to work. While I was in the U.S. they had a picnic, origami contest, poetry contest with two other senior groups.
5. Grace Hospice - the volunteer component continues to grow in cohesiveness and eagerness to serve home care patients, attempting to meet their every need - i.e. cleaning houses, providing clothes, and offering financial assistance, plus offering Jesus to them by their strength witness.

Unfortunately, there is much frustration and lack of enthusiasm in the salaried staff, and we ask for prayers for them to be convicted by this opportunity to care for others. We need God's strong intervention here.

Issues which concern us are: our patients in Hospice who not only suffer from end stage cancer, but are also without good caregivers in the home AND are in cold homes this winter. We currently have a couple of teenagers who are in this situation. Please pray for them as we try to relieve their difficult situation as much as possible.



6. In other parts of our mission work, we give thanks for the UMCOR funded water project this summer, which reconnected our building to the well and also provided for hand washing outside of the building.
7. We have become aware of a few grade school age children who cannot attend public school because they are without a document which indicates their place of residence, which was not updated when their families moved to Ulaanbaatar. So, the Tsaiz UMC Center is starting classes for these children to gain the basics and then we will work on helping them to obtain their much needed (Mongolia “passport”) documents.

Thanks!

We give thanks for your financial support this year and look forward to your continued concern and support for the UMC mission work, which can only continue by your donations. Currently, we are struggling to pay the Mongolian staff’s salaries and utilities in our two mission centers, so we need your help.

If you wish to support Grace Hospice or the UMC Mission you may do so by sending your donation to your Conference Office with one of the designated numbers. This will guarantee that the funds will reach us, 100% here in Mongolia. These numbers are as follows:

Grace Hospice #14928A
Mongolian Mission Initiative #00209A

Grace and peace to you!

Helen

Time Out Talk

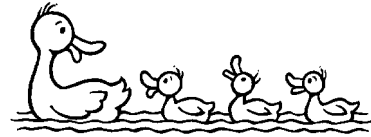


Serving the needs of 32 two– and three-year-olds this school year, Parent’s Time Out continues to provide a positive first learning experience for many children in our church and community. January was filled with fun winter crafts which included painting snowmen using balloons! Be sure to look in our classroom to see the students’ beautiful artwork celebrating God’s wondrous season of winter. During the month of February we will learn that Jesus loves us, using a variety of Bible stories, songs, and crafts. We will also celebrate God’s love with a Valentine’s Day party with the children sharing valentines, songs, and snacks with family and friends.

Currently a few spots are still available on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. If interested, please contact one of the teachers at 215.538.2950 or 215.538.1305. Additionally, registrations are being accepted for the 2010-11 school year. Registration information is included in this newsletter. Please feel free to share it with friends and neighbors. Thanks so much for your continued support of this important outreach ministry.



Family Matters



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Donald Barto - February 6 and Kathryn Landis - February 22.

LETTER OF APPRECIATION:

The Greatest Gift

In some ways, this past Christmas holiday may not be viewed as the best Christmas ever for the Regan family...but trust me, it was! I was so blessed throughout the entire holiday season with constant reminders of God's grace and love and I remain in awe of the comfort provided in the prayers of family and friends. Who could ask for more?

From the beginning, when I was lying in the ER when Kelly Martin came in and held my hand and prayed with me, I began to feel the strength and unending support from my wonderful church family. The folks who stepped up to help while I was away were terrific. The cards were beautiful and uplifting. The flowers, food, and hospital visits were inspirational and cheering. The best gifts of all however, were the prayers.

To simply say thank you is just not enough. To each of you I offer my most sincere praise to God for bringing such wonderful people into my life.

*In Christian Love and Praise,
Diana Regan*

Church Financial Report



2010 Actual Income - \$19,992.28
2010 Budgeted Income - \$23,097.43
2010 Amount Under Budget - \$3,105.15

A Round-Up from Adult & Family Ministries



Come on out to the church on Friday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. for an All-Church Movie Night. There will be two movies; one specifically for children and the other appropriate for all ages. Look for more information and a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

On Saturday, February 27 at 8:00 a.m., men of the church will meet at John's Plain & Fancy for breakfast. All men are invited to share in this time of food and fellowship.

For more information on either of these events, contact Steve Finch at 215.538.0835.



Confirmation

In the ancient Hebrew community, age 12 was considered the age of majority, when youth freely chose to be presented in the Temple, to be confirmed by God, through the priests, what the youth freely affirmed - his (now his and her) commitment to a deeper union with God.

For too long the United Methodist Church has witnessed a huge exodus of youth immediately following confirmation. Perhaps the church community has failed to take seriously the need of each person to freely make the choice that he or she is ready to deepen the commitment to Christ within the Body of Christ.

Candidates for confirmation must be in seventh grade or above. The first sign of desiring affirmation is the free choice by each young person to attend worship services on a regular basis.

Remember, parents and grandparents, Jesus as a lad of 12 went to Temple of His own free will. Ann and Joachim, the grandparents of Jesus, and Mary and Joseph waited upon God; their Son would show them by His actions when the time was right.

Candidates desiring confirmation should read the preceding paragraph carefully and with prayer and thoughtfulness. Then let each one decide whether or not he or she is ready to worship regularly. We believe that young people will more deeply appreciate the classes for confirmation when they know that they have freely chosen to enter upon this rite of passage in the journey of faith that began at Holy Baptism.

Orientation for students, parents, and mentors will be held on February 21 at 3:00 p.m. Confirmation classes will begin on February 28 at a time decided upon by the participants. Young people who are interested in preparing to receive confirmation should fill out the form below and mail/bring it to the church office so that preparations can begin.

I, _____, having read the above, seek to deepen my commitment to Christ, through regular attendance at worship and attendance at all classes and with God's help I will be presented to the congregation for confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2010.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____