



Ceresco Baptist Church
The Ceresco Messenger
February 2021

The Lenten Season

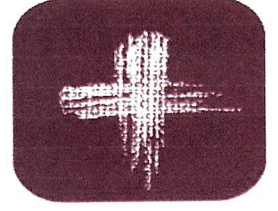
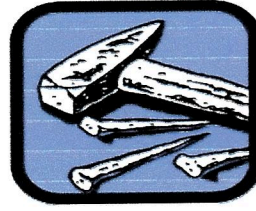
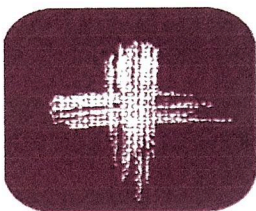
The 2021 Lent season officially kicks off with Ash Wednesday on February 17, 2021. It is one of two times per year where Christians set aside a time to spiritually prepare. The other is Advent. Lent is a time to open the doors of our hearts a little wider and understand our Lord a little deeper, so that when Good Friday and eventually Easter comes, it is not just another day at church. It is an opportunity to understand the sacrifice made and receive the overflowing of graces God has to offer.

Lent ends on Holy Saturday, April 3, 2021. The beginning of Lent is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. (Matthew 4)

Let's set aside time for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection. We will prepare for Lent together by focusing on "The Road Back to God." Each Sunday, the message will identify a topical focus for the week.

- Week 1: You Matter
- Week 2: Grace
- Week 3: Believing
- Week 4: Hope
- Week 5: Christian Suffering
- Week 6: Holy Week

This will include devotionals for Monday through Friday. We will conclude each week with a closing devotion on Sunday morning. We will kick off the next week's topic with the morning message. We will repeat the cycle through Easter Sunday morning.





AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2021

For the Purpose of Equipping Saints

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 (NIV)

Thanks to your America for Christ (AFC) Offering contributions, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 last year, as the pandemic swept our country and Puerto Rico. We helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires and storms, along with children living on the edge because of poverty, and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. These are just a few of the ways we minister to those in need; there are many more.

We have been answering God's call to heal broken families and communities—as well as cultivate strong Christian leaders and equip passionate disciples—since 1832.

The world's needs today are as great as they were close to two centuries ago. By awarding grants to mission partners also doing the work of healing broken families and communities with the healing power of God's love, we increase the numbers of those in need who receive support across the United States and Puerto Rico, at the same time increasing the impact of your AFC gifts.

So, when you contribute to AFC, you increase our capacity to fulfill the biblical mandate in Ephesians 4:11-13: "Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service."

Our America for Christ Offering 2021 campaign—"For the Purpose of Equipping Saints," based on Ephesians 4:11-13—focuses on our discipleship and leadership empowerment ministries, which nurture the faithful followers who find their call and life's work as the hands and feet of Christ.

We are collecting the America for Christ Offering throughout the month of February. There are special envelopes in the foyer for this offering. Thank you!



WHAT IF? - January 3, 2021

Luke 1:37 – *FOR NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.*

2020 was a difficult and challenging year. It was the poster child for uncertainty, increased stress and anxiety. It was a year of significant loss. Yet there is reason to be grateful. God loves us. God is still good and gracious.

God is all about new beginnings. A new year presents new opportunities and new responsibilities. Everything starts small and then we watch them blossom. There are over 273,000 words in the dictionary and all are made up of 26 letters of the alphabet. Job 8:7 – says though *the beginning was small, yet thy latter should greatly end.* 2021 may be off to a slow start but our future will be prosperous.

POINT 1 - WHAT IF THIS IS THE YEAR OF NEW BEGINNINGS?

After the death of Jesus, there was a new beginning for the Christian and He had done all of the teaching and evangelizing. With Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, the disciples had to step up to the plate and figure out what they were going to do. The day of Pentecost was a new beginning. It changed everything. There was a new boldness in the disciples, new courage and a new covenant. The old covenant made provision for sin to be covered by presenting a sacrifice. The new covenant cleansed us of all of sin not covered it. 2021 is the year of new beginning where you stop looking back and start looking up to Jesus.

- **So don't look back.** God knows about the fruitless efforts and He has *cleared our records and tossed our sins into the sea of forgetfulness* (Micah 7:19).
- **Let's just move forward in God.** God sees all of the future. Every trial we encounter, He will face with us.
- **But the best place to look is up.** Look into the face of Jesus. It is there that we can find rest and fears are calmed.

POINT 2 - WHAT IF 2021 IS THE YEAR YOUR PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED?

In Acts, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the 4th chapter, we see the people praying for boldness, courage, the ability to heal and to perform miracles in Jesus' name. Verse 31 says ... *After they had prayed ... "the place was shaken"*. The shaking of the place was an immediate sign that their prayers were heard. This is the year that your situation can change as well... that your prayers can be answered.

- The year that your children get right with God.
- The year your spouse comes to Christ and you can worship and pray together.
- The year you conquer that negative attitude or unforgiving spirit.
- The year God restores your health. What if this is the year?

POINT 3: WHAT IS THIS IS THE YEAR OF REVIVAL AT CERESCO AND IN "THE CHURCH?"

Verse 31 – *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind.*

Revival is a misunderstood word. Revival is the church falling in love with Jesus all over again. In Acts, the believers were in love with Christ – because of that love they prayed together, were of one heart and one mind, shared their possessions, continued to tell the story of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. Revival is the visitation of God which brings to life Christians and restores a deep sense of God's near presence and holiness. God's presence convicts people of their sin and there is an outpouring of repentance, praise, and love. Revival cannot be organized, but we can position ourselves to catch the wind from heaven when God chooses to blow upon His people once again. I want you to consider 2 more words: "why not?" Let the faith of God remove the limits that the world imposes on us and let's claim all God wants to give us in this life and in this new year.

DRAWING THE LINE - January 10, 2021

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

Christianity, as we understand it, can be extremely elastic with flexibility and at the same time can be extremely rigid. It is elastic, in that it includes a large measure of liberty or freedom for the believer. It is rigid in that it includes the provision that, however believers choose to behave, they must accept responsibility of their own actions and endure the consequences. God gave us freedom but He has also given us guardrails in the word of God. He recognizes that there are places and times when our own natural impulses can overtake our good intentions.

POINT 1 - DRAW THE LINE ON ANYTHING THAT IS NOT EXPEDIENT

Draw the line on anything that is not designed to help you achieve spiritual growth. All things are not expedient or beneficial. Not all things contribute to growth in Christian life.

We have all heard the story of Samson. He was a man of mythic strength. But he crossed all kinds of lines in his life. He was inwardly weak. He indulged in fits of anger. He was unfaithful to his vows as a Nazarite. His prayers and his actions against the Philistines seems to have been motivated by the desire for personal vengeance. That caused Samson to be blinded and imprisoned by the Philistines who were his lifelong enemies.

It is a picture of a man who was unable to resist the lure of earthly life. It reminds us of what can happen when we allow ourselves to become attached to things and people. It is enticing but it might just lead to self-destruction in our lives as it did in Samson's

The guardrails within the word of God helps us to focus on those things that are expedient and that promotes our spiritual growth. Ask the following questions? How does it enrich my life? Will it help me love Christ more? Will this enable me to serve Christ more effectively?

POINT 2 - DRAW THE LINE ON ANYTHING THAT ENSLAVES

There is wonderful freedom in Christ. All things are in my power ... but I want to make sure that I am not overpowered. The Bible calls out those things that enslaves. Matthew 6:33 says that *we should seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all of its righteousness and all of these things will be added unto you.* Lawful things can enslave us . . .

A. Money is lawful ... but I will not do anything for it. I will not be under its power. Money is important to our ability to live down here. We should not do anything for money. We should not harm others for it. That is what happened to Judas – that caused him to betray Christ.

B. Recreation is lawful ... Can we indulge in recreation? Yes, but it should not be our master or control our lives.

Jesus is your master and nothing else can be. Matthew 23:8 – *we have only one master. We are all just brothers and sisters. We have one heavenly Father. We have one teacher and that is Christ.* We will be enslaved to nothing else. We cannot serve both God and man.

POINT 3 - DRAW THE LINE ON ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT EDIFY

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. Edify means building up. Not all things builds up. Who are we to be building up ... our brothers and sisters in Christ. In 1st Corinthians 10 – Paul says that as believers *we should not seek our own good but the good of others.* Sometimes our own personal liberty takes a back seat to ensuring that our brothers and sisters are built up.

Our goal is always to serve the Lord. J. Wilbur Chapman said, "anything that dims my vision of Christ or takes away my taste for Bible Study or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work more difficult is wrong for me." That is where we should draw the line.

2021 - A YEAR OF GODLY HABITS

Philippians 4:6 – 8 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

We are creatures of habit (you've heard this before and it's true). "The habits you develop, develop you." The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt when you are developing but become increasingly real when they become too strong to be broken. Even when you think you have mastered a bad habit; we have to be careful that they do not find their way back into our lives.

Every day is a new opportunity and all habits do not have to be bad. In 2021, we want to develop Holy habits that will change our lives.

POINT 1 - Praying And Reading The Word First (Philippians 4:6)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Ronald Reagan said, "Within the covers of one single book, the Bible, are all the answers to all the problems that face us today—if only we would read and believe." We do not have to be anxious. Do not worry about anything. Faith and fear are opposites. You cannot be fearful all the time and have faith. We can develop habits that build faith and fight fear.

There are some things only learned in a fiery furnace. We all know the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel had developed some daily habits that were the foundation of his faith. Daniel would go into his home 3 times a day and openly pray. Not even the threat of death could keep Daniel from honoring his time of prayer to God.

We need to saturate our minds with the Word of God every day. Bible reading turns our thoughts to the gospel. The gospel reminds us of Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 15:3-4).

POINT 2 - START THE DAY THANKFUL (Philippians 4:6-7)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Start your day trusting God. Expect God to come through for you. Go ahead and give thanks for the prayer He has yet to answer. There is no condition in the world so miserable and so negative that we cannot find something positive to be thankful about.

In 2021, develop the Godly habit of being thankful. Focus on God's blessings that he has already given you. Give thanks for things you have been taking for granted. Most of all, give thanks that God loves you; that Christ died for you.

POINT 3 - SPEND THE DAY FOCUSING ON POSITIVE THINGS (Philippians 4:8)

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

- When Paul wrote this scripture, he understood the influence of our thoughts on our lives. He understood that our thoughts make us. They are the silent builders of the temple of our character. They give color and form to who we are. If our thoughts are evil, then everything we do will be blemished. If a man's life is righteous you know his thoughts are just; unjust thoughts will never yield righteousness in conduct.

The victory over those kind of harmful thoughts does not come by trying to suppress those feelings. The only way to drive out worry, anger, fear and hate is by replacing them with right thinking. Right thinking in *Galatians 5:22-23 is the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* We are talking about Godly habits that are worth pursuing. Invest your time in 2021 developing godly habits.

RESOLUTIONS TO GOD - January 24, 2021

Ecclesiastes 5:4 – 5 - ⁴When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. ⁵It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

As a believer, we do some things to make our lives better such exercise more, and save. We all make those resolutions. But we should make resolutions that make our faith walk strong and puts our relationship with God front and center. Our goals should always be to increase in our relationship with God. In our quest to be better let's be careful that any resolution we make to God that we keep. because the expectation is that we fill them.

POINT 1 - WE CAN MAKE A RESOLUTION TO TITHE (GENESIS 28:22)

One of the areas where we can make a RESOLUTION to God is tithing. We all give but ARE WE really tithing? Tithing is recognizing that everything we have belongs to God. We are called to give back a portion of all that God has given to us. Tithing is not a commitment to a particular church but it is an issue of faith. It is about whether or not we really trust God to do what he says. It is not just about money but all resources: income, time, and talents. Ask yourself if that is an area that you can commit to.

POINT 2 - MAKE A RESOLUTION TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. (JOHN 13:34)

Jesus calls us all to be disciples. But how do people know that we ambassadors for Christ? Jesus says this is how they will know who you are. He says in John 13:34 -35-- a new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

He defined how we should love one another. Love each other as I have loved you. While we were yet sinners – Christ died for us. While we were at our worst, He thought we were worth saving.

RESOLUTIONS have their place. You can have resolutions for Christ today. Think about the impact we could make in a year.

Sermons are available online!

We hope you found these sermon tidbits helpful! Remember you can watch the weekly message on our Facebook Page and on our YouTube Page!

<https://www.facebook.com/CerescoBaptist>

[Ceresco Baptist Church - YouTube](#) <https://tinyurl.com/y6yqtw6w>

Kid's Quips"

One night, as her mother helped me get ready for bed, my 4-year-old great-granddaughter watched. First, I removed my glasses and put them on the nightstand. Next came my two hearing aids. Finally my dentures were placed in the cup. With wide eyes, McKinsay tugged on her mother's arm. "Mommy," she wondered, "can Great-Grandma take her nose off too?"

Deep in thought, our 4-year old son pondered. "I know that God lives in my heart, so why don't I ever feel him walking around?"

At age 4, granddaughter Ashley already appreciated the power of prayer. Her mother was driving them down a muddy road - trying to steer clear of the ditch. Little Ashley suggested that the Lord's Prayer might help, and proceeded to say it aloud. Safe at home, her mother thanked her. "You're welcome, Mom," she beamed - then added, "I know a little bit about the "Holy Spearmint" too!

Your Divine Valentine

A Valentine may play a love song for you,

but God sings you the sweetest love song in the universe.

The Lord your God... will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love,

He will rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

A Valentine may give you flowers, but God sent you the most beautiful rose of all. Jesus.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
Song of Solomon 2:1

A Valentine may bring you chocolate, but God provides you

with something even sweeter, His Word.

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Psalm 119:103

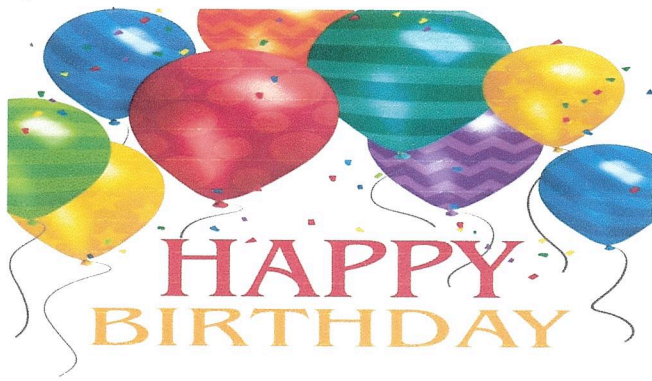
A Valentine may love you for a lifetime, but God loved you

before you were born and will love you for all eternity.

Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love...with loving kindness I have drawn you.

Jeremiah 31:3

Praying you're blessed by the wonderful love of God this Valentine's Day and always!



- Feb 4 Nicole Thomas
- Feb 17 Carlton Anthony
- Feb 18 Glen Cary
- Feb 25 Kelcie Collins
- Feb 26 Gretchen King
- Mar 9 Ron Chisholm
- Mar 11 Ruth St. John
- Mar 13 Lucas Finch
- Mar 15 Vi Halder
- Mar 15 Joanne Henley
- Mar 18 Pam Kirkland
- Mar 20 Deb Beltz
- Mar 22 Danny Sommers
- Mar 27 Sarah Collins
- Mar 29 Hainsley Casey



Michael Meng
& Angela Sommers

Mar 11

If your family birthday or anniversary is missing or is incorrect, please send an email to Joy Sommers at cerescobaptist@gmail.com

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive,
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
 Amen

Abundant Mercy

Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve:

Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord.

Amen.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

God's Love

I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

EPHESIANS 3:16-19 / PAUL

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan. 31	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Bible Study 10 am				
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Communion Sunday		Bible Study 10 am				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Valentine's Day God Loves YOU!  John 3:16		Bible Study 10 am	Ash Wednesday, 1st Day of Lent			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
First Sunday of Lent		Bible Study 10 am				
28	Mar. 1	Mar. 2	Mar. 3	Mar. 4	Mar. 5	Mar. 6
Second Sunday of Lent •		Bible Study 10 am	Information for March Messenger due by noon			Administrative Council Meeting 9:00 am

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