

Have You Ever Been To Jerusalem? Well, we are going there (in a way) this Lenten Season during February, March and the first week of April.

February marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is often referred to as a journey of discipleship – a journey of sacrifice, recommitment, and spiritual growth.

During the demanding times of Lent 2010 I am asking all of us to utilize this wonderful season to take steps to truly renew our relationship with God in FIVE ways.

1. Set aside time to pray. This doesn't mean that we can't pray "on-the-go" too, but there are definite benefits to making time for God each day. Martin Luther is reported to have told a group that his practice was to pray for an hour every day. One person in the group asked Martin what happened when things got more difficult and busy. Martin replied, "Oh well, then I have to adjust. When life gets more demanding, then I pray at least TWO HOURS a day."
2. Attend the mid-week Lenten services as well as the Sunday services. The Biblical characters always have a good message for us and the supper is a definite bonus.
3. Lent is also a time when we ask that you grow in giving. Please consider an extra gift of at least a dollar a day during the approximately 50 days of from Ash Wednesday through Easter. This is also a great time to take the step of inviting someone to church.
4. The gospel readings this year are from the Gospel of Luke and we invite you to read through this Gospel to help understand the "big picture" of Luke's message and to let God's Word feed you on a daily basis.
5. **And then there is JERUSALEM!!!** One definition of a *Pilgrimage* is that "it is a long journey or search that is of great spiritual or moral significance."

This Lenten season we are going to make a pilgrimage as a congregation. We are all going on a long journey that will hopefully have spiritual implications for every member. The distance from Charles City, Iowa to Jerusalem, Israel is about 6,817 miles.

First, we ask everyone to sign up to join in this pilgrimage. When you sign up you will receive a form on which to keep track of your miles. Then keep track of your miles each week and turn in your mileage by placing the slip in the offering plate or by writing the mileage directly on the back of your attendance slip. This can be how many miles you cover exercising and/or how many miles you cover each day during your normal routine. To determine the normal routine distance you will probably need a pedometer and we just happen to have some available. Please ask at the church office. We will be keeping track of our progress each week.

We invite you to join us as we seek to allow God to transform our lives this Lenten season as we sacrifice and recommit our lives to Him.