The coming of Spring is heralded in a number of ways, all of them welcome clues to birthing and readiness and life. A recent article in the Chicago Tribune alerts readers to what those in the Windy City are experiencing right now as Winter releases her grip.

Spotted a few weeks ago were the delicate blossoms of snowdrops and Lenten rose. The first shrub to awaken is witch hazel, followed by magnolias and forsythia. Seasonal birds are being spotted or soon will be as the month of March unfolds including robins and Sandhill cranes.

This life-giving and affirming newness of life makes the name of the month of March all the more noteworthy. Historically, armies marched off for conquest as winter came to an end, and this calendar period was named for Mars, the Roman god of war. Pause for a moment to picture marching soldiers walking off to battle amid blooms and blossoms. It’s a remarkable contrast, don’t you think?

March is, then, quite a month. Research shows that the majority of executive officers of companies were born in this month. Hoosiers know better than most that March is the best month for basketball. (Well, Hoosiers know there’s never a bad month for basketball.) Because of this, March is also the worst month for productivity since many workers take time from work to tune in to key matchups. Daylight-saving time begins in March, this year at 2:00 AM on the 10th of the month. Every March 14th is dubbed “Pi Day,” not for what is edible but for what is calculable as 3.14 . . . . as in the third month and the fourteenth day. March is a special month for many reasons.

As part of the Christian year, it is in this month that we enter into the season of Lent, a time of introspection on our way from the joy of Christmas to the pain associated with both the death of Jesus and what we might need to put to death in us so faith will flourish. Lent is a time to wait. If we do this deeply, we can sense the gifting of God that comes at heart and soul and mind level. Lent helps us know the love of God that goes deep and leads us to greater faithfulness and fruitfulness the rest of the year.

An element of great significance and deep, lasting impact comes to us this month, this March of 2019. In the often mysterious timing of God’s unfolding will, we are all invited to invest ourselves in the formation of our Pastor Nominating Committee. This includes praying for people to offer their own names or those of fellow members of First Pres who we believe would be wonderful candidates for consideration by the Church Nominating Committee.

Our prayers are also needed so the CNC can do its work of discernment to bring a fully qualified and representative slate of names to us for our consideration at the congregational meeting on March 31st. Those elected are entrusted with perhaps the most important and certainly the most far-reaching task in the life of First Pres for the rest of this year and likely into 2020, the search for our next installed pastor.

March of 2019 finds us looking inward during Lent and onward into our future. May we courageously engage ourselves in this month that is full of new beginnings and newness of life, all the while giving ourselves to all that God asks each and every day. Signs of God’s goodness are springing up all around us for all who have eyes to see.

The Rev. Pastor Pat Smith
“He who is generous will be blessed.”
Proverbs 22:9

Please look for the First Pres Pledge Cards
Generosity Campaign 2019
on the church information desk,
or call the church office and they will send you one!

**ADULT/YOUTH SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASS IN FELLOWSHIP HALL**
from 8:45 to 9:45 am every Sunday
8:45 a.m.—refreshments—starting promptly at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee and donuts served!

March TalkAbout: Updates on Projects
by: Jan McCune, Marty Kendrick, John Foster and volunteers

South View volunteers will share experiences, we are moving toward a Grant Project
and we will present Harvesters update!

**CALLING ALL OUR CHURCH MEMBERS!**
The Church Nominating Committee (CNC) needs your participation. Please take a moment to find and
read the insert in the mid pages of this publication and/or in the worship bulletin regarding nominees
to form the PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee). We appreciate that before filling the requested
information on the form, you pray and meditate about your answers.

Once you are ready to submit the filled form, you may give it to one of the CNC members, mail it, or
bring it to the church office during business hours.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER AND COMMUNION

On Wednesday March 6, at 6:00 p.m.
we will serve a simple meal followed by a communion service at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
Please join us and confirm your attendance by Monday, March 4th.
You may call the church office at 765-289-4431 or by email at office@firstpresmuncie.org

**Daylight Saving Time! Sunday March 10, 2019.**
**SPRING FORWARD IS HERE!**
On Saturday, March 9th, set your clocks one hour ahead before going to bed. Don’t be late for church.
As we move through the season of Lent, our worship will take on a more subdued tone. In particular, our music at the 10:00 service will reflect a pairing down, with a new and yet ancient response to confession, the voice of the choir heard in different ways, and hymns that are meditative in nature. There will be less pomp and circumstance, more introspection.

Walking with Christ to Calvary: Passacaglias with Peter

The Lenten season is a time of prayer, self-examination, and reflection on the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for each of us. Our organist, Peter Douglas, will encourage this Lenten spiritual practice through a series of preludes and postludes that are passacaglias. The term passacaglia comes from pasar (to walk) and calle (street). It most likely originated in early 17th-century Spain as a walking interlude between strophes of a song played by guitarists and eventually developed into a set of variations over a recurring (ostinato) bass line (ground-bass); Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) may have been the first composer to establish it as an independent instrumental genre. Peter will present a selection of passacaglias throughout Lent that spans eras and countries of origin, including compositions by Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Rebecca Clarke (with viola) and ending with the popular Passacaglia in C Minor by J.S. Bach as the prelude for Palm Sunday. Look for more music notes in your bulletin as we proceed through this prelude/postlude series.

As we journey through Lent, let us calm our thoughts and minds to be fully engaged in our walk with Christ to Calvary. We invite you to enter into a time of prayerfulness and meditation during Peter’s preludes and postludes as they open and close our worship each week.

Dee Dah Day

Women’s Book Study & Prayer Group

We continue to study “The Gift of Years--Growing Older Gracefully” by Joan Chittister.

We will meet on Friday, Friday, March 8 and Friday, March 22 at 9:00 in the Church Lounge. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Ottinger at 289-4080 or lkaott59@comcast.net.

* “These are the capstone years, the time in which a whole new life is in the making again. But the gift of these years is not merely being alive—it is the gift of becoming more fully alive than ever.”

2015 Per Capita

Please help offset First Pres’ Per Capita expense to Presbytery for 2019 by reimbursing the church for the per capita ($40.72) of each FPC member in your family.

Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian, memo: “Per Capita”. Thank you!
UPDATE FROM THE COMMUNITY MINISTRY GRANT TEAM

OUR SOUTH VIEW MINISTRY

Grant Project News:

Mid-February, Pat, Marty, Myron and I attended the final education session for the Community Ministry Grant. The entire day was spent getting us ready to apply. Our team started the day with 3 main target groups for our grant project: the South View parents, the students, and the teachers/staff. After feedback that we should focus on one of the three and after much discussion, we decided on the South View teachers/staff as our grant project focus. The 3 main reasons for this decision are:

1. Teachers have the greatest effect on the education process. By supporting them, we also support the students and the parents.
2. SVE teachers/staff work in a stressful situation with many students facing childhood traumas. Anything we can do to make their lives less stressful and more fulfilling will, in turn, help them in their day-to-day situations. It will also help in teacher retention.
3. We have already built trust with the staff and teachers. They are open to our support and thus we are not starting from scratch.

Our next step is more listening...this time to the teachers and staff. In early March, we plan to meet with Kara Miller (principal), Susan Clock (counselor), and 2-3 teachers/staff to get their input on how we can best support the them beyond what we are already doing at the school. In what ways could our grant money be spent to improve their job satisfaction and the overall emotional climate of the school? That meeting will also help us determine the best way to get input from the rest of the faculty/staff.

Notice that we are asking them, not giving them a list of how we think the grant money could or should be spent. That is all part of the Community Ministry Grant Program’s emphasis on collaboration, relationships, and looking at the strengths of those involved. Again, we do not know the outcome and will be excited to see what emerges.

Volunteer News:

◊ Welcome on board to Barb and Larry Ottinger and Aileen Howard who will be working with the librarian.
◊ Katie Rogers is volunteering 10-15 hours per week helping students with reading until she leaves for her study abroad.
◊ Jan Stratton and Janie Miller are working with reluctant readers in the primary grades.
◊ Jon Moll, Alan Wilson, Norm Beck, and John Foster received the go-ahead to study best models and research by-laws for Parent Teacher Organizations. Kara would like to resurrect the inactive PTO at South View.
◊ Joyce Beck and Jan Stratton worked the school store for the first time and plan to do it again.
◊ Cathy Nauman joined the Hospitality team.
◊ Joy Marsh (Susie Goddard’s sister) and Sheila Bracken are not church members but heard about our ministry at South View and wanted to help. Joy is helping in kindergarten while Sheila volunteers in a 4th grade.

Gibbons Family:

Thank you for the outpouring of prayers and donations for the Gibbons family who lost their son and South View 4th grader, Vincent, in a fire in February. As of Feb. 28, church members contributed $1,595 to the family.

Jan McCune for the CMG team of Cathy Alexander, Myron Earhart, and Marty Kendrick
DORCAS BASKETS MINISTRY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

After our church’s first trip to the Dominican Republic, Whitewater Valley Presbytery “came alongside” us in partnership with the Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana (IED) Church six years ago in the southwest region of the Dominican Republic (DR). Throughout this partnership, we have had numerous people from our church and the presbytery travel to meet and build relationships with the DR churches in this region.

During our time together, we have learned that one of their biggest needs is educational supplies and curriculum for their children, youth and adults. The southwest region is the poorest area in the country and many of the churches do not have the financial means or resources to get supplies.

For many years our presbytery wrote Vacation Bible School curriculum in partnership with our brothers and sisters in Mexico which is on the wwvp.org website. Since this material was already in Spanish, it was clear that we should share it with our friends in the DR. The name “Dorcas Baskets” came from one of the IED churches who fill baskets with donated items from members and share them with neighbors who are in great need. We adopted the name and decided to invite churches in our presbytery to put together “Dorcas Baskets” which contain craft materials and curriculum for 120 children throughout a week of VBS.

This is the fifth year that our church and our presbytery have done this mission ministry. Every year, when groups travel to the DR to deliver 12 Dorcas Baskets, we hear repeatedly how important these are to the churches. Yes, children can attend VBS without making a craft. But, these materials allow children – to be creative; to have a hands-on experience with the Biblical story; and to take this craft home and retell the story to their parents.

On behalf of the Hispanic Ministry Lead Team of the presbytery and the IED church, we thank you for your support in this ministry.

In coordination with other churches in our Presbytery, we are collecting items for 12 Dorcas baskets to take to the Dominican Republic for summer VBS. These items will reach 1,440 children in “our” region of the Dominican Republic. Of course, one suitcase of supplies will be earmarked for Mella. Items will be collected until March 18.

Here are the needed items:

⇒ Luggage with wheels (not a carry-on...a larger size that would be checked)
⇒ Staplers with staples
⇒ Scotch tape (with plastic dispenser)
⇒ Bag of beans
⇒ Brown construction paper
⇒ Yellow or orange crepe paper/streamers
⇒ Green crepe paper/streamers
⇒ Foam sheets (12”x9”)
⇒ Rolls of plastic lacing (100 yards each)
⇒ Foam stickers (religious symbols, no English)
⇒ Skeins of red yarn
⇒ 120 Zip-lock sandwich Ziplock baggies to hold puzzle pieces
⇒ Rolls of string (minimum 240 feet)

Please place your donations in the plastic tote labeled “Dorcas Baskets - DR” located in the church’s North Lobby.

Muchas Gracias!
The Generosity Committee was very busy during 2018 thanks to the incredible generosity of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church. The Rebuild the Walls campaign launched in July due to unexpected news regarding the condition of the brick on our church home. The repair costs were significant. We pulled together as a congregation to not only raise the funds necessary to cover the repairs and in the end exceeded the $200,000 goal by over $19,500! Immediately following the official end of the Rebuild the Walls campaign, the annual Generosity campaign started. The generosity campaign is still in process and to date pledges for 2019 total over $411,000.

The Generosity Committee wishes to say Thank You to everyone who adopted the “Everyone In!” spirit at First Pres and made a gift or pledge to the Rebuild the Walls campaign, the annual Generosity campaign, or both! Your generosity provides for the future of First Pres and enables our church to continue as a strong and vibrant church home for us all.

The Generosity Committee thanks each and every person who supported the Rebuild the Walls campaign and the 2019 Generosity campaign. The Committee wishes to gratefully acknowledge the following donors to the Rebuild the Walls campaign.

| A.J. Alexander               | Jayne Grandison               | Jerry and Nanette Rushton    |
| Dan and Cathy Alexander     | Merril and Linda Greene       | Jonathan and Lynn Schmidt    |
| Hazel Amos                  | Ned and Gloria Griner         | Lance and Sue Scholtes       |
| Nancy Barefoot              | Randy and Karen Hayden        | Don Scott                    |
| Norm and Joyce Beck         | Beth Hayes                    | Sandra Sexton                |
| Waldo Beebe                 | Marge and Duane Hobley        | Joel and Kelly Shrock        |
| Steve and Joyce Bell        | Donna Hofmann                 | Alan and Julie Simmons       |
| Don and Jane Black          | John and Chris Hostetler      | Alan and Mona Simmons        |
| Chris Bowles                | Dan and Mary House            | Neil and Joan Smith          |
| Erick and Cathy Bretz       | Aileen Howard                 | Pat and Laura Smith          |
| Joe and Marcia Brown        | Ed and Connie Humphrey        | Rich and Sheila Spisak        |
| Jack Buckles                | Betty Kendall                 | Len and Shauna Sterrett      |
| Patrick Burkey              | Marty Kendrick                | Bob and Jan Stratton         |
| Craig and Linda Buskirk     | Martha Kersey                 | Charlie and Claudia Sursa    |
| Olga Butler                 | Nancee Kinghorn               | Nancy Swickard               |
| Walt and Mary Campbell      | Philip and Janet Loy          | Allan and Carolyn Thomas     |
| Pat and Marilyn Cleary      | Mike and Jean McCauley        | Warren and Joy Vander Hill   |
| Jeff and Tracy Clinger      | Bill and Jan McCune           | Wade and Cissy von Kleeck    |
| Barbara Cossaart            | Nancy Millard                 | Pete and Franky Voss         |
| Sharon Cox                  | Carrie Jo Miller              | Bob and Julia Wadsworth      |
| Priscilla Davis             | Jon and Barbara Moll          | Carol Watkins                |
| Sue Desmond                 | Bruce and Sandy Moore         | David and Ann Westerlund     |
| Myron and Carla Earhart     | Joan Nelson                   | Don and Sue Whitaker         |
| Dick and Peg Edwards        | Larry and Barb Ottinger       | Jim and Jennifer Williams    |
| Don and Jeanne Fields       | John and Marilyn Phillips     | Alan and Bev Wilson          |
| John and Debbie Foster      | John and Shirley Reno         | Bob and Kathy Wilson         |
| Nancy Gallther              | Clara Rice                    | Lani Wilson                  |
| Kerry Glann                 | David and Polly Richman       | Jerry and Carol Wire         |
| Dave and Marcia Gobble      | Tom and Pam Riegle            | Sandra Worthen               |
| Jim and Muggs Gooden        | Bill and Heather Rogers       | Marissa Zacharias            |
| Jane Gortner                | Judy Routh                    |                             |
SELECTING A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

In the PC(USA) call process, the congregation gives authority to search for a pastor to a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The formation of this committee is key to the work God wants to accomplish in finding our next pastor. Once the PNC is elected and begins its work, the congregation will walk alongside the members of the committee as we

- pray for the search committee’s work,
- gladly receive updates,
- and await the time when the person of the committee’s choice is presented to the congregation for a vote at the end of their search.

Session has determined that the PNC will consist of nine members. Two will be from our current Session. One will be from our current Board of Deacons. The intention of the Session is that one person will be a youth representative (high school, university or early twenties.) The other five members of the PNC will be nominated from the rest of the congregation’s membership.

Our Church Nominating Committee (CNC) will walk us through this election process by which we form the PNC. Names may be submitted for consideration over the next three weeks. The deadline for nominations is March 17. Anyone may submit another person’s name or her/his own name to the CNC. Only official members of First Pres can be elected. We ask that anyone submitting someone’s name verify that this person is a member and agrees to serve if nominated and elected.

When making a nomination, please consider that the ideal nominee is someone…

- of spiritual and personal integrity,
- knowledgeable about the church and community and about Presbyterian theology and government,
- proven as a spiritual leader within the congregation who is currently active in the life and work of the congregation,
- able to make a significant commitment of time (possibly requiring weekly meetings and lots of reading, prayer, and faith), energy, and wisdom,
- willing to accept this as a task of spiritual discernment, not being easily influenced by personal desires or congregational politics, but rather listening for the voice of God
- reliant on the Holy Spirit to guide the process to find the right person in the right time, and committed to confidentiality.

The CNC will present its slate of nominees at a called Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 31, following the 10:00 worship service.

As soon as the PNC is elected, its members will move as quickly as possible to take care of organizational matters and start to work drafting our Ministry Information Form (MIF), a document that provides candidates with a brief description of (1) our ministry and (2) the type of person we believe will be a great match for us. Once this document is written and approved by our Session and the Presbytery’s Commission on Ministry, it will be filed at PC(USA) headquarters, and the PNC will begin to receive resumes of recommended or interested candidates.
We ask for all the members and friends of First Pres to
• pray for this election process,
• consider who you believe might best serve in this role (including yourself),
• receive permission of possible nominees,
• submit the names of those you think would be great PNC members,
• be present to vote, if you are a member, on the names presented by the Church Nominating Committee at
  the congregational meeting on March 31,
• be ready to support and encourage the elected PNC in all its work yet to come.

You may use this form below to place a name before the Church Nominating Committee. The members of
the committee are Norm Beck, Dave Froenicke, Michelle Kaitchuck, Mike McCauley, Janie Miller, Lynn Schmidt
and Nancy Swickard. You may also submit names to the convener of the committee, Clerk of Session Aileen
Howard. Pat Smith will meet with the committee during its deliberations but asks that names be submitted
through other channels.

This is a wonderful, vital moment in the life of First Pres! Thank you for doing your part to pray, submit names
according to the guideline above and invest in our continuing ministry all to God’s glory.

Please fill out this form, detach it from the newsletter, and give it to a member of the CNC listed above or turn
it in at the church office by Sunday, March 17. If you nominate more than one person, please use a separate
form for each name.

I would like ____________________________________to be considered by the Church Nominating
Committee as a possible nominee for the Pastor Nominating Committee. By suggesting this person, I affirm
that I have verified that she/he agrees to serve if elected and, to my knowledge, is a member of First
Presbyterian Church.

Submitted by: __________________________________

Qualifications I believe this person has that will make her/him a faithful and dedicated PNC member:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
BGSU Men’s Chorus In Concert March 19

The Bowling Green State University Men’s Chorus under the direction of Dr. Richard Schnipke will perform a concert in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m.

Dubbed “America’s Finest Singing Machine,” the chorus of approximately 70 singers will visit Muncie as part of their annual spring break tour. The concert is free and open to the public; a freewill offering will be taken to assist with the chorus’s travel expenses.

In hosting this concert, we need to provide overnight housing for the singers. If you are willing to serve as a host family for 2 or more gentlemen, please sign up on the sheets found in the choir room or on the announcements desk or contact Kerry Glann (kglann@bsu.edu) directly. Host responsibilities are to take the guests home after the concert, provide breakfast the next morning, and return them to the church by an certain time to meet their tour bus. Two singers can share a larger bed (e.g. queen/king). Sofa beds are also acceptable.

Third Thursday

Everyone is welcome for lunch and fellowship at our Third Thursday Luncheon in Fellowship Hall.

March 21, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.

Luncheon and Trip to the Owsley Collection at the Ball State Art Gallery

hosted by Cathy Bretz

We will have two departures at 12:45 and 1:00 from the north entrance using the church van. Lunch will wrap up as close to 12:35 as possible for the first departure at 12:45. Bus will come back for the second group in 10-15 minutes. Cathy Bretz and one of her associates will be our guides. People can drive to the gallery separately if preferred, but BSU parking midday is a problem for individual drivers, much easier to just ride the van. We will transport the first 28 people that confirm reservations for the bus.

Cost for luncheon is $5.00. pending confirmation of entrance fee at the Art Gallery. Please RSVP by Monday, March 18, call the church office (765) 289-4431 or email office@firstpresmuncie.org
Based on the Book of Job from the Bible, the suite, composed in 1987, consisting of eight movements
with narrative passages from the biblical story outlining the order of events in Job's life. The work
involves three characters: God, the Devil, and Job. The devil makes a wager with God to test the strength
of Job's faith. Job is a devote servant of God who loses everything in sacrifice for his devotion with the
reward of receiving double after the turmoil. The biblical reference states, “And the Lord turned the
captivity of Job and blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.” The story is much like Eben's
life: one of loss, pain, and suffering for one's religious and political freedoms.

Order of Movements:
I. Destiny - II. Faith - III. Acceptance of Suffering - IV. Longing for Death - V. Despair and Resignation -
VI. Mystery of Creation - VII. Penitence and Realization - VIII. God's Reward

Petr Eben (1929-2007)
Regarded as one of the most prolific organ composers of the twentieth century, this is Eben's 90th birth
year celebration. A survivor of the Holocaust, stationed at a camp located near Buchenwald and an
anti-supporter of the Communist leadership in his native land of the Czech Republic, Eben’s music re-
flects the political events that directly impacted his life. The struggles between his devotion to the
Catholic Church, the Communist rule in his homeland, and the consequences of the Holocaust inspired
the musical motifs in his works. A battle between good vs. evil and religion vs. politics are also
represented in his music with Eben ultimately deciding the outcome. Toward the end of his life, Eben
received numerous honors as a composer, music educator and humanitarian.
Some of our diligent members are working on getting our church directory updated with the most current contact information of our members and Friends. You will be contacted soon to confirm the information we have on file, and privacy preferences.

**FOR NURSE CHERYL:**
Like most teachers, the nurse buys items she needs out of her own pocket once she has exhausted her supply. Bev Wilson made a list of needed supplies: band aids, hand sanitizer, large or extra-large disposable gloves, Clorox wipes, cotton balls, Bactine spray, thin feminine pads, and Post-it notes or small note pads. Please put anything you’d like to donate in the South View box in the North Lobby.

**REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR SOUTH VIEW ELEMENTARY!**
March Prayer Calendars are now available at the South View bulletin board in the North Lobby. Please stop by, take one home, and remember to pray for all of our efforts with South View.

**Beyond I CAN**
Ministry Guild continues collecting crafting items for Beyond I CAN:

Bring anything that can be used or repurposed: Magazines, newspapers, crafting materials, jewelry, paint, glue, yarn, old and new greeting cards, stickers, paint brushes, terracotta flower pots, cardstock paper, scotch tape, etc.

Beyond I CAN creates jobs and experiences that allow individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to operate a business with assistance from volunteers.

Please put your donations in the tub basket located in the North Lobby.

**DINNERS FOR HOPE & JUSTICE**

Monday, March 25 at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall
Topic: "Living a Peaceful Life, Ending Violence"

**First Presbyterian Church**
1400 W. Riverside Ave.
Muncie IN 47303

Phone: 765-289-4431
Fax: 765-289-4486
www.firstpresmuncie.org
office@firstpresmuncie.org

**SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES:**
10:00 am One Unified Service
11:30 am International Congregation Service
4:00 pm University/Young Adult Worship

The Rev. Dr. Pat Smith, Interim Pastor
rpatsmith@firstpresmuncie.org

The Rev. Dr. Myungku Lee, Associate Pastor
9brights@firstpresmuncie.org

Carrie Jo Miller, Commissioned Ruling Elder
cjmiller3501@comcast.net

Tracy Clinger, Director of Pre-Kindergarten
tracy@firstpresmuncie.org

Lisa Ulrich, Business Administrator
lisa@firstpresmuncie.org

Gabriela Burciaga, Administrative Assistant
office@firstpresmuncie.org

Travis Graves, Building Superintendent
tog0311@gmail.com
Mirrors are not always our friends. We like it when our reflection shows what we want to present, like being all put together with every hair in place, wrinkle invisible and blemish obscured. Sometimes we just don’t see ourselves as we truly are.

What if we came to our own reflection with openness and honesty? What if we welcomed the true image, not just for what we might see that pleases us but for those aspects of how we look that are less than pleasing to us? In this way, we would open ourselves to a full and complete image of who we are with no desire to hide or pretend or cover up.

Starting with Ash Wednesday on March 6 and running through Sunday, April 7, we enter into the Christian season of Lent. It’s traditionally “a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection.” It’s a time we are all invited to look into the mirror for a true, deep, long look at our outer and inner lives.

As we open ourselves up to what God wants us to see about ourselves, Lent becomes a time of discovery, of celebrating the good that God has produced in us and also an inventory of the parts of us that are not yet what God desires us to be. This time of self-reflection should be embraced by us so that God will reveal all that God wants us to understand. Fresh understanding of God and ourselves can then lead to steps by which we change more and more into the image of Jesus, and that means greater and greater good flows through us to others.

Let’s step to the mirror, then, anticipating all that God’s deep love will show us in the weeks

|------------------|-------------|---------|