

‘Fasting Fish Fraternization.’ - Campus Mission in the season of Lent

From Vicar Jesse Greenhagen

Lent is a penitential season within the Church. Increased devotion in God’s Word, prayer, and the giving of alms are all historic and Scriptural practices of the Church. Logos Lutheran Church, in Center City, Philadelphia, has been spending time together socially over meals during the season of Lent. The committed group of young adults and students have set aside Thursday evenings to gather around a meal of fish once a week. This meal has replaced typical theology pub outings, with conversations focusing upon fasting practices and Christian vocation and identity.



Lent is a season that has been mostly forgotten and overlooked in America. Many denominations have thrown out the season of Lent entirely. In doing so, the passion and suffering of Christ has been diminished. In a world that likes to party, it isn’t surprising that the Devil would tempt the Church to have a similar mindset. But the congregation members at Logos Lutheran were especially intentional about the season of Lent. Although some members were initially appalled by Lenten practices, including the concept of ‘giving up’ ritualistic pub outings, each of the attendees openly appreciated the practice by the close of the season. Some even suggested that the practice become commonplace! A couple of attendees even shared the burden of meal preparation by bringing their own creative dishes to the meal or a locally baked loaf of bread. Setting aside their own busy schedules to feed fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is not a small task. The food and conversation also brought a handful of folks to the table who were not connected with the Church, including a Finnish family and a local young professional.

The Thursday evening meals became known as ‘Fasting Fish Fraternization.’ The atmosphere was conducive in expressing the season of Lent. By stripping away the enjoyments of meat, alcohol, and pub fare, a quiet and homey atmosphere of the Vicar’s apartment was used in conjunction with healthy meals free from the sweets and comfort foods that have become commonplace within America. It really is a testimony of Christ’s work to see young adults committing themselves to an evening that is void of luxury and focused upon Christ. Open conversations flowed concerning occupational challenges and familial conflicts. The group has really become a family, caring for one another’s needs and burdens. Many of the folks would drive into the city after a long day’s work, some traveling as much as two hours to the event! But meditating upon the Word of God, being among fellow Christians, and abiding in prayer were apparently worthwhile for the Logos Lutheran cohort in Philadelphia. In a society that has forgotten Lent, this is quite the sacrifice.