**Bearing Fruit – February 21, 2021**

**Entering Lent/Sending Roland with our love and prayers**

As you will see our sanctuary looks a bit different this Sunday. The predominate color is purple. Our paraments offer us a crown of thorns and the words, “Take up your cross.” Purple is the color of Lent. Full of symbolism, purple has a double meaning. At sunset and sunrise it is the color that bruises the sky. Sunset is a time of endings, and sunrise is a time of hope for a new day. On one hand purple symbolizes repentance and sorrow, and on the other hand it is the color of royalty. When Jesus was brought before Pilate he was mocked by the Roman soldiers as they dressed him in a purple robe and called him King - a tragic double meaning. Let’s think of purple as an invitation to reflect on your relationships with others and with our Lord Jesus Christ as we prepare with joy of Easter.

During the next six weeks we will spiritually journey through Lent, entering the events of Holy Week on Palm Sunday culminating into the sorrow of the cross and the joy of the resurrection. At the end of each service we will extinguish one of our candles representing the coming of Good Friday as we journey through the gates of Jerusalem.

Lenten inspiration: Have you ever wished that you knew the “street address,” or chapter and verse of a particular Bible verse. During Lent we will be highlighting as weekly Bible memory verse. Take a look; the week’s verse will be an attachment every Friday.

**Sending Roland with our blessing…**

Today, we are blessing Roland Lankah as he leaves the Chicagoland area for a new job opportunity. On February 27 Roland will leave to be the Assistant Director for the Environmental Health Department in Boston. We will miss Roland. Many have enjoyed him and his big smile. He has helped our pastor in teaching Bible Stories during Vacation Bible School for several years, as well as promoting our VBS mission one year to fund a new well in Africa. He has faithfully helped in Southminster’s monthly worship service ministry at the DuPage County Care Center. He is also part of our Covid Response team. His expertise in that area was most helpful. Please be in prayer for him as he moves to a new area and as he completes his doctoral dissertation. Rumor has it that he will be tuning in to our virtual worship and visiting his parents who live nearby. We hope to see him again. We have been very blessed by his presence with us, and we send him with God’s grace to this new adventure.