



By Tina Whitaker

Lent is to be feared by one member of my family

This week marks the beginning of Lent, which for Methodists, marks the beginning of a period of reflection and penance and prepares us for the most holy of days, Easter Sunday.

Traditionally, it all begins on Ash Wednesday when we are marked in ashes as a sign of sorrow for our sins. It is also the day that we determine just how we are going to spend the next 40 days and what we will “give up” during the period of Lent which is a time of fasting and prayer.

This is where it gets a little tricky at my house.

Mike is totally supportive of my traditional Methodist ways, though he was raised in the Church of Christ. He understands the peace I receive from the structure of a church service that includes The Lord’s Prayer, Apostle’s Creed and Gloria Patri, and encourages it.

He loves when I set up the Advent wreath at Christmas, sharing scripture readings with our grandchildren, and doesn’t seem to mind the ashes on my forehead on Ash Wednesday.

Where he does get a little nervous, however, is when I declare just what it is that I am going to “give up” for Lent. As any man, he is more than a little concerned of how this might affect him.

And to be sure, if I give up bread, for instance, there is a likelihood that he will not be coming home to the aroma of a hot loaf of yeast bread coming out of the oven. Not that this happens too often, but there is always that

chance, and to know for certain that this is not even in the realm of possibility for 40 straight days is disheartening to Mike.

The same goes for chocolate. To know that his favorite Ghirardelli brownies or chocolate cake will not appear on the kitchen counter for nearly six weeks is a lot to contemplate. Although being relegated to an array of Reese’s cups and Milky Way bars for his chocolate fix doesn’t seem to be that big of a deal to me.

And then, there are the things like Diet Coke and hot tea that supply me with the required amount of caffeine to not just get me through the day, but keep my brief, but powerful, flare-ups of anger in check. The mention that I might give up one of these strikes a bolt of fear into Mike that, though comical to me, may just be warranted if I am to be honest. And we are not even going to mention what happens when I give up wine. He actually suggested that I consider giving up either white or red, but not both, when I gave up wine for Lent a few years ago.

So Ash Wednesday is met with more than a little bit of trepidation in the Whitaker household, but when all is said and done, the season of Lent is met with the solemnity that it is intended. For certain, I will read and pray a little more and look forward to my favorite church service of the year.

As I prepare myself for this Lent season, what I will do without for the next 40 days is still yet to be determined, though Mike will be the first to know.

Pike Landfill Raises Concerns Here

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fill. USA Waste Management was the only company to respond to the RFP.

“When that proposal came back, we voted to accept it in open court,” Jones said. “I was authorized to negotiate a host agreement.”

According to Jones, the host agreement would allow the company to begin the lengthy administrative permitting process, which he said could take several years and would still require approval from the fiscal court before any landfill could be developed.

Jones outlined three options currently facing Pike County regarding solid waste disposal:

- Raising solid waste fees substantially;
- Closing the existing landfill and hauling garbage to another facility; or
- Exploring a privately owned landfill option.

He said previous administrations failed to set aside funds for the eventual expansion or closure of the current landfill, leaving the county’s solid waste department in poor financial shape. Jones noted that the landfill had long relied on coal severance funds and that equipment had become badly dilapidated by the time he took office.

An emergency expansion of the existing Pike County landfill, approved by state regulators following the February 2025 flood, is expected to last only six to seven years, according to Jones.

While Pike County officials emphasized that no final decisions have been made, the proposal has sparked strong reactions, including threats made online against a member of the fiscal court. Jones condemned those actions and stressed that officials would not knowingly take steps that would harm residents.

For residents of eastern Letcher County, particularly those in Jenkins and surrounding communities, the discussion carries added significance. While the proposed landfill would be located in Pike County, its proximity raises questions about traffic, water quality, air impacts, and long-term environmental effects that could extend well beyond county lines.

The issue is expected to remain under close scrutiny in both Pike and Letcher counties as the permitting and negotiation process continues.