March/April/May 2017 Cover Letter

March first is our ashen reminder of last spring's palms, which form a cross on many foreheads. "From dust you came, to dust you shall return." A humble declaration reveals the simplicity and unity of life.

During Lent we have the opportunity to watch with Christ. Let us watch for the mercies of God. So many mercies go unnoticed as we move through the paces of our lives. We may watch with Christ as he places the concerns of others before his own. There are plenty of concerns which make my own seem small indeed.   Finally, let us watch the Spirit of Christ uniting creation in love. We experience division, fear driven greed, and suffering. But still the essence of creation is unity flowing in many relationships. To act against this unity is short-sighted, for union always has the final word. As Christians, we speak of this unity as communion with Christ in God. Baptism welcomes us into relationship with God. The Lord's Supper is a weekly reminder of our relationship with Jesus Christ. We live our lives as a response to God's gracious welcome.

So here is my invitation to the observance of a holy Lent.   Take note of God's mercies, others' needs, and the unifying power of love. Or, put it in your own words! What is God doing here in this place, at this time, with all of these resources? How is the Spirit inviting *you* to contribute to the mercies of Christ? Perhaps set aside some distractions, yes, but may we seek to support mercy and faithful love wherever we find it around us. However we can commit to that during Lent will be a wonderful discipline.

The traditional focus on sin, weakness, or darkness--as real and frustrating as these are--will not bring us to the beauty and mercy of Christ. To see, feel, and embrace Christ's unifying love all around us and within us will make us mindful of this love and fill us with joy. Christ is the center of Lent. May this year's holy observance increase our faithful love and joy.   A blessed, hope-filled Lent to you all.

-- *Pastor Roy*