

# Ribbons for Lent

Members of the Youth Group at Immanuel Lutheran Church made these ribbons for use by the congregation during the 2004 Lenten season to describe the lenten theme: **Journey to the Neighbor**.

Journey to the neighbor is two fold: a physical journey, across the street or as far as Malawi, and a journey of the heart from self centered to being centered on God and the neighbor. We are on that journey from a deadly obsession with self to life for God, hence the color gray. It is the journey of Christ in the Passion, of emptying himself and giving himself for us.

The colors of the ribbons were taken from the dress colors of the Women's Prayer Groups in Malawi, as described in Bishop Bvumbwe's seminary paper: Spiritual Disciplines:

*"The top blouse is purple, which is a color symbolizing Prayer and penitence in the church. It is also a color for Bishop's clerical shirts in the region. The skirt is Gray. In most African countries Gray paint is not readily available. It is made by mixing black and white paint, half each in a container, in this way you can produce gray. The paint is then no longer white neither is it black any more. Throughout Christian history, black has been known to symbolize dark hopeless situation, while light on the other hand symbolize "day" known or revealed hopeful future. The group therefore adopted "gray" as their local symbol representing them as "women on the journey", they have left "night" and are moving towards "day" but are not there yet. The journey however has begun and is being undertaken. It is a faith journey "moving in transition". Gray is used in the skirt symbolizing "walking" and as headscarfs symbolizing "their thinking" remembering that they are not yet there where the Lord is calling them to be."*