

# The Messenger

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*Ascension Lutheran Church*

**FEBRUARY  
2023**

*How Many Times Are We Going On  
This Same Trip?  
Aren't There Other Places  
We Could Go?*

**I** know of folks who love to go cruising. They find it relaxing and great fun to be on a ship and out at sea. There are usually ports of call where they can sight see, shop, and enjoy some local cuisine. Many like to see new places and so they do not want the same ports of call again and again.

I know Lent is different than a cruise and I do not mean to be flip with the analogy. But, for a few moments, let's pretend Lent is a cruise, a cruise we have taken numerous times before. So, we are asking the question, "Should we go on this trip again this year?"

On a real cruise, near the beginning, there is the emergency drill with life jackets and where to assemble in an emergency. Our Lenten journey always begins on Ash Wednesday, (this year on February 22). Instead

of a life jacket, we receive ashes on our foreheads. Instead of "Welcome to your Carnival Cruise", we hear, "Remember that one day you are going to die." (Sometimes I want to say, "Great! Thanks a lot for that reminder." Instead I say "Amen".)

Our Lenten cruise is much longer than most ocean cruises. Forty days, not counting Sundays. Lent always ends at sunset on Maundy Thursday (this year on April 6). Unlike an ocean cruise, the ports of call come at the end of the journey, although the "cruise" prepares us for this.

So, we find ourselves on Maundy Thursday crowded into an upper room where a Passover Meal is being celebrated. Strangely, the leader of the group insists on washing his disciple's feet for them. He's willing to wash our feet too. He

## **JOIN US**

-February 22 at 6pm  
for the Ash Wednesday  
service.

-Starting March 1 all  
Wednesday services  
will be preceded by a  
soup/sandwich meal  
at 5pm.

-February birthday  
celebration will be  
Sunday the 26th after  
the service.

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then tells us that if he, who is our teacher, can wash our feet, then we should be willing to wash one another's feet. He came not to be served but to serve and to give up his life to ransom many.

He adds another course to the meal. Another cup of wine and more unleavened bread. Yet now, strange words. "This is my body." "This is the new covenant in my blood". "Do this to remember me".

It's time to get some good cool night air. We go to an olive garden and we are tired. This man, Jesus, seems to be troubled. He prays intensely. He asks God for a Plan B. Yet, if there is no Plan B, then God's will is what he will be obedient to. He addresses God as his Father.

He's arrested. He is beaten. He is humiliated and tortured. He is condemned. He is led to a place of execution. He is crucified.

Can we be honest with one another? Most of us would like to skip this part of the journey. We may be making plans already on how to skip this. I think Jesus would have liked to skip this too. He doesn't because he can't skip it and save us.

Our Lenten and Holy Week "cruise" ends at a cemetery. Jesus is laid to rest. His body is bloody and beaten. There is no time to properly prepare it for burial. The Sabbath is about to begin. What a tragic ending! No wonder we may wish to skip a Lenten season or two!

It appears that what we often think is an ending, is just not so. True enough, we cannot turn things around. We cannot erase the past. We can't re-write the previous chapters of our lives. Yet, here comes God who I believe asks us, "How about another chapter?" You will like it. I'm a good author, you might say, the author of new life. Come back on Sunday morning".

And so we come, back to the same cemetery, back to the same tomb. We listen intently as an angel talks to some ladies who loved Jesus and now have come to wash his body and put spices on it. "You are looking for Jesus. He isn't here," the angel tells them. (Ready for the words that change the world and our destiny?) "He's risen!"

Carnival doesn't offer this. Only God does. So, shall we go on this journey again this year? Would you like to travel together? We begin at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, February 22. Best part: **Jesus travels with us on the journey!**

In Christ Jesus  
Pastor Chuck



To the Ascension congregation,

I cannot express how humbled I am to have the Council's and Congregation's support to serve as President for the upcoming year. It is obvious no one could ever fill Jane's shoes, but I will do my best to serve Ascension well.

This year promises to be exciting. We have plans and funds to purposefully seek to grow the church while making nearly every aspect of the church experience better for all of us. I am eager to see what we can accomplish, always remembering that with the Lord all things are possible. When we stay focused on our calling and use the gifts God gives us to His glory, we will become that light in the community that we have been hearing so much about this Epiphany season.

It's always fun to come together to celebrate, and we did that well in celebrating January birthdays and in gathering in gratitude for Gene's bookkeeping services, graciously given to us for so long. This, indeed, is an example of using the gifts God has provided to serve the greater good. Thank you, Gene!

Lent comes early this year, with Ash Wednesday falling on February 22. As we enter this introspective season, I encourage you all to bring forward any and all ideas you have to help Council serve to our fullest in the functions you have entrusted us with.

May God's light shine through us,

*Deanne Kells*

President

## MID-WEEK LENTEN SERIES

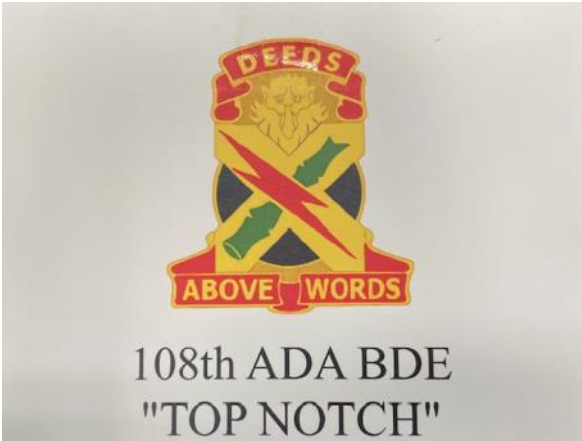
### Jerusalem at Passover

Our Wednesday Lenten series this year will be a tour of the Holy City the week that Jesus died. A tour guide will lead us to various stops along the way during this trip. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will visit The Temple. March 1<sup>st</sup>, the stop will be at the Passover followed by March 8<sup>th</sup> at The Mount of Olives. March 15<sup>th</sup> will bring us to The Palace of the High Priest and March 22<sup>nd</sup> we have a tour stop at The Fortress of Antonio. We will conclude our Jerusalem tour on March 29<sup>th</sup> at Skull Hill.

The "tour" begins at 6 pm on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ash Wednesday. There will not be a meal prior to service on Ash Wednesday; however, a soup/sandwich supper will be available beginning Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 5pm, followed by the "tour service" at 6pm.



**CELEBRATING JANUARY  
BIRTHDAYS**



108th ADA BDE  
"TOP NOTCH"

The Quilting Circle made and sent 438 Christmas stockings and 564 handwritten letters to Operation Shoebox. These letters and stockings mean so much to our service people who are not able to be with family and friends during the holiday season.



Dear Ms. Kurtz, 5 DEC 2022  
I wanted to take a second and say "Thank you!" for the care packages our unit recently received. We noticed that it was letter # 444 which seems to indicate a great deal of support to our Men & Women forward deployed! Please give your team a heartfelt thanks from the 108th Air Defense Brigade from Fort Bragg, NC.  
Happy holidays / Merry Christmas!  
MAJ. Scott McWhorter



## Children's Sermon Message



### **Be the Salt, Not Eat the Salt**

On Sunday, February 5, Jesus told us in the Gospel lesson to be the salt of the world. Salt is pure and our lives should aim for purity. Salt adds much flavor, and living out the love of Christ in our lives, we are giving flavor to the world!

However, there is no command to eat a lot of salt, usually listed on the packaging label as sodium. Recently in the magazine, "Arthritis Connection", published by the Arthritis Foundation, in an article entitled, "Lick the Salt Habit", it noted how Americans consume 50% more sodium than is healthy. The majority of this comes from packaged, processed and prepared foods. The FDA is asking restaurants and manufacturers to lower sodium content by 12%. There are 96 countries trying to cut sodium intake, attempting to prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths from heart attacks, heart disease, and strokes.

Too much sodium can also affect arthritis. Arthritis is on the rise in the U.S., which researchers expected to be the case. However, they were surprised how many of those surveyed (43.9%) said arthritis was limiting their daily activities.

Limiting salt content can be helpful. If you are overweight (30.7% of adults are), the loss of a few lbs. can help. Reading labels on food products may shock you in regards to the sodium content. Rejecting some of these foods may be very helpful.

So, be salt in the world as a follower of Jesus, but try to consume less salt. Doing both will help you to feel better!

The Quilting Group met on Sunday Feb 5 to pack **103** finished quilts for Lutheran World Relief.



Potluck lunch to honor Gene Duffey for his years of service as Treasurer.



*February 12 is the Super Bowl. Over 90 million people are expected to watch the Super Bowl. With that kind of attendance, the church should take notice of this. What a time to proclaim the Gospel!*

*On Super Bowl Sunday Ascension Lutheran congregation will play a bit, worship a lot, and celebrate that we have a Super God! You are invited (only if you'd like) to wear your favorite team colors or jersey to church (it need not be a football team). Although there are good Christians who believe that smiling or laughing in church is not appropriate, we believe that our salvation through Jesus gives us much to smile about every Sunday. Perhaps we will see you at Worship this super Sunday!*



**MARDI  
GRAS**  
*Party*

**Please join us at  
St. Matthew's  
Sunday, February 19  
after worship service  
in Benson Hall  
FOOD • JAZZ • FUN  
LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!**





## Remembering Arlene

Arlene Renzi served our congregation for many years as our Secretary. She enjoyed the people at Ascension and always tried to fulfill her duties with grace and professionalism. I think serving God in this congregation was a joyful part of her week.

Arlene and I had many conversations on the phone and in the office where we both laughed as we talked about Florida, political events, and how it seemed every other week brought challenges, either with the computer, the copier, or our phones. Some weeks it was a trifecta concerning office equipment. Charles was always her companion at work and always folded the bulletins.

I think what Arlene enjoyed most about her job was the monthly Newsletter. She was always searching for “filler” articles to include. Snoopy was her favorite cartoon and so Snoopy often was featured in our Newsletter.

We talked about faith, God, and the hope and confidence we have in Jesus. Arlene was a person of faith and I think her job as secretary at our church was an expression of her faith.

Arlene became ill before Thanksgiving. We were made aware on Monday evening, January 30<sup>th</sup> that she had passed away at home. Her brother in New Jersey is planning burial there, but has also accepted my offer for a Memorial Service here at Ascension. We do not have a date at this time for the Service and will continue to work with her family.

We give thanks to God for Arlene and her faithfulness to this congregation. We know she now rests from her labors in the presence of the Savior she knew and loved.

In Christ Jesus,  
Pastor Chuck



### **Bulletin and Video Sponsors Needed**

*Sponsor the Sunday Bulletin for a donation of \$10.00 per week.*

*Be a video sponsor in church for \$15.00 per week.*

*Sponsor a You Tube video for \$20.00 per week.*



Bulletins

*You may wish to do this in memory or honor of a loved one, in honor of someone, to the Glory of God.*

*Sponsors will be noted in the bulletin and the Newsletter.  
Video sponsors will also be noted on our You Tube service.*

*A signup sheet is in the Narthex at Church, or call the church office at: 352-624-0066.*



## Celebrations for February

## Daily Scripture Readings for FEBRUARY



2/03 Michael Gomillion

2/09 Luis Santiago

2/14 Breanna Lopez

\*Please contact the office if your birthday is in February and not listed above.



## Anniversaries

2/25 Tom and Eleanor Newton

\*Please contact the office if your anniversary is in February and not listed above.



1	Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 8 Galatians 4:4-7 or Philipians 2:5-11; Luke 2:15-21
2	Psalm 148; Proverbs 1:1-7; James 3:13-18
3	Psalm 110; Proverbs 1:20-33; James 4:1-10
4	Psalm 110; Proverbs 3:1-12; James 4:11-17
5	Psalm 110; Proverbs 22:1-9; Luke 6:27-31
6	Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
7	Psalm 110; Exodus 1:22—2:10; Hebrews 11:23-26
8	Psalm 110; Exodus 2:11-25; Hebrews 11:27-28
9	Psalm 110; Exodus 3:7-15; John 8:39-59
10	Psalm 29; 1 Samuel 3:1-21; Acts 9:10-19a
11	Psalm 29; 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Timothy 4:11-16
12	Psalm 29; 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; Luke 5:1-11
13	Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
14	Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36; Genesis 17:1-13; Romans 4:1-12
15	Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36; Exodus 30:22-38; Acts 22:2-16
16	Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36; Isaiah 41:14-20; John 1:29-34
17	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; Judges 2:6-15; 2 Corinthians 10:1-11
18	1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
19	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Samuel 2:21-25; Matthew 25:1-13
20	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; Judges 2:16-23; Acts 13:16-25
21	Psalm 86; 1 Samuel 9:27—10:8; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1
22	Psalm 86; 1 Samuel 15:10-31; Acts 5:1-11
23	Psalm 86; Genesis 16:1-14; Luke 18:15-17
24	Psalm 62:5-12; Jeremiah 19:1-15; Revelation 18:11-20
25	Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
26	Psalm 62:5-12; Jeremiah 20:14-18; Luke 10:13-16
27	Psalm 62:5-12; Jeremiah 20:7-13; 2 Peter 3:1-7
28	Psalm 46; Genesis 12:1-9; 1 Corinthians 7:17-24



# FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>February</p>			1	2 9:00 am Quilting	3	4
<b>5</b> 5th Sunday after Epiphany  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	<b>6</b>  5:30pm—AA	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 9:00 am Quilting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 6th Sunday after Epiphany  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion  Wear your favorite sports team apparel!	<b>13</b>  5:30pm—AA	<b>14</b> Valentine's Day  	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 9:00 am Quilting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Transfiguration of Our Lord  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion  Council Meeting after service.  Mardi Gras at St. Matthews	<b>20</b>  5:30pm—AA	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <i>ASH WEDNESDAY 6:00 PM</i>  	<b>23</b> 9:00 am Quilting	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 1st Sunday during Lent 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion February birthday celebration after service.	<b>27</b>  5:30pm—AA	<b>28</b>				