

The Messenger

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FEBRUARY
2024

God Simply Changes Everything!

The above title is the theme for our special mid-week Lenten Services beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. Our Worship Service will be at 6:30 pm. Beginning on February 21, a simple supper will take place at 5:30 pm in the Social Hall. All are welcome and we hope you might invite a friend.

Topics and Scripture

Ash Wednesday, February 14

“Ashes and Snow – God’s Amazing and Merciful Cover-up”

Scripture: Isaiah 1:16-18

Wednesday, February 21

“Can a Full-Grown Man Become Taller?”

Scripture: Luke 19: 1-10

Wednesday, February 28

“Do We Need A New Sign” (Conversations at the Cross-Eyed Buffalo Bar)

Scripture: Matthew 12:38-42

JOIN US

-February 14 at 6:30pm for the Ash Wednesday service.

-Starting February 21 all Wednesday services will be preceded by a soup/sandwich meal at 5:30pm.

Wednesday, March 6

“Reckless Love”

Scripture: John 15: 34-35

Wednesday, March 13

“Stinky Feet” (Conversations at the Cross-Eyed Buffalo)

Scripture: John 13: 1-17

Wednesday, March 20

“A Woman’s Extravagant Gift”

Scripture: Matthew 26: 6-13

I have enjoyed developing these themes for our mid-week services. I believe, by **God’s grace, it will be another way we reflect on the amazing grace of God this** Lenten season. Yes, as in Advent, on two evenings, we will listen to conversations at the Cross-Eyed Buffalo Bar. I think they are playful, but also with a serious message about Jesus and his extraordinary love.

I hope to see many of you, not only on Sunday, but on many of the Wednesday evenings of Lent.

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Chuck

Lent and Ash Wednesday – Some Background

Not all of our Christian friends observe Lent or Ash Wednesday. That’s fine, because we are bound together by God in our common believe that Jesus is our Savior and we want him to be Lord in our lives. So diversity in practice among Christians can be interesting and instructive.

Sometimes Christians who do observe Lent and Ash Wednesday are not quite sure why. So the following reminders might be helpful.

The word *Lent* means Spring and probably comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word. Today it refers to a period of *40 days* (not counting Sundays), which takes us all the way to sunset on the Thursday evening of Holy Week.



The early Christians eventually began to observe a period of *40 hours* before Easter as the time when Jesus laid dead in **the tomb, following his crucifixion on Good Friday. (I don't think they went shopping, hid eggs with candy in them, or packed super market parking lots, but that's another interesting topic.)** I think they meditated on the death of Jesus and what that meant.)

Later *a two week period* was observed called Passiontide to remember the suffering and death of Jesus. Finally the period came to be *40 days*, the same number of days that Jesus spent in the wilderness and also faced temptation by the devil. (The First Sunday in Lent always recalls this event (Mark 1: 9-15).

Interesting that *Sundays are in (not of) Lent* and are not considered part of Lent because Sundays always recall the resurrection of Jesus, who rose from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week.

Ash Wednesday comes out of the time period we historically have labeled the Middle Ages. Lent had become more somber and penitential and the custom of **wearing sackcloth and having no shoes on one's feet became prevalent.** Ashes, made from burning the palms of the previous Palm Sunday, were also thrown by parishioners over their heads as a sign of sorrow over their sins and a desire to repent.

Today (for those wishing to receive them), we place ashes on one's forehead with the words **"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return"**. Gets our attention, doesn't it? We use a friendlier blessing for children, like **"Remember how much you are loved by Jesus"**.

It is a sobering evening, but also one of Gospel proclamation where we remember that the only answer to our sinfulness is the loved and mercy of God that comes through Jesus. That is great news!

All the above is a very brief and sometimes incomplete background to Lent and Ash Wednesday. I hope though that it is helpful.

Pastor Chuck



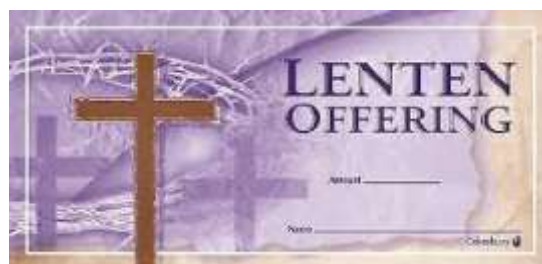
Congratulations to all the elected members of council! I think we have a great team, and we will do great things this year. I would like to thank all of our exiting members for all your hard work this past year. You are all much appreciated. I know that we will continue to work hard this year to keep Ascension Lutheran Church going in the right direction and supporting our outreach programs, tithing responsibilities within the ELCA, the community, as well as locally, and internationally. There is so much need and we can only do so much, but we will do our best at whatever and wherever the need is. Just a reminder that Lent is early this year, earlier than last year even, starting with Ash Wednesday on February 14th. There will be no dinner prior to Ash Wednesday services, but we will once again resume Lenten suppers at 5:30pm, with services following at 6:30 pm. WELCA has volunteered to provide the first Lenten meal on February 21st. We will need other volunteers to assist with future meals, but we will get back to that soon. I am looking forward to working with all of you this next year and am excited to see the outcome of our endeavors. We are going to have a great year!! We are blessed with having a completely filled council again this year. Thank you all for your willingness

to serve. Also, if there are any concerns that the congregation may have, please seek out any of the council members so it can be addressed.

Blessings to you all,

Lynn Andrews

Council President



Special Offerings May Help Many this Lenten Season

Last month our Church Council decided on three special causes to receive our mid-week Lenten and Holy Week Service offerings. They are:

ELCA Missionaries: Our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports the work of over 240 missionaries in over 40 countries. Our missionaries work with other Christians to nurture faith and well being, sometimes provide education, medical care, and encouragement. The ELCA believes that Christ calls all of us to witness to our faith in him, and sometimes that means answering a call to serve in a country other than our own.

ELCA World Hunger: It is a startling statistic that over 820 million men, women and children, about 11% of the world's population suffers from hunger. As you and I know, behind each statistic is a person, a precious child of God, who does not have enough food and nutrition. "From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty."

Global Refuge is the new name of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. For 85 (founded in 1939) years this organization has welcomed refugees and migrants entering the United States. It has a 4 star Charity Navigator rating (the highest an agency can receive). Global Refuge helps newly arrived persons and families to adjust to a new country and to feel welcomed. Hospitality to the stranger was commanded by God in Deuteronomy 10:19: "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Offerings from our mid-week Lenten services as well as on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will support these causes. Also the special envelopes marked Lenten Offering will help.

In addition, we will be collecting new pairs of socks, which will go to First Lutheran Church (at the intersection of I-75 and highway 301, and their ministry to a camp of homeless persons, many of them veterans.

We will also be collecting items (still to be finally determined) for Veterans Helping Veterans, USA, Inc. on East Silver Springs Blvd. More info. coming on this.

May God bless all these special causes, serving precious people in need of assistance!



On Sunday Feb 4, we prayed a Blessing of the Quilts during service. After service the ladies of the Quilting Group met to pack 62 finished quilts for Lutheran World Relief.



February 11 is the Super Bowl. Over 128 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!



Extra Devotional Resources for Lent:

40 Day Hunger Calendar - Produced by our ELCA World Hunger, this two sided calendar helps us think about hunger and how we can help. Please remember that 1/3 of our Special Lenten offerings are going to support the work of ELCA World Hunger.

Weekly Devotions by Bread for the World. Bread for the World is a bipartisan (yes, there is such a thing) Christian lobby which brings leaders together to help legislation address the needs of hungry people at home and abroad. It seeks to build consensus around ways to address hunger issues, bringing together people of different faiths, as well as people with different political beliefs. As a Christian group, they have produced these Lenten devotional aids. Bread for the World began in the 1980's with a Lutheran pastor, Rev. Art Simon, helping it to begin.

Both of these are available free of charge at church, should you decide to use either or both.



- 1/01 Pastor Chuck
- 1/17 Donna Ellickson
- 1/30 Herb Enberg
- 1/31 Greg Phillips
- 2/03 Michael Gomillion
- 2/09 Luis Santiago
- 2/14 Breanna Lopez

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

Anniversaries

- 1/19 Eddie and Louise McCallon
- 1/20 Ian and Stacy Tighe
- 2/25 Tom and Eleanor Newton

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



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.

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.



Daily Scripture Readings for FEBRUARY

Thursday Feb 1	Proverbs 12:10-21	Galatians 5:2-15	Psalm 147:1-11, 20c	
Friday Feb 2	Job 36:1-23 1	Corinthians 9:1-16	Psalm 147:1-11, 20c	
Saturday Feb 3	Isaiah 46:1-13	Matthew 12:9-14	Psalm 147:1-11, 20c	
Sunday Feb 4	Isaiah 40:21-31	Psalm 147:1-11, 20c (3)	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
Monday Feb 5	2 Kings 4:8-17, 32-37	Acts 14:1-7	Psalm 102:12-28	
Tuesday Feb 6	2 Kings 8:1-6	Acts 15:36-41	Psalm 102:12-28	
Wednesday Feb 7	Job 6:1-13	Mark 3:7-12	Psalm 102:12-28	
Thursday Feb 8	1 Kings 11:26-40	2 Corinthians 2:12-17	Psalm 50:1-6	
Friday Feb 9	1 Kings 14:1-18	1 Timothy 1:12-20	Psalm 50:1-6	
Saturday Feb 10	1 Kings 16:1-7	Luke 19:41-44	Psalm 50:1-6	
Sunday Feb 11	2 Kings 2:1-12	Psalm 50:1-6 (2)	2 Corinthians 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9
Monday Feb 12	Exodus 19:7-25	Hebrews 2:1-4	Psalm 110:1-4	
Tuesday Feb 13	Job 19:23-27	1 Timothy 3:14-16	Psalm 110:1-4	
Wednesday Feb 14	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	Psalm 51:1-17 (1)	2 Corinthians 5:20b—	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Thursday Feb 15	Daniel 9:1-14	1 John 1:3-10	Psalm 25:1-10	
Friday Feb 16	Daniel 9:15-25a	2 Timothy 4:1-5	Psalm 25:1-10	
Saturday Feb 17	Psalm 32	Matthew 9:2-13	Psalm 25:1-10	
Sunday Feb 18	Genesis 9:8-17	Psalm 25:1-10 (10)	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
Monday Feb 19	Job 4:1-21	Ephesians 2:1-10	Psalm 77	
Tuesday Feb 20	Job 5:8-27	1 Peter 3:8-18a	Psalm 77	
Wednesday Feb 21	Proverbs 30:1-9	Matthew 4:1-11	Psalm 77	
Thursday Feb 22	Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18	Romans 3:21-31	Psalm 22:23-31	
Friday Feb 23	Genesis 16:1-6	Romans 4:1-12	Psalm 22:23-31	
Saturday Feb 24	Genesis 16:7-15	Mark 8:27-30	Psalm 22:23-31	
Sunday Feb 25	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Psalm 22:23-31 (27)	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38
Monday Feb 26	Genesis 21:1-7	Hebrews 1:8-12	Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45	
Tuesday Feb 27	Genesis 22:1-19	Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19	Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45	
Wednesday Feb 28	Jeremiah 30:12-22	John 12:36-43	Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45	
Thursday Feb 29	Exodus 19:1-9a	1 Peter 2:4-10	Psalm 19	





FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>February</p>				1	2	3
<p>4 5th Sunday after Epiphany</p> <p>10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5:30pm—AA</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:00 am Quilting</p>	8	9	10
<p>11 Transfiguration of Our Lord</p> <p>10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p>Wear your favorite sports team apparel!</p> <p>Super Bowl Sunday</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:30pm—AA</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Valentine's Day</p> <p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p> <p>6:30 PM</p>	15	16	17
<p>18 1st Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion</p>	<p>19</p> <p>5:30pm—AA</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:00 am Quilting</p> <p>5:30pm Meal</p> <p>6:30pm Midweek Lenten Service</p>	22	23	24
<p>25 2nd Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p>Council Meeting after service.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:30pm—AA</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:00 am Quilting</p> <p>5:30pm Meal</p> <p>6:30pm Midweek Lenten Service</p>	29		