

The Lamp Lighter
February 2021
The Newsletter of Living Lord Lutheran Church
Real God. Real Faith. Real Life.
www.LLLC.org

WORSHIP SERVICES SUNDAYS AT 8:00 AND 10:30 AM
ADULT FORUM & SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:00 AM

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE, FEBRUARY 17, 12:00 NOON

LENTEN EVENING SERVICES – WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 PM

From Interim Pastor Larry Klinker...As we celebrate Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, February 17, we shift from the **Cycle of Light** which began in Advent and included the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany. With Ash Wednesday, we shift into the **Cycle of Life** which includes the season of Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. Both cycles follow a pattern of **expectation** (preparation), the **fulfillment**, and the **proclamation**.

For me, Lent is not primarily focused on denial, as we have often heard asked, “What did you give up for Lent?” If we give anything up or participate in more Lenten services or use Lenten devotionals or the Lenten practices such as fasting, prayer, or acts of charity, it is all about creating a more open space within our hearts to experience the forgiveness and grace and oneness that is the essence of our relationship with God.

We need these forty days to first prepare for our Lenten confession that we will make on Maundy Thursday. Because I hope you noticed there is no absolution given on Ash Wednesday to our confession because it leaves the whole season of Lent open for us to prepare our confession. The whole Lenten season is time to reflect on how we have been in bondage, the powers and principalities that keep us from God, and our true humanity and how we need to find new spaciousness within ourselves. Our Absolution comes on Maundy Thursday.

We need this new openness and spaciousness because we discover in Lent that we are wrestling with the principalities and powers that hold us captive and have convinced us we are separate from God and each other. The powers have convinced us that being separate from God we need only to live for the new trinity of me, myself, and I which alienates me from my fellow human beings. Each Lent, as we wrestle with these powers, we find new places within ourselves where we are in bondage sin (sin is understood as being separate from God here) and cannot free ourselves. As Lutherans, we believe there is only one sin: beings separated from God. Everything we call sins are acts that reflect and affirm that we are separate from God.

Lent is a time to examine the big lie that we are separated from God. Lent is a time to explore the ways that we are captive to the powers and principalities. Lent is a time, as our present COVID pandemic has already taught us, is: we are dust and to dust we shall return. Life is that fragile on our own but so powerfully connected in and through God.

Bringing Palms back to the church...With Ash Wednesday approaching on Wednesday, February 17, we want to invite the members and friends of Living Lord to participate in an ancient practice. I want to invite you to take all the old palms that you received on Palm/Passion Sundays from last year, or other years for that matter, and bring them to the church to be cut up and then burned to create the ashes for Ash Wednesday. I look forward to this practice becoming a yearly practice of a rhythm of receiving Palms each year on Palm/Passion Sunday and then returning them each year prior to Ash Wednesday to be burned to create the ashes for Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday Service...This year, because of COVID-19 still impacting our worship services as well as our present attendance, the Church Council, after much discussion, has decided to only offer one Ash Wednesday service on **February 17** at 12:00 noon. We will offer a traditional Ash Wednesday service from the ELW which includes making our Lenten confession, imposition of ashes, readings from Scripture, preaching, prayers, and Holy Communion. We are still thinking about how the ashes will be imposed, either with a swab or sprinkled on each person, to limit the contact during these days of COVID-19.

Lenten Services...This year's Lenten series begins on **Wednesday, February 24**, at 6:30 pm. Because of the continued COVID-19 virus, we will not be offering a Soup Supper preceding our worship experience. The theme for this year's Lenten series is: we are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. Though many of our common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of repentance, prayer, fasting, sacrificial giving, and works of love, Lent is a time for deepening of our sense of community. This year we will use readings from the Gospel of Mark to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, and with God.

Wednesday, February 24: **In community with creation.** Mark 4:35-41: Jesus calms the storm.

Wednesday, March 3: **In community with all the saints.** Mark 9:2-8: Jesus in conversation with those who have gone before him.

Wednesday, March 10: **In community with our neighbor.** Mark 2:1-12: A community comes together to bring a neighbor to Jesus.

Wednesday, March 17: **In community with those on the margins.** Mark 5:1-20: Jesus crosses barriers to attend to those on the margins.

Wednesday, March 24: **In community with Christ.** Mark 10:32-45: Jesus reminds us that we are walking the way of the cross.

We will use a simple form of evening prayer to help us in our Lenten reflections.

Council Retreat...On **Saturday, February 20**, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm we will hold our annual Council Retreat. We will do this wearing masks and being social distant from each other. Participants are asked to bring their own lunch. The retreat will help the Council reflect upon: **The Why? The How? The What? of ministry.** What we want to reflect on are the places in our community that God is already at work and is calling upon us as the church to join God in that work. We want to keep asking the question: What is God's dream for this place? The retreat will be based upon a delightful little book called: "Everywhere You Look: Discovering the Church Right Where You Are".

Pastor Larry's Bible Blog...Pastor Larry offers you an opportunity to read your way thru scriptures with him each day at his Bible Blog. The readings alternate between readings from an Older Testament book and then a Newer Testament book. We are now reading the book of Proverbs from the Older Testament. Then we will begin reading the Newer Testament the First Peter on Pastor Larry's Bible blog online at <http://klinkerld-pastorlarrysbible.blogspot.com/>. Join us online. When we complete these two planned books, we will start the Older Testament book of Ecclesiastes, another wisdom book.

Interim Pastor Larry Klinker's Office Hours...Pastor Larry will be in the office on Wednesdays from 9:30 am to noon. You may reach him at 330-550-0077 or email him at klinkerld@att.net.

From the President, Nancy Walters...

Church Information...Please remember that you can obtain church information from the monthly Lamplighter Newsletter, the Constant Contact emails you receive, on the church website (www.lllc.org), on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Living-Lord-Lutheran-Church-493806727349110/>), and postings on the church bulletin board. Church Council Meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board and sent out via Constant Contact. We would like to see a better "open rate" when we send information to you via Constant Contact so that we know you are being informed of the activities that are occurring at the church. If you have any other suggestions on how best to reach out to our parishioners, please see a Council member.

From the Finance Committee, Treasurer Dave Henderson...The books are closed for 2020. Receipts for 2020 totaled \$126,974.11 and expenses for 2020 were \$117,084.44 for a net gain of \$9,889.67 for the year. Thanks to everyone who sent their offerings in through the mail in 2020 during this COVID-19 crisis. We managed to stay positive for 2020 essentially because of Pastor Bill's retirement. As we move forward in 2021, we will continue to face challenges as we search for a new pastor and the COVID-19 crisis lingers. Let's hope that sometime during this year we will return to some sense of normal. We will be discussing the 2021 budget on January 31 at the Annual Congregation Meeting. If you can attend, please do as we prepare for the financial future of Living Lord. Again, thank you to all who helped keep us going financially! Let's hope and pray that 2021 is a better year!

From the In-Reach Committee Chairperson, Lorraine Bell...Please notify Lorraine Bell at 330-219-5881 (cell) or 330-372-0227 (home) (or the church office) of any members who are hospitalized, ill, etc., so a card can be sent from the church.

Prayer Chain...We have started our prayer chain with five members (if I forgot someone, please let me know): Camille Allen (330-503-1817), Pam Boothe (740-395-3584), Karin McKinney (330-469-6083), Jacquie Thomas (330-609-9805), and Lorraine Bell (330-219-5881). Please call one of the women with the name needing prayer and any concerns your feel are relevant. Be sure to have the permission of that person. That person will pass it on to the next one and it will go on to the next person, etc., so that we are all praying.

From the Outreach Committee Chairperson, Judy Shaffer...Due to COVID-19, we have not been able to go to Shepherd of the Valley to host our Bingo. In place of our visits, Shepherd of the Valley has been holding their own Bingo, but have no prizes to give to the residents. We have been collecting and dropping off Bingo prizes. It is time to restock. If you are able to pick up some of these items while you are out shopping for yourself, call Judy Shaffer at 330-856-3148 to make arrangements to get them to her. Items we are collecting:

lip balm, small pocket packs of tissue, lotions and hand creams, SOFT candy like Kit Kat bars, Three Musketeers, Hershey chocolates, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, and bags of hard candy, small individual packets of crackers (nothing spicy) and cookies, small Easter decorations that might cheer up their food trays or for their bulletin boards, and small knickknacks they may put on their dresser or windowsills.

From the Worship Committee Chairperson, Jan Was...

Ash Wednesday... We will have one service on **February 17, Ash Wednesday**, at 12:00 noon.

Lenten Evening Services... We will have Lenten Evening Services every Wednesday during Lent at 6:30 pm.

From Worship Committee Member, Lynne Walters... I deeply appreciate the outpouring of support that I have received from the Bell Choir, congregation, and Council. After prayerful consideration, I have rescinded my resignation and will be continuing as your Bell Choir Director. If you have been thinking of joining Bell Choir, now is the time! We are looking forward to adding special music to our Lenten and Easter services. Please feel free to contact me at 330-856-9689.

From the Parish Nurse, Dora Muller... *"The past is a source of knowledge, and the future is a source of hope."* Stephen Ambrose

"Never lose hope. Storms make people stronger and never last forever." Roy T. Bennett

We are facing difficult times. In the past weeks, I saw so much pain among the families and patients. COVID-19 does not spare gender, social status, or age. We start to see and lose younger relatively healthier people to the virus. It is an emotional rollercoaster for all of us. The hope to mitigate and control the virus is through the vaccine and continue to follow the prevention guidelines of social distance and face masks. The vaccine is now available for those who believe in the power of immunization. Personally, I believe that immunization will protect me and those around me from the virus. I am fortunate that my workplace provided me with the vaccine, but not everybody has the same opportunity. My husband and a large part of the population qualify to receive the vaccine based on age and health issues, but like many others, the access to the vaccine has proven a little challenging. So far, we could not secure an appointment for my husband. Despite all the phone calls, set-up appointments online, no organization has called us with a vaccination date and location. There is a high demand for the vaccine, but the availability is not ideal. Even with vaccination available, the virus will continue to be present among us. We still need to be vigilant with our health. The vaccine is a tool, but not a guarantee of complete immunity. Like many other diseases, such as influenza, shingles, and measles, the COVID-19 vaccine will provide an extra layer of protection.

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 7, 8:00 & 10:30 am – Installation of Council

Wednesday, February 10, 10:00 am – Trustees Meeting in Activity Room

Sunday, February 14, 11:45 am – Council in Activity Room/NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Wednesday, February 17, 12:00 noon – Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Saturday, February 20, 9:00 am – Council Retreat in Fellowship Hall

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

1 = John Thomas
3 = Jake DeScenna
7 = Larry John
8 = Frederick Peachman
12 = Rollie Walters
14 = Frank LaRock
18 = Anthony Brounce
19 = Bill Dillon
23 = Frank Roberts
25 = Cynthia Griffin
29 = Bonnie Smith

Anniversaries

8 = Lauka, Tom & Pat
19 = Gerbetz, Ernest & Pam