



CURRENTS

FEBRUARY 2021

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - OXNARD, CA

**Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his
life for his friends.**

John 15:13



THE GIFT OF LOVE

Gary W. Henricksen
Parish Administrator

Jesus told us that there is no greater love that a person can have, than to lose their life for a friend. [John 15:13] Here we have three themes locked together in one verse:

- Love
- Death
- Sacrificial Giving

Valentine's Day (February 14) and Ash Wednesday (February 17) are close together on the calendar this year and so are their theological emphases. There is no true love without Jesus and there is no true love of God without repentance and sacrificial giving. In a similar way we see Jesus as the perfect example of love and forgiveness as we look to His death and sacrificial giving of Himself on the Cross *for us!*

Ash Wednesday begins the church season of Lent. The word Lent comes from the Old English word "lencten" or lengthening of days in the Spring season. At this time, the church focuses on the end of Christ's earthly ministry and the sacrificial gift of love in His death on Calvary.

It is customary for many people to give up something in a sacrificial way during this season and thus unite their prayers and actions with Christ's gift of love and sacrifice. Will you give up something during Lent? Here are some suggestions that cause me to stop and think:

- Give up hurting words and say kind words.
- Give up sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Give up anger and be filled with patience.
- Give up pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Give up worries and have trust in the Lord.
- Give up complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Give up pressures and be prayerful.
- Give up bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Give up selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Give up grudges and be reconciled.
- Give up words and be silent in order to listen.



ST. JOHN'S DURING THE SEASON OF LENT

Lent: February 17 - April 4 - A Journey with Jesus

At the center of the Bible is the work of Jesus. At the center of the work of Jesus is the cross of Jesus. Crosses adorn chancels and steeples. Many wear cross necklaces and earrings. Some make the sign of the cross before prayer, receiving communion, and getting into the batter's box. Let's not forget; the cross was a tool of injustice. An innocent Jesus was executed on a cross for crimes He never committed. God allowed this to happen for a specific reason. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price of sin so that He can offer the gift of eternal life. It is a means of life not death!

In upcoming weeks we invite you to join us as we focus upon Jesus' death and resurrection. So...

- Walk with Jesus through His journey to the cross and victory over death in His resurrection.
- Grow through the sermon series: Cross Words
- Observe the weekday celebrations of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.



Ash Wednesday on February 17

The devotion of Ash Wednesday goes back to the 600'S. Like many traditions, Ash Wednesday has changed over the years. On Ash Wednesday some Christians have the sign of the cross placed on their foreheads with ashes. This practice dates from the early Middle Ages. It is an outward sign of our sorrow and repentance for sinful behavior and our human mortality, yet it is also a sign that we have triumphed over both through the death and resurrection of Jesus

Christ. You are invited to join us on Ash Wednesday in a devotional time of Word and Sacrament outside at the firepit at 7:00 pm. We will inform you if COVID19 regulations change and permit us to move inside.

Cross Words; Reflections on What Jesus Said on the Cross.
February 21 - April 4



As Jesus died on the cross, He spoke words that have something to say to us. Tradition has put the different phrases together, calling them the seven last words of Jesus. In them are insights to who Jesus is and what He was going through. These words also give us insights into receiving and sharing the blessings that result from Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Join us for our weekly reflections.

February 21	Words of Mercy "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." <i>Lk. 23:34</i>
February 28	Words of Assurance "This day you will be with Me in Paradise." <i>Lk. 23:43</i>
March 7	Words of Care "Woman, behold your son." <i>Jn. 19:26-27</i>
March 14	Words of Substitution "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" <i>Matt. 27:46</i>
March 21	Words of Humanity "I thirst." <i>Jn. 19:28</i>
March 28	Words of Victory Palm Sunday "It is finished." <i>Jn. 19:30</i>
April 4	Words of Trust Easter Sunday "Into Your hands I commit My spirit." <i>Lk. 23:46</i>

The Passion Story According to Matthew

Each Sunday we will review Jesus' journey to the Cross by reading the Passion story recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, ending with the resurrection of Jesus. We encourage you to read these verses as a devotional.



February 21	The Evil Plot Unfolds Matthew 26: 14-25
February 28	Gethsemane: The Heartfelt Prayer Matthew 26: 31-45
March 7	Gethsemane: The Betrayal and Arrest Matthew 26: 47-56
March 14	Jesus before the High Priest Matthew 26: 57-68
March 21	Judas Hangs Himself Matthew 27: 1-10
March 28	Two Very Different Parades Matthew 21: 1-11; 27: 27-31
April 1	The Two Holy Meals Matthew 26: 26-30
April 2	The Crucifixion, Death and Burial Matthew 27: 11-65
April 4	The Resurrection Matthew 28:1-11

Holy Week Worship

April 1	Maundy Thursday - A Service of the Sacrament - 7:00 pm
April 2	Good Friday - A Service of Scripture, Prayer and Song – 7:00 pm

FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS
Ernie Moore, Chair



Sunday Worship Details

Please continue to be patient with Sunday worship flexibility as we “feel our way” through COVID19 and Winter weather. To cut through any confusion - please stay informed by looking at:

- Weekend emails sent by St. John’s. We always send them.
- Website updates.
- Facebook.
- Instagram.

Offerings

Thank you for your continued support of our mission and ministry. On Sundays when worship is live-streamed only, with no in-person congregation, your offerings can be given in two different ways:

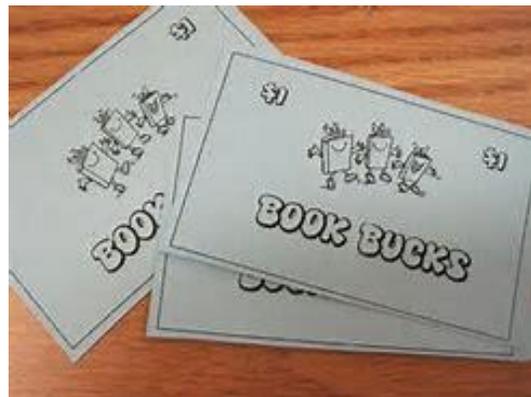
- Mail to: St. John’s Lutheran Church, 1500 North C Street, Oxnard, CA, 93030.
- PayPal on our website: stjohnsoxnard.com. PLEASE NOTE: When giving your offering online, 3% of your offering goes directly to PayPal.



FROM THE BOARD FOR PARISH EDUCATION
Christie Allmen, Chair

Book Fair Bucks

St. John’s has \$1,378.41 book bucks with Scholastic Book Fairs and \$547.92 with California Book Fairs left over from past book fairs. We are going to use these bucks to order books to use in an evangelism event for families of younger children in our community. We are looking toward a possible future event which may include hotdogs, books, puppets, information about church, and more. This event will be possible when COVID19 restrictions are lifted.



FROM THE BOARD FOR MISSIONS

Cindy Terrell, Chair



Personal Care Kits Ministry - Please Help!

The Board for Missions is excited to announce its partnership with Lutheran World Relief for a Lenten project that will touch the lives of many throughout the world with Personal Care Kits. Please participate with us in making Personal Care Kits for people in need who are besieged by the results of poverty, civil war, and natural disasters.

A: INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH PERSONAL CARE KIT

- ONE light-weight bath-size towel (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27"), dark color recommended
- TWO or three bath-size bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz. any brand, in original wrapping
- ONE adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging. Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business-size envelope; no plastic bags or wrap
- ONE sturdy comb, remove packaging
- ONE metal nail clippers (attached file optional), remove packaging

B: SOME IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER

- Be sure to shop for light- or medium-weight towels, which are easier for Kit recipients to hand wash and air dry, take up less storage space and considerably less expensive than the fluffier towels we may prefer to use.
- Bath towels vary in size. The 52" X 27" size listed in the guidelines is the maximum size. 20" x 40" is a good guideline for a minimum size.
- Please do not donate items with any religious symbols, messages or your group's name.
- Please do not donate any items decorated with a U.S. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage.
- Do not add other items or leave out any of the items listed.
- All items should be new and in good condition.
- Do not enclose the Kit or any of its contents in plastic bags.

C: HOW TO PACK YOUR PERSONAL CARE KITS

1. Fold the towel in half.
 2. Place the rest of the items in the towel.
 3. Fold and roll so nothing falls out.
 4. Secure with yarn, ribbon, string or rubber bands.
-

Delivery of your personal Care Kits will be easy. Just bring them to St. John's on any Sunday before or right after worship. Drop them off at the Welcome Table when worship is outside or place in the boxes by the church when worship is only streamed or is in the church. In addition, we will have two additional drop off dates when the office foyer will be open for drop off kits in the boxes. Dates and times are:

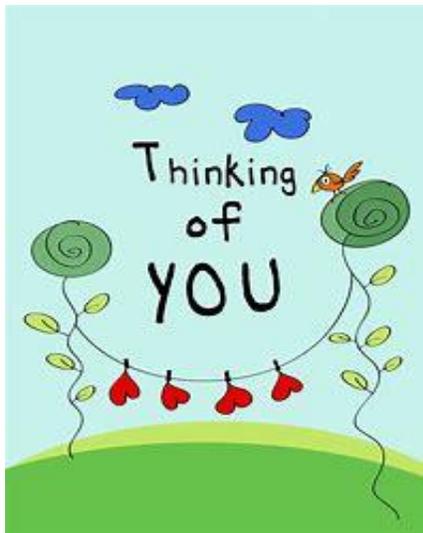
- Monday, March 1 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- Monday, March 29 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Oaxaca Dental Clinic



Missionary work in rural Oaxaca, Mexico continues, including the building of a new church and the building of a dental clinic. As COVID19 conditions improve and vaccine becomes more readily available, dental professionals from the Santa Barbara area and our Centro Cristiano churches will be working on the dental clinic quite a bit. Things are getting organized in the Lord's time. Please keep this effort in your prayers.

Cards to the Elderly



The Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) continues to seek letters of support and encouragement as part of the *Letters of Support Campaign*, which was launched in September in partnership with Meals on Wheels America. This campaign is designed to provide older adults and people with disabilities living in Ventura County with letters or cards and a message of encouragement and support.

Letters may be mailed to 646 County Square Drive, Suite 100, Ventura, Ca. 93003. Please notate *Letters of Support Campaign* on the envelope. All letters will be reviewed and then delivered with food boxes from the VCAAA's COVID-19 pantry. For more information, visit www.vcaaa.org or call (805) 477-7300.

The Food Pantry

We continue to collect food pantry items which benefit our brothers and sisters at Centro Cristiano Redwoods (Oxnard), ministry to local Mixteco friends, and others in need in our community. Drop off donations **at the welcome table** at all worship times. If church worship is not in person, please contact the church office for a delivery time.

We can always use these non-perishable foods:

- Bags of rice – any size
- Bags of pinto beans - any size
- Pasta
- Canned tomatoes
- Tomato sauce
- Bags of flour
- Maseca
- Cooking oil
- Sugar
- Salt.
- Knorr seasoning (chicken or beef)
- Fruit juices
- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Canned or dried fruit
- Cans of tuna
- Peanut butter
- Coffee
- Gift cards to help purchase chicken, milk, eggs, tortillas.



FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Art Terrell, Chair

Sandbag Thanks!



Grateful thanks go to our local Boy Scout troop for their help in sandbagging the doors at the R. G. Nauman Education Building. The troop meets on Sunday afternoons at the Fire Pit. The Scout Leader is our friend and former school-parent Jeff Zook! Thank you guys!



FINANCIAL OFFERINGS WELCOME FOR UPCOMING PROJECTS

Much like in your own lives, we at St. John's are pressing on with much needed home maintenance and improvements. To be good stewards of God's property, we continue to research the best prices available, good quality services, and long-lasting products. Thank you to our Board of Trustees, Worship Team, and Church Council for their many hours of hard work and researching of items.

We will be asking for expenditure approval at the next **Voter's Meeting** on **February 22, 2021**. Therefore, we ask for your financial and prayerful consideration in support of the following projects:

- Equipment for Worship Services (sound, computer, video, and lighting) = **\$7,000 - \$8,000**
- Air Conditioning Repair (AC does not work at all) = **\$5,000 - \$6,000**
- New carpet in the office (replaces smelly, worn out, ripped, stained, and aged carpet) = **\$4,000 - \$4,500**

Do any of these projects touch your heart? Could you contribute financially to any of this? If so, you can contribute in the following ways:

- Mail a **check** to St. John's at: 1500 North C Street, Oxnard, CA 93030. Designate the project area you wish to support in the memo.
- Use **PayPal** on our website. NOTE: We lose 3% of your donation to PayPal if you chose this method.
- Call the Church Office at (805) 983-0330 to arrange a special drop off time.

Please note: we are only asking for financial donations and not physical items.

As always, thank you for your prayerful consideration of these needs.



ST. JOHN'S COMMUNICATIONS Sara Gonzales



New on the Website

Take a look at stjohnsoxnard.com for our very own:

- Organ music videos
- Organ music audio
- Worship Band videos
- Handbell videos
- Past sermon recordings

FROM THE GRACE PLACE PUPPET THEATER MINISTRY

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them. [Psalm 126:2].



Easter is just around the corner and we would love all of our families to be involved. It is our goal to be a part of a special Easter video. This video has already started production, so join us now.

There are many ways to be involved with social distancing, including filming families separately. The goal is to have as many people be involved at their comfort level.

This is a great fun ministry for family and friends. We would love you to join the group. Contact Sara Gonzales for details: sarabpk20@gmail.com or at 805-479-2279.

FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD



LCMS Life Ministry will host its first-ever virtual life conference on March 19-20 2021, under the theme “Making Disciples: Valuing Life.” The pandemic constraints have given us an opportunity to share presentations by many experts with students of all ages, missionaries, church workers, and congregation members who couldn’t make it to previous in-person events.

That includes you!

Conference sessions will help you explore a distinctly Lutheran understanding of the sanctity of human life, specifically as it pertains to:

- Speaking for life in the public square
- Caring for life in your community
- Teaching about human life

Hear from theologians and human care advocates, including LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, Focus on the Family Vice President of External, and Government Relations, Timothy Goeglein.

Access the conference by livestreaming, watching on-demand videos, and engaging with speakers through question-and-answer opportunities. Register individually, or as groups of 10 for a group registration discount. To register for the conference or learn more, visit lcms-life.org.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, February 2	Fire Pit Passages and Prayer – 7:30 pm
Tuesday, February 9	Fire Pit Passages and Prayer – 7:30 pm
Tuesday, February 16	Fire Pit Passages and Prayer – 7:30 pm
Wednesday, February 17	ASH WEDNESDAY Fire Pit Worship - 7:00 pm
Sunday, February 21	First Sunday in Lent
Tuesday, February 23	Fire Pit Passages and Prayer – 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 21	Time Change - Spring Forward!

ON THE SIDELINES



A Little Lutheran Laughter:

Q: What do you call a very small Valentine?

A: A Valen-tiny!

Q: What did one volcano say to the other volcano on Valentine's Day?

A: I lava you!

Recipe of the Month: Valentine Sugar Cookies



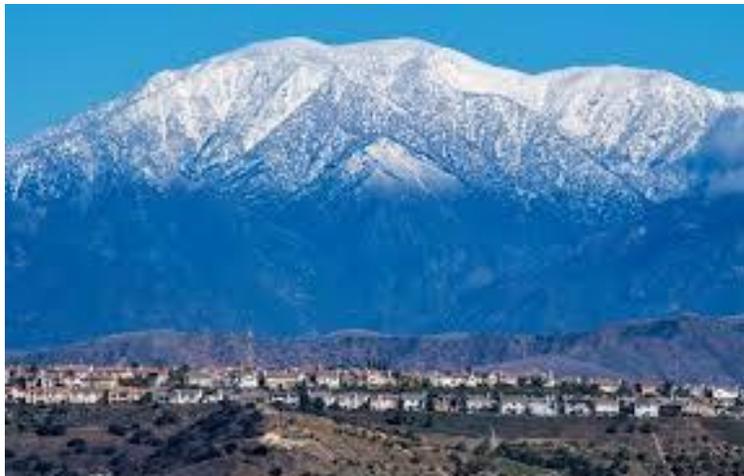
1 cup butter, room temp.	1 tsp water
1 cup sugar	3 cups flour
1 ½ tsp. vanilla	1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 egg	¼ tsp salt

1. Cream butter, sugar, and vanilla.
2. Add egg and water. Beat until light and fluffy.
3. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Sift together.
4. Blend dry mixture into creamed mixture.
5. Divide dough in half. Wrap each half in waxed paper or plastic wrap and chill for 1 hr.
6. Roll dough to ¼ in thickness and cut with a heart shaped cookie cutter.
7. Bake at 375 for 6-8 min. Edges should not brown.

Icing:

2 cups powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 tbsp of melted butter
Milk as desired

Stir sugar, vanilla, and butter together. Mix in teaspoons of milk, one at a time, until desired consistency is achieved. Add food coloring as desired.



HOW TO CONTACT US



**St. John's Lutheran Church, 1500 North C St. Oxnard, CA 93030
805.983.0330; stjohsoxnard.com**

STAFF

Vivian Moore, Office Manager: extension 10; vmoore@stjohsoxnard.com
Gary Henricksen, Parish Administrator: extension 15; ghenricksen@stjohsoxnard.com

OFFICERS, BOARD CHAIRS, AND MINISTRIES STAFF

David Chavez - President
William Speitel - Vice-President
Joyce Gregory - Treasurer
Marilyn Valenzuela - Secretary
Ernie Moore - Elders
Art Terrell - Trustees

Christie Allmen - Parish Education
Cindy Terrell - Missions
Emma Thompson – Sunday School
Scott Meier – Worship Coordinator
Sara Gonzales – Digital Media/Puppets

THE FINAL WORD



**“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.”
1 Corinthians 13:13**