



spirit

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of Triune Lutheran Church
“Set Free to Serve One Another”
February 2023

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Worship Schedule:
Saturdays 5PM (contemporary)
Sundays 11AM (traditional)

Ministers.....All People
Pastor.....Brad Ross
Administrative Assistant.....Jan Piskac
Organist.....Edith Schatt
Council President.....Dale Kirk
Council Vice-President...Bonnie Piskac
Council Secretary.....Heidi Bailey
Council Treasurer.....Jack Schwab

Siblings in Christ of Triune,

Greetings! On Wednesday, February 22, we will begin our journey of Lent with Ash Wednesday. It also happens to be that on February 22, will be the anniversary of one of the greatest upsets in the history of sports. It was a few years before I came around, but amidst the tensions of the Cold War between Americans and Soviets, an Olympic hockey game was about to be played between the two teams representing the political enemy countries. That made it more than interesting enough, not just for the respective national audiences, but throughout the world. Beyond that, the stage was also set for the ultimate athletic version of David vs. Goliath: the Soviets with their professional-grade and utmost experienced and talented players against comparatively amateur boys. The ones from the other side of the Pacific had not lost a World Championship or Olympic tournament since 1954. They had soundly defeated the Americans in an exhibition match just before the 1980 Olympics began. And yet, somehow, someway, it happened: “The Miracle on Ice,” it’s so called, now. To the over 34 million people who watched, many who did so on tape delay, now-famed broadcaster Al Michaels shouted the question, “Do you believe in miracles?”

It's safe to say sports reaches an obsession-like level for many throughout this country and beyond (I probably have my moments) to the point we crave for the miraculous victory for our respective team more so than the kind of miracles Jesus pulled off in first century Galilee. We also may not be on the same page in terms of what we think about miracles happening outside the sports arena. Can miracles happen only when God directly intercedes?



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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



Can it be a miracle when a bunch of college students, in their own way, defeat the mighty Soviet empire on the ice? Or, can it be a miracle when another college student studies hard to get into med school to end up being a surgeon that saves someone's life? Can it be a miracle when another goes into teaching and helps a child struggling at home? Are miracles happening in a variety of ways that may not quite be on the same level of water-walking and bread-multiplying?

Of course, how much you want to say that such various miracles are God/Holy Spirit-directed or more so influenced or whatever else with good 'ole free will thrown in there, is up to each child of God to decide. But when it comes to Ash Wednesday, it's

fair to say that God is the One pulling off the miracle for us, and not just in the sense that human life can somehow form from the very dust of the earth. There's a miracle that in spite of our mortality, in spite of us having our moments of wanting to give up against the Goliath of evil and hatred and greed, God will insist on responding with wondrous hope, with passionate fervor, with a relentless love.

Ash Wednesday will begin our journey of Lent, one we often call a journey to the cross. And although it does lead up to Good Friday, the day when we remember our Lord's death through such horrible means from an empire that lusted for power; the truth is the cross is always with us. The God who is with us in our sufferings is a constant. No matter how much we may feel like even a fraction of a David in comparison to whatever Goliath of pain and unfortunate events, there's always going to be more of a miraculous Christ within us to guide us through each and every day. And sometimes the miracle may not appear with a water-walking or a bread-multiplying, but it may emerge in simple ashes placed on a forehead before a wafer and a few drops of wine. It may emerge in a family member or a neighbor or a complete stranger, where our Lord is just as present as in the body and blood of Christ. There is a miracle that happens each and every day with the Greatest News that nothing can happen in this life that will ever separate us from Jesus Christ our crucified and risen Lord. Thanks be to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

We will gather at 4pm on Wednesday, February 22, to begin the journey of Lent together. There will be a time for confession while also hearing God's steadfast mercy. We will also give the opportunity to have ashes placed on our foreheads before receiving the ultimate gift of new life in Communion, remembering that God can still create a masterpiece even from dust.



We ask you to keep the following siblings in Christ
in your prayers:

Niki Grigsby
Richard Jakubcin
John Kurtz
Dan Maldovan
Jill Maldovan

Annie Slaughter
Gloria Roderick
Mardell Weiss
Clara Wilcox



If you wish to send any cards, please send them, or drop them off, to the church office, and we will be sure to deliver them.



1st Carol Dorsey
2nd Norelle Gress
12th Almut Zvosec
21st Jack Schwab

The Monday Discussion Group
We will resume our discussions of
Disappointment with God.
New participants are always
welcome!



Triune Lutheran Church Ministry

Last year, we invited our Triune family to complete a survey to help us discern what we and God envision for our ministry as a congregation. The overwhelming majority responded in continuing the quarterly ministry collection that we started before COVID emerged, when we collected items for Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (specifically, for the men's shelter in Cleveland) and Lutheran World Relief, among other local and worldwide ministries. We know that when we join forces with other communities of faith near and far away, our impact for other children of God becomes magnified.

And so, as we approach the season of Lent, it is during that season of the church calendar year that our wider church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) promotes one its most pivotal ministries to the world: ELCA World Hunger. For a bit of background, from their website:

More than 820 million people - that's about 11 percent of people in our world today - are hungry. As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work.

Working with and through our congregations, in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. 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.

Hunger facts

- 821 million people around the world - that's more than 1 in 10 - can't access the food they need to live active, healthy lives.
- According to the most recent estimates, 736 million people live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 per day. That's 10% of the world's population.
- At some point in 2017 (the most recent year available), more than 40 million people in the United States were unsure where their next meal might come from.
- 39.7 million Americans were living in poverty in 2017. For a family of four, this means their annual household income was below \$25,094.

And so, throughout the season of Lent, we will highlight the impact made by ELCA World Hunger, that many of us may not realize. It is a ministry that not only helps those in Africa, Asia, and South America, but in many places throughout the United States as well. If you wish to support this ministry not only during Lent, a time of spiritual reflection and renewed commitment to discipleship, you may do so directly through their website: (www.elca.org/worldhunger) or through your offering to Triune by simply designating "ELCA World Hunger." We are all in this ministry of feeding bodies and souls together!

Lent: Reflect, Repent, and Connect

Lent is a time of introspection, and even penance, as we look forward with humble awe and deep gratitude to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

The modern practices of Lent have ancient pedigrees. The term "Lent" comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which referred to the "lengthening" of the daylight hours during spring. Christians in northwestern Europe and the British Isles appropriated this term for the spring liturgical season.

Lent was traditionally a time for preparing both longtime believers and new converts for the welcoming of new Christians into the community through their baptisms, which were celebrated during Eastertide. Lent continues to be a time of preparation of self and the community as we look forward to the expansion of God's reign and the defeat of sin and death.

Lenten practices traditionally fall into three broad categories: justice toward God, justice toward oneself and justice toward others. Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to meet these goals.

The following activities can help mark this important season:

Justice toward God

- Rededicate yourself to living into your holy vocation to extend God's reign in your daily life.
- Meditate on God's faithful and sacrificial love for us to cultivate deep and abiding gratitude.

Justice toward oneself

- Remember in humility that you are created of dust and to dust you shall return.
- Take time to honestly, critically and gently evaluate how you have loved God and neighbor—or not—and how the Spirit might be calling you to do better.
- Fast from rich and delicious food to help yourself consciously break patterns of selfishness and overconsumption.
- Repent of patterns and habits that harm yourself and/or others.

Justice toward others

- Continue the traditional Lenten practice of increased giving to people experiencing poverty.
- Commit your time, energy and resources to supporting social justice causes through such organizations and programs as the Lutheran World Federation and the ELCA Good Gifts project.
- Invite acquaintances (or strangers!) to share a meal and share their stories.
- Take steps toward reconnecting with those from whom you've been estranged (if healthy for all).

One of my favorite practices during Lent is a modification of the Jewish ritual *Tashlikh*. A person will go to their closest flowing water source, such as a stream or river. I like to survey the path my local Mud Creek takes on its way to the Gulf of Mexico, which helps me remember my responsibility to be a good custodian of local waterways. Then I recite, among other prayers, Micah 7:18-19:

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency.

He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Lint (for Lent!) taken out of one's pocket—or perhaps a tiny bit of bread or a handful of soil—is cast into the stream or river to be carried away to the sea. The water carrying away the tiny bits of lint that accumulate in my pocket helps me visualize how God takes away my sins and injurious habits that also accumulate over time, so that I'm freed to serve God and neighbor once again.

On Thursdays during Lent, I try to discern patterns that harm myself or my neighbor, and when I come up with something of which I would like to repent, I take from my pocket or wallet a tiny bit of cotton or linen lint (something that will biodegrade quickly and not harm fish or amphibians). On Good Friday, I toss the small collection of natural fibers into the creek, repenting and thanking God for carrying away my sins.

However one practices Lent, it's a time of introspection and preparing to celebrate Jesus' taking away of our sins, sinfulness and embrace of death over life. It's important that we don't wallow in self-contempt. Rather, with confidence in Jesus' salvation, we should repent of negative patterns and live into Jesus' calling to love God and our neighbors. Lent continues to be a time of preparation of self and the community as we look forward to the expansion of God's reign and the defeat of sin and death. – Cory Driver (2/28/20, LivingLutheran.org)

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 AA @ 8pm	3	4 WORSHIP @ 5 PM TIM MIZE
5 WORSHIP @11 AM	6 Bible Study @ 1pm	7 AA @ 7pm	8	9 AA @ 8 pm	10	11 WORSHIP @ 5 PM PASTOR BRAD
12 WORSHIP @11 AM	13 Bible Study @ 1pm	14 AA @ 7pm	15	16 AA @ 8 pm	17	18 WORSHIP @ 5 PM TIM MIZE
19 WORSHIP @11 AM	20 Bible Study @ 1pm	21 AA @ 7pm	22 Ash Wednesday Worship @4pm	23 AA @ 8 pm	24	25 WORSHIP @ 5 PM PASTOR BRAD
26 WORSHIP @11 AM	27 Bible Study @ 1pm	28 AA @ 7pm				