

The Luther Memorial News February 2021

*We are a
Reconciling in Christ Congregation.*

*A community committed to making
Christ's disciples, dedicated to worship,
study, and prayer while serving all in need.*

Rev. Monica L. Weber, Pastor

Vicar Alyssa Kaplan, Lay Campus Minister

Juanita Smoot, Director of Music Ministry

Michael Spencer, Custodian

Marcia Barrow, Office Manager

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In two and a half weeks our Epiphany celebrations of Light will end with the Transfiguration of Jesus on February 14th. It's hard to believe that Ash Wednesday is February 17, and our Lenten fasting will begin: fasting from indulgence; fasting from self-gratification; fasting from habits or activities that distract us from God. Our Lenten theme this year is "Forgiveness," the same theme of my final week of Spiritual Direction study in January. Our instructor, Dr. Amy Montanez, pointed out that forgiveness looks and feels different for every person, so it's difficult to define. But every wounded person remains shackled to the past, until he/she can learn to forgive the hurt, the wrong, or the oversight. When we refuse to forgive, we allow anger and resentment to steal our power and harden our heart. To forgive doesn't mean that the damage never existed, but that it no longer controls our lives. Forgiveness runs much deeper than saying, "I'm sorry," because it requires the victim and the wounder to swallow their pride, and that's the perennial human struggle. True forgiveness takes hard work and time, and requires that we see each other through the eyes of God. It's also important to understand that forgiveness doesn't equate to reconciliation: sometimes it's not healthy for us to admit certain people back into our lives, if they haven't changed their behavior or attitude. Dr. Montanez advises that praying The Beatitudes can help us cultivate a way forward toward Forgiveness, and I look forward to sharing her insight with you during our Midweek Lenten Worship journey. Until then, bask in the Unfailing Light of Christ, who walks beside us, every day. Peace to all here, *Pastor Monica*



February Council Meeting: February 21st, 11:30am-1pm by Zoom. Staff & Council members please submit your monthly reports to Marcia Barrow in a PDF file no later than Monday, February 15th. Packets and the Zoom meeting link will be distributed by email.

Congregational Council Corner

2021

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2023

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Authorized the Committee on Social Ministry to recommend the distribution of benevolence payments on a quarterly basis.

Established a Campus Ministry Discernment Committee of six members, including representatives from the Well, to evaluate a proposed shared ministry with Christ Lutheran congregation, Radford. Carolyn Howard will chair the committee with a goal to report recommendations no later than the February meeting of Council.

Requested the Committee on Property to obtain an estimate on the longevity of the current roof and to obtain estimates for replacement cost of the roof to be reported to Council by May 2021. This information is essential to identify ongoing needs for the Capital Campaign, initiated in 2017.

Approved a second sabbath day for Pastor Monica so that she may more successfully meet goals for the coming year.

Approved meeting dates for Congregation Council generally for the third Sunday of the month in order to consider the financial report from the previous month.

December by the numbers:

General Treasury receipts: \$34,346

General Treasury expenses: \$40,100

Net General Treasury: - \$5,754

Our monthly cash flow continues to be negative. However, we did have a larger amount come in from pledges in December and we really appreciate that. The main reason for higher expenses in December was due to Council authorizing to pay the remainder of our local benevolences. The only 2020 benevolences that did not get paid were the final monthly payment for VA Synod/ELCA support and the remainder for the Food Pantry mainly because the checks did not get written by the end of the month due to the holidays. They will be paid in January. Overall 2020 was not financially successful for the church as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our total general treasury receipts for the year were \$343,640 while our total expenses were \$426,311: a negative net income for the year of -\$82,671. As a result

of the unbalanced income vs. expenses we essentially wiped out the entire cushion in the General Treasury checking account that we had at the start of the year. Thus, we can no longer pay any expenses that exceed our receipts without tapping into the Restricted Funds account.

The Finance Committee thanks you for your tremendous support this past year. We are definitely not out of the woods and this coming year will be even more trying for the church's finances especially since we will be starting off with fewer reserves in the new year. It is important that you stay up with your giving as we go forward as you are able. Your support is always greatly appreciated!

God's Work, Our Hands



In January, LMLC members contributed:

- *Carloads of Diapers for the NRV Diaper Pantry (thanks to Sandy & Terry Hagman for collecting/delivering!)
- *\$1,000 from the Good Shepherd Fund to pay the past-due electric bill for a single mom with 3 children
- *Funds to purchase 16 cartons of bar soap for Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry clients
- *\$100 in Kroger Cards distributed to persons seeking assistance



By your generous donations to LMLC Benevolences, you share the love of Christ Jesus with persons in need.

Your contributions to the **Good Shepherd Fund** are used to assist families in crisis. Please consider making a special gift to the Good Shepherd Fund. For more information, email Pastor Monica.



February 2021 Change 4 Change: Reconciling in Christ

LMLC is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. As a RIC Congregation, we provide a safe church and worship space. We support all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is a place where all can grow in faith and in community. We understand that God created each of us as beautiful and worthy of love without exception, judgement, or blame. Jesus loves all of us. If you want to contribute to this charity please, send in a donation to our church office, to the attention of Marcia Barrow. Please write Reconciling in Christ in the memo line. Thanks so much.
Elaine Belay; Social Ministry Committee Chair

Calling ALL Teens for Fun and Fellowship

All teenagers 13-17 are invited to attend the first Blacksburg-Radford ELCA Fellowship Youth Group on **Sunday, February 7th, from 2-4pm** (first meeting cancelled due to snowstorm) at Luther Memorial in the covered picnic shelter, rain, snow or shine! The Fellowship clergy will fire up the fire pits so we can stay warm to share games with Vicar Alyssa, enjoy snacks and get to know each other, but mostly we want to hear your ideas about how you'd like to have fun and serve Jesus in 2021. Masks are required for this gathering and social distancing will be observed. **Parents, we need snacks:** please contact Pastor Monica (pastormonica@lmlc.org) to bring pre-packaged food/drink items.

Women's Covenant Bible Study Thursdays @ 7pm: Join us anytime!

Join Pastor Monica & Pastor Michelle of St Michael Lutheran for a women's Zoom Bible study that explores the origins and history of how the Bible came to be, and what God is saying to us through Scripture. This 3-part study features contemporary Biblical scholars sharing their insights on DVD and participants receive a workbook. We began on January 21st with "Creating," an 8-week dive into God as Creator. If you ordered a workbook, please pick it up from the LMLC Office. If you would like to participate but did not already notify Pastor Monica, please email her (pastormonica@lmlc.org) so we can get you your materials. The "Creating" study runs through March 11; the second installment, "Living," runs from April 8 through May 27th; the third installment, "Trusting," will resume on August 12 after a summer break. Each study is self-contained, so join us for any or all sessions!

Transfiguration of Jesus February 14th

Mark 9:2-9 explains that Jesus leads Peter, James and John up a high mountain. Suddenly Jesus body and clothing are 'transfigured' into light so bright, the disciples are astonished and terrified. The prophet Elijah and Moses appear in this light and talk with Jesus, then a cloud overshadows them and a voice proclaims, "*This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!*" On February 14th, the day we usually remember St Valentine and celebrate human love, I invite you to take a few moments to give thanks to God for the love of God in Christ Jesus, God's Beloved Son. It is love that moves Jesus to give his own life, so that humanity may be reconciled with God. There is no love in heaven or on earth that compares to the unconditional, eternal love of Jesus, the Christ! You are a beloved child of God, thanks be to Jesus!

How Do We Observe Ash Wednesday During a Global Pandemic?

Christians have received an Ash Wednesday sign of the cross of Christ traced on their foreheads since the 6th century, but it's important to remember that this is a ritual, not a sacrament or command of Christ. The ashen cross reminds us of God's unconditional forgiveness, given to us by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in baptism. When we are baptized, a cross is traced on our forehead in holy oil, marking us as a beloved, forgiven child of God, forever. Where the Ash Wednesday cross easily wears off, our baptismal crosses are permanent signs of God's love, and God's promise us that we will be raised from death to eternal life with Christ Jesus.

This Ash Wednesday, join us for some new rituals as we respect COVID19 health and safety precautions:

***Drive-Thru Car Windshield Cross:** On **Ash Wednesday, February 17 between noon-3pm**, enter the Upper LMLC Parking Lot off Tom's Creek and pull up to The Well front entrance. Pastor Monica & Vicar Alyssa will offer an Ash Wednesday prayer and mark your car windshield with a black chalk marker (it washes off easily without harming the glass or car paint!).

***Set up a Home Altar:** To prepare for Ash Wednesday and Lenten Midweek worship, every household is encouraged to set up a home altar. Use your imagination: include a cross, prayer beads or religious artwork that is meaningful to you. Add a candle or a strip of purple cloth...purple is the color of royalty, so it honors Christ the King; purple also is the color of repentance which we observe during the 40 days of our Lenten journey to Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, we will strip our home altars as part of the

worship service. If you'd like a large palm cross to use for your home altar, please pick up a palm cross from the basket outside the Office entrance. **We invite you to email photos of your home altar to Pastor Monica: the photos will be shared during Lenten Midweek worship.**

***Worship at 7pm by Zoom:** The Blacksburg-Radford ELCA Fellowship congregations will gather by Zoom at 7pm for a traditional Ash Wednesday service, but instead of receiving ashes, we will ask everyone to trace the sign of the cross on their forehead using water. The Zoom link for worship will be emailed to you.

Midweek Lenten Worship: "Forgiveness" We will gather with the Blacksburg-Radford ELCA Fellowship congregations for Midweek Lenten worship by Zoom, 7pm, from Wednesday February 24 through Wednesday, March 24. The Zoom link will be emailed to you. Our Lenten focus, "Forgiveness", will reflect on the many ways Christ calls us to forgive each other, as we seek to be reconciled with God and one another.

What is Spiritual Direction? The ancient practice of Spiritual Direction is a one-on-one conversation between a Director and a Directee that pays close attention to God's holy presence in the Directee's life. Spiritual Direction differs from counseling in that the Spiritual Director seeks to help a Directee identify how God may be speaking to him/her; offers guidance on how to deepen one's relationship with God; and accompanies those who wish to discern God's will. **Pastor Monica recently graduated from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary's Certificate Program in Spiritual Direction;** over the course of two years, Pastor Monica trained to offer Spiritual Direction with persons of faith, as well as with Seekers who have no experience of God. **For more information, email Pastor Monica.**

Nita's Notes – February 2021

... "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:28b-31 (New American Standard)

February is my favorite month of the year for three reasons. 1) It is a short month meaning that Spring, my favorite season, will arrive soon. 2) It is my birthday month celebrated traditionally with a heart shaped cake. 3) It is a month filled with Valentine's Day celebrations, thoughts and remembrances shared with those we love and hold dear to us.

During non-pandemic times, I usually select hymns and choral anthems that reflect the theme of God's great love for us and our response to also love God and others. Since that cannot happen this year, I decided to introduce a new hymn, which is actually very old. Many of you might know the text since it appears in the LBW three times with different tunes. The title is "Where True Charity and Love Abide ". It is set to a Taizé chant and an early 19th century American shaped note tune. However, the setting I will focus on is #653, UBI CARITAS, a traditional plainsong chant (Mode VI) dating from at least the 8th century. It was collected in the 11th century chant compilation, *Liber Usualis*. The Latin text probably dates to the 4th century, but was attributed to Paulinus II of Aquileia in 796. It was used as an antiphon, or refrain, during the Eucharist for the Maundy Thursday foot washing rite in the Roman Catholic Mass of the Last Supper. The literal translation of the title is, "Where charity and love [are], God is there." This implies that through our devotion to God AND our caring for others, God is present. It is in our living this belief that our lives are truly infused with such charity making all spaces sacred and all people welcome into the Kingdom of God. It is through this profound level of personal connections and interactions that we offer kindness and authenticity to meet the needs of those near and far, known and unknown to us. It extends the Valentine's Day party to each and every person who needs the riches of heart birthed charity.

To introduce this hymn, I will play a beautiful piano arrangement of the tune in the extra music recording found on the website. I would also encourage you to do a Google search for the many arrangements performed on YouTube. Then during our worship service Jan 31st, Jay Crone and I will sing the plainchant setting introduced by an alto recorder. Yes, this is a much unadorned setting, but perhaps it enables us to listen and truly understand the most basic desire of Christ for us. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."* John 13:34

Joyfully yours, NITA



Lutheran Campus Ministries At Virginia Tech

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus.

I pray that this new year finds you all whole and well. I give thanks for your continued support of The Well Students as we begin this Spring semester together. In particular, I invite your prayers for our students as we engage in this next semester of service, learning, fellowship and faith-formation together. I want to give a special word of thanks to the faithful leaders who guided The Well for the past 3 (!) semesters in the midst of leadership transition and 11 months of pandemic-related uncertainty. Thank you to Andy Taminger, Christian Lysek, Abby Hall, Sophie McMahon, Lily Bleicken, and Mark Hustedt! Well done, good and faithful servants.

The new leadership team is already working hard in their respective positions this semester! I ask your prayers for them as well, as they serve with passion and flexibility. We give thanks for the leadership of Abby Hall (president), Rachel Rosenquist (secretary and VP), Emily Dwyer (service and outreach coordinator), Gwyn Steel (peer ministry coordinator), and Amanda Wilson (social coordinator).

Here's a look at the upcoming events of this semester:

Burning Bush: Weekly gatherings around the firepit continue this semester, weather and COVID numbers dependent). Recognizing the key role that these safe outdoor gatherings play within our ministry community, the students and I have broadened their programming scope. Monthly at Burning Bush we will have dinner and worship with communion. We also are integrating service projects into these weekly gatherings, last week we made no-sew blankets together for the Women's Resource Center in Radford and on February 6th (national mail a card to a friend day!) we'll be working on letters to our homebound community members.

Tuesday Night Gatherings: We will continue to gather over zoom on Tuesday nights, this semester biweekly. These gatherings, though held over zoom, will hopefully provide a reprieve from screen fatigue and zoom school. We will continue our tradition of Bob Ross paint nights this week, as well as share in a cooking class, justice-issue teach-ins, game nights, and other joy-filled activities.

Wednesday Bible Study: On alternating weeks we'll join in bible study together over zoom. These studies began last week and are rooted in identity. Each week we will read about a Biblical figure, discuss

their experiences with their own identity, and then use their story to reflect and talk about our identities. We began by looking at Moses' story, using the stories of his early adulthood to reflect on how experiences of witnessing injustice and experiencing hospitality can impact our own understandings of identity.

Monthly Podcast Study: The first Thursday of every month, Well Students will join with our neighbors from Red Door Campus Ministry, a progressive protestant campus ministry at Radford, for a joint podcast discussion! Each month we'll listen to an episode of [Unshaming](#) and then discuss it together! We'll begin this week with an episode about undoing the shame of failure.

Reconciling in Christ Committee: Finally, I ask your prayers for The Well as we dive into the work of pursuing RIC status for The Well and drafting an authentic welcome statement for our campus ministry. Please pray for the leaders of our 'core team' who are going about the work of participating in trainings from Reconciling Works, engaging in one-on-one conversations with the membership of The Well, and drafting a Welcome statement. The committee aims to present a draft of the Welcome Statement for review by the end of April and hopes to have a final statement prepared for our community to vote to adopt by May 5th. We give thanks for the core team, Andy Taminger, Lilly Bleicken, Mark Hustedt, Abby Hall, Gwyn Steel, and Emily Dwyer!

Peace be with you all!
Vicar Alyssa Kaplan

Fellowship Hall Renovation & Tours: The final touches on Fellowship Hall should be completed this week. Plans are in the works to schedule "DIY Tours" of this renovated space soon. The congregation will be emailed with information about how to sign up for a tour time slot; all attendees must be masked and observe social distancing. The new LMLC Library will be open during tours so you can take home your next great read!

We've gone social!

LMLC congregation members and friends please take a few minutes in this new year to post a review of Luther Memorial on Google (here's the link: <https://g.page/r/CZvHfC5I-b0lEAg/review>) or on the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/luthermemorialblacksburg>).



Like us on Facebook! &



Follow us on Instagram!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE BORN IN FEBRUARY

February 02	<i>Linda Libey</i>
February 03	<i>Robin Myers Carol Reynolds</i>
February 04	<i>Seth Knight Katherine Widner</i>
February 05	<i>Alan Smeal</i>
February 09	<i>Sue Dille</i>
February 10	<i>Bob Phillips</i>
February 11	<i>Amy Roeder</i>
February 13	<i>John Anstrom Tammy Graham Mike Peterson</i>
February 15	<i>Marilia Deisenroth Kay Jordan</i>
February 18	<i>Bryce Carlson</i>
February 19	<i>Juanita Smoot</i>
February 20	<i>Lisa Carlson</i>
February 23	<i>Lois Lang</i>
February 26	<i>Patty Marickovich</i>



Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

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STEWARDSHIP NUGGET FOR FEBRUARY 2021

“Some people say, “Give till it hurts.” But God recommends that we give until it feels good. God loves a cheerful giver!” **Brian Kluth**