

Friendly Messenger

February 2021

Light at the End of the Tunnel

I know many of us like to take trips to the beautiful and touristy city of Gatlinburg. I remember the trips I would take there with my family. We would take a route with lots of tunnels! I loved it! At each one, my sister and I would usually draw a deep breath the second before we entered the tunnel, and would hold it until we exited the other side.

The short tunnels were easy to make, but some of those tunnels were really long and that little light at the end of the tunnel would slowly get bigger. One tunnel we took had a curve and did not even offer a glimmer of light until halfway through. Knowing this, I accepted the challenge and took a deep breath.

And I held it.

And held it.

And held it. “Where is this light??” I asked myself.

It was too dark to see, but I am sure my face was getting red. I was getting desperate for that little light to grow, letting me know that I was getting closer to the end of the tunnel so I would be able to breathe again. Finally, a small light appeared.

“OH, FINALLY! There it is! There’s the light!” I became so encouraged (and a little impatient!) as the light grew bigger and bigger! “I’ll be able to breathe again in just a minute!” What a relief when we emerged from the tunnel in full daylight! The new oxygen in my lungs was invigorating.

Of course, that was just a game. There is greater depth to the phrase “light at the end of the tunnel”. It is an idiom that we have used since the 1880s to indicate hope and the possibility of success after a difficult experience.

This pandemic has been a difficult experience. Are you seeing a light at the end of the tunnel yet? I hope you do. It may be small; it may look faint, but it is there. We have had months of masks, staying at home, and social distancing.

I know we are all ready to come back into the sanctuary to see each other! It will take time for us all to get vaccinated, but we are on our way! It may be difficult waiting in these winter months. We may feel more isolated and lonelier than we would during the summer. We miss seeing our friends and family, freely moving about, giving hugs and handshakes. We miss seeing people and being out in public together.

In these winter months, know that we are together. We are not alone. We are getting through this together and God is with us. Just like oxygen, we may not be able to see it, but we know it is there. We may not be able to see God, but God is all around us, supplying for our needs beyond our comprehension.

Cont.

Jesus, the light, has come into the world. Christ is the light at the end of the tunnel and is ushering in the ever-present, and not yet Kingdom of God. This kingdom is one of unity, peace, joy, and reconciliation. It is one with a full and noisy banquet table where everyone is present. A table where everyone is fed and the Holy Spirit of God effortlessly breathes through us all. It is true blessedness.

While the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel grows brighter, but is still far off, we can participate in this Kingdom of God. When we feel lonely, it might be that we are waiting for someone to contact us. However, our relief may lie in our outreach to someone else.

In our loneliness, we can reach out with a phone call, a letter, or a text. In our pain, we can heal it by asking someone else about theirs. In our need, we can bless someone else in their storm. That is bringing light. You are a bearer of light, a source of warmth, welcome, and reconciliation. YOU are the answer to your prayer and somebody else's!

Ash Wednesday and Lenten Services

This month, we will enter the Season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on February 17th. We will stream our Ash Wednesday Service at 7 pm on Facebook. For the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion, you are invited to drive-thru on Sunday, February 14th to pick up your individual packet of ashes and Holy Communion element packets. You may hold on to these until our service on Wednesday.

*An important note about the ashes you will receive for our Ash Wednesday Service. On the 14th, you will receive a small container of dry ashes. A little goes a long way! For the proper consistency, mix the ashes with a small amount of oil until it forms a thick paste. You may impose ashes on yourself or impose ashes on each other in your family when the time comes during the service. When it is time, you may dip your finger in the ashes and make the sign of the cross on the forehead, saying, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

We will also stream our Evening Lenten Services at 7 pm on Sundays during Lent. Tune into Facebook for our sermon series. More information about our Lenten services is coming!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Adrienne



Winter Bible Study Options

If you are interested in participating in a Bible Study this winter, please let Pastor Adrienne know. The Winter Bible Study will be kept to an hour or less per weekly Zoom meeting.

Congratulations to Bill and Mae Whitener who will be celebrating their 70th Wedding Anniversary on Feb.3rd, 2021. Due to COVID regulations, we will not be having a celebration at Sardis. Please feel free to send them cards or telephone calls on this important day in their lives.



“Six Weeks on Money”

Did you know that:

- More than 50% of American households are living from paycheck to paycheck?
- 157 million are paying off credit card debt?
- 7 in 10 have cried about money sometime in their lifetime?

Even if you are in perfect financial health, money management can be difficult, especially when financial education is not readily available. Christians especially may have a tenuous relationship with money, receiving mixed messages about how we relate to the world with our wealth.

For our Lenten study this year, we have the opportunity to participate in a digital course that will give us a new way to think and feel about money. It is one of the first programs created in partnership with the ELCA. It is called *Six Weeks on Money*. This course intends to encourage us to develop a healthy relationship with money.

The course will start February 17th and will conclude shortly after Easter. The instruction includes two 30 minute audio files and one weekly group Zoom session. Weekly group Zoom sessions will take place every Thursday during Lent, starting February 18th, at 7 pm.

This is truly a great course. Please let Pastor Adrienne know if you are interested in participating!

Sardis Lutheran Church
Council Minutes
December 13, 2020

Joe, Ken, Bryan, Jon, Terry, Bruce, Ben, Tim, Kathy, Rick, Sherrie, Carolyn, Pastor Adrienne New Members: April, Gene, Mike, Susan	

Joe called the meeting to order via Zoom at 7:10 pm with 12 current council members and 4 new council members in attendance. Rick had devotions.

Minutes from the November Council Meeting were read with no changes from the Council. Motion was made by Rick to accept the minutes , Carolyn seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The Treasurer's report was given by Joe. The General Fund balance was \$3,414.28 as of October 31, 2020; the Building Fund balance was \$5,844.67, the Cemetery Fund was \$1,437.69. The General Fund balance was \$9,389.25 as of November 30, 2020; the Building Fund balance was \$6,388.66, the Cemetery Fund was \$1,437.69. Ken made a motion to accept the Financial Report as read, Kathy seconded, motion carried.

Pastor Adrienne gave her monthly report included below:

Grace and Peace to you in the name of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Advent blessings! I hope everyone had a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving. Thank you to Terry Bledsoe for livestreaming our Thanksgiving Eve Service and to Tim Whitener who played his dulcimer for the prelude! It was a beautiful service of gratitude and hope. I watched it from home as I self-quarantined while awaiting my COVID test results. Thankfully, I was negative!

At our last council meeting, we decided to act on Bishop Smith's suggestion to follow-up on the Boy Scouts proof of claim form. Joe, Dwayne, and I gathered the most information we could and submitted it before the deadline. This will be a good safeguard in case anything comes up relating to Sardis association with the Boy Scouts of America.

As the church year has begun and the calendar year is coming to a conclusion, I would like to say thank you to our council members who are rotating off this year, including our council chair, Joe Biggerstaff, who has led us safely through this pandemic. We have had to make several difficult decisions regarding our plans and responsibility of keeping people safe. Welcome to our newly elected council members!

As the Nativity of the Lord is approaching, we continue to await Christ's second coming. Late have many guidelines to follow for this covid19 season. We have gotten excellent guidance from our governor, ELCA, and synod regarding safe conduct this precarious time of pandemic. In addition, I was curious what other churches and denominations were doing and came across a letter from a United Methodist Bishop who was writing his churches about this Advent Season. He wrote:

In my last pastoral letter, I also said that you need to be making plans that include the distinct possibility of on-line Advent and Christmas worship. This is now more than a distinct possibility. Today, I am asking you in the strongest way possible to refrain from in-person indoor worship for the Advent and Christmas seasons. I am deeply grateful for all the ways you have encouraged the wearing of masks, social distancing, and handwashing. It has helped. Yet, community spread has become so prolific that we need to do more to protect public health, promote the common good, and care for others' well-being in the name and spirit of Jesus.

In reading this, it struck me that at the birth of our Lord Jesus, the angels, the shepherds, and the wise men worshipped the newborn Christ outside. While I have always known this, it seems particularly meaningful as we are gathering for worship outside on a regular basis. How interesting to be encouraged to refrain from indoor worship for the Advent and Christmas season. In this heavy and concerning time, there are lights of revelation and gifts of faith along the way. The incorporation of our new radio transmitter, however, may be contemporary and welcome addition to our outside service.

Pastorally, this remains a difficult time for all. It is disappointing that we cannot spend holidays with family and friends as we normally do. It appears that covid cases have increased at troubling levels. Schools are starting to close and Governor Cooper has issued stricter guidelines a curfew. Life is stressful for everyone as we live and work as safely as we can.

Still, we continue to share God's gift of the love of Christ in the world. I am grateful that we find new ways of serving others and living out our mission. Here is a summary of my activities and upcoming events.

Summary

Drive-in service and congregational meeting and Frank Griffin Appreciation Sunday, Sunday, November 15th

Live Nativity Zoom meeting, Tuesday, November 17

Christ the King Sunday, November 22

Thanksgiving Eve Service, Wednesday, November 25th at 6 pm

First Sunday of Advent, November 29

Live Nativity Meeting, Sunday, November 29

Vacation November 30th-December 6 (with the exception of December 3 for Bible Study!)

It's a Wonderful Life Zoom Advent Bible Study, December 1 at 7 pm

Livestreamed service, December 6

Jon Gladden preaching

Funeral Service for Carolyn Truitt, Monday, December 7 at 12 noon

Christmas Caroling and Shepherd's Dinner been cancelled due to COVID19

Lifeline Fund Steering Committee Meeting, Monday, December 7 at 2 pm

It's a Wonderful Life Zoom Advent Bible Study, December 8 at 7 pm

Drive-in Service, Sunday with installation of 2021 council, December 13

Council Meeting, Sunday, December 13

Upcoming

It's a Wonderful Life Zoom Advent Bible Study, December 15 at 7 pm

Blue Christmas/Darkest Night Service, Thursday, December 17 at 7 pm (Facebook Live)

Live Nativity, Children's Program, Sunday, December 20th, 6-8 pm

It's a Wonderful Life Zoom Advent Bible Study, December 22 at 7 pm

Christmas Eve Service, December 24th at 9 pm, with prelude at 8:45 pm

Lessons & Carols, Sunday, December 27, livestreamed

Vacation (December 28-January 4)

Supply Preacher, Sunday, January 3

Ash Wednesday, Wednesday, February 17

Actions for Action/Discussion

Possible need to change time of Christmas Eve Service to accommodate new NC guidelines.

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Adrienne Martin

Old Business

Joe Reported on the steeple. Dwayne contacted the insurance company and they came out to survey the damage. The insurance company said that the steeple was loose and wanted an engineer to inspect it. They sent an engineer out to inspect the steeple and he reported the steeple did not need to be removed to fix the damage. We have requested a copy of the engineer report. The insurance company is to get an estimate on fixing the roof.

New Business

Ken reported that Frank had asked for the heat to be turned up during the week. It had been set to a low temperature to save money but that may damage the musical instruments. The heat has been set higher during the week.

Ken reported that Ray Whitener sent a letter of resignation to the Property Committee. Ray has been mowing the grass at the church for 34 years. The council would like to thank Ray and recognize him for his service to the church.

Ken reported that Rick Johnson had approached the Property Committee about mowing the grass for the same price as budgeted. Ken made a motion from the Property Committee to hire Rick to mow the grass, Terry seconded. Motion carried.

Tim asked that the sign in front of the church be fixed. A number of the letters are broken and need to be replaced. Tim is going to check with a sign company about replacing the letters.

Joe held the yearly election for Church Council officers. Tim Whitener nominated Bruce Sigman for Vice Chair of the Council. Hearing no other nominations, Jon moved that the nominations be closed, Terry seconded. Motion carried.

Joe opened the floor for nominations for Council Secretary. Terry nominated Kathy Weaver. Hearing no other nominations, Gene made a motion that the nominations be closed, Jon seconded. Motion carried.

Joe thanked the council for their service during this very difficult year and wished the new council a successful year.

Meeting adjourned with The Lord's Prayer

Submitted: Terry Bledsoe, Council Secretary

WELCA Food Drive for Our Neighbors in Need

WELCA will hold a Food Drive again this year for our neighbors in need. All donations will go to ECCCM. It may look a bit different this year than in the past. The drive will run in conjunction with the Lenten Season. After speaking with a person at ECCCM these are the items they need most...

Cereal (individual and boxed)

Canned Soups

Canned Meats

Canned Pastas

Canned Fruits

Peanut Butter

Jelly

Rice

Beans (dried and canned)

Pasta (boxed)

We will have drop off times for you to bring your donations to the church. You will be able to just drive up and ladies will come to your vehicle to collect your donations. The drop off dates are stated below. We may have to change or add a March date when we find out more about what may be going on at church in March such as a drive-in service or a drive thru. If so, that will be stated in the March newsletter. As of now the drop off dates are...

Sunday, February 14th 11:45-1:00 (Drive thru)

Wednesday, March 3rd 4:00-6:00pm

Saturday, March 13th 12:00-2:00

Sunday, March 28th 11:45-1:00

Please consider purchasing some of these items as you grocery shop during this Lenten Season as we at Sardis show we care for our neighbors in need.



Our Church Sign is in Desperate Need of Repair

The total cost (lowest quote) to repair and replace the letters is \$2330.00.

How about a

“SPONSOR A LETTER CAMPAIGN”

Letters are \$38.00 each.

Of course --any amount would help.

Please put any monies donated in an envelope and send to Jane.

Please put “church sign” on envelope and on check.

Lenten Series

The Heart of God and the Greatest Commandments

For our Lenten series this year, we will be exploring the commandments Jesus said were the greatest: to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength; and to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus says, “There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12: 30-31)

In our services, we will have the opportunity to open our hearts and minds to the heart of God. In God’s heart, there are all those who hunger and thirst for justice. In this series, we will host a speaker to preach about the greatest commandments as it relates to loving ourselves and loving others. We are called in the waters of Holy Baptism to “strive for justice and and peace in all the earth.” We are called to love and serve as Christ.

As St. Paul writes in Romans 12: “Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God--what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.” I invite us to open ourselves to the holy transformation of our minds as we learn about the world in which we live, not to be conformed, but to be faithful. I pray and expect us to be renewed, challenged, and indeed, transformed this Lenten Season.

Please tune in to Facebook on Sunday evenings in Lent at 7 pm. Here are our topics for the first two weeks.

Sunday, February 21: “Loving Yourself” The Rev. Todd Byrd, a Christian counselor and Methodist preacher, providing a Christian perspective about what it means to love yourself.

Sunday, February 28: “Loving Others: A Healing Hand in a Time of Crisis” Carolyn Thompson, Faith Community Nurse at FaithHealth Catawba, will speak to us about how the pandemic has revealed disparities in healthcare and how we can respond as engaged and faithful disciples.

**February 2021
Sardis Lutheran Church**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Presentation of Our Lord	3	4	5	6
<u>No Drive-in Service for February</u>						
7 Epiphany 10:30 Worship Service, FB Live Annual Meeting FB live following Worship.	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Transfiguration of Our Lord 10:30 Worship Service, FB Live 11:45—1:00 Pick up Ashes/Communion Cups 7:00 Church Council	15 Presidents Day	16	17 Ash Wednesday	18 7:00 Bible Study ZOOM	19	20
21 Lent 10:30 Worship Service, FB Live 7:00 Lenten Service FB live	22	23	24	25 7:00 Bible Study ZOOM	26	27
28 Lent 10:30 Worship Service, FB Live 7:00 Lenten Service FB live						

****NOTE****

If you have a birthday or anniversary and they are not listed please let the office know. Thank you.

SARDIS LEADERS CONTACTS

Pastor: The Rev. Adrienne E. Martin (C) 469-243-5237 pastor@sardislutheran.net

Organist/Director of Music: Frank Griffin, tfgriffin59@gmail.com

Council Chair: Bruce Sigman (C) 828-310-5851 bruce.camping@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Jane Moretz, (C) 828-302-8458 secretary@sardislutheran.net

**February
Birthdays**

2/1 Evie Jo Carroll
 2/6 Margaret Propst
 2/9 Bill Whitener
 2/10 Ethan Carroll
 2/15 Amy S. Kilpatrick
 Mike Whitener
 2/16 Buster Bledsoe
 Hope Gladden
 2/21 Sylvia King
 Ashley Yow
 2/23 Alan Fulbright
 2/25 Carolyn Hoyle
 2/27 Jeff Wilson

Anniversaries:
Bill/Mae Whitener 2- 3
Dwayne & Barbara Whitener
2-11

ALTAR FLOWERS

Feb. 7 Nena Babb
Feb. 14 Ken & Margaret Propst
Feb. 21 Richard & Dawn Covington
Feb. 28 Ralph & Sheila Ramsey

COUNCIL CONTACT & ASSISTING MINISTER

Kathy Weaver

Feb. 7 Tim Whitener
Feb. 14 Rick Johnson
Feb. 21 Jon Gladden
Feb. 28 Kathy Weaver

SATURDAY MEAL DELIVERY/IF COMFORTABLE DOING SO
AT THIS TIME.

Feb. 6 No Meal Delivery
Feb. 13 Sylvia King
Feb. 20 No Meal Delivery
Feb. 27 April Fulbright

REMEMBER: you can find this NL, the weekly calendar and Sunday Sermons on the website: <https://sardislutheran.com/> mark it as a favorite and check it out often.

OUR MISSION

Sardis Evangelical Lutheran Church serves together as disciples of Christ, teaches the word to invite people into a life of knowing Jesus, encourages each other in faith and personal mission through reaching out to the needs of the community and individuals.

Methods for Giving

Gifts may be made online by clicking on the green "Give" button on our NEW website www.sardislutheran.com or our Facebook page.

or

Gifts may be mailed to:
Sardis Lutheran Church
6103 W. NC 10 Hwy.
Hickory, NC 28602

or

You may bring your gifts by the church during office hours. Place your gift in the basket out front and ring the bell to alert the office of your gift.

God bless you and keep you in his care.

**SARDIS LUTHERAN CHURCH
6103 W NC 10 HWY
HICKORY NC 28602**

