
Mount Cross Chronicle

February 2021



601 E. Highway 260
Payson, AZ 85541
Phone: 928-474-2552
www.mountcross.org

Sunday Worship Services

8:15 a.m.

Online Worship Service

9:30 a.m.

In-House Worship Service

Pastors

Rev. Cliff Hanus

Rev. Linda Hanus

474-2552

pastor@mountcross.org

emergency phone

928-363-1683

Music Director

Daria Mason

daria1024mason@gmail.com

Accompanist

Angeline Ng

Office Administrator

Lenore M. White

secretary@mountcross.org

Custodian

Rod Rice

Pastor's Ponderings

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It's nostalgia time! As I sit down to write this article, I have a copy of the January/February issue of *Living Lutheran* on the desk. The cover story is about the wonderful animated series *Davey and Goliath*, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this month. Wow! Where have the years gone? Perhaps, you can **remember** watching it yourself or with your children. I **remember** watching the show every Sunday morning before leaving for Sunday school. As a small child, I was amazed that it was a Lutheran church production that aired on one of our local television networks. I knew that because of the show's theme song, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," which I had sung in church, and also because of that funny looking flower thingy (the Luther rose) that appeared during the credits. I recognized it because one of them hung on a wall in my Sunday school classroom. I felt connected to that show. Many of the lessons that were learned by Davey were also lessons that I learned at church: faith in God, kindness, love of neighbor (all neighbors, especially those of different backgrounds and beliefs), compassion and values. When I was just starting out in pastoral ministry, I purchased two VCR episodes of the show to use as teaching aids in my First Communion Classes and Confirmation Classes. The kids loved them. I think I finally donated my tapes to a church library when DVD's came into being. Sigh... Still, the warm and fuzzy **memories** that I have of this fabulous cartoon series live on and bring a smile to my mask-covered face.

Enter the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. This year, we find ourselves in Year B of the Lectionary. So, our Lenten time will be one of **remembering** and reclaiming our identity in baptism as children of God, as we prepare for Easter. The readings from scripture will be filled with rich baptismal imagery. Our *Sundays and Seasons Guide to Worship Planning* suggests "that in each of the gospel readings we will hear a word of grace in the midst of the fears that we face: angels accompany Jesus during his temptation in the wilderness; Jesus calls Peter to move from confession to discipleship; the corrupt temple cannot throw Jesus off his mission; even the cross becomes a sign of healing; and death is a precursor to new life."

During this Lenten season, our daily morning devotions from the Hanus house will cover a Lenten theme. Because of COVID, we will not be offering midweek services or suppers, but we will be joining our Payson ecumenical church pastors to piece together and offer a virtual Ash Wednesday worship service, like we did for Thanksgiving. It's hard to believe that it has been one year since we gathered together in-person to celebrate Ash Wednesday here at Mount Cross. Hopefully, we will be able to do it again next year! Stay tuned for more information regarding Ash Wednesday 2021.

As we enter this Lenten season, may we spend time in God's word, **remembering** and reflecting on what it means to live in community with God, with creation, with the world, and with one another and deepening these relationships.

Wishing you and yours a meaningful season of Lent, **remembering** your baptismal identity as children of God, as well as, some of the lessons you may have learned from our pals, Davey and Goliath,

Pastor Linda Hanus



† ChristConnectingCommunity



**Reminder:
SouperBowl Sunday
February 7th**

Please remember to bring non-perishable food items and/or financial contributions, which will be given to our local food banks. If you choose to write a check, please make it out to Mount Cross and on the memo line note "SouperBowl."



Are you feeling alone?

Pray to your best friend, God.

Are you feeling closed in?

Pray to our Father.

Are you needing a new threshold of opportunity?

Pray to our God for his guidance.

Are you missing being a social person?

You have a Friend in Jesus.

Pray, pray, pray,

**then praise God for the gift of life,
the opportunity to share in his world.**

**God's work.
Our hands.**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

I met with one of the volunteers at the Warming Center. She has a heart for helping, which inspired me. My reason for being there was to re-donate socks that had been left behind last year. I paired them up, displayed them where the sign-in person sits. According to this lady, socks, gloves, hats, sleeping bags, as well as backpacks are always needed. With the Warming Center being on our campus, this is an opportunity to meet some of the people, talk with them, and to give time and listening skills towards helping them.

Alice Natale

Journeys with Angels

Turnaround Angels

You are invited to join the Women's Bible Study as we gather in spirit on February 11 at 10:00 a.m.

The complete study can be read in the "Gather" magazine or obtain a copy at the church building by the mailboxes. If you received the January-February "Gather" magazine, please note that it has two lessons in it, one for each month. The one for February starts on page 36 and says Session Two under the top heading.



Angels are known for carrying messages from God to humans. Their existence tells us something about the immensity of God, the universe God has created, and our own human place and potential in relationship to God's cosmos. This month we will learn about "turnaround angels," who confront and accompany people to a change of direction in their lives.

This month we enter the season of Lent, a season traditionally associated with repentance. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia* which literally means to "change one's mind." In the parable of the sweeping woman, *metanoia* is associated with being physically pulled up from the cracks of life. This is an experience where angels abound as in Luke 15:8-15 where the woman sweeps the floor for a lost coin and rejoices with her friends and neighbors when it is found. Jesus says this is just like the party God throws with God's angels in heaven, over a sinner who's been retrieved.

The "cherubim" like those who guarded Eden and the Tree of Life from Adam and Eve functioned as messengers of warning. The question can be asked, do the cherubim east of Eden still hold a turnaround warning for us today in regard to the plunder of our environment? The author includes an example from her experience in Myanmar. What other "angels" stand guard today?

Do we see the beginning of repentance from Jacob when his self-centered world is pierced by a ladder of angels? As Jacob decides to journey hundreds of miles back to his home, he hears that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men. It was a fearful experience for Jacob. That night, God's angel comes to Jacob in the form of a mysterious "man" whom Hosea later interprets to have been an angel. This night is a turning point for Jacob who receives a new name: Israel, meaning "One Who Wrestles with God." After that, Jacob walks with a limp.

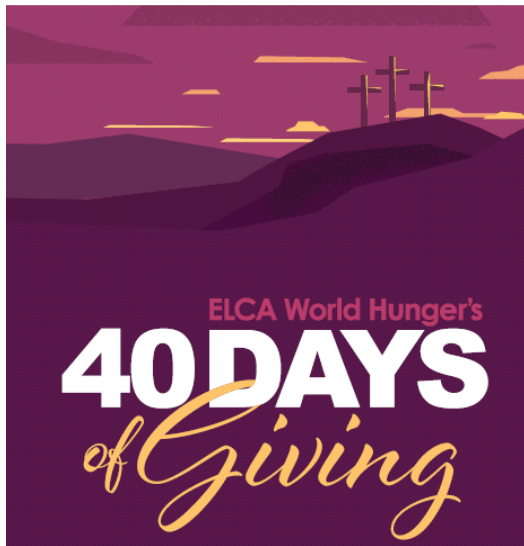
Moses is confronted with an angel in a flaming bush. Moses "turns aside" to marvel and suddenly hears—for the first time—the compelling voice of God. Has an unusual feat of nature carried a message from God to you?

Sometimes motivation for change comes by way of shock and laughter. The story of Balaam involves a famous seer who can't see, and his humble donkey she-ass (translated from the original Hebrew) points out what her boss doesn't notice – a fearsome angel in their path, brandishing a sword. Balaam had been hired by Balak, the king of Moab, for the job of prophesying doom to the Israelites. God had other ideas and sends God's own most distinguished representative, an angel with a sword to "restrain the prophet's madness." Balaam, hilariously, doesn't see a thing. It takes not only his donkey's brave stubbornness, but also human speech coming from her mouth, to open his ears and eyes to the danger at hand. The angel would have killed Balaam if it weren't for his donkey's "turnaround" behavior. Read the story in Numbers 22:21-34

Angels, the messengers of God, appear even more often in the New Testament than in the Old. One of these "turnaround angels" shows up three times in the first two chapters of the New Testament. Joseph is known as a "righteous man," and when he finds out his fiancé is pregnant – and it's definitely not his baby – the path forward is clear: He will, as discreetly and calmly as possible, take the legal steps to end the relationship. We can imagine him being quite sure of his plan, and maybe congratulating himself on handling the situation with both kindness and firmness. That's when an angel steps in to turn Joseph completely around from divorce to instant fatherhood. (Matthew 1:18-21, 24-25.)

Joseph's second encounter with angels brings a warning that they should go to Egypt where they became refugees. His third and final encounter with an angel turns him and his family around to move back to their homeland. Mary (apparently) gets to speak to an angel face to face while Joseph only gets to hear from angels in dreams, and apparently has no opportunity to talk back or ask any questions! Why do you think this is? Have you ever dreamed about angels? Or received a warning through a dream?

Copies of the February Bible Study can be found on a clipboard by the church mailboxes.



As the world has reeled from the effects of a deadly pandemic, we have seen the number of hungry people around the world rise, watched as food pantries and soup kitchens expanded to serve an ever-growing number of guests, and longed together for the time when we **"will hunger no more, and thirst no more ... and God will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes"** (Revelation 7:16-17).

This very yearning is at the heart of who we are as church together. Yet our longing has never led to inertia or despair, despite the discouraging forecasts. We are an Easter people, ever journeying toward the cross but trusting in faith that God's story does not end on that hill.

This Lent, you're invited to join with fellow supporters to pledge to work to end hunger together during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving. Your support is critically needed for people around the world facing hunger and poverty.

Bring ELCA World Hunger into the life of your congregation and family with resources that are available to use at home, online or in person.



- 1) A devotional calendar with daily ideas for reflection, giving and action.
- 2) A weekly study inviting deep discernment and critical thinking, with inspirational stories about how your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are at work in the world.
- 3) Additional resources, including an inspirational weekly email series.

You're invited to study, pray, reflect and give during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.



Office will be closed on Monday, **February 15th** in observance of President's Day

LEN

Begins on
Ash
Wednesday
on Feb. 17th



Online ecumenical service will be held. Link will be provided via email closer to the date.



Spiritual Growth Opportunities

Ongoing opportunities:

Daily Devotions

A daily devotional time, led by Pastors Linda and Cliff Hanus, is available online via the church website on Facebook.

Online devotional is held Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:30 AM

Mount Cross Financial Report (January –December 2020)



2020 Approved Budget	\$312,284.00
Income	\$259,718.00 (83.17% of 2020 budget)
Expenditures	\$290,875.00 (93.14% of 2020 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during December 2020	\$2,280.00
Total paid out in 2020 for mortgage	\$38,202.00

Please note: above amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Total income received from Thrivent “Choice Dollars” in 2020	
Mount Cross	\$530.00

2020 has been a tough year to run a church (gym, restaurant). With that being said, I am grateful that we closed out 2020 with a loss of \$31,157.44. Two areas are major contributors to that negative number. On the income side, we had multiple members who did not fulfill their pledges and on the expense side, operating expenses increased by 50%.

As we move into 2021, I ask that you remain committed to your pledges, as well as to the church...we need an active congregation to pull us through round two of this pandemic environment. The church is applying for the 2nd round of PPP to offset staff wages and looking for creative solutions to re-engage membership, ministry and contribution.

Please note: The Congregational Meeting Part II has been postponed until Sunday, February 14th, after the service to approve a 6 month budget for the first half of the year.

Yours in service,
James Zorn
Financial Secretary



Payson Community Kids Sloppy Joe supper will be served on Thursday, February 18th... if schools are in session. Please plan to arrive at 3:50 p.m. and we are done about 4:30 p.m.

**Lector Schedule for February 2021
9:30 AM Sunday Service**

7	14	21	28
Alice Natale	James Zorn	Eloise Jones	Ron Nelson

The online service lector for February is Eloise Jones.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

February Birthdays

5	Pam Newton
	Rod Rice
6	Carrie Backe
10	Ray Leavens
12	Mary Walker
21	Diana Fletcher
25	Cathy Stewart
26	Gary Greer

February Wedding Anniversaries
None in February



After attending the meeting of the State Board of WELCA this month, there are some big changes coming up in our faith walk as Women of the ELCA.

The Church-wide Triennial Convention and Gathering that was scheduled for this summer has been moved to 2023, again in Phoenix, but date not established yet. There will be a triennial convention on Zoom on August 3 - 5, but no gathering in person.

The State Gathering Convention dates will be decided in near future, but please plan on a virtual event.

The Synod Assembly will be held as a virtual event on June 10 and 11, 2021.

As we move forward, things may change, but please anticipate more Zoom meetings during this pandemic.

Now for our local group. We have not met since last February. Like all things, we are bearing up, masks, prayers, individual study, and support as we can for each other. Keeping our faith alive is a challenge. Looking at ways to increase our studies is difficult. Fortunately, we have light at the end of the tunnel. If the vaccine is distributed to those who wish to receive shots, then we may see this pandemic end. My favorite way to see people is at Safeway, where at this point I am recognizing eyes only. Every human virtual touch is important. A theme for the WELCA women is to *Not Panic, but Pivot*. So that is our challenge as we peer down that dark tunnel.

I read a great quote this morning – Mother Teresa said: *“We cannot do great things on this earth, but we can only do little things with great love.”* From that tiny woman, her love yielded great things.

Alice Natale

WELCA president



NEWS FROM YAGM SENEGAL
Pastor Kristin Engstrom, YAGM Country Coordinator

January 2021

**Blessed Epiphany
to you!**

I have good news to share with you! It is with great joy and trepidation that I am excited to share that I will be returning to Senegal at the beginning of February. Please continue to keep our sisters and brothers in Senegal and myself in your prayers.

My January 2021 Newsletter which includes an update on my life as an ELCA global missionary, an update on COVID in Senegal, and stories from two Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Senegal alumni of when they experienced God enfleshed during their YAGM year in Senegal.

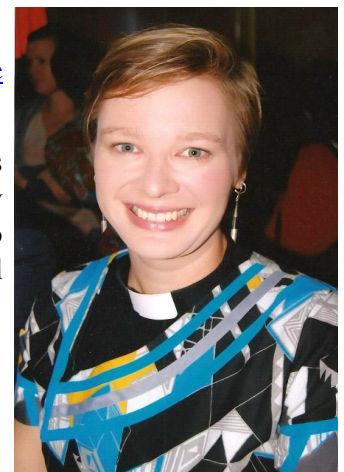


You can also access the [January 2021 Newsletter online](#) at the [YAGM Senegal blog](#).

May you be strengthened and surrounded by revelations of God's guiding presence with you during this Epiphany season. Thank you also for your continued partnership in mission, especially during this time of uncertainty and challenge.

On est ensemble. Nio farr.
(We are together. God be with you.)

Pastor Kristin Engstrom



[\(a copy of Pr. Kristin's newsletter is on the bulletin board across from the Ponderosa Room\)](#)