

# Alamance Lutheran Church

## February 2024 News Notes



***Our Mission:** "Alamance Evangelical Lutheran Church empowered by the Holy Spirit, worships and praises our Lord, loves and serves others, as Jesus Christ taught, and shares the Good News of God's gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

*Adopted 11-23-1997*

*"I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."*

**Martin Luther King Jr**

### **Words from our Pastor**

*My beloved Community of Faith of Alamance Lutheran Church: Who knew? I can only imagine the thoughts going through the minds of these men whose hands were callused and sore from mending nets and hauling in the catch of each day. Who knew that when Jesus was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee that he would call fishermen to be the disciples to lead his ministry. Why not religious leaders of the day? Why not, someone who was smart and well known and respected in the community so more people would be drawn? But that is what Jesus does, he calls us when we least expect it, and each one of us, even when we think we are the least qualified to serve others.*

This month we will begin the season of Lent which is a time of reflection, self-discipline, and repentance as we prepare for Easter. We find in the 8th chapter of Mark where Jesus said: *"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*<sup>35</sup>*For those who*

*want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”*

One by one Jesus called the disciples to follow, not think about it, or wait till they felt comfortable, just follow, and they did. As you prepare for your Lent journey, I encourage you to follow the Holy Spirits prompting now and beyond Easter.

When I was called into the ministry, I dragged my feet like a teenager who did not want to do his chores. Much like Jonah I tried to procrastinate, but God was not phased. He used the time for my formation as your pastor. The decision to close a business, work in a call center while finishing undergrad and grad school, led to a greater sense of humility and sense the Holy Spirit in every step of the way.

As I reflect on these past seven and a half years, the tragedies of unexpected deaths, a worldwide pandemic, and the milestones, we have not dragged our feet in facing the challenges together. We have begun informally calling ourselves the Community of Faith of Alamance Lutheran Church, because we are more than our address. Through thick and thin, we come together as a community who shares our thoughts, confident that our authentic love of Christ transcends any differences.

That is the legacy that Alamance Lutheran has been part of in the history of this village and your lives. We began from a small Bible study nearly 100 years ago, to a growing ministry today with a 30-acre campus to impact peoples' lives. We faced the pandemic with resolve and not fear, by creating a radio station to reach people with a weekly worship service broadcasted over a mile and a half radius in their homes. We offered “drive-In Church” for anyone who

wanted to come and worship from inside their cars and listen on the radio to the worship service. Drive through communion was advertised for any believer in Jesus Christ to come and receive Holy Communion every week. Hiking trails have been established for the public to enjoy the beauty of our wooded acres and a substantial bridge across a steep embankment was built by Eagle Scout Jarrett Waldron. After years of standing in the hallways for conversation before and after worship, we recognized the need for a space to gather. The Gathering Space was created for such a purpose. Through the sale of old pews in storage we accumulated enough to buy beautiful furniture for it. Many generous donations have given us a coffee bar and refrigerator, counters, plumbing and electrical, and a wide screen television which provides new and emerging opportunities for ministry. More generous donations have given our hallways a fresh look with new contrasting colors and replacing old flooring. This community has listened to others needs by researching new ways for those with mobility issues to get from the Sanctuary to the restrooms without going up steps. You have updated the ability for others to hear worship by adding suspended microphones and new speakers in both worship spaces. For those unable to worship in person new camera systems are installed so that others can see and hear too. Our music has been enjoyed through our former choirs and bell choirs and the additions of a harp, cello, violin, trumpet, and percussion from visiting musicians, through the years.

The annual Raise Your Spirits Fall Festival was created to invite the community to join us for a no cost celebration on the last Saturday before Reformation. What a better time to fellowship and invite the public to commemorate the day dear to all protestant churches. Our relationship with the village of Alamance was deepened with our continued request for speed control in the village and the eventual implementation of flashing speed signs that

determine each person's speed. This led to other discussions of the role that Alamance Lutheran has played in the development of the incorporation of the village. In participation together we created the annual Plaid Festival, which celebrates the Plaid Fabric that was woven at the mill across the street. "A community woven together" pretty much sums up who Alamance Lutheran is too. The local Country station Maverick and Christian Station Hope Radio have been great partners in helping us promote the efforts of our community outreach. We have sent young people to the National Youth Gathering prior to the pandemic to join for a week with 30,000 other Lutheran youth from around the nation for outreach and worship. Those BBQ and Brunswick stew fund raisers were fun! The ballpark, concession stand and its restrooms, have been thoroughly remodeled and upgraded to allow for greater outreach, future concert venues, our festivals and for our three local ball teams for boys and girls. Alamance Lutheran has joined in supporting many local ministries of Allied Churches, Alanon, Citygate Dream Center, LEAF. In addition, we support Alamance Childrens Theater with rehearsal space and file storage space, office space for Connect4Faith to combat Human trafficking, and Girl Scout Troop #13012. We partnered with the 32 member Girl Scout troop to develop a blessing box self-serve food pantry. For the comfort of members and guests we provided more room in the pews at 40 inches on center and gave them a slight angle change toward the cross.

Over the past three years alone we have welcomed 20 new members who have all become active in the development of this ministry. There is still work to be done. The parking lot that we promised the Euliss family through their land donation still needs to be graded down to street level and a new playground added inside of it. We have seen how the removal of the two trees that covered up the front of the Church has given a whole new profile to the

Church; imagine the impression the impression others will have when they can see all the activity that happens here throughout the week. An elevator will give others the ability to access all levels of the church. A new professional sign will attract attention to the activities of the church and may even give the 10,000 cars that pass by here something positive to think about as they pass by. These are just a few, but you have more BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) that the Holy Spirit will lead you forth in the journey ahead together.

As many of you know, like Jonah, I did drag my feet to answer this call to ministry. However, Bishop Tim once gave me some advice in filling out our annual congregation reporting form where you are asked if you are open to a new call or not. He said “Ron, you ran from the Holy Spirits call to become an ordained pastor for over 25 years, who are you to begin saying no, now?”

I have not wanted to move, yet when the Holy Spirit calls, who are we to drag our feet? Although I have been called to serve another community of faith in Chapin South Carolina, I will always be grateful for you who have formed me as a pastor and given me the opportunity to life high the cross of Christ with you in new and emerging ways.

My prayer for each of you is that you will keep your tennis shoes on and keep those feet moving with the momentum that you are building to God be the glory!

On Christs Mission, Pastor Ron Philabaum

**SAYING GOODBYE:** As Pastor Ron leaves the Community of Faith at Alamance Lutheran Church, the Council has received guidance from the Synod on how best to transition from Pastor Ron to an interim pastor. This is going to be difficult to for all of us, but the following guidance has been shown over

time to ease the transition for the outgoing pastor, the congregation, and the incoming interim pastor.

When a pastor leaves a congregation, it is not appropriate for him to continue to function in the pastoral role. This is sometimes difficult for people to comprehend.

A pastor should not be asked to do this or that baptism, funeral, or wedding. If a pastor does a funeral for Jane Doe because she was so special, why not do a baptism for Sam Smith? Sam is special too.

A pastor should not continue in any counseling relationship with a parishioner.

It is not appropriate for the pastor to be involved in any way in the call process or to comment on a particular candidate.

This is especially important to remember when Pastor Ron leaves. A line needs to be drawn clearly so that people know he is no longer our pastor. While this is painful, it must be done. The Church Council fully supports him in this decision, and any one of us is willing to discuss this with you in more detail if you need further clarification.

Therefore, it is important that you understand beginning February 12th, Pastor Ron will not:

- come back to do funerals or weddings or baptisms
- come back to lead worship services (except in very special circumstances)
- visit you in the hospital
- accept appointments with you

**SAYING HELLO:** Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, The Reverend Patrick (Paddy) J. Rooney will begin serving as our interim pastor. This is the 7th interim he has served since his retirement 10 years ago. His

preferred way to be addressed is either Pastor or Pastor Rooney. We look forward to learning more about him over the coming weeks and months, but below is an abbreviated bio:

Pastor Rooney is a retired Lutheran clergy having served parishes in central Pennsylvania, with 10 additional years in a Roman Catholic religious order. He has served on numerous committees in his Synods and, in his retirement, has served as interim pastor in a number of congregations in the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the North Carolina Synod - ELCA.

He has served in the human services field including as President and CEO of a large non-profit entity serving the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. He served 5 years in full time Ecumenical ministry.

Pastor Rooney is a native of England and completed his undergraduate studies at St. Mary's College, London; studied philosophy in America; has a master's degree in counseling from Shippensburg University and completed his Lutheran studies at Gettysburg Seminary. He has been married to Sally for 44 years and they have two grown children and three grandchildren.

He is an active member of the Rotary Club of Raleigh and previously a member of the Rotary Club of York PA.

***From the Council:*** The Council met on January 28<sup>th</sup>. The meeting began with a presentation by the Rev. Cassie Overcash, Assistant to the Bishop for Boundaries, Call Process, and Worship. She walked us through the process and set an expectation that we should be looking at a 12–18-month call process. As we get clearer on the process and timeline, we will provide more information.

In the interim, The Reverend Patrick J. Rooney from Raleigh, has agreed to be our interim pastor (more information below). We are excited to work with,

and learn from, him over the coming months. We are still working out the details of his ministry, and again, will provide more details as they become clearer.

The Council also welcomed Katie Whitehead back on board as a Council member. She joins Clare Holtz and Rhoda Weinbach who joined last month. Our first official act was to designate Council liaisons for each Committee. The liaison is responsible for calling the first meeting of the new year and leading the group in identifying a chairperson.

Kirk Tucker: Staff Support; Mutual Ministry

Rhoda Weinbach: Youth/Christian Education

John Ritchey: Finance; Church Property

Marty Adams: Stewardship; Evangelism/Social Ministry

Katie Whitehead: Worship and Music

Ted Milling: Cemetery; Hospitality

**If you are interested in joining any of those committees, please contact the Council liaison. Your gifts are needed!!!**

Our Council retreat is scheduled for February 24<sup>th</sup> at Twin Lakes.

Our next meeting is February 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

***From the Finance Team:*** Through December 2023, total General Fund Giving YTD was \$181,732. Operation Expenses YTD were \$223,308. That gives us a net loss YTD of \$41,576. Council voted to use the cell tower income to cover this deficit.



We are fortunate to have the income from the cell tower and our two endowments to help us when we are operating at a deficit, but it is not realistic to anticipate that we can do this indefinitely. As we enter this new year, we ask each of you to prayerfully consider increasing your weekly/monthly/yearly giving. We also ask you to think about adding Alamance Lutheran Church to your will/trust and making a legacy gift which will serve the congregation well into the future.

***From Worship and Music:*** Thanks upon thanks to John Ritchey for all the work he has done to enhance our technology in both the Sanctuary and the Chapel. Thanks also to the anonymous donor who is funding the technology. The Pastor no longer has to wear a microphone, the sound is much improved, and the on-line streaming capability has leaped light years into the future. Have you gone online to see it? We now can provide a high-quality experience when folks cannot be present for worship. The new system allows direct streaming to Facebook Live. You do not need a Facebook account to access the live stream on Facebook. Just go to the Facebook website.

The February 14 Ash Wednesday service will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. As has been the tradition in the past, the visiting church (us) delivers the message. This will be our first opportunity to hear Pastor Rooney preach. Let's make sure to have a good turnout to support him and begin the journey into Lent. More details to come.

Lenten worship will be held February 21, 28 and March 6, 13, and 20. We will begin with a simple meal followed by worship at 6:00. Please check the weekly bulletin for details.

***From the Christian Education and Youth Team:*** This team did not meet this month, so there is no new news to report.

### ***From Evangelism/Social Ministry:***

- The Blessing Box is in place and already being used by the community.
  - **We are still in need of someone to provide leadership to manage the box.** The person doesn't have to do all of the work themselves but would ensure that there is a team letting the congregation know what types of food we need donated, moving food from the congregational donation box to our storage area in the Fellowship Hall, coordinating involvement with the Girl Scout Troop, and regularly checking the box and replenishing it as needed. If you are interested in taking on this role, please contact Bob Hawkins.
  - Three of the girls in our Girl Scout Troop are using the blessing box as a project to meet their promotion requirements. They will be adding signage to the box, painting the legs, and planting a small garden beneath the box.
- Because of You....lunch: Our January 21<sup>st</sup> lunch with Connect4Faith was very informative. We will be having our next lunch in the Spring with one of the other organizations we support.
- Allied Churches: Bob Hawkins and John Weinbach are helping with food preparation February 7<sup>th</sup>. This is just a two-hour commitment on the first Wednesday of the month. If you are interested in being added to the rotation, contact Lynn Tucker.

- Dream Center: Thanks for continuing to support the Dream Center by bringing in food each week. We are collecting **pasta in February** and peanut butter in March.
- Christmas Cheer: Save the Date – March 16. Christmas Cheer is bringing back an Alamance County favorite – Cheers for Chocolate Festival. If you are a chocoholic, check out the attached flyer and plan to come to Holly Hill Mall to support Christmas Cheer and feed your addiction.
- Lunch Bunch: **February 8 at 11:30**. Our next outing will be to Ferrara’s 3243 S Church St, Burlington, NC 27215. The food is always good there, but the company is even better. Come join us!
- Visit the ALC website to see the improvements. One area of emphasis right now is ensuring that our [church calendar](#) is up to date. More and more people are making use of our space (that’s a good thing), but it also means we must be careful about not overbooking. **If you are planning on using any space for an event or meeting, please let Marty know so that she can make sure it is added to the calendar.**

***From the Cemetery Team:*** All residents are resting peacefully. If you are a voting member or an immediate family member of a voting member, you qualify for a free space in ALC’s cemetery or memorial garden. Let Ted Milling know if you are interested.

***From the Hospitality Team:*** The team supported the January 21st “Because of You...” luncheon. Goodies are being provided in the Gathering Space for social time following some of our services. Thanks to Kathy Ritchey and Cindy Milling for the work they are doing.

The next Red Cross Blood Drive will be February 9<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-5:30 pm. You can already sign up online. The last two drives have been very successful. ALC is a great location and has developed a group of “regular givers”.

***From the Stewardship Team:*** If you have not already done so, please pick up your 2024 Giving Envelopes and your 2023 end of year donation letters in the front of the Sanctuary (or if we are meeting in the Chapel, in the Gathering Room). If you want us to mail you your envelopes, send an e-mail to the [Marty Adams](#).

***From the Property Team:*** Have you seen the newly painted hallway? Things are looking pretty spiffy! Thanks to Terry Adams for the hours he has spent climbing ladders and laying on the floor to give us a fresher, cleaner appearance. Painting will continue until golf season starts.

We are continuing to work with engineering studies for the new ramp proposal in the Sanctuary. We shared the concept with you at the December congregation meeting. The ramp is a first step. Our longer-term goal is for an elevator or lift from the Fellowship Hall to the upper levels of our building.

***Fall Raise Your Spirits Festival:*** **We are still looking for someone to step up and lead the planning for our 2024 Fall.** You won't have to do it by yourself. Kathy Ritchey will provide her years of experience and others will assist. We just need someone to take the lead. If you want more information or are interested, talk to Ted Milling.

***Some Other Words:***

**Plaid Day Festival:** Planning has already begun for the May 2024 Village of Alamance Plaid Day Festival. While the Festival is planned and organized by the Village of Alamance, it will be held at Alamance Lutheran Church again because of the Church's historic significance to the village. **We are looking for a member of the congregation to be a liaison between the planning committee and the church.** This would require you to attend regular planning meetings and to ensure that the church is informed of the plans. If you are interested in being the liaison, please let Ted Milling know.

**SAVE THE DATE:** Annual Mother's Day Tea - May 4, 2023

***Schedule for February:*** The schedule is our best shot of what's happening looking from the end of the previous month. For a more accurate and up to date look at the calendar, check the ALC website and weekly bulletin.

- *February 1<sup>st</sup>: Evangelism/Social Ministry - 4:30 pm*
- *February 3<sup>rd</sup>: Men's Breakfast and Bible Study – 8:30 am*
- *February 7<sup>th</sup>: Food prep at Allied Churches - 9:00 am; ALANON - 10:00 am*
- *February 8<sup>th</sup>: Lunch Bunch - 11:30 am. (Ferrara's 3243 S Church St, Burlington, NC 27215)*
- *February 9<sup>th</sup>: Red Cross Blood Drive – 12:30-5:30 pm*
- *February 10<sup>th</sup>: Stewardship Meeting – 10:00 am*
- *February 11<sup>th</sup>: Philabaum Farewell Luncheon – 11:00 am*
- *February 14<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Ash Wednesday Service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church – 7:00 pm; Valentine's Day!*
- *February 19<sup>th</sup>: President's Day!*

- *February 21<sup>st</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Lenten Meal – 5:30 pm; Lenten Service – 6:00 pm*
- *February 24<sup>th</sup>: Church Council Retreat at Twin Lakes – 10:00 am - 3:00 pm*
- *February 25<sup>th</sup>: Noisy Offering Sunday; Finance Committee Meeting - 5:00 pm; Church Council Meeting - 6:00 pm*
- *February 28<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Lenten Meal – 5:30 pm; Lenten Service – 6:00 pm*

## **Serving This Month**

	<b>Altar Set-up</b>	<b>Communion Set-up</b>	<b>Worship Assistant/ Reader</b>	<b>Greeters</b>	<b>Ushers</b>
<b>February 4</b>	Diane Gural	Lynn Tucker	Marty and Terry Adams	Jerry and Sally Combs	Terry Adams and Jerry Combs
<b>February 11</b>	Diane Gural	Marty Adams	Pastor Bob Hawkins	Sandy Kirkpatrick and Wanda Patterson	Ted Milling and Roy Whitehead
<b>February 18</b>	Diane Gural	Lynn Tucker	Roy and Katie Whitehead	Sharon Isley	Pastor Bob Hawkins and Pastor John Weinbach
<b>February 25</b>	Diane Gural	Lynn Tucker	Kathy Ritchey	Kerry Sullivan	John Ritchey and Hugh Smith

*Please let Kirk Tucker ([kirktucker44@gmail.com](mailto:kirktucker44@gmail.com), 262-853-0373) know of any Church related events or announcements to be included in future news notes. News notes for each month will be sent to members and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church the last week of the preceding month.*

***Our Three-Year Goal: Double the number of people regularly worshipping at Alamance Lutheran Church***

Our actions need to support this goal. Each worship committee will focus their efforts on meeting this goal. Resource decisions (time and money) will be made with this goal as the driver. This does not mean that we will not do anything else, it just means that our driving focus will be to meet the goal.

DATE: MARCH 16, 2024  
TIME: 11AM-3PM  
LOCATION: HOLLY HILL MALL

# Cheers For Chocolate Festival

**Chocolate Samples:** Tickets to sample the chocolates will be available for purchasing at Holly Hill Mall the day of the event! Pricing for tickets are \$5 for 5 samples & \$10 for 10 samples.

**Live Entertainment:** The amazing "C Note" will be playing from 12PM-12:30PM & 1PM-1:30PM!

**All proceeds to benefit Christmas Cheer!!**

**Christmas Cheer**  
OF ALAMANCE COUNTY  
Keeping hope alive in the heart of a child