

# Alamance Lutheran Church

## March 2025 News Notes



*Our Vision: To be a beacon of Christian faith, love, and compassion where all are welcomed with open hearts.*

*Our Mission: We are called by God's spirit to:*

- *Worship and Praise God*
- *Serve in Faith*
- *Share God's story*

*"March is a tomboy with tousled hair, a mischievous smile, mud on her shoes and a laugh in her voice." Hal Borland "March-March 1" Sundial of the Seasons (1964)*

## Words from Pastor Rooney

### **LENT: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE SEASON**

Over the years you have probably heard that, in this holy season, the Church sees prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as the Lenten disciplines. These disciplines are important and can help form our lives in faith during this season. But the danger comes when we see such disciplines as restricted only to this season. For in actuality, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the year-round regime of Christian living, the disciplines that define our lives as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. So rather than call these our Lenten disciplines, perhaps we would be better off saying that in Lent we try our best to get back to these basic disciplines in our lives of faith; disciplines that we may have neglected through much of the rest of the year.

Fasting usually means eating less food and skipping meals, or it might mean abstaining from certain foods. But fasting should mean more than dietary restrictions. For often fasting should be accompanied by silence and reflection which one of the early Church fathers called our "fasting medicine" for with such means fasting can make us healthy. But for this medicine to be truly effective, fasting should be accompanied by prayer and almsgiving, since the word "alms" comes from the Greek word meaning "compassion."

For many in the Church, Lent is also a time of preparation for baptism at Easter and other new members enter the Church. But Lent can also be understood as a time of reconciliation for those who have broken their baptismal vows and who now seek reconciliation. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, therefore, the already baptized link arms with the soon-to-be-baptized or those renewing their baptismal vows as together we march toward Easter.

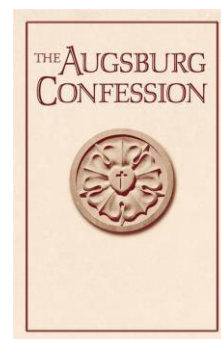
One of the things that we all know about Lent is that it is 40 days long, every day except Sundays in the season. This number of 40 is, of course, an ancient one in the stories of our faith. In the days of Moses, it took 40 years of preparation before God was ready to lead the people into the Promised Land. We also know that Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days before beginning His ministry. In that same sense Lent is like a retreat for us. Throughout the rest of the year the Church is directed outward to the world. But during these 40 days, we pull back into ourselves for reflection and self-examination. In fact, the word “quarantine” is an old word for Lent – 40 days of imposed recuperation.

And when Lent is completed, we will find ourselves right in the middle of everything that we have heard about during this season. For during the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services we will gather around the cross – that tree of life, that ark, that burning bush – where we will learn God’s name and know what great love He has shown us in and through His suffering and death. And in joy, everything then is put into perspective and makes sense to us as we prepare to enter the Easter season.

May God bless us all during this most holy season and may it be one which bears great fruit in your lives of faith.

## What Do We Profess to Believe?

It’s still not too late! Join us on Sundays at 9:00 in the Parlor for our continuing discussion of the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Confession is the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Protestant Reformation. Join us to get a better understand of what Lutheran’s believe.



## Call Process

The discernment process continues as the committee meets with potential candidates. **Pray for our Call Committee and the call process, support them, and thank them for what they are doing for all of us in the Faith Community of Alamance Lutheran Church.**

Confidentiality must be maintained until the committee submits the name of a primary candidate to the Council for approval. After Council approval, the primary candidate will meet with the Congregation for their approval and approval of a mutually agreed upon financial package. While a minimum of 2/3's majority is required for the call, it is common for a pastor to look for a vote over 9/10s majority from the Congregation to sense the Congregation supports the call. A simple majority is required to approve the financial package.

## Small, Scrappy & Vital Congregations Retreat

Although Alamance Lutheran Church is larger than the typical small congregation, Sherry Ford, Lynn and Kirk Tucker attended the recent retreat sponsored by the synod. We learned a lot about small congregations and are thinking about how we can share information about the retreat with ALC members. Over 60% of ELCA congregations have 70 or less members. Forty-three percent of congregations have less than 100 members and about 1/3 of them are at any given gathering. About 60% of worshipers came back after COVID. Small congregations were affected less than larger ones. "Small congregations are not just miniature versions of larger congregations. The ELCA model constitution doesn't fit small congregations. Worship services are either focused on **PERFORMANCE** or **PARTICIPATION**. Larger congregations are about presentation while smaller congregations are about participation. Buildings and property take majority of resources, not ministry. We should concentrate on sacraments: remembrance of baptism, communion. Start with strengths, not problems." Teresa Stewart, author of *"The Small Church Advantage."* led several sessions at the retreat. And a lot more...

## Synod Assembly

Cindy Milling and Kirk Tucker have been selected by Council to serve as our voting delegates, along with Pastor Rooney at the Synod Assembly in Greensboro May 29 through 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Congregation Meeting

We held a Congregation Meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>. We thanked Ted Milling and Katie Whitehead for their service on Council. Rebecca Maness, Cindy Milling and Jo Ann Moss were elected for 3-year Council terms. Kirk Tucker for a 2-year term. John Ritchey provided an update on our Finances and Property. Ministry Team Annual Reports were provided for all attendees. They were also emailed to the Congregation. Much has happened this past year.

## New Logo!

This past summer, we held several meetings to assess our Vision, Mission, and Values to ensure they were in alignment with our future. The Vision, Mission, and Values were voted on in the December congregational meeting and approved by all. Thanks to the talents of Sharon Ward, we now have a new logo which reflects these. The center dove and cross with the radiating light reflects our Vision “To be a **beacon** of Christian faith, love, and compassion where all are welcomed with open hearts.” The words around the circle are the Mission Statement. You will begin to see this logo as we update our branding (letterhead, website, etc.)

**THANK YOU SHARON!**



## Council

The Council met on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. We welcomed Rebecca, Cindy, and Jo Ann to the Council. The first order of business was to elect new Council officers and make Ministry Team liaison assignments. Kirk Tucker will continue as Council Vice Chair,

Marty Adams as Secretary, John Ritchey as Treasurer, and Roy Whitehead as Financial Secretary. The Treasurer is responsible for total funds and money going out. The Financial Secretary is responsible for funds coming in. Council liaisons to Ministry team Council liaisons have also been assigned.

The Council approved transferring approximately \$4,000 from the Tower Fund to the general fund to balance expenditures against income for 2025.

Marty Adams shared some aspects of the employment contract for a new Pastor, particularly sabbatical and family leave policies. The Finance Team will be negotiating a financial package for a new Pastor. We have agreed to follow Synod guidelines as part of our Ministry Site Profile.

## Finance Team

Lenise Meeks has stepped into the role of Bookkeeper and is doing a great job. End of the year reports were shared and approved by Council. As previously reported, we ended the year approximately \$4,000 in the hole because of reduced spending. Tower funds balanced the budget. **Revenue growth is important for us to meet future budget expenditures with a full time Pastor.** January reports had not been reviewed by the Finance Team prior to the meeting.

## Hospitality Team

A successful Red Cross blood drive was held on February 7<sup>th</sup>. The next blood drive is April 4<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to Donna Eash for taking on responsibility as our Red Cross coordinator. A Mother's Day Tea is planned for May 10<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday soup suppers will be held in Lent starting with March 12<sup>th</sup>. Suppers will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall.

## Worship and Music Team

Thanks to the efforts of Sherry Ford, we have a number of new volunteers to serve in our worship services. Pastor Rooney held orientation sessions for the volunteers, both new and old, to ensure consistency between volunteers. New volunteers will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

Choir practices are now being held on Thursday evenings and our bell choir is reconvening.

## Lent is here!

- **Ash Wednesday Service - March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.** As we have done in the past the Ash Wednesday service will be held jointly with St. Paul's Lutheran Church. It will be at Alamance this year, with Pastor Rooney leading the service and Pastor Hooks giving the sermon.
- **Mid-Week Services – March 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.** We will have midweek services on Wednesdays through Lent with a simple soup supper at followed by evening vespers.
- **Maundy Thursday Service – April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.**
- **Good Friday Service – April 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.**
- **Easter Service – April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.**

## Evangelism/Social Ministry Team

Thanks to all of you who are donating food for both the **Blessing Box** and the **Dream Center**. Donations are especially needed for the **Blessing Box** which is continuing to be used regularly by the community. We received a large donation of food for the Blessing Box from a local church that had been collecting food for Western North Carolina. The Dream Center is always appreciative of our donations. We are collecting Rice in March, **Pasta** in April for the Dream Center. We are discontinuing our food prep ministry at Allied Churches and will be looking for another ministry to support. **Allied Churches** did not seem to need us anymore.

The **Lunch Bunch** will be meeting at the La Cocina Mexican Restaurant (3932 South Church Street) on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am. Let Katie Whitehead know if you are attending.

We are planning a **Because of You** luncheon after church in March and hope to have Jackie Cole come and talk to us about **Meals on Wheels**. Members of ALC are currently scheduled for one week of service each month and more volunteers are always welcome.

We are sending letters from Alamance Lutheran Church to new residents of **Twin Lakes Community** inviting them to experience our faith community. We have seen some new faces from Twin Lakes Community thanks in part to the letters we have been sending.

Sherry Ford is taking the lead in a number of **Evangelism** efforts. She is looking for volunteers interested in Evangelism, visiting people in our community, spreading the good news. Being aware of members who are hospitalized, or dealing with health issues is also important. We will be deciding at the next meeting whether or not we should be splitting into two teams. We need to improve our communication links with each other and our Faith Community.

## Property Team

The Team met on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Elizabeth Powell will lead the team going forward and serve as Council liaison. The team has several things on their radar: looking at brickwork repairs, procuring supplies for the restrooms and new towel dispensers, and the possibility of a new church sign in the front of the building. While some members of the team have expressed concern about the new lift proposal, John Ritchey is continuing to get quotes for the unit and installation for Council and Congregation review and approval.

**Stewardship Team:** The team met on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Thirty adults and 6 children have completed Stewardship forms and have identified a number of new volunteers for Ministry Teams and in the service. Additional forms are being sent to members that have not completed them yet. The Team is also developing a proposal for a **Memorial and Honor Fund** policy.

The **“Above and Beyond”** campaign is continuing. Thanks to those of you who have already donated toward the campaign. Have you seen the new signs outside? The new printer in the office?

The new rolling cart and knife block in

the kitchen? All of these items, and more, are because of your donations to the Above and Beyond Campaign. If you are looking for an easy, low-cost item to donate, we still need copies of the new song books. We don’t have quite enough to use on a regular basis. The cost is \$17.05/book.



## Youth/Christian Education Team

The Team met on February 20<sup>th</sup>. Items of interest include providing additional Children’s Sunday School teachers to give Rebecca a break, and the creation of a monthly Youth Group. Planning has begun for a summer youth event that will



include liturgical dance, messy art, and cooking that will be promoted to other local Lutheran Churches. They have also begun thinking about the next ELCA National Youth gathering in 2027.

## Cemetery Team

The team has been in touch with Synod to better understand the policies around ELCA cemeteries. More work needs to be done to understand the implications for us.

The Team is also considering a number of changes to our policies and practices. Such things as charging an annual maintenance fee for every two plots and assessing a fee for replacing crumbling headstones are being considered. Alamance does not have the resources or budget to maintain all the headstones, so without support from the families with loved ones in the cemetery, headstones and vases or other memorial items may be removed. There will be fees associated with new plots requested by members. This fee would be in lieu of annual fees for up to 10 years. The possibility of family members that are not Church members requesting a plot is being considered.

## Some Words from the Council President

The small congregation retreat is still on my mind. Most of these congregations have a Synod Approved Minister (SAM) serving the small congregation of believers. In the Virginia Synod, SAM s can serve communion. The North Carolina Synod will allow SAMs to serve communion later this year. Part time Pastors also serve many of these small congregations. I was impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm members of these small congregations have. We can't hide in a small congregation the way we can hide in a large one. Serving God is not passive. It's active! Each of us has unique gifts we should be using in service to God and one another.

## Schedule for March

- March 1<sup>st</sup>: Men's breakfast and Bible Study - 8:30 am; Property Team - 10:00 am.
- March 4<sup>th</sup>: Women's Bible Study - 10:30 am.
- March 5<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Ash Wednesday Service - 7:00 pm.
- March 6<sup>th</sup>: Choir Practice - 6:30 pm.



- March 11<sup>th</sup>: Women's Bible Study - 10:30 am.
- March 12<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Lenten meal and service - 6:00 pm.
- March 13<sup>th</sup>: Lunch Bunch - 11:30am at La Cocina Mexican Restaurant (3392 South Church Street); Evangelism/Social Ministry Meeting - 4:30 pm; Choir Practice – 6:30 pm.
- March 18<sup>th</sup>: Women's Bible Study - 10:30 am.
- March 19<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Lenten meal and service - 6:00 pm.
- March 20<sup>th</sup>: Choir Practice - 6:30 pm
- March 22<sup>nd</sup>: Christian Education Meeting – 9:00 am.
- March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Church Council Meeting - 1:30 pm.
- March 25<sup>th</sup>: Women's Bible Study - 10:30 am.
- March 26<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am; Lenten meal and service - 6:00 pm.
- March 27<sup>th</sup>: Choir Practice - 6:30 pm.
- March 30<sup>th</sup>: Noisy Offering Sunday

## Serving in March

	Communion Setup	Reader	Worship Assistant	Greeters	Ushers
<b>March 2</b>	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Pastor Bob Hawkins		Sharon Isley Sidney Dill	Jerry Combs Hugh Smith
<b>March 5 Ash Weds</b>	Marty Adams	Sidney Dill	Pastor Nathan Hooks	Sherry Ford Elizabeth Powell	Terry Adams Don Eash
<b>March 9</b>	Lynn Tucker	Girl Scouts	Kathy Ritchey	Girl Scouts	Girl Scouts
<b>March 16</b>	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Terry Adams	Marty Adams	Don and Donna Eash	Ted Milling Jaxon Richards
<b>March 23</b>	Lynn Tucker	Lynn Tucker	Kirk Tucker	Roy and Katie Whitehead	Sherry Ford Elizabeth Powell
<b>March 30</b>	Lynn Tucker	Craven Ford	Marty Adams	Sandy Kirkpatrick Kerry Sullivan	Roy Whitehead Greg Beard

*Please let Kirk Tucker 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.*