

The Epistle

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

March 2024



March

Gathered to Go . . . to study God's Word, Worship together; and to walk with Christ by loving, serving and nurturing all God's people where ever they are and whatever their circumstances.

From Pastor Lori

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are halfway through the season of Lent, and I am wondering...how is Lent going for you? Traditionally, Christians focus on giving up something during this solemn season. This practice can be humbling because indulgence and excess are hallmarks of our times. Other Christians commit to taking on something during Lent. This practice helps us become more aware and sensitive to other people's needs. There isn't a right or wrong choice. Both approaches can be transformational in the life of discipleship.

The word "acedia" means "spiritual sloth." It describes a state of not caring or being unconcerned with one's spiritual well-being or the condition of the world. In a culture where there are so many things to occupy our attention, sometimes it is easier to do nothing. In a world where there are so many causes to care about, sometimes it's simpler to care less. During Lent, we repent of acedia by leaning into that which makes us more fully alive. The Holy Spirit works through our Lenten practices to wake us up from our "spiritual sluggishness" and ignite our desire to follow Jesus Christ.

Whichever approach you have chosen to practice this Lent, (it's not too late to choose one if you haven't already!), it's important to remember that Lent is a gift. The question is, how will you respond to this sacred opportunity?

Blessings,
Pastor Lori

Prayer for Lent: Letting Go

O God, help us to use this season of Lent to examine our attachments, and to sense where You invite us to live more simply and deeply. Shine the light of Your love into the private corners of our lives where we have acquired so much clutter that it has begun to restrict our freedom. Grant us the strength to free ourselves from appetites and needs that drive us into taking, having and wanting more than we need or have time for. Teach us that in letting go we become free, rather than deprived, generous rather than covetous, and spacious rather than restricted. We offer You our Lenten observance, and today we place our feet on the road to Easter and walk the Way that You have walked before us. Amen.

~ written by Ann Siddall and posted on the **Stillpoint Spirituality Centre** website. <https://stillpointsa.org.au/>

March News from the Pews

Sunday March 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

“O that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will.” ELW 772

Exodus 20:1-7

Psalms 19:1

Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

Sunday March 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Lent

“When I survey the wondrous cross.” ELW 803

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalms 107:1-3;17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

Sunday March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

“God who blesses earth with springtime, shine within our world anew.” ACS 924

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalms 119:9-16

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

Sunday March 24, 2024

Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday)

“Oh who am I that for my sake my Lord should take frail flesh and die.” ELW 343

Mark 11:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1-15:47

Thursday March 28, 2024

Maundy Thursday 6:30 PM

“Lo, the good shepherd, for the sheep is offered” ELW 349

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Friday March 29, 2024

Good Friday 6:30 PM

“Watch with him one bitter hour; turn not from his griefs away learn from Jesus Christ to pray.” ELW 347

John 18:1-19;42

Saturday March 30, 2024

Vigil of Easter 7:00 PM St. Paul's and St. Mark's

To be held at St. Paul's

Sunday March 31, 2024

Resurrection of our Lord Easter Sunday

“Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia! Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia! Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! Suffer to redeem our loss! Alleluia!” ELW 365

As I sat and reflected for **The Epistle** this month, I seem to be in the “did you notice” mode. Worship is corporate, something we do together as a congregation, yet, there are things which make it personal for each of us that might not have the same effect on everyone. I ask you each to reflect on the various things that make worship meaningful for you during this season of Lent. What do you take away from Sunday morning worship that carries you through the week?

As you enter the sanctuary during this Lenten season, what color do you notice? Do you see the change in the paraments? Is there a different banner hung? Take time to notice these changes. Do they change the way you feel or the way that you worship?

You will have noticed that we are once again passing the offering plates during the offertory music. Have you noticed that the Assisting Minister holds the plates up at the table while the Offertory Prayer is spoken? This is a reminder that all of our gifts are gifts given in thanksgiving to God and we lift them with thankful hearts and praise. And we have now returned to the communion rail to receive the Eucharistic meal. Take a moment at the rail to feel God's presence in the bread as Pastor Lori says to you “Child of God, this is his body, given for you” and the Assisting Minister says: “This is the blood of Christ shed for you.” Stand and take in this wonderful meal, no one will rush you away. What a beautiful gift we receive each and every week at the Table, open to all.

We hope that you have also noticed that the Assisting Minister begins the Offertory Prayer and the Prayer after Communion and then the congregation joins in to offer the prayer as a congregation. Both of these prayers are inclusive of all the people in worship, not to be said for us by the Assisting Minister which is why we, the people, join together in thanking God for our gifts and for the meal we have received.

Some pieces for the liturgy that will be different during Lent will be sung throughout the service. Our Hymn of Praise will be the hymn “Restore in Us, O God” which is number 328 in the ELW. We will be using Setting Four for the Gospel Acclamation, the Holy, Holy, Holy, and The Lamb of God. They should sound familiar. The Offertory Hymn will be the second verse of ELW Hymn 707-- “Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us.”

“When we are tested and wrestle alone,
famished for bread when the world offers stone,
Nourish us, God, by your word and your way,
food that sustains us by night and by day.”

Verse 1....*When We are Tested ACS #922*

Midweek Lenten Services



Lent is a time to practice individual acts of “repentance, prayer, fasting, sacrificial giving and acts of love.” It’s also a time for deepening community. Join us on **Wednesday evenings at 5:30 pm** this Lent for a worship series called, Created for Community. We will reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, the world, creation, and God. Services will be held on **March 6th, 13th and 20th.**

Forty Days

We have a challenge for you! Each day of Lent, remove one item from your closet or home that you no longer wear or need and put it into a trash bag. At the end of the forty days, donate these items to The Once Again Shoppe where the items can be shared with someone who can really use them! There will be trash bags on the Social Ministry table for you or you may use your own. We would encourage you to drop your bags off at The Once Again Shoppe. If you are unable to do that, you may bring them to church and we will be sure they are taken to The Once Again Shoppe.

Holy Week and Easter Worship Schedule

Sunday March 24, 2024	Palm Sunday Service	10:00 AM
Thursday March 28, 2024.	Maundy Thursday Service	6:30 PM
Friday March 29, 2024	Good Friday Service	6:30 PM
Saturday March 30, 2024	Easter Vigil	6:30 PM
Sunday March 31, 2024	Easter Service	10:00 AM

Flowers for Easter

Due to your generosity at Christmas, there are enough funds remaining to purchase Easter flowers to beautify the sanctuary. If you would like to honor a loved one, please have their name(s) into Jennifer by March 15 and names will be listed in the Easter bulletin.



From Brian Foster

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we start off 2024 the Church Council has been discussing how to build on the momentum that was created as the result of the Stewardship Awareness initiative that we concluded in 2023. Specifically, we have been talking about our core values as a congregation and defining some goals that are centered around those core values. Much has changed since the Long-Range Planning Committee went through the process of defining our values, vision, and mission in early 2000. Core values are defined as behaviors or ideas that are important/practiced at St. Paul's that help guide us in our decisions and how we practice ministry.

After a lot of prayer and discernment we feel the best way to go about this is to solicit your input through a series of meetings, like what we did when we were deciding to shift from two services on Sunday to just one following Covid. These meetings will focus on sharing stories about your experiences at St. Paul's. From these stories we will identify 3 values that are reflected in them. There will be an opportunity to share your stories by Zoom on March 14 as well as a coffee hour on March 17. We will review that input and identify 3-5 core values that will be shared at a potluck on March 24.

After Easter, the Council will begin the process of setting goals that are consistent with these core values. Our objective is to always have our decisions regarding the life of the church and its ministries in consistent alignment with our core values. Using that methodology will enable us to effectively manage the stewardship of our resources.

I look forward to hearing your stories as we identify together the values that we share at St. Paul's.

His servant,
Brian Foster

Core Value Conversations

Please join us to help discover St. Paul's Core Values during the following times:

Thursday March 14	Zoom Story Telling 7:00 PM
Sunday March 17	Story Telling Coffee Hour after worship
Sunday March 24	Palm Sunday Pot Luck Sharing and Identifying Core Values from the Story Telling Sessions

Flowing Forth

The Flowing Forth team was established with the Bon Homuhane bequest. This bequest continues reaching out to help others when needs arise. There are two parts to the bequest. One is the Flex Fund and the other is New Ministries. Just recently the team was approached with two opportunities to again help as we did for Bon and family so many years ago. Both of these were met with funds from the Flex Fund.

We were able to allocate \$1600.00 to Keuka College to help support the cost of their 2024 Spring Break trip. This group of students under the direction of College Chaplain Eric Detar will be heading to Puerto Rico in the Spring where they hope to work on projects including working with young people at the Boys and Girls Club and helping with preservation projects in the El Yunque National Forest. Upon their return, they will come to St. Paul's as in the past, and share their experiences with us.

Our second opportunity came through former St. Paul's member, Elva McBride. Elva is working with two refugee families in Rochester. The fathers of both families are attending school studying English and they are also learning a trade by attending Auto Mechanics School. The car which is owned by Ajmal is used by both men to get to school and to their after-school jobs. It needed many repairs which Ajmal and his Auto Mechanics class are able to fix, but the need was the money to buy the parts. As part of the Homuhane bequest we were able to send the needed \$800.00 to Ajmal so the parts could be purchased and the repairs made to the car.

Once again because of the generosity of one man, two more needs were met. What a blessing to be a blessing to others.

Getting to Know Your Neighbors Save the Date

Saturday May 4, 2024 at 3:00 PM

Bring your family and friends to St. Paul's to hear

The Finger Lakes Bronze Bell Ringers

Watch your bulletin for more information

Prayer Requests in Public Places

Prayer is an important part of our faith. It is one of the ways we support each other during times of illness, crisis and grief. This is a faithful and powerful practice. As Mother Teresa said, "Prayer is the mortar that holds our house together." Our intentions are often in the best place. However, some people prefer to keep their situation private. If you would like to include someone on the prayer list in the bulletin, during worship or through an email, please ask for their permission to make it public.

Grab and Go Lunches



The March dates for Grab and Go are the **8th and 22nd**. On **March 8th** we will need 4 crockpots of soup, 5 dozen individually wrapped dinner rolls, 5 dozen individually wrapped cookies and 5 dozen apples. We will need 4 crockpots of sloppy joes, 5 dozen individually wrapped hamburger rolls, 5 dozen individually wrapped cookies and 5 dozen apples for **March 22nd**. If you are able to help this month, please sign up across from the office. You may contact **Amy (315-759-0901)** or **Jewel (315-719-8182)** if you have questions. Thank you so much for your faithful help each month.

Grandma's Kitchen



We will be providing food for Grandma's Kitchen just once this year. Our turn is **Tuesday, March 12th**. We will be serving at the school. We will need food as well as people to help serve at the school. The sign-up sheet will be across from the office. The students have always been so thankful when we have participated in the past. We will need goulash, cookies and apples. We will plan to serve 100 - 125 students. You may contact **Amy (315-759-0901)** or **Jewel (315-719-8182)** if you have questions. Thank you for your help!

Hunger Offering for March

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me in.

Matthew 25:35

Each month we collect an offering to help feed hungry people and help hurting communities in our county and around the world. Sixty percent of the offering is used to combat world hunger. Forty percent is given to local organizations to help them “feed” people either physically, emotionally or spiritually. This month, the local part of our hunger offering will be given to **The Sharing Shed**.

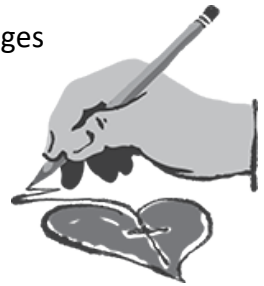


Your offering can be placed in the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary or mailed directly to church. Remember to designate the amount you want to give on the hunger line of your envelope or write “Hunger Offering” on the memo line of your check.

Thank you for helping to care for our neighbors near and far!

“Shower” Each Other with Messages of Love

Each month, we will “shower” someone from St. Paul’s with messages of love. Please take a moment to send the person/s listed below a note of encouragement. May God use our communications to remind the recipient of God’s faithful presence and love.



This month we are “showering” **Terry and Sallie Jensen** with our love. Their address is: **537 East Lake Road, Penn Yan, New York 14527.**



Palm Sunday Pot Luck.

There will be a Palm Sunday Pot Luck on March 24th. Be on the lookout for a signup sheet on the bulletin board across the office.

Winter Weather Updates

When the weather is questionable or if a weather warning has been issued by the National Weather Service/Sherriff's Department, please check your email to see if in person worship has been cancelled and to access the Zoom link. If you do not have an email address, you will receive a telephone call to inform you of the closure.



The Sharing Shed

Thank you for your on-going support of the Sharing Shed. We continue to see the need for paper products and personal care items. Canned soups are wonderful for the winter months along with "kid friendly" canned pasta meals. Oatmeal, breakfast bars, and boxes of cereal are welcome! Please no canned vegetables or boxed macaroni and cheese. We are helping those around us and it is appreciated by all! Any questions, contact Elaine Gleason (315-730-0629).

A Lenten Reflection by Angie Bailey

Last winter, on a cold rainy Monday at about 4 pm, as I was leaving the parking lot at the Presbyterian church and waiting for a clear moment in traffic to turn towards home, I noticed this older gentleman pushing a small shopping cart and dodging traffic to get safely across Main St. He was wearing a thin jacket and no hat. The cart was full of groceries, most of which were not in bags. As he crossed Main Street and headed down that little downward grade at the church on Clinton St, groceries were falling out of his cart and he was having a hard time picking them up and keeping the cart from moving forward. This poor gentleman was indeed struggling and it took a second or two to ask myself, "Should I get out and help him?" "Should I offer him a ride?".

Then I questioned my own safety, picking up a complete stranger was not really a smart thing to do but I asked myself, what would Jesus do? All of a sudden, I knew what I had to do.

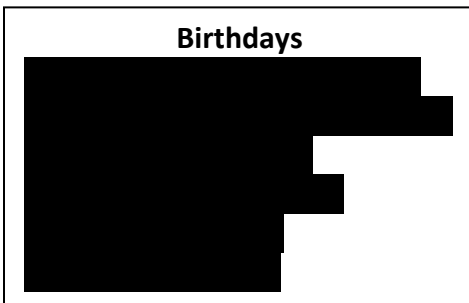
We hauled all the groceries and the cart into my car and off we went. He was not a talkative person, probably in fear of me as well. As it turned out, he only lived a few streets up and was, I believe, very thankful for the dry ride home.

Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief

The social ministries committee has voted to assemble 25 personal care kits to be sent to Lutheran World Relief along with baby kits, school kits, and quilts which will all be blessed on Sunday, April 28th during morning worship. These will then be delivered to the gathering sight, the Lutheran Church in Hilton, NY. From there, they will be transported to Baltimore, MD and then send throughout the world.

Once again, we are looking to the generous people of St. Paul's to provide the needed items to make up these kits. There will be a sign-up sheet across from the office on the bulletin board. We will need 25 light-weight bath towels, 50 bars of soap, 25 adult toothbrushes, 25 sturdy combs, and 25 metal nail clippers. A plaid box will be placed on the Social Ministry table to deposit your items by Sunday, April 21st. Thank you for your continued generosity!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



Anniversaries

No anniversaries are listed for March

Office Hours for the Month of March

Please check the weekly announcements for the office hours. Jennifer is generally in every Tuesday late morning to early afternoon and Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

Those Who Serve – March

	3/3	3/10	3/17	3/24	3/31
Assisting Ministers	Dave Nielsen		Whitney Booth		Elaine Gleason
Ushers (2)	Dan Malte and Todd Christensen		Dave and Charlene Nielsen	Terry and Sallie Jensen	Terry and Sallie Jensen
Readers	Wanda Wood		Wanda Wood		Wanda Wood
Altar Guild					
Sound Board	Les Wood	Charlene Nielsen	Les Wood	Charlene Nielsen	Les Wood
Computer	Various Volunteers	Various Volunteers	Various Volunteers	Various Volunteers	
Counters		Les and Wanda Wood		Dave Nielsen	Les and Wanda Wood

Don't forget to Spring Forward on Sunday, March 10th



Thank You Notes

Dear friends,

We want to **thank you for your support of ELCA missionaries!** We believe that we are called into community with our siblings in Christ around the world. Your generosity helps to foster relationships far beyond the ELCA. Through your sponsorship of long-term ELCA missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) participants, you are walking alongside our companions across the globe as they spread the good news and serve our neighbors with love and care. Our whole fellowship is stronger because of you!

Covenant relationships are crucial to the work of ELCA missionaries. Your steadfast support enables the missionaries you sponsor to better plan the future of their ministries and become more deeply connected to their communities. Through your gifts, prayers and communications, you are walking alongside them financially and spiritually.

If you have any questions at all (including how to receive news and updates from your missionary) or if you need help arranging a visit during their home assignment or following up on sponsorship contributions, please contact Tess Tait at Tess.Tait@ELCA.org or 773-380-2482.

Because of your support, the ELCA remains committed to engaging the global church. As we live into God's abundance, we give thanks for your generosity — it makes a difference in the world.

Together in Christ,

Daniel Rift

Amanda White

**Penn Yan Area Council of Churches
Ecumenical Prayer Service**

Immersed in Lent

Tuesday
March 5, 2024
12:15pm

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
135 Hamilton Street
Penn Yan

In Person or Via ZOOM:
bit.ly/pyprayer

*All services are posted on the Penn Yan Area Council of Churches
YouTube page*



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH STAFF



CHURCH COUNCIL:



NEWS FOR THE APRIL 2024 EPISTLE IS DUE MARCH 25TH