

February 2021
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The Commentator

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A publication of Atonement Lutheran

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HOW you can HELP

- ❖ Billings Food Pantry Needs –
**See list posted in the Commons
at the Food Bank Shelf.
- ❖ Worship Assistants, Readers,
Ushers

MARCH 2021

- ❖ Mar 1 WELCA Board Meeting
Property Committee
- ❖ Mar 3 Lenten Midweek
Online Service
- ❖ Mar 8 Ed/Youth & Fam
- ❖ Mar 9 Finance Committee
Evangelism
- ❖ Mar 10 Lenten Midweek
Online Service
- ❖ Mar 14 **In-Person Worship***
- ❖ Mar 15 Cinnamon Roll Sale
- ❖ Mar 16 Church Council Meeting
- ❖ Mar 17 *St Patrick's Day*
Lenten Midweek
Online Service
- ❖ Mar 21 **In-Person Worship***
- ❖ Mar 24 Lenten Midweek
Online Service
- ❖ Mar 25 St John's Delegate Day
- ❖ Mar 28 Palm Sunday

ATONEMENT TO RESUME IN-PERSON SERVICE

Join us at church for Sunday Worship!

Beginning

Sunday, Mar. 14th 8:00am or 10:30am

Details on page 3

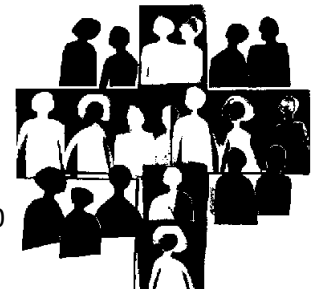
Volunteers are needed to help with sanitizing between and after church services. As a reminder to all groups and leaders, please continue to sanitize after all meetings. Wipe down tables, light switches, bathrooms and door knobs.

Thank you for your continued diligence in stopping the spread of infection in our facility.

Atonement Sanitation Team

CREATED FOR COMMUNITY

- March 3rd *With All the Saints* Mark 9:2-8
- March 10th *With your Neighbors* Mark 2:1-12
- *March 17th *With those Marginalized* Mark 5:1-20
- *March 24th *With Christ* Mark 10:32-45



Our Lenten series continues with an interactive opportunity to join in worship and fellowship. This 45 minute time will begin with prayer and a devotion, and then break into small chat rooms for continued conversation, fellowship and prayer. Watch for the links to our Zoom service and join your brothers and sisters in Community.

**offering in-person as well as online participation.*

WE BRING THE HOPE WE SHARE IN CHRIST TO ALL!



MEN'S MINISTRIES

Property Committee

Snow removal assistance is needed this time of year for the more occasional moisture that falls. Pre-school meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If snow falls the night before it is important to have snow removed before the 9AM start times on these days. If you have the desire or ability to assist on these mornings (notify office if able), simply come to the church early and clear walks around the pre-school entrance and pre-school exit door walks (and main church entrance, as able). Snow shovels are just inside the entrance doors.

As we near spring, the Adopt-a-Plot program has areas that are not assigned at this time. If you are interested in caring for one of these small landscaped areas, please contact Todd Koepp or the church office. We will again be posting the maps, so you can be reminded of which area is yours. Also watch for the Spring Clean-up Day to be scheduled in April.

Men's Square

This Ministry is looking at resuming activities in April. We have usually met at 6:30 am on the first Friday of each month, excluding the summer months. As we plan start up again, we will delay planned breakfasts, but will have bible study/devotion time. We need input on the day and time, if a change is preferred. Meetings would run under an hour most times. And with church resuming live worship, the intent would be to make this monthly meeting live also, honoring social distancing and masking at this time. Please contact Todd Koepp with your interest and input.

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Spring Greetings from Atonement Lutheran Preschool!

"It is better to know how to learn than to know." ~ Dr. Seuss. We are starting March with a Dr. Seuss week full of fun activities and a theme for each day. In March, we will be working with the letters S, T, and U, learning about space, spring, St. Patrick, the 10 Commandments, and we will be preparing for Easter.

We have opened the enrollment for the 2021-2022 preschool year. Please remember word of mouth is our best advertisement. "A person's a person no matter how small." ~Dr. Seuss

Big THANK YOU! to those who ordered Butter Braids during our fundraiser throughout the month of February. Those Butter Braids should be arriving to Atonement on March 16th. Orders will be available for pick on March 17th and March 21st.

We could use your help with some of the supplies we will be working with in the coming months. If you are able to find and donate these items, it would help us are great deal!

- ✿ Bags of Green Split Peas (Dry peas)
- ✿ 6: White Canvas' 8x10
- ✿ 8: Oh! The Places You'll Go! By Dr. Seuss books
- ✿ Painter's Tape
- ✿ Marshmallow Peeps
- ✿ Sunflower Seeds

Thank you for those that were able to help last month in donating items on the list. Thank you for your support and please keep us all in your prayers as we learn together! "To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." ~Dr. Seuss. Blessings,

Sara Westrope-Atonement Lutheran Preschool Director

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Friendship will not meet on March 1st. I previously had stated that we would meet for lunch at Pizza Ranch. Watch for April Commentator. Keep the Faith, God loves you.

FINANCIAL MILESTONE TO CELEBRATE!

Once our March mortgage payment is made, we will be celebrating a milestone! Our original loan amount for the new building was \$1,676,750, and the first payment was on 02/01/2014. When the March payment is made we will be under the \$1,000,000.00 mark. In 7 years we have paid \$677,375 in principal. Great job, Atonement!

ATONEMENT FINANCIAL REPORT

JANUARY 2021

	General Fund		Building Fund		Building Fund Reserve
Total Expenses	\$29,420.31	Monthly Mortgage	\$7,240.00	11.30.2020	\$23,861.60
Total Income	\$25,360.36	Income	\$5,827.00	12.31.2020	\$26,937.41
Net Income	\$(4,059.95)	Net Income	\$(1,413.00)	01.31.2021	\$25,524.62

Tom Danielsen – Treasurer, Atonement Lutheran Church Council

FROM THE PASTOR

Nearly one year ago, we were just learning of the severity of COVID-19 and had little understanding of how it would impact all aspects of our life. We're now nearing a national death toll of 500,000 people – included in that number are some people of, and known by, our congregation. On top of that, we have members who have been infected with greater or lesser degrees of severity. While I and our church leadership grieve the disruption this has caused to the patterns of life and ministry in our congregation, we remain unified in our efforts to protect our membership and support our healthcare community.

Promising news comes out daily: with reductions in active cases, decreased demands on our healthcare community and increased vaccinations. It is clear that we are not yet “out of the woods” but we are confident there is encouraging progress. With these updates, our church leadership also been unified in our decision to **resume on-site, in-person worship** beginning **Sunday, March 14th**, with our two-worship service schedule of **8:00am and 10:30am**. Some things we can expect will be to continue:

- Social distancing in the sanctuary
- Expectation of wearing masks
- Sanitizing between services
- Shorter worship services to limit exposure
- Communion each week with individual servings
- Online services for those not ready to return to public worship
- Multiple Easter worship opportunities to accommodate our expected attendance

There are areas where we will need your help.

- Support! Please join us in these efforts to curb the transmission of COVID-19. While there have been legislative efforts to protect churches and businesses from litigation, it would not alleviate our conscience should our worship service be a source of transmission.
- Volunteer! Some of our regular ushers, greeters, worship assistants, etc. are among those who are not ready to return for on-site worship, so we will need your help.
- Pray! This pandemic has taken an economic, emotional, and spiritual toll on individuals, businesses and institutions. There is much healing that needs to occur in the coming months and even years as we recover. I suspect many of you are included in that need – so know that your church is also praying for you.

Lent is often likened to the ancient Israelites journey through the wilderness where God's people once again learned to rely upon the providence of God amidst their adversity. At the outset, Moses and the people had no idea how long it would take to get to the Promised Land. It left them sometimes yearning to return to Egypt, willing to forgo their own best interests for the sake of familiarity and predictability. They would rather things return to “normal” rather than endure the pilgrimage into a new future. But it was only in retrospect that they saw these years as a cleansing renewal and refining clarity in their relationship with God and undaunted commitment to one another.

It is my hope that we will NOT return to “normal” in these coming months. May we discover a deepened commitment to our God who has provided for us amidst our hardships. May we discover the value of our time as a community of God's people who gather for support, encouragement, prayer and purpose. May we extend our arms and hearts to welcome back all – members of strangers – who are ready to walk with us into our new future.

✝ Pastor Darren

From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised. - Psalm 113:3



Women ^{of the} ELCA

WELCA has 2 fundraisers a year, Spring Plant Sale and Fall Bazaar. Our online Bazaar this past November had profit of over \$7000, THANKS to everyone for your support! We get a lot of questions as to where we spent these profits, so we decided to show you where they've been spent over the past 7 years.

ACCOUNTING OF WELCA BAZAAR EXPENDITURES JAN 2014- DEC 2020

2014	Atonement building fund	\$	13,015.00
	Purchased tables	\$	1,000.00
2016	Signage for church	\$	16,394.00
	Rain gutters for shed	\$	795.00
	Angle iron for shed	\$	113.00
	Concrete for shed	\$	3,630.00
	Electrical for sign/shed	\$	4,249.00
2017	Cabinets for quilting room	\$	5,924.00
	Sidewalk	\$	3,197.00
2018	New refrigerator	\$	3,120.00
	Taxes	\$	13,167.00
	Labor/materials re parking extension	\$	2,099.00
	Roller shades for windows	\$	4,950.00
	Sod (shared with WyndStone)	\$	6,889.00
	Computer	\$	9,079.00
2019	Chair/picture (church enhancement) and dishes	\$	1,299.00
	Landscaping	\$	2,778.00
	Crack seal parking lot	\$	876.00
2020	Snow blower	\$	2,000.00
	College scholarships	\$	2,300.00
	Outside front door lighting	\$	539.00
	Christikon Scholarships	\$	4,547.00
2014-2021	Misc. donations (quilting, Festival of Trees, school pantry etc.)	\$	2,238.00
2018-2020	Sound system/streaming/music	\$	26,577.00
2021	Heights School Food Pantries	\$	900.00
	Planned expenditures	\$	11,000.00
	GRAND TOTAL	\$	142,675.00

Our leader, Tina, is missed immensely. We are looking for more Board members, you can volunteer by giving one of us a call. And your name does not have to start with a "J"!

The WELCA Board, *Julie, Julie, Judy, Joyce, June and Eleanor*

Will you be "Spring Cleaning"? If so, WELCA will be collecting your need to be "replaced" or just "gone" pillows, stuffed animals, cushions, mattress toppers/covers and such. These are the materials we recycle for the dog beds we sell during the Fall Bazaar and donate to the Animal Shelter. There will be a marked receptacle at the church during the month of March for drop off of these items. Thank you in advance for your help. For more details contact Judy Belden.

Atonement WELCA



YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

Atonement Youth will be holding an Easter Cinnamon Roll Sale to help send Atonement youth to summer camps. Pre-Sale orders start online March 15th and end at noon on March 31st. Orders will be available for pick up Saturday the 3rd. This is a great way to support the youth and have a delicious breakfast ready made for Easter morning. Reach out to Nikki Groshans if you have any questions of if you have a youth interested in volunteering with this fundraiser.

Starting March 14th we will be accepting Easter Egg Candy donations. There will be a designated and marked bin in the entryway. We received lots of new eggs the last couple years so as of now we do not need new eggs, just candy donations. Thanks so much! Youth and Family & Education Committees

Nikki Groshans – Director of Youth and Family Ministries

Come & be part of the excitement of ALC Youth Ministry!

CHRISTIKON DELEGATES

We are seeking one individual to serve a two year term as Atonement’s Delegate for Christikon.

Atonement Church Council



Christikon Benefit Auction April 18th

Bus Attendants needed for 2021 – Would you or someone you know be willing to ride with youth on their way to Christikon? Yes? Please call Kerry in the office at 406-656-1969 or email at secretary@christikon.org for details. It pays a daily rate as well!

Don’t miss out on the Early Registration Discount for youth campers: Register by April 1st and save \$25 in any youth session. If you don’t have the camp brochure mailed to you, pick one up at the church, or register online.

Adults and families: In lieu of brochures this year check out the special focus for each of the family/adult weekends next summer at Christikon: work projects, faith formation, and Bible study will be woven together with worship, meal fellowship, re-creation, folk dancing, former staff reunion and much more. Check out camping for adults and families online at www.christikon.org.

1st COMMUNION 2021

We at Atonement Lutheran Church are excited about the First Communion milestone that our youth get to experience in 4th grade. At Atonement, First Communion is considered a milestone in the faith life of our young people as we work together towards their 7th-8th grade milestone of Confirmation – or Affirmation of Baptism – as they fully claim this Christian faith for themselves.

When we receive the bread and wine, we not only receive spiritual nutrition as we grow closer to God, but we grow closer as a church and as a community that God calls us to be.

The schedule for First Communion will be as follows:

✝ **Sunday, March 21st 11:45 am**

4th grade students will paint their own chalice at the church in the Jerusalem Room. Please bring \$12 to cover the cost of the chalice.

✝ **Sunday, March 28th 11:45 am**

Instruction with student and parent or parents present. Students will help bake the communion bread.

✝ **Thursday, April 1st 6:45 pm**

Maundy Thursday Worship Service
Family, grandparents and godparents strongly encouraged to attend! Children are also encouraged to dress up for this milestone event.

We are excited for this milestone in your child’s spiritual journey! Please RSVP to Nikki Groshans if your 4th grade child will be able to experience this milestone with the rest of the 4th grade students.

****Last year’s class will be joining this year’s First Communion ceremony.***

Nikki Groshans, Director of Youth and Family Ministries
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THANK YOU. . .

Thank you for the donations of coat socks and winter wear for the Salvation Army. Some of the new coats were donated to Bench school where they were thrilled to receive and will give to needy children here in the Heights. Thank you for your faithful and generous support.

Doreen Shewmaker

Thank you for all the card and words of sympathy and encouragement following Erle's passing.

Jan Gross and Family

Dear Atonement Lutheran Church, Thank you for your generous cash gift of \$450 to Tumbleweed. We are grateful to have your support. Through donation, we are able to offer programs and services to over 700 youth and young adults in our community. You truly are making a difference in their lives and we are extremely grateful. Thank you again for your support!

Ericka Travis – Development Manager Tumbleweed

Thank you for your generous donation of quilts! We appreciate you!

The Tumbleweed Team

WEDNESDAY ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

We continue our Wednesday study of the Revised Common Lectionary – doing a deeper dig into the prescribed readings for Sunday's worship service.

March 3rd - Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

March 10th – Third Sunday of Lent

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

March 17th - Third Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 24th – Passion/Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1--15:47

March 31st – Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

*Email the church office to get the Zoom link and join us
Wednesday mornings at 10am, facilitated by Pastor Darren.*