

March 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p style="text-align: center;">9am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11:15am Sundays after Church VBS Planning Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1-5pm Confirmation Class at St. Thomas</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">9:30am Monthly Staff Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Noon Morning Prayer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1pm Bible Study</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:15pm Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:30pm Dinner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30pm Evening Prayer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6pm Table Talk at the Daily Grind</p>	<p>BABY DAY IS DUE!</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 100%;">Luther Hall in Use</div>
8	9	10	11	12	13	
<p style="text-align: center;">9am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Worship</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2-8pm Luther Hall in Use</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7pm Church Council</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Noon Morning Prayer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1pm Bible Study</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:15pm Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:30pm Dinner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30pm Evening Prayer</p>			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<p style="text-align: center;">9am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11:15am Sundays after Church and Corn Beef and Cabbage Dinner</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">Noon Morning Prayer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1pm Bible Study</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:15pm Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:30pm Dinner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30pm Evening Prayer</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">6pm Family Movie Night</p>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<p style="text-align: center;">9am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Worship</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">5-8pm Sierra Club in Luther Hall</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Noon Morning Prayer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1pm Bible Study</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:15pm Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6:30pm Dinner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30pm Evening Prayer</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">6-9pm Mustard Seed Paint Night Fundraiser</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11am Friends Feeding Friends</p>
29	30	31	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Worship Assistants</p> <p>March 1 - Michael Noll March 8 - Ed Shewbridge March 15 - Andrew Banks March 22 - Bess Day March 29 - Anne Moore</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ushers</p> <p>March 1 - Brenda Morrison & Doug Widmeyer March 8 - Kandi Ruth, Rhett Cosner & Bill Torbert March 15 - Arnold Bock and Jane Kelley March 22 - Linda Payne and Jerry Olsen March 29 - Pat and Bev Murphy</p> </div>			
<p style="text-align: center;">9am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Fifth Sunday Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p>We welcome the students, family, and teachers of the Mustard Seed School. They will share some of what they have learned and as well as their plans for the future!</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">8:30am Potomac Conference Meeting</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Acolyte and Crucifers</p> <p>March 1 - Christian Gottlieb/Justin Gottlieb March 8 - Sharon Brumback/Rebekah Root March 15 - Matthew Edwards/Laken Edwards March 22 - Rachael Walker/Nathaniel Edwards March 29 - Ian Fleming/Sally Jenkins</p> </div>			

NEWSLETTER

St. John's Lutheran Church

101 W. Martin Street

Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

Telephone: 304-263-9291 FAX 304-263-4559

E-Mail: churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Website: www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Pastor: Matthew A. Day



ST. JOHNS LUTHERAN
MARTINSBURG, WV

MARCH, 2020



Definition:

Lent is the forty-day season (excluding Sundays) of penitence and preparation for the Three Days of Holy Week and Easter.

A Few Notes on Current Practice

The appointed liturgical color for Lent is purple because purple has long been associated with royalty. In this case, Christ reigns from a cross.

Currently, the ancient understanding of Lent as both a time for baptismal preparation and baptismal renewal is being rediscovered in Lutheran rites and practice. Many congregations hold mid-week services during Lent and a baptismal renewal theme is particularly appropriate for these.

Many congregations refrain from speaking or singing the word "alleluia" during Lent. "Burying" the alleluia occurs at the conclusion of worship on Transfiguration Sunday and it is restored at either the Vigil of Easter or Easter Sunday. A Lenten acclamation replaces the alleluia verse in preparation for hearing the Gospel (See ELW pg. 103 for one example).

The term "Lent" originally comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten" which means "spring." This is the time, in the Northern Hemisphere, when the days are lengthening. The season began as period of fasting leading up to the Vigil of Easter. Catechumens, those preparing for baptism at Easter, would fast and spend days in intense preparation. For those that were already baptized, Lent was a period to be renewed in their faith by studying the Bible, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

PASTORAL AND LEADERSHIP COVERAGE DURING PASTOR MATT'S PATERNITY LEAVE

On Call for Pastoral Emergencies and Sunday Morning:

- Pastor Karen Erskine-Valentine, Pastor Christine Olson, and Pastor Ron Kreiensieck (Pastor Ron will handle any emergencies at Winchester Hospital)
- Visitations to shut-ins will be handled by our Eucharistic Ministers.
- If you have a pastoral emergency, please call the church office at 304-263-9291 or Council President Jerry Crites at 304-263-1467. For after hour emergencies, please call 304-263-9291 and dial 3. Leave a voice message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.
- On March 8, the liturgy will be led by Mindi Esswein and in place of a sermon, we will have a musical response instead of a spoken response. Luther calls John 3:16, "The gospel in miniature." We are going to explore that theme more in depth through music and reflection.
- Pastor Torben Aarsand will be with us March 15 and 22 to lead our Sunday morning worship. Pastor Aarsand is retired and is currently living in Hagerstown. He will be leading our worship these two Sunday.

Wednesdays in Lent

- Morning Prayer will be led by Pastor Christine Olson from Trinity Lutheran Church.
- Evening Prayer will be led by different members from the council and the congregation. Pastor Matt will prepare a message and a leader will read the message. Another person will lead the liturgy. The coordinator for Evening Prayer will organize and make sure each week is filled. **The coordinator will be Drew Catrow.**
- There will be a simple meal held before Evening Prayer each Wednesday. The Evening Meal Coordinator will make sure there are people who sign up to bring food for dinner. **The coordinator will be Betty Lou Boyton.**

Extra helpers for Holy Week and Easter

- We will need extra helpers for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. These lists will be passed around by the coordinators.
 - Palm Sunday - Linda Payne**
 - Holy Week - Cindy Moats**
 - Easter - Linda Payne**

Pastor Matt will return and lead worship for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter.

2020 ST. JOHN'S COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2020

Meeting called to order by: Jerry Crites, President

Members Present: Pastor Matt, Rick Losh, Drew Catrow, Jane Kelley, Brenda Morrison, Linda Payne, Diane Shewbridge, Shane Wagoner, Jerry Crites, Anne Moore, Bess Day (Treasurer)

Members Absent: Trey Voorhees, Michael Gottlieb, Blaine Wilson

Guest: Bishop Riegel, Jerry Olsen, Doug Widmeyer

Devotions: led by Jerry Crites

Minutes: January 2020 meeting minutes approved as submitted. (M/S/P: Drew Catrow; Rick Losh)

Pastor's Report: Pastors Matt and Diane express their thanks and gratitude for the generous gift cards they have received. "Your generosity is overwhelming and incredibly helpful!" Baby Day is due March 6th or so. Baptism will be celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter with Bishop Riegel presiding. Pastor Christine (Arden) and Pastor Karen (Shepherdstown) will both be on-call. Pastor Kreiensieck will be able to cover Winchester Hospital emergencies. Sunday services in March (8,15,22) will be led by Pastor Nelson Strobert. On March 29th the Mustard Seed will present a program during the sermon time with Pastor Matt, (here with Thomas) will preside. Wednesday worship during lent: Morning Prayer (noon) will be led at St. John's by Pastor Christine Olsen from Trinity Lutheran; Evening Prayer at St. John's will be led by different members of council and the congregation who will present the messages written by Pastor Matt. Drew Catrow will coordinate leaders and readers to cover each week of Lent. Betty Lou Boynton will coordinate food donations for a simple meal before the Evening Prayer services. The theme for Wednesdays in lent is *Lent – A Journey from Creation to the Tomb*. Topics from week 1 thru 5 are the following: (1) Creation, (2) Flood, (3) Deliverance at the Red Sea, (4) Salvation Freely Offered to All, and (5) Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace. Lenten Visitation to shut-ins will be by our Eucharistic ministers. Please let Pastor know if you would consider serving in this important role as St. John's has 24 shut-ins. Pastor

plans to return for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. Pastor will need volunteers to assist on Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter services. Sign-up sheets will be circulated during the Sunday church services. Linda Payne and Cindy Moats will be coordinating the volunteer lists.

Shrove Tuesday: Pancake supper on February 25th from 5:30 to 7:30pm. Pastor has applied for a Thrivent Action team grant for Shrove Tuesday and Corn Beef and Cabbage Dinners. Freewill donations on these events will be donated to designated organizations.

Upcoming Events:

- February 15 – Family Movie Night
- February 25 – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- February 26 – Ash Wednesday
- February 29 – Blood Drive in Luther Hall
- March 4th – Wednesdays in Lent begin
- March 6 – Baby Day Due!
- March 29 – Fifth Sunday Worship - Mustard Seed Families invited to join in
- April 5 – Palm Sunday with Procession from the Square
- April 9 – Maundy Thursday (noon in the Chapel and 7:30pm in the sanctuary)
- April 10 – Good Friday (noon ecumenical service at Trinity Episcopal and 7:30pm here at St. John's)
- April 12 – Easter Sunday (Sunrise at 6:30am; breakfast at 7:30ish; Egg Hunt at 9am; Eucharist at 10am)
- April 19 – Baby Day's Baptism at St. John's. Bishop Riegel preaching and presiding. St. Thomas will not hold worship this day and will be joining us. Pastor Diane has requested that the St. Thomas members bring their envelopes and we will sort them out.

Bishop Riegel's Presentation: The Bishop presented Stewardship resources available to us on the ELCA website. Pastor Matt has forwarded all council members the website for reviewing these materials. Our mission/goal is to review some of the suggested actions/activities and focus on those initiatives that would best match the needs, talents, and goals to grow our church. Bishop stressed that every congregation is different and he cannot give us a template for action. He will be available

for support as we move through the process. Linda Payne, Jane Kelley and Diane Shewbridge will form a committee to begin reviewing the online resources. All council members are encouraged to take a look at these various resources also and make a note of things that might work well for St. John's. This committee will meet late February/early March. Just a few suggested links/topics are: Longitudinal Stewardship Analysis, Intergenerational Stewardship activities, Cottage meetings, Stewards of God's Love.

Town Hall Meeting Review: The Town Hall/Souper Bowl event was well attended. Donations received were put into the fund for our youth to attend the 2021 Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. Topics raised included economic/finances, property updates and concerns (need to organize a Property Committee), visitation/ministry to shut-ins, backup support for our church secretary (Martha Seitler) and treasurer (Bess Day), activity director (unpaid position), cottage meetings, small interest groups, growing our membership, giving Pastor feedback on anything is much appreciated, ecumenical togetherness with other congregations, improving our media and messaging options. These suggestions will be further addressed as we move towards forming stewardship plans for future growth.

Appointment of new Council Member: Blaine Wilson notified Jerry Crites that he wishes to resign from Council. Mike Noll is the next in line, as per our recent vote, to fill a vacancy. Council will appoint Mike Noll to fulfill the vacancy. **(M/S/P: Drew Catrow; Brenda Morrison)**

Old Business: Assignment of special offerings for 2020 (by consent of Council)

- February – Lutheran Disaster Response
- Shrove Tuesday – Youth Gathering 2021 funding for our youth to attend
- March – CCAP/Loaves and Fishes and Meals on Wheels
- Lenten offering and “in lieu of lilies” – Camp Caroline Furnace and Camp Luther
- April – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- May – Grove Center

- June – Berkeley County Schools Backpack and Kids Power Pack
- July – United Lutheran Seminary
- August – WVU Campus Ministry

NOTE: September, October, November, December to be determined at a later date)

New Business: Luther Hall request. Sierra Club has requested the use of Luther Hall on Friday, May 1, from 6-11pm for a film presentation. **(M/S/P: Rick Losh; Drew Catrow)**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Christian Education: A VBS meeting to be scheduled for March 1st following the worship service. The theme for this year’s VBS is “*Construction and Concrete*”.

Social Ministry: Pancake Supper on February 25th. Friends Feeding Friends on February 22.

Evangelism: The committee will meet in April.

Worship and Music: Donations received for Carlton Esswein will be used to purchase a set of annotated hymnals to be used in the chapel for choir rehearsals etc.

LYFE: No report

Property/Tech: A meeting is called for February 23 following the worship service. Anne Moore will liaison with this committee.

Mutual Ministry: No report. The committee should hold a quarterly meeting in February. Kathy Chapman is chair.

Stewardship: Blood Mobile has been scheduled for Saturday, February 29th from 9:30am – 2pm in Luther Hall. Volunteers are needed.

Mustard Seed: The next Mustard Seed Board meeting is scheduled for February 24th at 7pm. Rick Losh will liaison with Mustard Seed Board.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer. **(M/S/P: Drew Catrow; Linda Payne)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Shewbridge

Friends Feeding Friends has begun handing out gently used clothing items to anyone who might need them. Please, no clothes with holes or visibly soiled items. One of Friends Feeding Friends goals is to make people feel like human. It is why we use real china and silverware for most meals. We thank you for helping us expand our feeding ministry into other areas and for making everyone who comes through our doors feel human and appreciated.

**Let's face it,
we all wear underwear!**

We need all sizes and kinds. Please bring only new items and will hand them out at the next Friends Feeding Friends.

And thank you!

SERMONS IN MARCH

March 1 - The Devil made me do it.

March 8 - The Smallest Gospel (special music this day)

March 15 - Well Water

March 22 - "And who is he, sir?"

March 29 - What a wonderful world (We welcome our Mustard Seed students and families)



Theme Verse:
I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of

JESUS CHRIST

Philippians 1:6 (CSB)

Motto
Jesus! Our Strong Foundation!

VBS Planning Has Begun.

March 1, after church, we will meet in the lounge.

This year's theme of Concrete & Cranes will include:

High Steel Worship Rally

Bulldozer Crafts

Blueprint Bible Study

Wrecking Ball Rec

Jackhammer Music

Food Truck Snacks

Excavator Missions

As you consider whether you have time (or energy) to assist with VBS this summer, consider this:

* 95% of parents said that participating in VBS was one of their child's most meaningful church experiences, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

* The unique nature of VBS gives everyone an opportunity to be involved and impact children on a short term basis for long term results! (And it's FUN!)



IGNITE YOUR FAITH

YOUTH NIGHT

LYFE is for Middle School and High School age kids who wish to come for dinner, Bible Study, and prayer. This will be a space to have safe conversations and to have fun.

**LYFE MEETS ON THE
SECOND AND FOURTH
SUNDAYS FROM 11:30-1PM**

**ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL AGE
KIDS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN!**

An opportunity for the youth to grow in spirit through worship, prayer, good food, fun games, and amazing company!

Lent at a Glance

**Wednesdays in Lent - Lent: A journey from
creation to the empty tomb**

Morning Prayer at 12 pm

Dinner at 6:30 pm and Evening Prayer at 7:30 pm

Every Wednesday in Lent

starting March 5 - April 1

**Palm Sunday with the reading of the Passion from
Matthew on April 5 - One Service at 10 am with the
procession beginning outside at the square.**

HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday - April 9 at 12 pm and 7:30 pm

Good Friday - April 10 at Noon at Trinity

Episcopal and 7:30 pm at St. John's

Easter Sunday - Sunrise at 6:30 am and

Festival Eucharist at 10 am

Deepen your faith this Lent by making time to come and worship with us. Learn about the mysteries of our faith with others. See the story of how Jesus saved us, come alive.

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Lent

A journey from creation to
the empty tomb

Morning Prayer
at 12 pm
&

Dinner and
Evening Prayer
at 6:30 pm

Every Wednesday in Lent
starting March 4 - April 1

Theology and Bible

TABLE TALK

Food and Drink

JOIN US

1st Thursday of the
Month

MARCH 5

6pm at the Daily Grind

Ever want to explore theology in a way that is not intimidating or hard to understand? And do you enjoy, eating out with friends who want to know more about their faith? Then you need to join us for Table Talk.

Over the next few months, we are going to be exploring Luther's Small Catechism. Luther instructed pastors to teach the Catechism to the entire congregation once a year. Many have called Luther's Catechism a jewel of the church. Come and experience its richness!

Sunday March 15
After Worship

CORN BEEF AND CABBAGE

**PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT OUR
YOUTH MINISTRY AND WITH
SENDING OUR YOUTH THE
GATHERING IN 2020**



**FREE WILL
OFFERING**

ST. JOHN'S IS LOCATED AT
101 W. MARTIN ST
WWW.STJOHNSMARTINSBURG.ORG

**Saturday,
March 21**

Family Movie Night



This month
we are
watching
the new
Aladdin
Movie

We will provide the movie, popcorn
and drinks.
All you need to bring is your family!

Movie starts at 6pm!

Fifth Sunday

Worship

March 29

at 10am

**A DAY TO CELEBRATE THE
WORK AND MINISTRY OF
THE MUSTARD SEED**

Come hear and see all that our Mustard Seed Children have learned about over the year. They will sing some of their favorite chapel songs, show off some of their favorite things they have learned, and hear where God is leading us.

This is a special part of our ministry at St. John's. Be sure to come and welcome the students, families, and staff of the Mustard Seed and make sure they feel welcome and a part of our church family!

A FEW CEMETERY MOWERS NEEDED

The season has started and will go into the Fall for the up-keep of the Old Lutheran - Reformed Cemetery located across from Brown Funeral Home.

We are in great need of “trimmers”, but you will need to bring your own equipment - trimmers, pruners, rakes, etc.

Once we get the winter left-overs cleared away, maintenance is much easier and less often.

We welcome any amount of time and help you can spare.

For more information contact Pat Murphy (304-263-0586).

2020 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

St John's Scholarship Award began in 2011. In the past, eight scholarships have been awarded in June. Previous recipients of \$500 awards include Lauren Haines, Colin Banks, Harrison Banks, Christine Smith, Nicholas Crites, Jenna Taylor, Myranda McQuaid, Eryn Fleming and Katie Kline.

Confirmed members of St. John's who apply must fulfill these minimum requirements: Contributed 25 hours to the community (church and non-church) through service, have a 2.5 GPA for the most recent grading period, have graduated from high school within the last three years, been accepted to an accredited college, university, or technical school, and complete a 500 word essay that explains the impact this one-time scholarship will have toward achieving their career and academic goals. Applications for the Scholarship Award are available through the church office and are to be returned to the church by April 15. Visit our website to download the application. The scholarship will be awarded during a June worship service.

Welcome the Children

"Let the little children come to me ..." Matthew 19:14

Steve, Maria, and their two young children were new to the area and were looking for a church to call "home." After checking the Yellow Pages, they decided to visit First Church, a long-standing congregation not far from where they lived. Upon their arrival, they noticed several things about the congregation:

- There were not many people their age or their children's ages
- There was a nursery, but parents had to remain there with their children during worship as the nursery was not staffed.
- During the Fellowship Hour after worship, there were no refreshment choices for their children. Hot tea and coffee were the only available beverage choices.
- Except for the nursery, there was no age-appropriate furniture anywhere in the building.
- There were no "kid-friendly" activities and/or resources during worship, e.g. children's sermon; children's choir; children's bulletins; or children's activity packs.

Without saying a word, it was obvious to visitors that children were not welcome here.

Questions to Ponder

1. *What arrangements does your congregation make to "welcome the stranger"?*
2. *What "unspoken messages" do those who visit your congregation "receive"?*
3. *How has your congregation addressed any of the issues noticed by Steve and Maria? What else might your congregation do to address these issues?*



Writer: Robert Dealey

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Website: www.elca.org/evangelism

5 WAYS TO OBSEERVE LENT

By Teresa Blythe

Last Month, we published a comprehensive list of some different spiritual practices you can try Lent. However, those were just a few. Here is an article Patheos that might help spark those creative juices and hopefully inspire you to take on the blessings of Lent.

Many Christians observe the season of Lent with 40 days of a spiritual practice of their choosing. Lent is traditionally the fast of 40 days before Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday, and it helps us clear out space in our lives for a deeper relationship with God. It's a small way we honor the suffering of Jesus in the last days of his life.

Throughout Christian history, Lent has been a time of taking responsibility for our failures and sin—penance—and dedicating ourselves to greater devotion through our giving of time and money, spending more time in spiritual activities, and abstaining from that which comes between us and God.

If you want to observe Lent this year, here are five ideas to consider:

- 1. Fast.** The golden oldy of Christian spiritual practices. Catholics fast by not eating meat on Ash Wednesday or on Fridays during Lent. You could choose to skip one meal a day, a week or by eating only 3 meals a day (no in-between-meal snacks). You can fast from foods that you feel addicted to, with chocolate being top on the list for many of us. So, there are fasting options for all bodies and physical conditions. Some people fast from media, gossip, complaining or other habits that get in the way of their spiritual condition
- 2. Move your Body.** Most of us don't exercise enough, and while Lent is not about a body project, it is a good time to simply move around more. Prayer walks are especially helpful. They are exactly what they sound like. You pray and open yourself to God's presence as you walk.
- 3. Appreciate nature.** Most of us also don't spend as much time outside our four walls as we need to.

Breathing fresh air and enjoying the elements (be they sunshine, clouds, rain or snow) bring us closer to God. Commit to feeling more grounded by letting your feet come into contact with actual *ground!*

4. Add a spiritual exercise to your daily routine. I call this the Preferred-Protestant-Practice for Lent. While my Catholic friends are perfectly OK giving something up for Lent, my Protestant friends don't usually like that approach, so they add a practice. There's no reason you can't do both and I personally would like to see all Christians at least *try* giving up something that is not healthy for Lent! Adding a new spiritual practice to your life can be refreshing. If you have never tried centering prayer—sitting in silent openness to God—Lent is a great season to pick this practice up. If you need new ideas for prayer, see my book *50 Ways to Pray*.

5. Almsgiving. This is the traditional Lenten practice of giving more of your income to alleviate poverty. Since a prime sin in our culture seems to be over consumption, giving wealth way is proper penance and it helps loosen the grip of materialism in our lives.

Do you need help choosing or sticking with a spiritual practice? Perhaps a spiritual director could help. Spiritual directors are trained in helping you explore your spiritual path. Learn more about it at www.teresablythe.net or contact me at teresa@teresablythe.net.

Article taken from <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/spiritualdirection/2017/03/5-ways-observe-lent-year/>

About Teresa Blythe

Teresa Blythe is a full-time spiritual director and ordained UCC minister living and working in Phoenix, AZ. She is founder of the Phoenix Center for Spiritual Direction and serves as the Director of the Hesychia School of Spiritual Direction in Tucson. Contact her at teresa@teresablythe.net.

WE ARE BROKEN

By Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

In 1526 the reformers embarked on a program of visiting the parishes in Electoral Saxony. It's known as the Saxon Visitation. As would later be stated in the [Augsburg Confession](#), its objective was to determine if "the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly."

Martin Luther himself visited the parishes in and around Wittenberg. He wasn't pleased. He found that many clergy didn't receive adequate compensation, and that the gospel was not clearly taught or understood.

Luther, in his inimitable subtle style, wrote: "Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet supposedly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! As a result, they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of misusing all their freedom." Yikes!

Luther's experience led to the publication of his [Small Catechism](#), a "Handbook for Ordinary Pastors and Preachers." In clear and concise language, he explained the basics of the Christian faith so that all people, not just educated professionals, could understand the great gift of the gospel and live it in daily life.

Theologian Timothy Wengert points out that Luther rearranged the typical order of medieval catechisms to make clear the evangelical understanding that the good news means law and gospel, judgment and promise. Luther "insisted on moving from law (Ten Commandments) to gospel (Creed and Lord's Prayer)."

This uniquely Lutheran understanding of the gospel is an important contribution to the Christian movement. It calls out the reality of the

human condition, that we are broken and have broken creation, that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves, that we need a just and loving God who has no illusions about human nature and, at the same time, has infinite love that claims us and sets us free.

This is true evangelicalism that rejects what I call the “Billy Joel gospel” that declares: “I like you just the way you are.” God’s love is unconditional, but God does not like us just the way we are—that’s why we have Jesus.

I am concerned that our branch of the Lutheran movement can become watered down to the point of Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism—a concept developed by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton in their 2005 study of common beliefs of American youth. To paraphrase very roughly the results of their study: God exists, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, the central goal in life is to be happy and feel good about oneself, God does not need to be particularly in one’s life except when God is needed to solve a problem, and good people go to heaven when they die.

In this philosophy, there is no awe in the presence of the Transcendent, no turning outward from self, no horror of the reality and the effects of sin—and not in the narrow sense of individual moral failings—no wonder at the intimate love of God shown in the incarnation and the crucifixion, no deep gratitude for the liberation of the resurrection.

In 2017, I called this church to study [Luther’s Small Catechism](#). I think we did for a while. I ask that we all study it again, use it in Bible study and preaching, refer to it when navigating the demands of daily life, incorporate it in our work of justice and advocacy, use it in honest self-examination, and trust its witness to the gospel when we receive the Lord’s consolation. Luther said he needed to study it every day—and he wrote it! Let’s us do the same.

This article was taken from www.livinglutheran.org/2020/02/we-are-broken/?fbclid=IwARiC_Dqp6_vWxh5LJEpO7n1ps3LtI-LiNMFu3N_sx2IwHs_UTXQZFU_wq_4

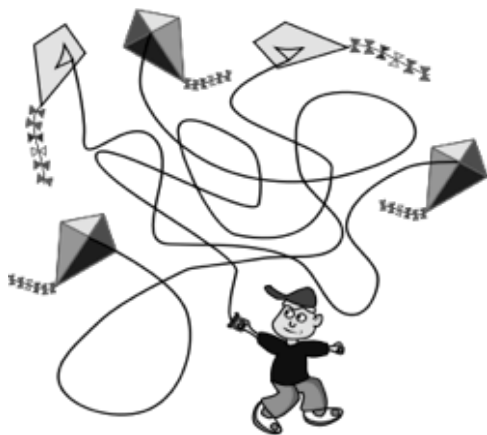
Milestones in MARCH

Birthdays

- 1 Genevieve Gochenour
- 2 Colin Banks
- 4 Travis Propst
- 5 Karen Kelley
Timothy Leitzke
- 9 Jane Kelley
- 12 Virginia Williams
Rosalind Vogel
- 16 Priscilla Horner
Jason Noll
- 17 Johnny Link
Jennifer Noll
- 20 Doug Horner
Oliver (Pete) Long
- 21 Judy Hinnerichs
- 22 Lee Brumback
Ken Remsberg
Tripp Smith
Sarah White
- 23 Laken Edwards
Luke Hartley
Michael Noll
- 28 Betty Calahan
Deborah Haarman
- 29 Michelle Byers
Kandi Ruth
- 31 Thomas Lewis

Anniversaries

- 30 Megan and Nathan Cosner



**We would love to include you
and your family's special dates:**
Just give us a call: **304-263-9291**
Drop us an e-mail:
churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org
or put them in the offering plate.

Summer CAMP 2020



2020 Camp Theme

“From Generation to Generation

June 21 - 27, 2020

Located at Camp Caesar
in Cowen, West Virginia

register online by visiting
camplutherwv.com/



register online by visiting www.carolinefurnace.org/

Scholarships available to both camps

SUNDAYS AFTER CHURCH

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. JOHN'S

Worship is just one part of a Christian's faith development. Learning and growing in faith is a key part for ALL Christians. On the first and third Sundays, we have a program for both children and adults to help them grow in their faith while taking into account the very active lives of all involved. Sundays after Church offers class time for both adults and children to learn the same thing, just at an appropriate grade level. This way, parents can go home and talk with their children about what they learned and further re-enforce the story. Christian Education works best when the story is brought home and talked about around the dinner table or in the car. You do not need to have a family to participate. Everyone is welcome to come and deepen their faith in our Lord so that we might better fulfill our mission of proclaiming hope to the people of Martinsburg, WV.

The Schedule:

10am - Worship

11:15am - Potluck Lunch

11:45am - Class Time

Classes

Nursery (to the age of Kindergarten)

1st-4th grade (Both Nursery and 1st-4th grade can be combined if necessary)

LYFE (Middle School - High School)

Adult Class

Curriculum

Nursery through 5th Grade will use the Spark Bible. Typically, we will have an Old Testament Lesson the first week and a New Testament Lesson the third week.

Upcoming Dates

March 1 - The Red Sea

March 15 - David and Goliath

April 5 - Ten Commandments

April 19 - Lord's Prayer

May 3 - Trivia Night

May 17 - The Lord is My Shepherd

CONFIRMATION WITH POTOMAC EAST CONFERENCE - YEAR 2 (2019-2020)

Date	6th and 7th Grade	Teacher	8th Grade	Reinforcement Activity	Teacher
October @ St. John's	6		Why Church? Presenter: Pastor Karen Panel Discussion led by Pastor Christine		
November @ St. John's	10	Pastor Matt and Pastor Karen	Commandments 1-4	10 Commandments Movie	Bess and Pastor Diane
November	22-23		Middle/High School Confirmation Lock In at St. James Uvilla		
December @ St. John's	8	Miracles Pastor Christine and Pastor Diane	Commandments 5-10	West Wing Episode - Take this Sabbath Day: Discussion on the Death Penalty	Pastor Matt and Bess
January	17-19	Confirmation Retreat: Prophets		Confirmation Retreat - Topic: Sacraments	Pastor Matt
February @ St. Thomas	23	God's Kingdom Pastor Diane and Bess	Apostles' Creed		Pastor Matt and Pastor Christine
March @ St. Thomas	1	Death to life Pastor Karen and Bess	Lord's Prayer		Pastor Christine and Pastor Diane
April @ St. Thomas	26	The Church Pastor Karen	Confession and Forgiveness/Office of the Keys		Bess and Pastor Christine
May	1-2		Field Trip to Gettysburg (Friday to Saturday)		
Confirmation Sunday - Pentecost (or at your congregation's preference)					



Stewardship

a way of life

Each month, we will focus on a different ministry and show different ways that you can support their work. This month we will focus on:

SUPPORTING HUNGER MINISTRIES OF CCAP & MEALS ON WHEELS

About CCAP

- The Berkeley County Congregational Cooperative Action Project, or CCAP, is an organization run by a group of churches in Berkeley County, WV. It is chartered as an emergency social services agency that provides temporary food and financial assistance to residents of Berkeley County who can demonstrate both residence and need. Its largest ministry is its Loaves and Fishes food pantry, which obtains food donations from both federal programs under the USDA's "Feed America" program and local donations, often through local food drives.

Meals on Wheels

- Is a NON-PROFIT agency that provides hot, nutritious, low cost, home delivered meals to all qualifying community residents.
- Is inspired by the desire to help solve the nutritional needs of the ELDERLY, HANDICAPPED, and/or CONVALESCENT citizens throughout the Berkeley County community.
- Provides professionally planned menus which include an entrée, vegetables, salad, fruits, breads, dessert, milk and other special treats 5 days a week.



Benefits: The Mustard Seed Early Learning Center

Date: Friday, March 27, 2020

Time: 6:00-8:30pm

Place: The Mustard Seed Early Learning Center

101 W. Martin St. Martinsburg, WV 25401

Cost: \$40.00

Additional Information: up to \$15/ticket will go to The Mustard Seed Early Learning Center.

Pizza, snacks & drinks will be available for purchase.



Join us for an evening of fun while we paint signs to support The Mustard Seed Early Learning Center. We are giving you the paint brush to create your very own sign. But don't worry, we will be there to instruct you along the way. You will be able to choose from one of the six signs pictured above. There will be a variety of paint colors to choose from, allowing you to paint the colors of your liking. No experience needed. All supplies provided to paint a sign that is ready to hang when you take it home.

- * Tickets must be purchased prior to the event due to limited seats.
- * Ticket sales will end on Thursday, March 26th.
- Tickets are available on Eventbrite. Search Fundraiser benefiting The Mustard Seed Early Learning Center.
- Please contact Christy Costello at 304-263-9291 or director@mustardseedwv.org with questions.

3 YEAR GOALS

For St. John's

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

BY NOVEMBER 30, 2020, WE WILL:

- Increase Sunday worship attendance by 20% so that more people will be able to experience the great reward of being in a relationship with Jesus.
- Have 50% of the congregation's confirmed-membership fill out a Covenant so that we can seek out those ministry areas the Holy Spirit is leading us to do.
- Strengthen our physical involvement in community activities through participating in community organizations and schools.

Please pray over these goals and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you in helping us accomplish our goals over the next year.

WANT TO KEEP UP BETTER WITH ACTIVITIES AND WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S?



Search for **St. John's Lutheran Church, Martinsburg** on Facebook and like our page.

Visit Our Website

www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Sermons posted weekly, information about faith practices, and more information about events happening at the St John's.



Send an email to announcements@stjohnsmartinsburg.org to sign up for weekly emails and announcements.

Pastor's Report

January 2020

VISITATION

January Visits: 19

CONFERENCE AND SYNOD

Epiphany Vespers Worship Planning
Synod Assembly Future Sites Committee Meeting
Potomac East Conference Meeting
The Light Conquers - Vespers

WORSHIP

4 Sunday Worship Services
2 Evening Prayer

CHURCH COMMITTEES

Council

Lunch with Presbyterian Pastor - Rachel Crumley

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

EDUCATION

2 Sunday on Monday
Confirmation Retreat
Table Talk

MUSTARD SEED

3 Chapel Services with Mustard Seed

WEDDINGS

FUNERALS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

CHOIR

7 Choir Rehearsals (includes both Sunday Morning and
Conference Choir)

MILEAGE

Pastor Day's Mileage for the month of January was 208 miles.



My brothers and sisters in Christ,

The season of Lent is a multi-dimensional season in that it is shaped by the preaching of our Lord's passion, penitential reflection, and catechetical formation. These three areas, drive us to humble

repentance. Our hymnody also serves as a helpful aid in bringing about such repentance. One hymn that guides us in repentance through the Lenten Season is, "O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days."

This particular hymn is a type of prayer. It is based upon Jesus' successful battle with Satan and temptation in the wilderness. Since our Lord fought temptation and was successful, we pray in the first stanza that our Lord would inspire repentance within us as we battle with daily temptations. He who overcame Satan in the wilderness also claimed victory over the arch-enemy of God through his death on the cross and rising from the dead. He has freed us from our past and has the power to do so daily as we return to the promise of his forgiveness of sins granted to us in our baptisms.

In the second stanza of the hymn we pray for the courage, skill, and trust of Christ in God's eternal Word. We pray that he who overcame Satan and temptation with the written Word of God would grant us the strength to do the same, even as we gather together to hear, study, learn, and inwardly digest his Word.

In the third stanza we pray for God to bring about godly contentment in his Word and Will. We pray that God would help us seek not our own will and desires first and foremost, but that we would trust firmly in him to meet our needs and be satisfied with his provision for our bodies and our souls.

Finally, in the fourth stanza we pray that God would continue to be with us, even as he has promised to be with us and to never leave or forsake us. We pray that he would guide us through our Lenten pilgrimage and our season of preaching on our Lord's passion, penitential reflection, and catechetical formation. We pray that he would guide us and be with us through all our days, just as sure as he has freed us from our past. We pray that he do this so that when the final Easter dawns and our Lord returns, we join in heaven's praise.

As we embark upon these 40 days, I ask that you take advantage of this season of Lent. Even though I will miss being with you for most of Lent this year because of the birth of our new child, this does not mean you should miss it too. Things will still happen on Wednesdays both during the day and at night. The word of God will still be proclaimed on Sunday mornings. St. John's is bigger than myself and it is times like this that stand as a good reminder to all of us that the future of St. John's is not myself, but Jesus Christ.

At the end of the month, we will welcome the students, parents, and teachers of the Mustard Seed to join us for worship. The children want to share some of what they have learned, Mrs. Christy will share some of the amazing things happening with the school, and also share some future plans. The Mustard Seed has come a long way in the past four years. It is time we celebrate the great work they are doing along side of us. Betty Lou and the Social Ministry team are planning some refreshments for after worship. I hope to see you all there this Sunday. Come and meet the families and make sure they feel welcome in our holy space. Diane and I are hoping to bring our new addition to worship this day!

I will miss you all over the next few weeks. Please, as always, keep my little family in your prayers as we welcome and re-adjust our lives to our new little addition. I will see you all at the end of the month if not before!

In Christ,

Robert M. Dargatzis



St. John's Lutheran Church
101 W. Martin Street
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

Return Service Requested