



ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2021

A Prayer *From Bishop William O. Gafkjen*

O God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance, respect, and commitment to the common good and the wellbeing of our neighbors.

Where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety and violence are infectious and widening, grant reassurance and peace. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and commitment to forging new ways forward together. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. In the midst of darkness and shadow, use us who bear your name to shine bright with the light of the Prince of Peace.

[adapted from prayers found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship]



When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

Psalms 69:10

Announcements

Do you need communion supplies? For those who only use the mailed resources and do not watch online, let us know and we will get you more consecrated items. If you do watch online and wish to, you may use your own bread and wine/grape juice as we speak the words of institution in the video. If you would still prefer to have them consecrated in person, again, we would be happy to provide them, simply let us know.

We asked if you would like to start up again our weekly Zoom Fellowship time? We had suggested that we would begin at 10:45 am on Sundays, allowing time to worship online first. If you are interested or have a suggested for another time or day, let us know by calling the office or Pr. Amy.

The community Meal is back! It takes place every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 4:30pm to 6:00pm.

Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17th. The Imposition of Ashes will be offered from 7am-Noon from the front of the church as you stay in your vehicle. An online worship service will be posted that day as well.

Scripture for February

February 7

Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, 20c, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, I Mark 1:29-39

February 14

2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Gospel Mark 9:2-9

February 21

Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Gospel Mark 1:9-15

February 28

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Gospel Mark 8:31-38



Ponder Anew...what the Almighty can do!

by Pastor Amy

As our season of Epiphany draws to a close, we prepare ourselves for Ash Wednesday and Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with ashes, we recognize that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the ashes, placed in the shape of the cross, reminds us of the life-giving cross forever marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent with an intentional drawing nearer and return to God, we also know we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. It is in this knowledge and out of our faith, we seek to strengthen our relationship with our Triune God.

When I was young, Lent was a very sad, somber time. (In some ways, with this pandemic, it seems like we have been in Lent the entire year- especially since we had just gotten started in the season when COVID hit.) All my Roman Catholic friends had to “give up” something for Lent as a sign of penance. Many tried things like giving up broccoli or spinach or something else they already avoided- but of course to no avail. I remember chocolate, candy and other sweets being a popular choice. It was always a relief that we were Lutheran and didn’t have to do that. As the years passed, however, we Lutherans saw some value in the practice and began to adopt it, though there was some confusion about why and how to do it well.

In my first call, we held Community Lenten Lunches. Christians from across several denominations would gather at noon to share a simple lunch, pray, sing and hear a brief message. I remember very clearly the Catholic priest saying that ‘giving up chocolate for Lent will not get you into heaven’. Instead, the idea was to give up, to sacrifice something, as a tangible reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus made with his life and the God made of his son.

This reminder about our sin- not just “bad things” we do but those things that interfere with our relationship with God- can inspire us to 1) recognize our sin; 2) confess to God what we recognize; 3) ask for forgiveness; 4) change our behavior- out of a faithful response, not fear of God’s wrath. I am glad we now view Lent more as a time of reflection and growth of our faith instead of just punishment. Scripture speaks of fasting, prayer and almsgiving as spiritual practices that are often the focus of Lent. You may have seen lists of things like “fast from criticism, feast on encouraging others”.

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Ponder Anew...what the Almighty can do! Cont.



Another suggestion is fasting from a meal and collecting food that you may have eaten and donating it to the food pantry. It may be giving up that favorite indulgence- specialty coffee, donut, ice cream, clothing purchase and donating the money you would have spent to a favorite charity to benefit others. Perhaps it is giving up an hour of watching tv, being on social media, being on the phone, etc. and spending the time in more intentional prayer. (You can create a ritual around it, much like using the Advent wreath at Christmas for devotions. I am looking at possible devotions to distribute.) You may already have a spiritual practice you like to use. I like using YouTube videos that combine Scripture and prayer with yoga. I have gotten away from it since the holidays and want to return to that practice- for my physical and spiritual health.

What will you do? I would love to have you call, text or email your plans/practices. They can remain anonymous while still sharing with each other how we live out faith and draw nearer to our God.

We don't know when COVID will end. We don't know when we will be able to gather like we used to- for worship, with family and friends, for entertainment, etc. We don't know what the coming days, weeks and months will bring. What we do know is that, regardless of what happens in the world, our God is there to love and walk alongside us, our Savior is there to offer grace and forgiveness and the Holy Spirit is there to lead and guide us, reminding us we are part of a greater community, the family of God.

Abundant blessings to each of you, my fellow siblings in Christ.

May you hear and experience our Triune God on your Lenten journey.

Pr. Amy



Pray for one another

Current: Becky Oden, Nancy Jamerson, Dean McKinley, Amy, Haley, John, Janet, the Rapley family, Bill Leonhard.

Ongoing: Jon Perkins, Linda Rager Hampton, Peggy Gilbert, Mara Joy Nelson, Owen Vannoster and his family.

Homebound: Marie Betten-Niccum, Bo & Joanne Boettcher, Nancy Coble, Betty Hamlin, Ruth Hauser, Betty Lawrenz, Vada Lee Nixon, Robert & Lois Dowd.

Churches: Grace, Columbia City and Rev. Matthew Converse, Marquardt, Monroeville, Messiah, Ft. Wayne and Rev. Tim Graham, Manchester Church of the Brethren, Pr. Kurt Borgman and Pr. Karen Eberly.

Birthdays in February

Sarah Hawkins-2/5

Ruth Hawley-2/7

Morgan Meinert-2/28

Cheryl Spratt- 2/19



Walk
in the
Light
of the
Lord
see John 5:35-36

Written by Mark Zimmerman

Ash Wednesday marks the official start of the 40-day Lenten season and is hallmarked by the placing of ashes on the foreheads of parishioners while saying the ancient words from Scripture, "You are dust and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Traditionally made by the burning of the palm leaves from the previous Palm Sunday, the ashes symbolize our mortality as well as our sorrow over our sins. The practice harkens back to Old Testament days when God's people wore sackcloth and ashes to visually show to God and those around them the depth of their repentance for their wayward behavior. The prophet Jeremiah called for repentance by saying: "O daughter of my people, gird on sackcloth, roll in the ashes" (Jer 6:26). Today wearing ashes on our heads in the shape of a cross becomes a reminder to us and a witness to others who see us wearing these ashen crosses that we firmly believe that though we will one day die, we know we will one day be made alive again forevermore, forgiven and free through the precious cross of Christ.

Report from Council

I'm afraid I was a little wordy with my "Report from Council" in the Annual Report which you should have received a week or so ago. Because of that there is very little to report to you this month. Council meet twice in January. Once to finalize plans for the Annual Meeting and Report and once again, late in the month, for regular business.

We hope you all agree with Council's recommendation to hold our Annual Meeting via the mail. We felt the business matters could be completed through the mail and it didn't make sense to hold an in-person Annual Meeting while suspending our much more important in-person worship. If you have any concerns about this one-time-only Annual Meeting process please don't hesitate to let us know.

As part of this through-the-mail Annual Meeting, Council agreed to personally contact every member to: 1) assure the Annual Report was received; 2) hear any concerns or questions about the process or other matters; 3) encourage the return of the ballot; and 4) learn how you are doing during the pandemic. If you have any needs with which we can assist please let us know.

Hopefully you have had your conversation with a Council member by this time. I hope you take the opportunity to review the Annual Report. It's an attractive piece thanks to the skills of Chloe Steele our Administrative Assistant. And, please complete your ballot and return quickly.

Thank you for your prayerful support of Zion and the Council as we work to further God's Work with Our Hands. And, thank you for continuing to mail in or deliver your offering support as well.

You can call me personally if you have any suggestions, questions or concerns you wish to share.

My cell phone number is 260-750-3725.
Or email me at dlawrenz.123@gmail.com.

David Lawrenz; Council President



Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Isaiah 30:18



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Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for
you are the God of my salvation.



The Lord is
calling Zion to
live out its
calling to belong
to Jesus Christ and to each other
by virtue of our baptism; to believe in
Jesus Christ by virtue of our faith
given as a gift of the Holy Spirit
through
Word and
Sacrament;
to be sent by
Jesus Christ
as
ambassadors
of the gospel
in our
homes, workplaces,
communities
and to the
ends of the earth.

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