

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH - March 2020 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

To God's saints at OSLC,

Each January, all ELCA pastors complete a congregational report to forward to the synodical and national offices of our church. One of the questions asked was "In the past year, has someone besides the congregational leader shared a personal story during worship about God's activity in their life?" I was pleased to answer 'yes' to this question, because of the faithful witness of our lay preachers who lead worship during my absences. But for weeks after I sent in the report, the question kept returning to me. When you called me to serve as your pastor, the letter of call included this mandate: "... to equip us for witness and service, and to guide us in proclaiming God's love through word and deed." As that question returned again and again to my mind, I wondered if I am being faithful enough...

We are pretty good at 'service' and 'proclaiming God's love through... deed.' It is harder for many of us to 'witness' and to 'proclaim God's love through ... word.' Speaking our faith out loud *can* be intimidating, but it doesn't *need* to be intimidating!

For this reason, I am delighted to share with you that five members and friends of the congregation have accepted my invitation to share about their faith during Lenten mid-week worship. Instead of a sermon, we will have a five- to ten-minute Holy Conversation, where we will talk about things like "Who taught you about Jesus?" and "Have you ever experienced an answer to prayer that was surprising or unexpected?"

None of these five members or friends would describe themselves as spiritual superstars. I imagine they would tell you that they are 'just ordinary Christians, doing our best to follow Jesus.' And they are taking a risk by opening up to you about their faith. Come and support their courage. Come and let them encourage you. The Holy Spirit promises to show up! Even (and especially) if you have never attended Lenten mid-week worship before, you are invited to join us at 7 PM on Wednesdays from March 4 through April 1.

God be with you!

Pastor Anne +

WORSHIP NOTES FOR SUNDAYS IN LENT

Although the pattern of our worship remains unchanged, according to the tradition described by Justin Martyr in the second century – Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending – the details of worship change season by season, in order to help us more fully contemplate both law and gospel. During the penitential 40-day season of Lent this year,

- Our confession and forgiveness will include prayers that we keep God's ten commandments.
- We will sing a Kyrie at the beginning of worship. *Kyrie eleison* is Greek for "Lord, have mercy."
- We will 'fast' from singing or speaking the word 'alleluia' (though it's not a sin if this word of praise accidentally escapes from our mouth!)
- We will chant the Psalm in a somber tone, ELW psalm tone 9 (ELW pg. 338).
- Décor in the chancel will be sparse, inviting us to reflect on Jesus' 40-day experience in the wilderness, being tempted by the devil. Bare branches rather than flowers will be present.
- Paraments (altar cloths) and pastor's stole will be purple, a traditional color indicating repentance.
- Pastor Anne will wear a simple wooden cross rather than a silver cross.

- Our intercessory prayers will include sung responses from ELW Hymn # 751, “O Lord, Hear my Prayer.”
- The “Lamb of God” hymn we sing at the beginning of communion will include the stanza, “Lamb of God, you call us to the way of your cross.”
- Our communion hymns will include the Taize chant “Jesus, Remember Me.” These are the words spoken to Jesus by the penitent thief who was crucified by His side on Good Friday.
- We will use the older version of the Lord’s Prayer. (This was a specific request from a council member).

LENTEN MIDWEEK WORSHIP AND SOUP SUPPERS

- Mark your calendar now to share soups, fellowship and a Lenten service each Wednesday march 4 through April 1. Soup supper begins at 6 PM followed by worship at 7 PM.
- Please sign up to bring soup that will serve about 12 people and two or three loaves if you sign up for bread. Traditionally each family brings a jar of jam or jelly to the first service that can be kept at church and used the following weeks.
- There will be a sign up sheet on a clipboard on the wall at the back of the church. Thanks!
- We will learn portions of the ELW Vespers service, which begins on ELW page 309.
- Each week, a member or friend of the congregation will engage in a 5 to 10 minute Holy Conversation, in lieu of a sermon.
- Offerings received on these Wednesday evenings will support the congregation’s God’s Work, Our Hands project this fall. We will be creating and donating school kits for students around the world through the ministry of Lutheran World Relief.

CHURCH TRIVIA

1. Why do we say ‘farewell’ to alleluia during Lent?
2. Members of OSLC have just completed a seven-week adult education class called Dialogues on Race, with members and friends of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension and the First Presbyterian Church. According to a 2014 study from the Pew Research Foundation, which is the “whitest” denomination in the United States?
 - a. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
 - b. The Episcopal Church (TEC)
 - c. The Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA)
3. Throughout history, Christians have paid special attention to the practice of three spiritual disciplines during Lent. Jesus speaks about these spiritual practices in Matthew 6:1-18, which is the Gospel text for Ash Wednesday every year. What are these three spiritual practices?
 - a. Singing, serving, and soup suppers
 - b. Simplicity, solitude and submission
 - c. Prayer, fasting, and giving alms
 - d. Baptism, holy communion, and confession

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“A true Christian lives and labors on earth not for himself but for his neighbor. Therefore the whole spirit of his life him impels him to do even that which he needs not do, but which is profitable and necessary for his neighbor.” – **Martin Luther**

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FREE CHURCH SAFETY CONFERENCE – MARCH 5

The Twin Falls Police Department will be hosting a Place of Worship: De-Escalation Techniques training on March 5, 2020 from 8AM to noon at the City of Twin Falls Council Chambers.

If a potentially violent person in your congregation becomes verbally disruptive, do you know how to bring the situation to a peaceful ending? Local experts will speak about de-escalation strategies and techniques specific with places of worship and offer ways to identify potentially disruptive people, communicate and de-escalate without physical intervention while actively listening and maintaining control through clear and calm communication. This training is free, but seating is limited. If you would like to attend the training, please notify Jon Helms or Pastor Anne by Sunday, March 1.

GIVING UP SOMETHING FOR LENT

In 2014, the Los Angeles Times reported that the average American home contains 300,000 items, from paper clips to ironing boards. Many of these items languish unused in closets, under beds, and in garages. During this season of Lent, you are invited to consider your relationship to your material possessions. Are there some things you may use to bless others?

For several years the youth of OSLC have raised funds by means of a yard sale. This year, with your help, they hope to make the event bigger than ever.

During Lent, the youth invite you to search your possessions each day and find one useful item that you are willing to 'give up.' Specially decorated paper collection bags will help you remember your commitment. If each member and friend of the congregation were to donate one item for each day in Lent, there would be several thousand useful treasures to sell at the yard sale!

Funds raised will support youth programming at OSLC, including a planned trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis in summer 2021!

SHARE AN EASTER LILY ON EASTER SUNDAY

We traditionally decorate the sanctuary on Easter morning with as many lilies as possible. You can help decorate the sanctuary by purchasing one or more lilies through the church. Please put cash or a check made out to Our Savior Lutheran in an envelope marked "2020 Easter Lilies." Sign-up forms will be available at the worship services on March 15, 22, and 29. For each \$9, we will add an Easter lily to the display on Easter Sunday, and donors' names will be listed in the bulletin along with the names of those honored or memorialized. The flowers are available to take home with you, if you desire, following the Easter worship service. (Note: Stamens will be removed from lilies to alleviate allergic reactions).

STEWARDSHIP – MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Did You Know....

If you are 70 ½ you can donate to any 503(c) organization, including Our Savior Lutheran Church, tax free (up to \$100,000) from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA). These qualified charitable distributions can count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD). For example, if you are required to withdraw \$12,000 from your IRA and you wish to give \$10,000 to one or more 503 (c) organizations, you can direct your IRA custodian to send \$10,000 to the 503(c) organizations and that money would count toward your RMD. You would only report \$2,000 in IRA distributions (instead of \$12,000) on your tax return. Call your Financial Advisor for more information.

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GOD COMES TO US

"The movement in our relationship to God is always from God to us. Always. We can't, through our piety or goodness, move closer to God. God is always coming near to us. Most especially in the Eucharist and in the stranger."

— Nadia Bolz-Weber

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR...

- March 7: Upper Snake River Cluster meeting at Good Shepherd in Pocatello. Contact Pr. Anne or Andy Hamblen if you would like to attend.
- March 15: Early registration deadline for Luther Heights summer programming.
- March 29: Special congregational visit by the Rev. Phil Misner, Assistant to the Bishop of the Northwest Intermountain Synod. Potluck follows worship this day!
- April 9: Maundy Thursday worship, 7 PM
- April 10: Good Friday worship, 7 PM
- April 12: Easter Sunday worship, 9:30 AM!
- April 18: Potato Bar and Auction in support of Youth Programming.
- April 19: Camp Sunday – Enjoy special, Luther Heights style worship with LHBC Executive Director Kelly Preboski.
- April 19: Afternoon road trip to St. John's in American Falls for a global hymn sing and organ concert.
- April 26: Celebration of the 50th anniversary of women's ordination in the ELCA. Special visit by the Rev. Gretchen Bingea from Immanuel Lutheran in Boise.
- May 2: Northwest Intermountain Synod Festival in Twin Falls. The congregation will cover the cost of your participation.

FAITHFUL USE OF LEGACY GIFTS – MARCH 3

Last year, Our Savior Lutheran Church received a generous bequest from the estate of Toby Wiklund. Your council is now tasked with making wise plans for the use of this gift.

On March 3, at 7 PM, Beth Adams, Regional Gift Planner from the ELCA Foundation, will visit OSLC and lead us in the first steps of discernment in creating plans that will fully honor Toby's generosity, and to have a plan in place to receive and use future legacy gifts (bequests – both cash and otherwise) from other members and friends of the congregation.

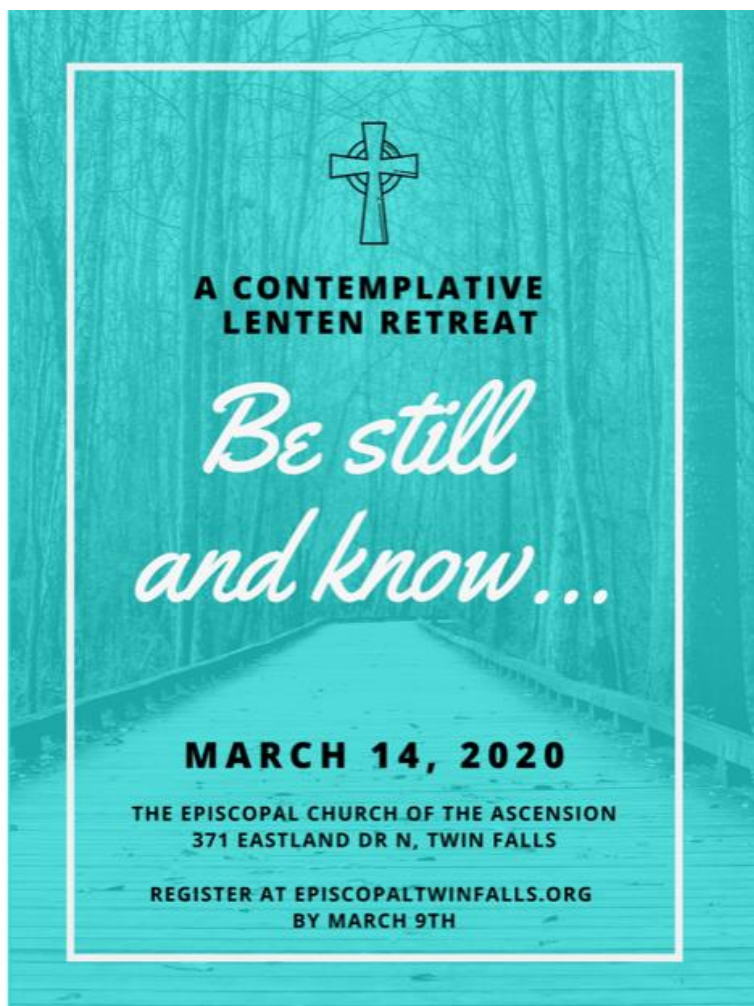
Your council invites you to join us for this meeting.

READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

This new year, 2020, may be the year that you read God's word in its entirety. It's not too late to begin this spiritual discipline. If you read three or four chapters daily, you can finish the Bible by the end of this year!

Here is a list of suggested readings for the month of March:

March 1: Deuteronomy 28-29. March 2: Deuteronomy 30-32. March 3: Deuteronomy 33-34. March 4: Joshua 1-4. March 5: Joshua 5-7. March 6: Joshua 8-10. March 7: Joshua 11-13. March 8: Joshua 14-17. March 9: Joshua 18-20. March 10: Joshua 21-22. March 11: Joshua 23-24. March 12: Judges 1-3. March 13: Judges 4-5. March 14: Judges 6-8. March 15: Judges 9-10. March 16: Judges 11-13. March 17: Judges 14-16. March 18: Judges 17-19. March 19: Judges 20-21. March 20: Ruth 1-4. March 21: 1 Samuel 1-3. March 22: 1 Samuel 4-7. March 23: 1 Samuel 8-12. March 24: 1 Samuel 13-14. March 25: 1 Samuel 15-16. March 26: 1 Samuel 17-18. March 27: 1 Samuel 19-21. March 28: 1 Samuel 22-24. March 29: 1 Samuel 25-27. March 30: 1 Samuel 28-31. March 31: 2 Samuel 1-3.



YOUR GIFTS AT WORK BIBLES FOR ZAMBIA

In December 2018, our Advent mid-week offerings were designated for the purchase of Bibles for friends in Africa. In June 2019, we blessed and shipped 80 English-language NIV Bibles to the Eternal Life Assembly Church in Lusaka, Zambia, where friends of the Lupumba family will use them to share God's good news. On February 7, 2020, Joseph Lupumba received notice that the Bibles have finally arrived safely at their intended destination. Thanks be to God!

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Our Lenten mid-week offerings (Mar 4-Apr 1) will support materials and shipping to create simple backpacks filled with school supplies to be created during our God's Work, Our Hands day of service this fall.

CHURCH TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Based on the Hebrew words, *hallelu yah*, meaning "Praise the Lord," alleluia has been a word of great praise to God in the life of the church and was prominent in early Christian liturgies. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the quality of our baptismal faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice. The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the western church. The custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages. [Copyright © 2013 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. www.elca.org/worshipfaq. Used with permission.]

2. Eighty-eight percent of members of the Presbyterian Church, USA, are white. Ninety percent of members of The Episcopal Church are white. The ELCA is the 'whitest' denomination in the USA, according to a 2014 Pew Research study on racial diversity in religious groups. Ninety-six percent of members of the ELCA are white. Among all adult Americans, 66% are white, 15% are Latino, 12% are black, 4% are Asian, and 4% are from other or mixed races.
3. Throughout history, Christians have paid special attention to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and giving alms during the 40-day penitential season of Lent.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR MARCH

	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29
First Reading	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Genesis 12:1-4a	Exodus 17:1-7	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm	Psalm 32	Psalm 121	Psalm 95	Psalm 23	Psalm 130
Second Reading	Romans 5:12-19	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	Romans 5:1-11	Ephesians 5:8-14	Romans 8:6-11
Gospel	Matthew 4:1-11	John 3:1-17	John 4:5-42	John 9:1-41	John 11:1-45

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Your new 2020 council met on February 19, 2020. Highlights of the meeting included a report from the Youth Representative to the Synod Council; establishment of council liaisons for the Safety/Security team and the Stewardship of Land team; affirmation of volunteers to complete the ELCA Legal Checklist for Congregations/Property section and to review and update the OSLC constitution; review of unfinished business for 2019; confirmation of attendees for the March 7 Cluster meeting in Pocatello and the March 14 Council training in Boise; and designation of the Lenten mid-week offering to the ministries of Lutheran World Relief.

The next council meeting will be on March 22, 2020, at 10:45 AM, following worship. Council meetings are open to all members and friends of the congregation.

A FINAL NOTE OF GRATITUDE

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, you will have noticed that this month's edition is not quite as pretty as usual. Our congregation secretary, Penny Henriksen, has been under the weather and so this edition was crafted by someone markedly less aesthetically skilled. The next time you see Penny, please thank her for her diligent and creative work in forming our OSLC newsletter each month!

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TWIN FALLS

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Worship with Holy Communion

is Celebrated

every Sunday

at 9:30 AM



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.