



SAINT THOMAS CHURCH NEWS

March 2020 XXXXII, Issue 3

Pastor's Column

Changes in worship are typical in the season of Lent. The most notable is dropping the word, "Alleluia," from the liturgy. Although, as we said on Transfiguration Sunday, we are Easter people and Alleluia is our song, during this penitential season, we put away this celebratory word until the Resurrection.

This Lent you may notice more changes in the liturgy than normal. In addition to dropping the word, "Alleluia," we will forego the Hymn of Praise, again, as is typical during this season. This year, however, we are taking a "fast" from a number of other elements of our worship.

First, there will be more silence woven into our worship this year. The prelude and postlude will not be heard. In order to encourage silent meditation and prayer during this time, we will ask that everyone have their conversations in the narthex and enter the sanctuary with reverent stillness. This time for reflection, prayer and meditation will continue after the Welcome and Announcements as we prepare to worship.

Second, we will not be singing any of the liturgy. I hope that this will draw our attention to what we are saying, to the meaning of the words we will speak.

We have also moved some of the liturgical pieces from their normal position in worship. Instead of singing *Create in me a clean heart, O God* as the offering is brought forward, we will sing this as the Gospel Acclamation, asking God to grant us clean hearts and a right spirit so we can truly hear God's Holy Word. We will also move Confession and Forgiveness from the beginning of our worship and put it after the Sermon, between the Hymn of the Day and the sharing of the Peace. This emphasizes that our recognition of our sin and the promise of forgiveness is *because* of the Gospel, which both reveals us and heals us. This also highlights that the peace we share in Christ is the fruit of the forgiveness we receive and give.

For some of you, these changes may cause some consternation. We are all creatures of habit and making changes to the liturgy can cause some distress. Others of you may hardly have noticed these changes if they had not been pointed out. Either way, I hope that you will allow yourself to experience worship in a slightly different way, to hear the words in a new light. I hope that the extra time for reflection will draw you deeper into worship and help you know God's presence in a more profound way.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Darby

"Grief on the Way" Lent 2020

Grief is one of the universal human experiences, part of everyone's life. We grieve because we love. Nothing on this earth lasts forever, but the journey of grief is a holy one. God is present to bless us as we grieve.

Lenten Worship Services

March 4 (Midweek 1) Noon & 7:00 PM
March 11 (Midweek 2) Noon & 7:00 PM
March 18 (Midweek 3) Noon & 7:00 PM
March 25 (Midweek 4) Noon & 7:00 PM
April 1 (Midweek 5) Noon & 7:00 PM

April 9, Maundy Thursday 7:00 PM only
April 10, Good Friday Noon & 7:00 PM

Topics for the Wednesday Midweek Lenten services

March 4, Speaker: Jan Sinn
"Imbalance in the Valley of Grief"; Scripture: Psalm 23:4

March 11, Speakers: Gene & Gayl Laughman
"Grief and Learning a New Emotion"; Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

March 18, Speaker: Rev. Wendy VanderZee
"Life in the Desert"

March 25, Speaker: Doug Bauder
"Gratitude and Grief"; Scripture: John 11:28-36

April 1, Speaker: Pamela Grenfell Smith
"Five Poets on Grieving"; Scripture: Romans 8:34-35, 37-39

Weaving the texture of grief

This year our Lenten midweek worship asks us to reflect on grief—a universal human emotion. St. Thomas's Fiber Arts spiritual growth group invites you to be part of a shared project during Lent, a woven fabric expressing the grief that has touched each of our lives. Both adults and children are welcome to add to the weaving.

In the narthex, you'll find a table with a loom and a tray of fabric strips. You're invited to choose some fabric from the tray and weave it into the frame loom (*just like making a potholder out of loopers*) as a way of showing that your grief is part of the texture of our common life at St. Thomas. You can do this any time you're here – not just Sundays. More fabric strips are in a basket under the table – you can use them, too.

Midweek Lent Lunches
sponsored by OWLs (Older Wise Lutheran)
begin March 4th!



Lively Older Lutherans invite you to join them after the Wednesday Midweek Lent Service for a light soup-and-bread lunch and dessert! Take a break in your day and enjoy some fellowship. Sign up in the narthex to contribute food items, but contributions are not necessary. We look forward to seeing you!

EDUCATION SCHEDULES



Adult Forum

March 1: Saving Jesus Redux

March 8: Open

March 15: Saving Jesus Redux

March 22: Spring Break – No Classes

March 29: Open

Sunday School and Confirmation WILL NOT have classes on March 15 or 22 due to Spring Break.

Women's Bible Study meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month (next up, March 8) in room 16/17. We follow the study provided in the magazine "Lutheran Women Today" and it is for women of all ages. Kari Esarey prints out the study from the magazine so one doesn't have to have a copy of the magazine. The group reads the study together followed by discussion. We would love to have you!

YOUTH GROUP

March 8 – Regular youth group from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at STLC. Service Project?

March 22 – **(note date change)** Regular youth group: movie night? Would someone like to host youth group at their house? Let Amy know!

Souper Bowl Sunday was a HUGE success! The Youth Group would like to thank everyone who donated for Souper Bowl Sunday! We have again broken a record! It is because of YOU that we are able to donate money to Hoosier Hills Food Bank! Our totals are (drumroll, please...):

A blue graphic with yellow and white text. At the top, "THANK YOU!" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Below that, "St. Thomas Lutheran Church Youth Group's 2020 Collection" is written in white. In the center, "raised:" is written in small white letters above "\$822" in large, bold, white letters. The number "2020" is faintly visible in the background. Below the amount, a paragraph of white text reads: "Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed and the nation has seen the impact of people working together to help those in need. Thank you for working to transform the time around the Super Bowl into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving." At the bottom left is the "SOUPER BOWL OF CARLING" logo with the website "souperbowl.org" below it. At the bottom right, the date "February 2, 2020" is written in white.

MISSION NEWS

Yet More Winter Coats, Sadness, Consolation, Altar Flowers, and a Podcast

At our February meeting, the Mission Committee noted with thankfulness that last month we gathered - from this and other congregations - another thirteen bags of winter clothing, this time for the Bloomington Refugee Support Network. We committed to ongoing prayer about our Sister Parish linkage with Iglesia Santo Domingo de Guzman in Chichipate, Guatemala and made plans to offer an Adult Forum about Sister Parish.

We also shared the deep sadness we're feeling these days about the state of the world: wildfires, earthquakes, cyclones, epidemics, and the national news. Thank you, friends, for the winter clothes - they are important! - but we wonder if you share our sense that sometimes it feels like we're trying to empty the ocean with a spoon.

In this context, we talked about how much the Sunday altar flowers mean to us. They're not only a kind gesture of thanksgiving or remembrance, but also a source of consolation and hope. We treasure their presence in our worship as a way to keep our work grounded in the sustaining, generous, transformational grace of God.

Suzanne Halvorson has been telling us for a couple of months now about a podcast, The Growing Edge, that she truly values as a source of courage and insight. Here's the mission statement for The Growing Edge: "Hope is holding a creative tension between what is and what could and should be, each day doing something to narrow the distance between the two." This sounds very much like what we're all trying to do, day to day, as followers of Jesus Christ. The Growing Edge is produced by Carrie Newcomer and Parker J. Palmer. We wonder if some of you might like to try the podcast during March and get together at the end of the month to reflect on it together. Possibly there could be pie, too. Here's the web address for the podcast: www.newcomerpalmer.com/podcast



If you think you might be interested in volunteering with the Bloomington Refugee Support Network, there are a couple of orientation meetings in March to introduce potential volunteers to opportunities for service in BRSN. The meetings will be held on Wednesday, March 4 and on Wednesday, March 11, location TBA. Both meetings begin at 7 p.m. (It is the same meeting, held on two different dates, to accommodate people's schedules.) If you are able to attend, RSVP to: bloomingtonrefugees@gmail.com. Jan Sinn will attend on 3/11 if anyone would like to accompany her please contact her @ 812-320-2019 or jems1949@gmail.com



Bloomington Refugee Support Network
Supporting asylum seekers and advocating for refugee resettlement in Indiana

New Hope for Families

(The only emergency shelter for families in Monroe County, keeping families intact)!



Cuddle time at The Nest

Do you love cuddling infants? Do you enjoy sharing the love of reading a good book with preschoolers? Then you should consider volunteering with The Nest at New Hope for Families! The Nest is an accredited early-childhood education and daycare program. They are currently seeking volunteers to assist their team of dedicated professional educators. Volunteers typically commit one to two hours once a week, to hold, read to, engage and play with infants and young children. For more information, please email Amie Messer, The Nest Director, at amie@newhope4families.org.



Nap time at The Nest

A gentle reminder to check the Wish List for New Hope for Families located above the donation bin in the narthex, as well as immediate needs listed in the weekly, if you are interested in donating needed items. Monetary donations are also appreciated. Amy Stolberg, New Hope for Families Board Member, writes, "Your support of New Hope for Families is critical in helping families recover from the devastating circumstances and consequences of homelessness and helps them progress to stable housing and healthier lives, breaking the cycle of poverty. We greatly appreciate your generosity and partnership!"

A Note from the Call Committee

Thank you to everyone that completed the survey related to the Ministry Site Profile. The committee is using your valuable input to craft responses for the MSP. We are on target to finish this very lengthy document soon. We appreciate your continued support and prayers during this process.

Prayer Chain

Want to join our St Thomas email prayer chain? Do you have prayer requests?
Contact Susan Colston for further information.



Did you know that one of the ways we welcome visitors to St. Thomas is by delivering a loaf of "friendship bread"?

There is a small and dedicated group of volunteers who would also welcome you to the delivery group! You may contact Susan in the office for more information.