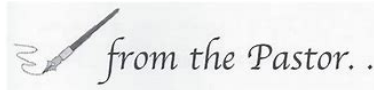




New Era Lutheran Church

March 2022 Newsletter

Pastor Kirsten Lee
405-248-0586



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Sunday School: 9:30 am (Sept-May)
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each week
Newsletter Items due by the 20th of the
month

Check us out at www.neweralutheran.com
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[NewEraLutheranChurch](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)

Why Lent?

How we spend these days leading to Easter matters

Dear beloved in Christ,

As we begin another season of Lent, we are faced with the question of why we participate in Lent and what this season means for us as we live as Christ followers in our secular world.

Lent is the forty-day journey with Christ toward his crucifixion on the cross and his Easter resurrection. We begin with Ash Wednesday, which is a day of repentance and worship when our foreheads are marked with the sign of the cross using ashes. As this is done, we hear “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return”. We pause to remember that we will all die, and our mortal bodies will return to the earth. At the same time, the cross is a reminder of the hope we have in Christ. As we acknowledge our mortality, we acknowledge our need for salvation through Jesus Christ and the promise of salvation already given to each of us.

Ash Wednesday and Lent are a time of hope-filled and peace-filled reflection. As we look toward the hope and joy of Easter, how we spend these days leading to Easter matters.

Imagine picking up a book and reading the very first chapter and the very last few pages, when there is typically a happy ending or a resolution of some kind. What is lost in the middle? Well, we would likely be confused if we missed learning about the characters and the details of their story. If their happy ending did make sense at the end of the book, we couldn't fully appreciate it if we didn't go through the conflict with them. Their happy ending would be meaningless.

So it is with Christ's story as he journeys toward his Easter glory. We could skip right over Lent, Holy Week, and land in the Easter glory, but what would be lost along the way? As we follow Christ to the cross and hear his story of what led him to the cross, the joy and glory of Easter are more meaningful. Through the insights the Holy Spirit gives each of us along the way, we can gain a deeper understanding of Christ's death on the cross and his triumph over death.

Lent is a time of repentance or turning to God. This invites us to consider what in our life distracts us from God and what can help us turn more intentionally to God. As we turn to God, we do so with trust that God takes our sins and gives us graceful and merciful forgiveness. To help with this turning toward God, we offer devotions for you to enjoy at home.

The theme of our Lenten season this year is Full to the Brim. Through

worship and devotions, we will be reminded of God's expansive grace that is promised to each of us. This Lent, take a step away from the scarcity mentality, competition, and the business of life and step into God's grace that fills you to the brim and reminds you that God cherishes you just as you are. This Lent, we are invited to live our faith fully and trust fully that we belong to God. "If love is our beginning, how can we live our lives led by love's promises? Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us" (sanctifiedart.org).

In Christ, *Pastor Kirsten*

**Full
to the Brim**
An expansive lent



Before I share our Lenten devotions with you, I have something for you try. Get some kind of container that will hold water and fill it with water in the sink. Watch as the water fills and overfills your container. Watch how the water doesn't stop, even when the container is full. The water keeps pouring and overflows without end---until you turn off the water. So it is with God's love and grace. God fills and overfills you with grace and love. Unlike the faucet, God's grace never ends and can never be turned off. Close your eyes and imagine you are the pot into which God's love overflows without end. This is our visual theme for Lent.

To share from Sanctified Art, our sponsor for our Lenten materials, "*Full to the Brim*, is an invitation into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed...When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path." (sanctifiedart.org).

We share with you these Lenten offerings. Choose what speaks to you:

Daily devotional cards. Read the card for the day



before you get out of bed in the morning or before you go to bed at night.

Reflective Assessment Tool for Expansive Living. If you're familiar with the wellness wheel, this is similar. If you're not, imagine your life, take a look and give it a try!



Birthdays

3 – Mary McCleary
5 – Pastor Kirsten Lee
7 – Skeeter Dugan
9 – Gary Ruser
12 – Steven Batteau
17 – Joan Dietrich
18 – Bev Dugan
18 – Kris Gladwell
21 – Brad Cole

Anniversaries

7 – Josiah & Stephanie Anderson
17 – Chad & Renee Johnson
20 – Skeeter & Bev Dugan

May the good Lord continue to shower you with happiness, good fortune, prosperity and good health all the days of your life.

Happy Birthday and Anniversary!

Journey through Lent for your fridge. Back by popular demand, this page offers weekly ideas for fasting, praying, and giving.

Devotional Booklet. A weekly devotion that follows the readings we hear in worship. This begins with Lent and goes through Easter. Each week offers poetry, visual arts, reflections and journal prompts. There are two devotions each week for you to use at your own pace.



Remember in Prayer

Joyce McCallister, Betty McMahon, Troy Davis, Catherine Dittmer, Lois Thornburg, Randy Meador, Amy Wilson, June Weber, Emogene Sorgenfrey, loved ones of Jerry Goehagen.

March

Ushers – ??

Alter Guild – Becki Petersen

Communion Asst – ??

Readers

Eric Leacox

Shirley Petersen

Bill Turner

Flowers

No flowers

No flowers

No flowers

Mar 6

Mar 13

Mar 20

Mar 27

Fellowship Hostesses

Mar 6

Mar 13

Mar 20

Mar 27

Vicki Hampton, Lynn Bendt

Shirley McDaniel & Nancy Henke

Lynne Leacox, Shirley Petersen

Special dates

- Ash Wednesday — Mar. 2, 2022
- World Day of Prayer — Mar. 4, 2022
- Daylight-Saving Time begins — Mar. 13, 2022
- St. Patrick's Day — Mar. 17, 2022
- First Day of Spring — Mar. 20, 2022



A prayer for Lent

This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on March 2.

During worship services that day, pastors in many Christian churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.

Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," Genesis 3:19). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday — and throughout the 40 days of Lent — ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, you know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of your word, so that we may be victorious over the seduction of the Evil One and reach the paschal feast in the joy of the Holy Spirit."

Wounded healers

"Nobody escapes being wounded," writes Henri Nouwen. "We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually. The main question is not 'How can we hide our wounds?' so we don't have to be embarrassed, but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?' When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers." He continues, "Jesus is God's wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed. Jesus' suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus, we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others."

How might viewing Jesus as a wounded healer affect your relationship with him? What roles have wounds and healing played in your own faith life? How can you minister to other people from a place of brokenness?



Jesus has gone there first

Whether we gaze with longing into the garden or with fear and trembling into the desert, of this we can be sure — God walked there first! And when we who have sinned and despoiled the garden are challenged now to face the desert, we do not face it alone; Jesus has gone there before us to struggle with every demon that has ever plagued a human heart. Face the desert we must if we would reach the garden, but Jesus has gone there before us.—
James Healy

Mary's yes calls us to love

On March 25, we remember the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her she is to bear the Son of God, and she says yes.

In *Wholehearted Faith*, Rachel Held Evans writes: "I am a Christian not because of anything I've done but because a teenage girl living in occupied Palestine at one of the most dangerous moments in history said yes — yes to God, yes to a wholehearted call she could not possibly understand ... yes to a vision for herself and her little boy of a mission that would bring down rulers and lift up the humble, that would turn away the rich and fill the hungry with good things, that would scatter the proud and gather the lowly, yes to a life that came with no guarantee of her safety or her son's. ... And through Mary's example, God invites us to take the risk of love."

Love that welcomes all

Actor Tom Hanks once said, "There's no substitute for a great love who says, 'No matter what's wrong with you, you're welcome at this table.'" Although I don't know that quote's context, those words could well describe Jesus and Holy Communion, as well as God's unconditional love.

For when Jesus first invited his followers, "Take and eat; this is my body. Take and drink; this is my blood," he didn't exclude Judas, who would betray him, or Peter, who would deny him, or any of the others, who would abandon him as he was arrested and executed.

Indeed, no matter what's wrong with us — what sins we've committed, what flaws we try to hide — Jesus welcomes us to the communion table. And he'll welcome us to the

great heavenly banquet at the end of time. For the great love of God declares, "You're all welcome at my table."—Heidi Hyland Mann

"Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without it, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible."

—Mary McLeod Bethune

* * *

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

—Mother Teresa

* * *

"Better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing flawlessly."—

Robert Schuller

Our stain remover

From sanitizers and soaps to solutions and sprays, many products promise to eliminate germs and grime. Unfortunately, they often fall short. Just think how many items in your closet or kitchen have been ruined by stubborn stains.

What if we were that concerned about ridding our lives and hearts of sin? What if we spent as much time confessing and repenting as scrubbing and laundering? The good news is that with one "application" (the cross), Jesus makes us "whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7). Praise be to our unblemished Lamb, the perfect stain remover!

Puzzle!

Complete the Scripture verses (NIV, unless marked) using letters found in the words **SAINT PATRICK'S DAY**

Puzzle!

Complete the Scripture verses (NIV, unless marked)
using letters found in the words

**SAINT PATRICK'S DAY**

See! The winter is _ _ _ _ ; the rains are over
and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season
of singing has come. (Song of Solomon 2:11-12)

"Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no
part of it _ _ _ _ , it will be just as full of light as
when a lamp shines its light on you." (Luke 11:36)

When I consider your heavens, the work of your
fingers, the moon and the _ _ _ _ , which
you have set in place, what is mankind that you
are mindful of them ... ? (Psalm 8:3-4)

We all, like sheep, have gone _ _ _ _ _ ,
each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD
has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but
you are fellow citizens with the _ _ _ _ _
and members of the household of God.
(Ephesians 2:19, ESV)

Answer: past, dark, stars, astray, saints

Hands-on reflection

While preparing props for a church photo shoot, I had to make a crown of thorns. In the woods, I found a long, wild, prickly plant that seemed promising. Just cutting a bit to bring home proved difficult, making me quickly

question my decision to do this project sans gloves.

Once home, I worked the vines so they'd be flexible and not break when curved into a circle. That required finding multiple spots to grasp. Again, numerous finger pricks ensued. It wasn't until I formed the vines into a crown, however, that thorns started sinking into my skin and taking hold. Each shock of pain was an accident, but my focus remained intentional: I purposely tackled this endeavor bare-handed to glimpse what Jesus suffered on my behalf. The torn skin on my fingers was nothing compared to the gashes on my Savior's head. Working with thorns for a few minutes reminded me to be humbly grateful for what Jesus sacrificed to win my eternal salvation.—Julie Lee

An ancient prayer

Lord Jesus, think on me
and purge away my sin.
From earthborn passions set me free
and make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
that when the flood is past,
I may th' eternal brightness see
and share your joy at last.
—Synesius of Cyrene (4th century)

Facing life's giants

During the NCAA basketball tournaments, many fans enjoy rooting for an underdog, hoping a Cinderella story will emerge. First-round March Madness matchups often are billed as David vs. Goliath events, with perennial powerhouses facing off against little-known schools.

Underdogs play key roles in the Bible: Moses takes on Pharaoh's army, Daniel defies a king and David squares off against an actual giant. Being an underdog didn't faze David, who knew the source of his strength: "For the battle is the Lord's," he says in 1 Samuel 17:47. What assurance as we battle life's "giants"!

In *Goliath Must Fall*, Louie Giglio writes, "Our giants keep taunting us, so we need to hold God at his word: that he is already victorious." Instead of "staring at our giant," we must "lock eyes with Jesus" and remember that "life is short and God is big." With bold hearts, adds Giglio, we can worship with "holy urgency" while giants fall.



Bible Quiz

All four Gospels tell of a woman anointing Jesus. Details vary; clearly, she isn't the same person in all accounts. In John, who is she?

- A. Jesus' mother, Mary
- B. Mary Magdalene
- C. Mary of Bethany (sister of Martha and Lazarus)
- D. None of the above

Answer: C (See Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-39; John 12:1-8.)

The power of let

I once crafted a trendy sign that read "Make it happen." It reminded my high-achieving self to take the bull by the horns and work hard.

Though that message isn't necessarily harmful, I've come to appreciate a different approach.

On her podcast *The Next Right Thing*, Emily P. Freeman shared the concept of "Let it count." She decided to trade out the word *make*, which implies forceful effort and control, for the word *let*, which is surprisingly more powerful. Consider Colossians 3:15, which begins, "*Let* the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (NIV, emphasis added). *Let* involves an intentional decision to set aside my selfish desires to *make* and to allow God's way and will to play out instead. When we *let* Christ's peace rule, we can truly "let go and let God," relinquishing control to the One who ultimately holds it.

Although I still have my sign, now it's a reminder to let God and his peace happen — and to let him take the reins of my days and my life.—Janna Firestone

Complete serenity

Many of us have heard the first part of what's called "The Serenity Prayer," attributed to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. But we would do well to learn the rest of it as well:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen."



Christian symbol

40—In Scripture, this number often indicates a time of trial or testing, or simply marks

significance. It rained 40 days and nights during the Flood. Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus fasted for 40 days and was with the disciples for 40 days between his resurrection and ascension. The Christian church has long observed 40 days of Lent (not counting Sundays).



A wonderful washing

David's prayer of repentance reveals a desire to be cleansed of his sin.

Directions: Unscramble the words on the left. Then match them with the correct phrases from Psalm 51 (NIV) on the right.

ETRCAE _ _ _ _ _	_____ out my transgressions (v. 1)
HSAW _ _ _ _ _	_____ away all my iniquity (v. 2)
RSEEROT _ _ _ _ _	_____ me with hyssop, and I will be clean (v. 7)
WNERE _ _ _ _ _	_____ me, and I will be whiter than snow (v. 7)
TLBO _ _ _ _ _	_____ your face from my sins (v. 9)
DIHE _ _ _ _ _	_____ out all my iniquity (v. 9)
NATRG _ _ _ _ _	_____ in me a pure heart (v. 10)
LNSECAE _ _ _ _ _	_____ a steadfast spirit within me (v. 10)
LBTO _ _ _ _ _	_____ to me the joy of your salvation (v. 12)
WHSA _ _ _ _ _	_____ me a willing spirit, to sustain me (v. 12)

Answer: blot, wash, cleanse, wash, hide, blot, create, renew, restore, grant



Make customized jelly soaps to banish dirt and grime.

What you need:

- 1 package unflavored gelatin
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup very warm water
- 1 tsp salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup gel body wash
- Food coloring
- Rubbing alcohol in spray bottle
- Silicone baking molds

What you do:

1. In a bowl, stir gelatin and warm water until dissolved.
2. Add salt, body wash and a few drops of food coloring. Stir.
3. Spray molds with rubbing alcohol (to prevent bubbles). Place molds on a tray.
4. Pour mixture into the molds. Refrigerate until set, about two hours.
5. Pop soap out of molds and store in an airtight container.



Jody's Pecan Coconut Bars (submitted by Vicki Hampton)

Crust

½ C unsalted butter*, softened
½ C Shurfine® Light Brown Sugar
1 C all purpose flour

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine ingredients and press into a 9" x 13" baking dish. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until light brown.

Filling

2 eggs, beaten
1 C Shurfine® light brown sugar
1 ½ t vanilla extract*
3 T all purpose flour*
1 t baking powder*
¼ t baking soda*
1 C pecan pieces*
1 C shredded coconut*

Combine all ingredients in a medium-sized bowl. Carefully spread filling over baked crust. Bake for an additional 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown.










Cool completely and cut into squares. Makes 24 squares.

*Indicate s other quality Shurfine® products.

March 2022



February '22							April '22						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28						24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	1	2  7 pm - Ash Wednesday Service	3 Pastor Kirsten on vacation - Thurs., Mar 3 - Sun., Mar 6	4 	5
6 *	7  9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox	8 9 am – Sewing group meets at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome.	9 9:00 am - Care & Concern New Era Wed. evening soup supper 5:30-6:30, worship service 7:00 pm	10	11	12
13 * 	14  9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox	15	16 Gloria Dei 7:00 pm	17 	18	19
20 * 	21  9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox	22	23 New Era Wed. evening soup supper 5:30-6:30, worship service 7:00 pm	24	25	26
27 *	28  9:30 am - "Classic Stretch" w/Lynne Leacox	29	30 Gloria Dei worship service 7:00 pm	31	1	2
3	4	*Every Sunday: 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship Service				