

THE LIVE WIRE

www.americanlutheran.net

PLUG INTO THE HIGHEST POWER

February 12, 2020

ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT

Ash Wednesday will look a little different this year, but for the most part it will feel much the way it has in the past. One difference this year is the decision to not mark worshiper's foreheads with ashes (in the form of the cross and as a sign of repentance) due to the need for social distancing during this world-wide global Covid-19 pandemic.

What I wanted to do in this Livewire article is provide a brief refresher on: "What are Ash Wednesday and Lent and why do Christians observe them?"

Ash Wednesday is the first official day in the Christian Church's Season of Lent. Ash Wednesday has been practiced by the Christian faithful since the time of Pope Gregory (590-604 C.E.)

Actually, the Christian observation of Lent (several weeks leading up to Easter Sunday) pre-dated Ash Wednesday by several hundred years. Lent was originally established as a time of religious/spiritual preparation for the annual Easter celebration. During the several week period leading up to the Easter celebration, those who were planning on becoming Christians (through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism) participated in a period of religious instruction prior to the Easter celebration and then would typically be baptized at the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday.

Eventually this Lenten period of religious preparation was established to be a period of several weeks. It was Pope Gregory that initiated the practice of beginning the Lenten (baptismal) preparation period with a "Day of Ashes."

Side note: Lent consists of a period of forty days (Ash Wednesday – Easter Sunday) but if you do the math you will actually count 46 days. Why the difference? We do not count Sundays as part of Lent since Sunday is always a "feast day" as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on a weekly basis.

Ashes have been recognized by the Jewish faith as a sign of humility and mortality since long before Jesus was born. For Christians the ashes also became a reminder of our sinful human nature. From Ezekiel, chapter nine we read: "And the LORD said to him, 'Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.'"

The ashes symbolize sin, death and repentance. During this period, Christians commit to repentance (acknowledging one's sin and turning away from our sinful nature and turning back faithfully to God).

When the pastor/priest applies the cross of ashes, he typically says to the worshiper: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This is a reminder that because of our sin we will surely die, but thanks be to God

for Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins and thereby raises us to new life (partial now, but in full in heaven).

Side note: Traditionally, the ashes used on Ash Wednesday are gathered up after palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday service are burned. Palms are used on Palm Sunday to symbolize Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before his crucifixion. Residents of Jerusalem are said to have waved palm fronds to celebrate Jesus' arrival.

This year we will have one Ash Wednesday service at 7 pm on February 17th. Our mid-week Lenten services will also be at 7 pm. Our Lenten theme for this year's Lenten sermons is: "Jesus said what?"

We will have five pastors and former pastors sharing a sermon on one of the more controversial things Jesus said. The actual worship service will be Holden Evening Prayer (which we have used in the past). The five participating pastors are (in no particular order): Pastor Jack, Pastor Erich, Pastor Steve, Rev. Mark Karle and Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm.

We are also planning on "live streaming" our mid-week Lenten services this year so if you cannot attend "in person" or if you are not yet comfortable with attending worship services you can watch the worship services "live" by going to our church website www.americanlutheran.net and clicking on the appropriate link for live worship.

One final note: You will need to make a reservation for Ash Wednesday worship, but you will not need to make a reservation for the five mid-week worship services following Ash Wednesday. We ask that you continue to reserve your space for all Sunday worship services as well as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. You should contact the church office to make all reservations!

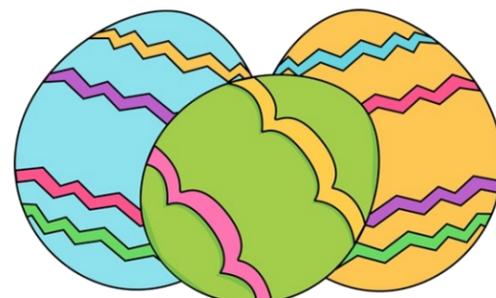
Thank you for your patience during the current pandemic and for your ongoing faithful support of American Lutheran Church by way of your time talent, and financial resources.

Peace and Blessings; *Pastor Jack*



CANDY DONATIONS

"ALCKids needs CANDY for our upcoming Easter "Egg-straveganza". Would you consider donating a bag or two of prewrapped candy? All candy can be dropped off in the narthex or outside of the Fellowship Hall. Call Tricia with questions or for more information. 928-445-4348. Thank you!"





FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

The February theme is Kindness and we are doing weekly themes based on each week's story and encouraging kids to dress up each week. Here are the weeks:

Feb 14: Big Red (Wear as much red or pink as possible)

Feb 21: Twin Day (Bring a friend and dress alike)

Feb 28: Super Hero Day (favorite character, super power, etc.)



The church office will be closed Monday, February 15th in observation of Presidents day. We will resume our normal hours Tuesday, February 16th.

GIRL SCOUTS COOKIES

This Sunday, Feb. 14, the Girl Scouts will be selling cookies on the patio. Supplies are limited so come early!

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

We are sad to say **Ed Carr** is retiring as our Facilities Coordinator, February 21. So much goes on behind the scenes to keep our church building running and ready! And Ed is the driving force that gets things done on time each and every week. Please take a moment to thank Ed for all his service to American Lutheran.

Denny Larson is (thankfully) staying. All the hard work he does... and the institutional knowledge he and Ed have would be a huge loss for us if he retired, too! But because we have cut back this year on our contracted janitorial services and on our church staff, Denny wants to focus this new year on a lot of cleaning and repair projects we've put on hold.

Denny has asked to be appointed as **Head Custodian**, which we're happy to do. His dedication to our church is an enormous blessing, and it's difficult to imagine what we'd do without his strong, gentle leadership and huge servant's heart.

You, too, can get involved. If any men and women want to join our volunteer brigade of church helpers, we have a lot of painting, re-arranging and organizing projects **YOU CAN HELP** Denny with, if you would like!

Both **Ed and Denny**, over the next two weeks, will be training our newest addition to the American Lutheran Church staff family. After a long process and interviews with many candidates, **Michelle** was offered and accepted the position as our new Facilities Manager. She will train to take on Ed's duties starting February 8.

Michelle lives out her strong Christian faith in so many ways! She has wonderful children and is a very good, creative worker. She brings a wealth of facilities and church ministry experience that will be a great blessing to all our American Lutheran Church friends and members!

When you see her on Sundays, say hi and introduce yourself. You'll be glad you did!

Blessings, *David Barnes, Director of Administration*

4TH QUARTER BENEVOLENCE

Amazing Grace Christian Church, AZ	\$2,355.81	Peace Lutheran Church (LCMC)	\$1,177.90
Children of the Nation	\$1,963.17	Prescott Area Habitat for Humanity	\$1,177.90
Coalition for Compassion and Justice (CCJ)	\$1,963.17	Prescott Valley Food Bank	\$3,963.17
Community Cupboard	\$3,963.17	Servant Partners to the Urban Poor	\$2,355.81
GracePointe, Sedona	\$1,963.17	10/10 Ministries	\$1,177.90
Granite Creek Feed	\$1,570.54	Total	<u>\$45,263.42</u>
Hope Clinic, Guinea, W. Africa	\$3,533.71		
Hungry Kids Program - Prescott	\$392.63	2020 Total Benevolence	<u>\$177,455.92</u>
Hungry Kids Program - Chino Valley	\$2,570.54		
Hungry Kids Program - Humboldt	\$2,177.90		
LCMC	\$1,963.17		
Light the Way Mission Church (LCMC)	\$1,177.90		
Missionary Aviation Fellowship	\$1,963.17		
NALC	\$5,889.52		
One Hope	\$1,963.17		

Do you see that huge number?! That is incredible! In a year with so much fear and uncertainty God was still in control and working hard at American Lutheran Church.

It is because of the faithful and generous members here that we were able to help out so many amazing charities and missions locally and globally!

Thank you for your faithfulness in furthering the Kingdom of God!