

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Weekly Update

*Our mission is to be more visible, to become more connected,
and to draw closer, with Christ as our center.*



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday and Lent

The holy season of Lent begins today. We won't be able to hold a Service as we did last year. In fact, last year we celebrated Mardi Gras and then the pandemic hit. This Ash Wednesday a Reflection will be online to pray along with. You can enter into the Lenten spirit by being intentional with actively engaging yourself and your family in little acts of prayer during the weeks of Lent. The recorded Sunday Service and the Drive In Service will continue. Perhaps by Easter Sunday it will be possible to celebrate outdoors as we did all last summer and Autumn. I'm hoping February will exhaust itself of all the cold and snow and I'm praying for an early and a warm Spring. We say that repentance is the core of the Lenten season. The word we translate into English, "repent" does not capture the original Greek word, "metanoia". This word literally means "change your mind." or "change your thinking."

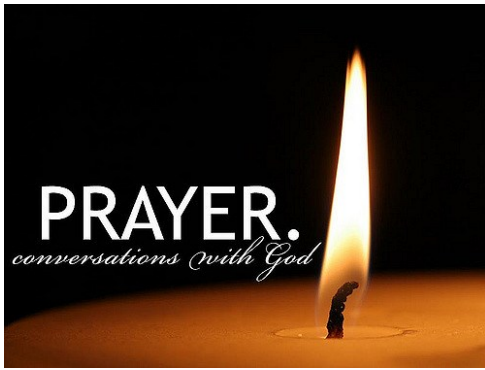
Lent is an inside job. Traditionally prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the practices the Christian Tradition has encouraged. Some people find it helpful to "give something up" for Lent. Becoming a bit more whole, a bit more Spirit centered and a bit more humble are worthy goals of Lent.

Donna Duessel will lead a Wednesday evening Lenten Study utilizing the poetry of Emily Dickinson. All are welcome even if you can't make all of the zoom meetings. Lent is also a good time to pray for all the members of Good Shepherd. It has not been an easy year for any of us.

As in past years we will engage in almsgiving for the Good Shepherd Foundation in Haiti and the Summerfield United Methodist Church in Bridgeport. This too is a spiritual discipline of Lent that increases our soul making as a community.

Have a good Lent!

LV
PD



Pour out your Spirit on all people living with illness, as well as their loved ones and caregivers. Help them to know that you claim them as your own and deliver them from fear and pain; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.

A Community of Prayer

For those in need of healing and comfort:

Members and Friends of the Congregation: Trudi, Lauren, Ray, Tim, Joan, Marie, Audrey, Elizabeth, Gordon, Sarah, Miriam, Scarlet, Jason, Brian, David, Tricia, Cate, Cecilio, Donna, Anthony, Steve.

Military (on active duty), Fire fighters, and Police: Ryan, Teddy, Tyler, Ben, Kenny, Brian, Bill, Ken, John, Glen, and Vic.

Front Line workers in the COVID-19 pandemic: Diane, Alicia, Brittany, Loretta, Jay, Alyssa, Monica, Rachel, June.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147 vs. 3

Do you wonder how to put a loved one, friend, neighbor, or yourself on the prayer list?

Simply email the church office at office@gscl-ct.org. If you would like a prayer card sent to your loved one, friend or neighbor, please include the full name and address. Prayer requests may also be made by phone (203-268-7596) and will be included by the church office.

For privacy, only the first name of each individual will be listed.

Do you have something you would like to discuss with Pastor Doug?

Should you be in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Doug Ryniewicz by cell phone (860-595-9560—text if you like!) or by his email (dearynos@gmail.com).

To join us for Worship online:

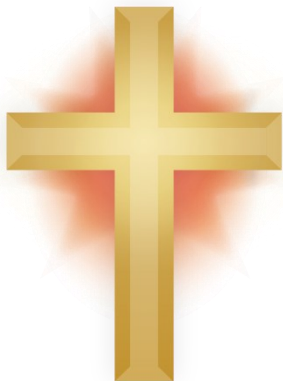
There are several options for you to join us for online worship:

- 1) go to the Good Shepherd website www.gslc-ct.org. Click on youtube on the menu under News & Events to be directed to our church's YouTube page.
- 2) go to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Good-Shepherd-Lutheran-Church-220717937953573/> Scroll down until you see the post with the current "Church Service (date)" click on this to be directed to our church's YouTube page.
- 3) To find us directly on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/> enter Good Shepherd Monroe CT in the search field and you will be directed to our page, then select the worship video you would like to see. Subscribe to our channel to make it even easier.

To join us for Worship in person: This Sunday, February 21st at 10:00 am. We will have Drive In Church, weather permitting (If it is extremely cold, snowy, or a steady rain, the service is cancelled).

This is how it works:

- Pastor Doug will be on a platform at the rear (east edge) of the large, main parking area.
- Cars should park facing that direction (east – towards the wooded area) with taller vehicles closer to the main road. This will allow shorter vehicles visibility by parking in front of the taller ones.
- The radio frequency of the broadcast is **FM 94.9**. Please tune your car radio to that station to hear the worship service.
- You should stay in your vehicle and keep your windows closed.
- Bring your own bread (as you did for Outdoor Worship) for communion.
- You must wear a mask if you exit your vehicle.
- Other recommendations of social distancing apply when you are outside your vehicle.



Due to the inclement winter weather the past three weeks the Drive In Worship Service was cancelled. So weather permitting, on **Sunday, February 21st** at the Drive In Worship Service, the Church Council and Officers of the Congregation will be installed for 2021. Our gracious thanks to Donna Duessel, Brian Immel, Tim Carlson, Roy Remlin, Thelma Cleland, Barbara Abraham, Trudi Black, Tricia Bobowick, Jeff Jackson, Karen Merrick, Renee Shoop and Riley Immel for their dedication and service to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.



Lent in a Lunch bag is on its way to you!

Everyone in the congregation will receive a Lenten bag with items prepared especially for you on your Lenten journey. You should receive it by Tuesday, February 24th.

Please note the bells that are mentioned are not in the bag. The delivery to church is currently missing enroute so we'll keep you posted on when they arrive here. If they don't make it, please look around your home and see if you have bells of your own to use on Easter Sunday.

If you do not receive your bag, please contact us and we'll get it to you as soon as possible.



The Crawfords send their thanks for the Lenten Activity Bag and share their cookie decorating results. What a great job decorating!



Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

Join Pastor Doug online for Ash Wednesday Reflection. Watch for an email with the link, or go to our website www.gslc-ct.org, Facebook page or YouTube channel.

Upcoming Events



EMILY DICKINSON and the POETRY OF LENT

A LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL

Due to the pandemic, we are unable to get together for our annual Lenten Soup 'n Study. This year we're trying something different and invite you to join us on Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7:00 pm for a 45 minute Zoom get together to discover "Emily Dickinson and the Poetry of Lent". The booklets will be included in your Lenten Bags so it will be easy to participate. If you do not receive one, we have extra copies at church or it can be sent to you via email. Call or email the church office if you would like one sent to you.

In addition, we will put the pages for the upcoming discussion in the newsletter each week.

Please join us beginning
**Wednesday, February 24th
at 7:00 p.m.**

TIPS FOR READING DICKINSON'S POETRY

1. **TAKE HEART!** Dickinson is a fascinating, rewarding poet, and her style can be quite compact and sometimes enigmatic. If you don't understand something at first, don't worry. Think of her poems as little cut gems, or small bites of delicious, rich food. Go slow, savor, and let the light come!
2. **THANK GOD FOR DICTIONARIES:** Dickinson wrote in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and she also had a taste for quirky terms, so her vocabulary can be unfamiliar at first. Don't be afraid to look up words as you go!
3. **TRY READING OUT LOUD:** Sometimes, the simple act of reading aloud can unlock the inner emotions or meaning of a poem. And all – those – dashes? Think of them as tiny dramatic pauses, or as signals to sharpen the notes of the music.
4. **RINSE AND REPEAT:** And speaking of music, think of a Dickinson poem as a song, or a miniature symphony, meant to be listened to again and again. Like many poets, she writes in a way that opens each poem to many possible meanings – and no reader is supposed to get them all at once! So take your time, and come back often. Each poem is a continual invitation to visit and revisit, always with the possibility of discovering something new.

Topic: EMILY DICKINSON AND THE POETRY OF LENT: A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBsy9MNnFMM05mZz09>



ASH WEDNESDAY

READ


Scripture:

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Poems:

"There's a certain Slant of light"
and "A Light exists in Spring,"

by Emily Dickinson



For where
your treasure is,
there your heart
will be also.

+ Matthew 6:21

MEDITATE

As Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality, this is a day for taking stock. In this passage from Matthew, Jesus challenges us to reflect on our motives and priorities – and beginning Lent with this passage frames the season as an opportunity for this reflection. As we pray, give, refrain, or consume – in other words, as we live our lives – what's really driving us? Are we trying to impress others, storing up "treasures on earth," in effect putting our hearts in the wrong place?

These two poems from Dickinson reflect on the light at this time of year. On one hand, the slanted light of winter afternoons, evocative of heaviness, despair, and affliction (even affliction caused by religion); and on the other hand, the light of early spring, evocative of hope, new life, and sacrament (a sacrament is "a visible sign of invisible grace"). Thus Dickinson imagines this time of year in emotional, theological terms, and so as a special, if fleeting, time for stepping back and reorienting our lives. As we look out onto the world, what heaviness, what afflictions do we feel? What hope and beauty? What sacrament, what grace?

MORE LIGHT

Pair these meditations on light with Dickinson's "Before I got my eye put out," a poem in which she imagines losing her eyesight, then gaining it again – and consequently being overwhelmed by the beauty of the world, so much so that she contemplates wanting to remain blind. On Ash Wednesday, this poem can serve as an exploration of the ways we fail to notice the radiant loveliness of creation. Accordingly, the 40 days of Lent may be conceived as a journey toward increasing our awareness of God's gifts all around us.

PRACTICES:

- + For the rest of this week begin each day by lighting a candle of reflection, praying, "God of light and life, help me to put first things first today. Help me notice the things that are weighing me down, so I can relinquish them; and give me eyes to see signs of your grace, so I can embrace them. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Make a special effort to notice the light in the world this week (or all Lent long); try keeping a "light journal" as a tool for reflection. Which window(s) does the light come in over the course of the day? What emotions does the light outside evoke? Let these reflections lead to others: What goals do you have for this Lenten season? How would you like to reorder your motives and priorities as you pray, give, refrain, and consume?
- + Among other things, Ash Wednesday is about remembering our mortality. Try writing a simple obituary for your life. What would you like to be remembered for? Share and discuss what you write with family or friends, over a meal or online.
- + "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Take a fresh look at where your treasure is: how are you spending your money and time? What small but meaningful steps can you take to bring your spending and giving more into line with your values?



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:

Mark 1:9-15

Poem

"A little Madness in the Spring,"
by Emily Dickinson

MEDITATE

The baptism-in-the-wilderness by John was about repentance, and Jesus' preaching was, too. In Mark's original Greek, the word for repentance is *metanoia*, from *meta* ("change") and *noia* ("mind") – today we might say, "change of heart," or "change of life." Dickinson suggests that some "wholesome madness" is fitting for this time of year: a fresh start, a new beginning, a wild, lush springtime of the soul.

But just as the spring brings new growth in a forest or in a backyard garden, the new life in our lives is not "our own," but rather a gift from God, the movement of the Spirit in our lives. With this in mind, we can ask: What "change of heart" is God already stirring within us? What new growth, what new leaf, what new flower is the Spirit calling us to cultivate?

MORE LIGHT

For a beautiful meditation on the dignity and "responsibility" of a flower (Dickinson was a passionate gardener), see Dickinson's "Bloom – is Result – to meet a Flower."

The time is
fulfilled, and the
kingdom of God has
come near; repent,
and believe in the
good news.

+ Mark 1:15

PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of repentance, praying, "God of mercy, show me the ways you are changing my life, the new growth, the new flowers you have in mind for me, and for your wider world, 'this whole Experiment of Green.' In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Schedule a "wilderness walk" in solitude or with a family member, listening for how God may be calling you to change and grow.
- + Do something "a little mad" this week, for the sake of delight: explore a brand new place; eat breakfast for dinner; read your favorite children's books to each other; fast from housework entirely (entirely!) for a full day; have a snowball fight; put a bunch of quarters in parking meters downtown; schedule a day-long board game marathon with your family; do a Zoom call with friends consisting entirely in joke telling – the "madder" the better!
- + Research or reach out online to an organization changing the world in inspiring ways: a racial justice and reconciliation organization; an environmental advocacy organization; a local community garden – follow your passions! Learn more about their work, their impact, and how you can get involved.
- + Dickinson loved letter-writing – so write a letter to yourself this week. What changes are you making (or would you like to make) to be more in tune with God's good news? Discuss this question with family or friends over a meal or online. And then, like a mad monarch, address the letter to yourself – and put it in the mail!



The Good Shepherd Book Club is meeting on March 2nd at **1:00 p.m.** when we will discuss "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennett. In April, we will discuss "The 100 Year Old Man Who Jumped Out the Window and Disappeared" by Jonas Jonasson. We will either meet via Zoom or possibly indoors using the new handler system if the infection rates are low. We welcome new members!



Our gracious thanks to Barbara Abraham, Donna Duessel, Karen Jackson and Eileen Holleran for creating the beautiful quilted Lenten cross in memory of Kathy Goulet.

Reaching Out, Serving Others:



Food for Summerfield

There is an ongoing need for nutritious food for the kids at Summerfield. Protein is especially needed. GSLC Council has challenged the congregation to provide funds for the purchase of nutritious food. GSLC will match donations from members for up to \$250 per month. Pastor Gaston has told us that \$500 per month would meet their nutritious food needs. If you wish to donate please write a check to GSLC with the notation "Food For Summerfield" or place cash in the Summerfield box.

Weekly Offering

As worship services are online and outdoor for the near future, if you have a chance, please submit your offering to help with our expenses. Thank you for your contribution!

There are different ways to contribute. You may bring it with you to the Drive In worship service or you may mail it if you are worshipping online with us or you may use your bank's online checking and have the bank issue the check and mail it—it's most often a free service offered by banks. Check with your bank to see if this works for you. In addition, our Finance Committee is working diligently on implementing PayPal/Venmo and hopes to have it in place by next month.

Let us know if you have any questions, we are always happy to help.



A Cosmos of Kaleidoscopic Fragments

Devotional for the week of February 14th, 2021

It was several months since her death, months of looking to make sense of his pained world that had changed so completely. In desperation, he wandered into a room of unknown faces, a circle of uncertainty. Welcome. Names. Introductions. Then instructions from the grief counselor: "Next week, bring an item, something that will let us know your loved one."

He wondered how that could possibly be done. What one thing, what symbol would be able to define a whole life? What to bring? Her hiking boots or blue sport sandals, the spinning wheel, a gardenia bush or bouquet of zinnias? The gold wedding ring worn for

thirty years? Her passport? Perhaps one of her paintings. Maybe her recipe for spaghetti sauce with olives—no, better, her grandmother's date cookies. The flannel-lined jeans or white linen dress? A picture of her children, her Bible, a book, her diary? He did not return to the circle. He could not imagine any token to be stand-in for a whole life.

There with Jesus on a high mountain apart from the comings and goings below, just hours away from when he would foretell his own suffering and death, three disciples grasped for a full-screen image of their rabbi, Jesus. In one dazzling flash of terrifying brightness they thought they had found it. But then the same voice that presided over Jesus' baptism interjected: "This is my Son . . ." (Mark 9:7). Suddenly, a cosmos of kaleidoscopic fragments rushed in: there was Jesus restoring sight to blind eyes, defying demonic strongholds, settling seas, passing bread and multiplying fish, rattling an empire, embracing a child, drinking the Samaritan's water, eating the sinners' meals, casting mercy about like seed, robing enemies in love, championing the lowly, promising life, accepting death. There is no way that this Jesus could be condensed into a single moment, image, or being.

As if to say, "Don't be blinded by the light," from the cloud there came a voice: "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

Devotional message and art based on the readings for February 14th, reprinted from sundaysandseasons.com.

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Sunday, February 21 — First Sunday in Lent

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25:1-10

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15



In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."