

Parish Rebuilder

St. Luke's Lutheran Church - 5150 Wilson Street, La Mesa, CA 91942

www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org

February 2026
Monthly Newsletter
Volume 26 Issue 2

We invite you to attend

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Please contact Lupita in the office to discuss
a visit or to arrange an appointment with
Pastor Mark:

619-463-6633 or office-sllc@att.net

Giving Up Something for Lent?

The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday which this year falls on 18 February. The Lenten season is often considered a time of reflection and repentance. Its forty days reflect the time during which Jesus was in the desert being tempted by the devil, which is like being in Las Vegas but without all the glamour. To practice avoiding temptations and sin, it has long been tradition that people give up something for Lent.

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The idea of refraining from or foregoing fleshly pleasures to lead a holier life predates Christianity. Unfortunately, very early in Christianity the notion took root that giving up something sinful, potentially or actually, was meritorious, i.e. earned points with God. So arose the various religious orders of monks and nuns who believed that living lives of poverty, chastity, and obedience would earn them favour in the economy of salvation, and thereby salvation became a type of business. Once the Vatican started selling indulgences, the economy of salvation became really big business.

As indicated a couple weeks ago in a sermon, this emphasis on getting the old Adam, the sinner, in us to behave is well



intended but biblically misguided. According to Lutheran theology all of us believers are *simul iustus et peccator* (simultaneously justified and sinner, or at the same time saint and sinner). Being both saint and sinner at the same time, however, does not mean that we can do sinful and saintly things at the same time. No one can multitask, not even computers which operate by switching on and off between ones and zeros, countless times to complete their programmed tasks. So, if Christians spend their time trying to get the sinner to behave, they are not exercising their gospel created faith manifested in loving their neighbour.

In contrast to the Roman Church and to much of Christianity throughout the ages, the Lutheran reformers following biblical example repeatedly propounded that only good trees can produce good fruit. Trying to get a bad tree to stop bearing bad fruit was, so to speak, a fruitless effort. Furthermore, good trees bear good fruit as a matter of course. So, if the tree is good, i.e. justified by faith alone, good works come on their own. In relation to Genesis 29:1-3, Luther describes this dynamic implemented as follows:

“But we teach that first of all the person must be looked at, whether it is just and godly, which takes place through the Word he believes. Then, however, it carries out its ministry in the church: teaches, exhorts, prays, learns and hears

the Word, bears the cross for the sake of the Word, and is mortified in the flesh. That person is saintly, alive, and well-pleasing to God. It proceeds to other external offices after it has heard the Word, believed, prayed, and discharged its duty in the church. Thus after David has done this, he proceeds to the administration of the kingdom, hears lawsuits, wages war, draws up his army, attacks the enemy, kills, and sheds enemy blood. Properly speaking, these are not duties of the church; they are political. Accordingly, if anyone says: ‘Then David is not saintly, for he is a soldier and bears the sword,’ that person judges, too grossly, as the papists do. For who is that man David who sheds blood and wages war? He is a person who has been justified in the church by the Word and faith. But later he has the political administration entrusted to him. Therefore he judges, condemns, justifies, administers the state, punishes the guilty, and wages wars. Nevertheless, he remains a man of faith and a good tree. But that spilling of blood is pleasing to God, although the world, the monks, and all other hypocrites are violently offended, because they look only at the external mask of the works. They do not see the Word, faith, the spirit, and the impulse of God, who governs the person not only in sublime duties but also in those that pertain to the state and the household. For David was called by God to do this, as is stated, ‘that he should do My whole will,’ which also orders him to humble the Philistines, the Damascenes, the Amalekites, the Ammonites, etc.

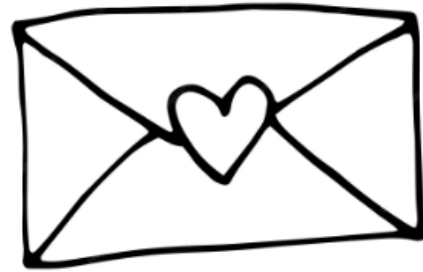
“But what does this mean?’ the papists say. ‘He had to pray, sacrifice, and bring offerings in the temple.’ Right indeed! He also performs the works of the church in accordance with his place and rank. In the morning he prays, meditates on the Word, believes, sings psalms, and carefully discharges the duties that pertain to the church. Afterwards he also administers political and household affairs, procreates children, takes care of the household, eats, and drinks. Thus David goes along in a godly and saintly manner through all three hierarchies: the church, the state, and the household.

“In the same manner our life, too, must be arranged, so that we are found in the rank and station which is pleasing to God according to His Word. Above all, you should believe in the Word, confess it, and be prepared to suffer and die for the Word. Later, whether you are a magistrate or the head of a household, you should serve your calling in your place. Such a life pleases God and is honored by God with many great rewards and successes”

(LW 5:268-269).

So, rather than “giving up something for Lent,” perhaps it would be biblically and theologically more fruitful to take up a new activity for Lent which conveys the gospel both in the church and to one’s neighbour. The possibilities would seem endless, restricted only by our lack of faith, i.e. the sinner in us.

Why wait for Lent? As Luther advises, remember your baptism, put the old Adam to death daily, and let Christ raise and set loose the resurrected believer to bear and share the gifts of God’s love for all us sinners, repentant or not!



Heartfelt Thanks

As pastor at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, I wish to thank all those who participated in the Christmas version of “pastor appreciation” day/month. (In my case, it should be restricted to one day every twenty-five years or so.) The many cards and expressions of gratitude were very touching and appreciated, but they overlooked one important aspect. As I have repeatedly stressed, I am the luckiest pastor in the world be called to serve the members of arguably the best congregation in the world. With my limited talents and abilities, however, it is always an honor and privilege to serve you with God’s word and to serve among you as we bear the fruits of God’s word to our neighbors together. Blessings to all of you in your service to the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout 2026.

- Pastor Mark Menacher

Dear Women of St. Luke's,

One year ago this month, I wrote my first article as your WSL Representative. I prayed that we might grow in relationship with God and one another. What a year it has been!

In March, we compiled your hopes and wishes into a big chart of Areas of Interest – noting dreams and goals and how we might grow and participate in serving our community and one another. We enacted many ideas over the year. There are so many wonderful possibilities on our chart yet to be accomplished. One of our first activities was a Day Trip by bus to Julian to see the Annual Daffodil Festival. What a joyful adventure!

We shared Soup Suppers and Lenten Services as Easter approached in April and focused our attention on Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross and His victory for us in His resurrection. This truth needs always be our primary focus – our solid foundation for fellowship – our precious gift of salvation.

In May, almost sixty of us gathered for our Springtime Women's Tea – complete with our Gentlemen Wait Staff! What a lovely and delicious event it was! Oh, the awesome privilege of gathering together as Daughters of the King!

Throughout the year, the quilters made many prayer quilts and full sized quilts – some that ministered to the Texas flood victims through Lutheran World Relief. Various women served as Altar Guild workers, Newsletter folders and Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers and helpers. Many prepared and brought delicious treats for Sunday fellowship hour while others served weekly in the kitchen – greeting each of us and cleaning and organizing for the next gathering. There have been so many opportunities to be a blessing to each other.

In September, we started Saturday Story Telling – a time to share and listen and grow in our relationships with each other. As of this publication, we have met ten times! I am so excited to watch God's outpouring as we continue this fellowship.

In November, we surveyed and identified the recipients of our charitable giving. What

joy to bless our Adopt-a-Family through the Santee Crisis House. The gift wrapping day was fun and heartwarming as we prayed for each family member. We had the opportunity to also bless a needy local family with much needed new shoes and clothes. The El Cajon Pregnancy Crisis Center was overjoyed with your donations of diapers and wipes and clothes for babies and pregnant moms. We made a significant donation to TACO supporting the feeding of the homeless in downtown San Diego and also supported our Lutheran Missionary, Pastor Andrew Fedder and Family in Romania. How blessed it is to give to others!

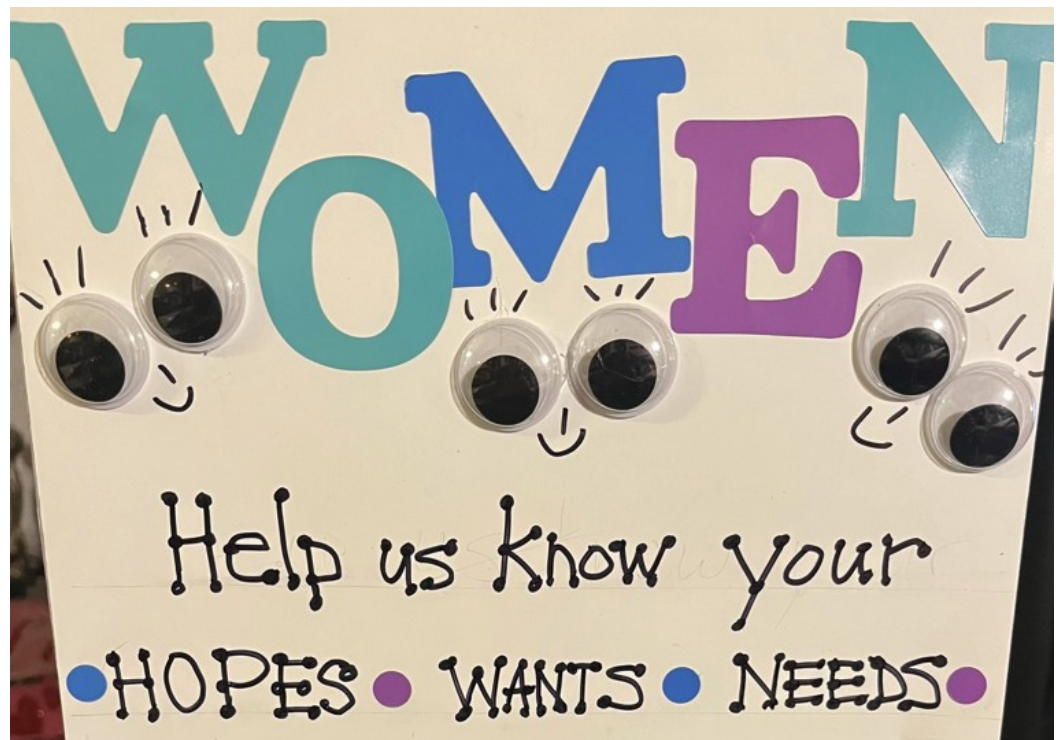
What will this year hold for us as Women of St. Luke's Church? I think of the verse in Hebrews 10:24 – "And let us consider how we may spur one another toward love and good deeds." Another verse in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 also comes to mind – "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing."

Let's take another look at our Chart of Ideas. Let's bring additional ideas and hopes into the conversation. Let's pray for God's leading, wisdom and provision as we plan together activities and projects and celebrations for 2026. As Proverbs 29:18a says – "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

I look forward to hearing your hopes and dreams and continuing to walk with you in sweet fellowship and ministry.

In His service,

Laurie 



Dear brothers and sisters,

I feel so blessed to have such a caring family and to be part of the body of Christ with you. I am still in awe of the 100th birthday party. I have never received so many birthday cards with such kind words, nor have I ever had so many people want their picture taken with me.

Thank you all. I pray every day for God's peace, protection, and guidance for each of you.

Yours in Christ,
Betty Wiedmer



Happy 100th Birthday Betty



FEBRUARY WORSHIP TEXTS

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

— **February 1, 2026**

First Lesson — Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

Second Lesson — 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Gospel — Matthew 5:1-12

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

— **February 8, 2026**

First Lesson — Isaiah 58:3-9a

Psalm 112:1-9

Second Lesson — 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)

Gospel — Matthew 5:13-20

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

— **February 15, 2026**

First Lesson — Exodus 24:8-18

Psalm 2:6-12

Second Lesson — 2 Peter 1:16-21

Gospel — Matthew 17:1-9

First Sunday in Lent

— **February 22, 2026**

First Lesson — Genesis 3:1-21

Genesis 3:1-21

Second Lesson — Romans 5:12-19

Gospel — Matthew 4:1-11



| | |
|------------------|------|
| Rick Parkhurst | 2/1 |
| Michele Dipierro | 2/3 |
| Carol Bohnsack | 2/7 |
| Audrey Utley | 2/8 |
| Richard Utley | 2/18 |
| Stephanie Brown | 2/19 |
| Andrew Killion | 2/20 |
| Doris Snashall | 2/23 |
| Charlie Utley | 2/25 |



FEBRUARY PRAYER CALENDAR

“Give to our God Immortal Praise!”

| | | |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1 | Psalm 103:1-22 | <p><i>Give to our God immortal praise; Mercy and truth are all his ways; Wonders of Grace to God belong; Repeat his mercies in your song.</i></p> <p><i>He sent his son with power to save From guilt and darkness and the grave Wonders of Grace to God belong Repeat his mercies in your song.</i></p> <p><i>Give to the Lord of Lords renown; The King of Kings with glory crown. His mercies ever shall endure When lords and kings are known No more!</i></p> <p><i>Lutheran Book of Worship Hymn 520</i></p> |
| 2 | Psalm 8:1-9 | |
| 3 | Psalm 33:1-22 | |
| 4 | Psalm 47:1-9 | |
| 5 | Psalm 111:1-10 | |
| 6 | Psalm 34:1-10 | |
| 7 | Psalm 66:1-9 | |
| 8 | Psalm 113:1-9 | |
| 9 | Psalm 89:1-6 | |
| 10 | Psalm 36:5-12 | |
| 11 | Psalm 96:1-13 | |
| 12 | Psalm 86:8-13 | |
| 13 | Psalm 105:1-6 | |
| 14 | Psalm 95:1-7 | |
| 15 | Psalm 67:1-7 | |
| 16 | Psalm 59:16-17 | |
| 17 | Psalm 18:1-6 | |
| 18 | Psalm 98:1-9 | |
| 19 | Psalm 40:16-17 | |
| 20 | Psalm 56:8-13 | |
| 21 | Psalm 100:1-5 | |
| 22 | Psalm 43:1-5 | |
| 23 | Psalm 138:1-8 | |
| 24 | Psalm 111:1-10 | |
| 25 | Psalm 121:1-8 | |
| 26 | Psalm 30:1-12 | |
| 27 | Psalm 65:1-13 | |
| 28 | Psalm 146:1-10 | |

WORSHIP TEAMS

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| | Reader(s) | <i>Randy Engel</i> |
| | Altar Guild | <i>Terry East</i> |
| 1st | Communion Assistant —bread | <i>Bob Urich</i> |
| | Communion Assistants—wine | <i>Jillian Barnard & Jennifer Killion</i> |
| | Greeter | <i>Randy Engel</i> |
| | Prayers of the People | <i>Pastor Mark Menacher</i> |
| | Projectionist | <i>Shirley Carrington</i> |
| | Usher Team | <i>Bob & Cheryl Gray</i> |
| | Acolytes | <i>Jocelyn Sollenberger & Charlotte Utley</i> |
| | Sound Tech | <i>Kendrick Jennings</i> |
| | Counter | <i>Jennifer Killion</i> |
| 8th | Communion Assistant —bread | <i>Ted Olsen</i> |
| | Communion Assistants—wine | <i>Judi Cole & Terry East</i> |
| | Greeter | <i>JoAnn Hendrickson</i> |
| | Prayers of the People | <i>Jillian Barnard</i> |
| | Projectionist | <i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i> |
| | Usher Team | <i>Cheri Murrell & Randy Engel</i> |
| | Acolytes | <i>Stasha Raschtschenia & Giuliana Salas</i> |
| | Sound Tech | <i>Kendrick Jennings</i> |
| | Counter | <i>Judi Cole</i> |
| 15th | Communion Assistant —bread | <i>Ken Murrell</i> |
| | Communion Assistants—wine | <i>Richard & Whitney Utley</i> |
| | Greeter | <i>Randy Engel</i> |
| | Prayers of the People | <i>Jennifer Killion</i> |
| | Projectionist | <i>Shirley Carrington</i> |
| | Usher Team | <i>David & Kim Emerson</i> |
| | Acolytes | <i>Charlotte Utley & Jocelyn Sollenberger</i> |
| | Sound Tech | <i>Kendrick Jennings</i> |
| | Counter | <i>Jennifer Killion</i> |
| 22nd | Communion Assistant —bread | <i>Judi Cole</i> |
| | Communion Assistants—wine | <i>Jennifer Killion & Randy Engel</i> |
| | Greeter | <i>Jillian Barnard</i> |
| | Prayers of the People | <i>Whitney Utley</i> |
| | Projectionist | <i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i> |
| | Usher Team | <i>Gary & Carol Prior</i> |
| | Acolytes | <i>Audrey Utley & Giuliana Salas</i> |
| | Sound Tech | <i>Kendrick Jennings</i> |
| | Counter | <i>Judi Cole</i> |

February 2026

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|--|-----------|--|
| 1 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 6:00 pm Al-Anon 3:00 –5:30 pm SLTA | 2 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm AA | 3 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day | 4 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 11:00 am Staff 5:30 pm Choir 7:00 pm Service | 5 8:00 am Tai Chi 5:00 pm Catechism 6:30 pm Al-Anon | 6 | 7 8:00 am JOY 10:30 am WSL Story telling time |
| 8 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 6:00 pm Al-Anon 3:00 –5:30 pm SLTA | 9 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm AA | 10 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 6:00 pm Council mtg | 11 11:00 am Staff 5:30 pm Choir 7:00 pm Service | 12 8:00 am Tai Chi 5:00 pm Catechism 6:30 pm Al-Anon | 13 | 14 8:00 am JOY |
| 15 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 6:00 pm Al-Anon 3:00 –5:30 pm SLTA | 16 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm AA | 17 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day | 18 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 11:00 am Staff 6:00 pm Lent supper 7:00 pm Service 7:30 pm Choir | 19 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon | 20 | 21 8:00 am JOY 10:30 am WSL Story telling time |
| 22 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 6:00 pm Al-Anon 3:00 –5:30 pm SLTA | 23 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm AA | 24 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day | 25 11:00 am Staff 6:00 pm Lent supper 7:00 pm Service 7:40 pm Choir | 26 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon | 27 | 28 8:00 am JOY |

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Dated Material
February 2026

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL

- Sunday Worship: 9:00 am in the Sanctuary
- Sunday School: 10:30 am in the Lower Level
- Wednesday Choir Practice: 5:30 pm in the Fireside Room (Lower Level)
- Wednesday Pericope / Communion Service: 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room

St. Luke's Mission Statement:

We are called as a community of Christians saved by grace

—through faith alone in Jesus Christ—

to spread the Holy Gospel in word, sacrament, and action

solī deo gloria.