

Parish Rebuilder

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

www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org

March 2025
Monthly Newsletter
Volume 25 Issue 3

Ash Wednesday and Lent.

What? Already?

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

It is that time of the year again. The Lenten season is approaching, and to be extra penitential no one should use any seasoning in their food. There is a "reason for the season," but in interests of Lenten good taste, should our food taste good? Some seasoned pastors would say, "Yes," but other salty, old dogs in clerical collars would disagree. Without any degree of reflection on this important topic, however, preparations are already being made at St. Luke's for Ash Wednesday and Lent.

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Strictly biblically speaking, there is no scriptural foundation for Ash Wednesday or for Lent. Whereas one can read in the Old Testament about people repenting in "sackcloth and ashes" and spending time in the wilderness tempted to do and doing ungodly things, apart from Jesus' 40 day venture into the desert, where the devil got his just desserts, in the New Testament sackcloth and ashes have gone out of style, and the entire world is viewed as a pagan wilderness in which unbelievers seem "tempted" to hear and believe the gospel.

3/9 — Congregational Forum



Two thousand years later, particularly in many US churches, the only ashes involved at the beginning of Lent arise with the smoke when the pastor cooks the soup. As many are aware, Martin Luther had little time for Ash Wednesday. In fact, Luther was keen to dispense with just about anything in the church smacking of paganistic mythology derived from

and introduced by humanity's pious sinfulness. Taking that further, many other Protestant denominations and groups have dispensed altogether with the "trappings" of liturgical seasons, the lectionary of readings, and so forth.

However, questioning the suitability and perhaps even the viability of observing Ash Wednesday and Lent consequently calls the rest of the liturgical seasons and calendar into question. Even if Christians were prepared to give up Lent for Lent, would they be as keen to give up other parts of the liturgical year, such as Christmas and Easter? Doing so could really throw a spanner in the works both in the church and well beyond it. If implemented, how would Christmas and Easter (C&E) Christians know when they should attend church during the year or at all? Also, what would happen to the economy? If Christians dropped Christmas and Easter, the profit-driven, pagan retailers would probably find themselves begging the church to reimplement these holidays (holy days) for their own financial gain. Although Lent does not have the same appeal as Christmas and Easter, some crafty merchants might promote the first Wednesday in Lent with a view to turn ash into cash!

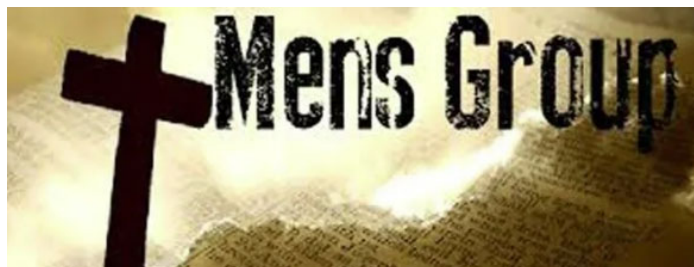
Although such observances (called *adiaphora* or "middle things") are wholly dispensable, Lutheran churches have generally retained liturgical and church seasonal practices as part of an ethos of teaching and preaching the word of God. The seasons, the colours, the set pericope readings, etc., serve as tools to teach and preach regularly and collectively about the life of God engaged with the sinners whom he seeks to save. As Martin Luther reminds in his exposition of Psalm 51, one of the seven penitential Psalms, handy during Lent, "The proper subject of theology is the sinful human being, guilty and lost, and the justifying God and saviour of the

sinful human being. Whatever is sought or discussed in theology outside this subject is error and poison" (WA 40, 2:328, 17-19 = LW 12: 311 - author's translation).

Focusing one's mind and the congregation's life as a whole on our sinfulness is something which we sinners do not readily do. Have you ever wondered why so many non-liturgical churches with no pericope end up being bastions of the so-called "prosperity gospel"? Often in such churches, God is portrayed as having a biblical recipe for your success, health, and well-being (and maybe even a trip to Disneyland). If you do X, Y, and Z for God, God will reward you with _____ (fill in the blank). Reminding people that they are "by nature sinful and unclean" or that they are "in bondage to sin and cannot free themselves," simply does not sell (although it has led people to buy indulgences). Consequently, even though such churches celebrate Christmas and Easter, the probably do not observe Lent.

More important than being reminded of our individual and collective sinfulness, frequently expressed in soup supper gluttony rather than in confession of sin, Lenten observances offer us sinners another opportunity during the week to gather to hear the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ to effect the forgiveness of our sin and to reconcile us depraved, deplorable sinners with himself. Midweek we take advantage of an extra opportunity to hear once again how our human sinfulness spared no effort to kill the Christ sent to save us. What good news it is to hear how God, rather than destroying us in righteous rage, takes us into the life, death, and resurrection of his son to free us from the devil's soup of sin and death and to give us the gift of eternal life.

Forum - Old Chapel Restoration



Calling All Men

As announced during the January Quarterly Congregational Meeting, St. Luke's plans to hold a series of congregational forums or fora (both correct) starting on Sunday, 09 March, after church to discuss the restoration of the old chapel and to start gleaning ideas from the membership about future use(s) and thus corresponding design(s) for that space. This first forum will intentionally be quite broad and non-specific. The church council is looking for suitable photographs and other relevant information to give forum participants an idea of how the chapel once was, how it is now, with a view to how it might be. In addition to sharing information, it is hoped that those unfamiliar with the space will take a few minutes to "tour" the old chapel in all of its current lack of glory.

On Sunday, 09 March, after the congregational forum, Rick Godfrey and Pastor Mark invite all the men at St. Luke's to meet briefly to gauge interest in reestablishing a men's group or a series of men's groups at St. Luke's. For those not aware, Reformation Lutheran had a men's group, but sadly St. Luke's has not had one for a long time. Unfortunately, in all the merging and moving over the past couple of years, the men's group has got a little lost in all the shuffle. Scripture is very clear about the important role that men play in the life and mission of church. So, men, please mark your calendars to attend this meeting.



Richard Deal in Concert!

On 22 March 2025 from 3:00-5:00 pm, the San Diego Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is holding a recital and awards event. St. Luke's Director of Music and very gifted musician, Richard Deal, will perform as part of the recital. Please mark your calendars to come and hear Richard play and to partake of the talents of fellow organists from the San Diego area. Last year's event garnered national recognition, and with Richard playing this year it could go international! The recital will be held at Christ Lutheran Church-Pacific Beach (4761 Cass Street, San Diego, CA 92109).



Dear Women of St. Luke's,

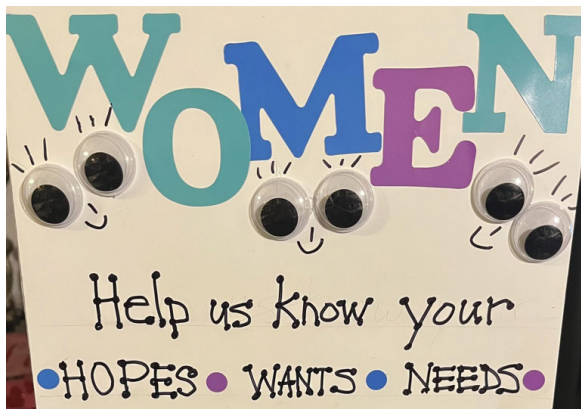
Early in February, we asked you what you would like to see as opportunities and possibilities for the Women of St. Luke's. WOW! I have been delighted and inspired by your responses on our "googly eyed" cards and in numerous conversations. There have been so many ideas for activities and projects, for types of gatherings and fellowships, as well as stated desires to grow and learn together while building relationships with God and each other, and, also, reaching out to others in our community. Each idea sent my mind and heart racing. How wonderful that would be! How do we get started? What joy that would bring! What do we do first? Let's get started with all of these suggestions! I am so eager to see each idea blossom into action and fruition and yield beautiful, bountiful blessings. Each card and every conversation raised my anticipatory delight.

This frenetic eagerness also reminded me of a pivotal experience when I was a young girl. My Daddy helped me plant Sweet Pea seeds on our side yard. I was beyond excited about this project. I absolutely loved sweet pea flowers - and I cherished projects in the yard with my Dad. He helped me prepare the soil, set up trellises for the plants to grow on, and, finally, we planted and watered each seed. He then told me, "We need to wait for God to make them grow."

Well, I waited for days ... checking several times each day to see if our sweet peas had bloomed. NOTHING! I saw NOTHING! I was so disappointed and sad. What was the matter? Did we do something wrong? Why weren't my flowers growing? My Dad told me, "We need to wait. Roots need to grow first in order to get the nourishment to support the plants." So ... I waited ... and waited... for what seemed like "forever". As I daily checked our plantings, I still saw NOTHING! Tears came to my eyes and rolled down my cheeks. I decided that I needed to dig in the dirt to see if the roots were, in fact, growing. My Dad walked out to our side yard and gently asked, "What are you doing, Laurie?" I explained my search for roots and my wise Daddy explained to me that my impatient excavation could keep the plants from ever growing by disrupting the roots.

Oh, my goodness! I was impatient! I didn't mean to hurt the flowers. I just wanted them immediately. "Growth takes time," he said. Ultimately, the plants broke ground, leaves began to spread, and, finally, after what seemed like a very, very long time, my sweet peas bloomed! What an awesome blessing ... and what a great lesson I started to learn — GROWTH TAKES TIME.

"One plants, another waters, but God brings the increase." (I Corinthians 3:6)



This is a lesson that I still wrestle with at times, as described by the following poem:

Little girl goin' to school. Little girl scared by all the rules.
 Little girl fightin' fears and tears, but little girl sees Teacher near.
 Teacher, Teacher, I wanna be everything Your heart sees me to be.
 But Teacher, Teacher, why don't You see I'm just a little girl, not the woman You seem to see.
 Oh, Teacher Teacher, I wanna be everything Your heart sees me to be, please help me!"

Day by day with her Teacher she walked. Day by day with her Teacher she talked.
 But she worried why they moved so slow. Doesn't Teacher know she wants to grow?
 "Teacher, Teacher, I wanna be everything Your heart sees me to be.
 But Teacher, Teacher, why can't You see, I'm still a little girl not the woman You seem to see.
 Oh, Teacher, Teacher, I wanna be everything You seem to see me to be. Why don't You help me?"

Years go by she seems to turn and toss, seems to feel that all is lost.
 So discouraged freely flow the tears, but, as always, Teacher's near.
 "Teacher, Teacher, I wanna be everything Your heart sees me to be.
 But Teacher, Teacher, why won't You see, I'm still a little girl not the woman I thought I'd be.
 Oh, Teacher, Teacher, I wanna be everything You seem to see me to be. Why won't You help me?"

Her Teacher answered her...

"Child, My child, you've been growing each day - changed and strengthened along the way.
 Look in the mirror, tell Me what you see. You'll see a woman beginning to look like Me.
 Yes, I'm your Teacher and I want you to be everything My heart sees you to be.
 I know your struggles and I know your fears, so let Me be your joy in exchange for all those tears.
 Oh, Child, My child, I want you to be everything My heart sees you to be... so I'm helping you.
 Keep walking with Me... Keep talking with Me... I'm helping you!

Ladies, the Church Council has called a Congregational Forum in the Lower Level after church on March 9th to begin discussing the restoration of the Old Chapel. Let's meet together after this meeting on **March 9th** for a **brief Women's Gathering** to look at all the ideas and suggestions that have been shared and gather any others you've thought of since. Let's begin talking about the possibilities... and let's pray together that God will bring the increase.

I look forward to seeing each of you then.
 In His service,

Laurie





MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Henry Reisert	3/6
Robin Wheeler	3/9
Mary Ann Boullain	3/10
Judy Horning	3/10
Katrina Wilborn	3/11
Carol Prior	3/13
David Emerson	3/14
Stuart Olsen	3/23
Scott Brown	3/24

Coffee Hour Host

**March 2nd — Jennifer Killion
& Ken Proctor**

March 9th — Laurie Floren

March 16th — Debbie Deal

March 23rd — Pending host

March 30th — Pending host

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Colleen & Ted Olsen	3/29
Rick & Nancy Parkhurst	3/23

Not
Lucky
Just
Blessed

MARCH WORSHIP TEXTS

The Transfiguration of Our Lord — March 2, 2025

First Lesson — Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Psalm 99

Second Lesson — Hebrews 3:1-6

Gospel — Luke 9:28-36

First Sunday in Lent — March 9, 2025

First Lesson — Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-13

Second Lesson — Romans 10:8b-13

Gospel — Luke 4:1-13

Second Sunday in Lent — March 16, 2025

First Lesson — Jeremiah 26:8-15

Psalm 4

Second Lesson — Philippians 3:17-4:1

Gospel — Luke 13:31-35

Third Sunday in Lent — March 23, 2025

First Lesson — Ezekiel 33:7-20

Psalm 85

Second Lesson — 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Gospel — Luke 13:1-9

Fourth Sunday in Lent — March 30, 2025

First Lesson — Isaiah 12:1-6

Psalm 32

Second Lesson — 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gospel — Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

MARCH'S PRAYER CALENDAR

"In Your Word"

1	I Peter 5:6-12
2	Psalm 138:1-8
3	Matthew 11:25-30
4	Luke 11:9-13
5	Psalm 119:11-16
6	2 Corinthians 4:16-18
7	John 10:9-16
8	Isaiah 55:10-13
9	Psalm 121:1-8
10	Lamentations 3:21-26
11	Philippians 4:4-9
12	Psalm 119:25-32
13	Titus 3:4-7
14	Hebrews 4:11-16
15	Romans 8:26-28
16	Romans 8:37-39
17	Psalm 119:113-117
18	Psalm 91:1-4
19	Proverbs 2:1-5
20	Isaiah 40:27-31
21	Colossians 2:6-15
22	Psalm 34:4-10
23	Romans 15:4-7
24	Ephesians 3:14-21
25	Psalm 73:23-26
26	Jude 24,25
27	Isaiah 43:1-2
28	2 Corinthians 5:16-18
29	I Peter 1:3-7
30	2 Peter 1:3-8
31	John 1:14-18

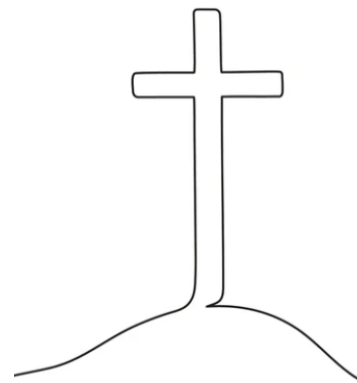
*Father of mercies, in your word
 What endless glory shines!
 Forever be your name adored
 For these celestial lines*

*Here springs of consolation rise
 To cheer the fainting mind,
 And thirsty souls, receiving supplies
 And sweet refreshment find*

*Oh may these heavenly pages be
 My ever dear delight;
 And still new beauties may I see
 And still increasing light.*

*Divine instructor, gracious lord,
 May you be always near.
 Teach me to love your sacred word
 And find my Savior here.*

*Lutheran Book of Worship
 Hymn 240*



MARCH WORSHIP TEAMS

	Reader(s)	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Altar Guild	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
2nd	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Bob Urich</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Rick & Nola Godfrey</i>
	Greeter	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Pastor Mark Menacher</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Bob & Cheryl Gray</i>
	Acolytes	<i>Phoenix Griffin and Stasha Raschtschenia</i>
	Sound Tech	<i>Scott Brown</i>
9th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Ted Olsen</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Jillian Barnard & Mark Stanton</i>
	Greeter	<i>JoAnn Hendrickson</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Laurie Floren</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Randy Engel & Cheri Murrell</i>
	Acolytes	<i>Audrey Utley & Stasha Raschtschenia</i>
	Sound Tech	<i>Brad Sollenberger</i>
16th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Gleason Snashall</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Ken & Cheri Murrell</i>
	Greeter	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Kim & David Emerson</i>
	Acolytes	<i>Audrey Utley & Phoenix Griffin</i>
	Sound Tech	<i>Ken Murrell</i>
23rd	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Judi Cole</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Jillian Barnard & Laurie Floren</i>
	Greeter	<i>JoAnn Hendrickson</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Ted Olsen</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Gary & Carol Prior</i>
	Acolytes	<i>Stasha Raschtschenia & Audrey Utley</i>
	Sound Tech	<i>Brad Sollenberger</i>
30th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Mark Stanton</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Cheri Murrell & Randy Engel</i>
	Greeter	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Gleason Snashall</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i>
	Usher Team	<i>David & Kim Emerson</i>
	Acolytes	<i>Audrey Utley & Phoenix Griffin</i>
	Sound Tech	<i>Dave Emerson</i>

MARCH 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 4:00 pm SLTA	3 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA 7:00 pm SLTA	4 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 6:30 pm Special Olympics	5 Ash Wednesday 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Lenten Service 7:40 pm Choir	6 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm Catechism	7	8 8:00 am JOY
9 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Cong. Forum 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am Men's & Woman's Group 4:00 pm SLTA	10 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA 7:00 pm SLTA	11 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 6:00 pm Council mtg 6:30 pm Special Olympics	12 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Lenten Service 7:40 pm Choir	13 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm Catechism	14	15 8:00 am JOY
16 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 4:00 pm SLTA	17 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA 7:00 pm SLTA	18 8:00 am Tai Ch 9:30 am Project Day 6:30 pm Special Olympics	19 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Lenten Service 7:40 pm Choir	20 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm Catechism	21	22 8:00 am JOY 1:30 pm Gideons Int'l
23 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School	24 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA	25 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 6:30 pm Special Olympics	26 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Lenten Service 7:40 pm Choir	27 8:00 am Tai Chi 12:00 pm Book Club 6:30 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm Catechism	28	29 8:00 am JOY
30 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School	31 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA					

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Dated Material
March 2025

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
 - Bible Study: 10:00 am Wednesday 5th & 19th in the lower Level
 - Book Club: Thursday the 27th at 12:00 pm in the library.

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.