

## What's Inside?

- February Calendar and Ministry Schedule
- February Birthdays
- Service Possibilities!

# February 2016

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## The Pastor Ponders...Lent

Those of you who have been with me for some time know that Lent is important to me and that I believe it can be a time of renewal. Some people begin and end Lent with "giving up chocolate (or Coke or pasta)" while others think of Lent as "40 days of gloom" we have to put up with to celebrate Easter. My hope is that you might see Lent as a time for tending your faith journey "as it is this year" (not from childhood or what someone else does) and that it would be grounded in the conversation of God's grace and hope with life "as it really is", for the daily, the ordinary is where God meets us.



Pastor Gloria

What might Lent offer? Beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 10, we tell the truth about our lives, about the journey of being human...our mortality, our inability to be as good as we know we ought to be, our challenges with frailty, meaningfulness, purpose, and more. While facing this truth can be (and has been) done in a totally gloomy way, truth and honesty can be freeing rather than frightening. In 30+ years of pastoral ministry, I have found that people need time to reflect and ponder on their journey of faith. Lent is a time to do this. Because Lent comes at a fixed time, it may be too early or too late or too long or not enough. Lent isn't "perfect" (nothing is!) but let's give renewal a try.

When we are marked with ashes in the Ash Wednesday Liturgy, we don't splatter them in a chaotic way. Rather they are placed on our foreheads in the shape of a cross to remind us that experiences that threaten our well-being have been taken up in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and transformed through the Holy Triune God into "hope and mercy for life as it really is". We are people of hope not because we have everything figured out or have escaped hard times. We hope because the Holy Mystery has created, redeemed, and sustains us. **"Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ..." (Rom. 8).**

My pastoral hope for all of us this year is that our faith journey will deepen through some Lenten "extra": the "Sundays-in-Lent" liturgies, the Prayer Retreats in Lent, the study opportunities we have, or the invitation to be generous toward those who experience food insecurity. Before you decide what to do, I encourage you to take some time and ask yourself, "What am I hoping for this Lent?"

## Prayer Retreats in Lent (and in Easter)

for those who are...

*...weary...grieving...have health challenges...or simply desire time away for any reason...*

*For the past few years, we have partnered with Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community to offer Prayer Retreats. Some were all day and others just an hour or so. The one constant from those who came was an appreciation for these times of quiet. The Sunday Assembly is an "upbeat celebration" of God's mercy in Christ with only brief times for meditation. The middle-of-the-week times of prayerful quiet have touched people in ways that the Sunday liturgy most often cannot. (It does something different which is helpful in a different way!)*

*In light of this, Nancy Corran, Pastor of MMACC, and I see a need for Prayer Retreats in Lent and Easter. The dates are tentative... stay tuned for final announcements.*

*Now two invitations. We desire to have shared leadership with members of our congregations for these Prayer Retreats. If you want to help plan and/or implement these times of quiet, talk with Pastor Gloria.*

*A second invitation....many of us have friends, family members, neighbors, or co-workers who share their "weariness with life" with us. Consider inviting them to come... these Prayer Retreats are not "Lutheran or Catholic"...all are welcome to experience God's embrace of mercy in the quiet of a Retreat.*

### An Opportunity to "Remember the Poor" this Lent...

One of the traditional disciplines of Lent is to "remember the poor". Offerings brought in your purple edged "Lent" envelopes (or so marked on the Designated Offering line on your regular envelope or simply marked as "Lent") will be divided between the Serra Mesa Food Pantry, TACO, and ELCA World Hunger Appeal. This threefold approach enables us to "give alms" locally, in our wider community, nationally, and internationally.

For six years, the **Serra Mesa Food Pantry** has been helping families in our neighborhood who struggle to have enough food on their tables. For some of our neighbors, the choice may be between food and prescriptions or fixing a car needed for work. One of the bright ideas of the San Diego Food Bank and Feeding America (another San Diego food bank) is to use local Food Pantries as a distribution system to help grocers and farmers share their excess fresh produce. Getting the excess or soon-to-be-discarded to the tables of food insecure San Diegans is much better than having it go to a landfill! Each week, volunteers from our Food Pantry go to the Food Banks to pick up fruits and vegetables at no cost (bread also). People from the 92123 area come to our Food Pantry to pick up canned and packaged goods once a month but bread, fruits, and vegetables are available as long as they last every week. In addition to offerings in the purple-edged Lent envelopes, you might consider buying a few items whenever you are at the grocery store and feeding the Food Pantry basket in the narthex.

For over 40 years, First Lutheran has been feeding whoever comes to their table...people who live on the street, in single room occupancy hotels, senior high rises, and other places. Over 20 years ago, First saw the need to go bigger and formed a separate 501c3 organization, "**Third Avenue Charitable Organization (TACO)**", to address the many needs. On Monday nights and Friday mornings 100-200 guests are served a hot, nutritious meal. In addition, community partnerships have led to medical, legal, acupuncture, and dental clinics and to having social workers on staff to work with the people who come. In "America's Finest City", TACO does some mighty fine work among some of the people left behind.

Lutherans organized in response to hunger in the aftermath of World War II in Europe and then continued when famines were occurring in Africa in the 1960s. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's vehicle to respond domestically and internationally is the **ELCA World Hunger Appeal** which funds emergency and long-term relief work and development projects so that emergencies might become fewer and further between. The ELCA also works with Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran World Federation around the globe with partner churches. As an example, the LWF operates one of the Refugee Camps in Jordan that have become a safe haven for people fleeing the war in Syria.

There is no end to the need and none of us can solve it alone. But together we are able to do things that make a difference. Blessings as you consider the possibilities this Lent.



### February

Jean Arneson 2nd  
Jerry Class 6th  
Tristan McGinley 6th  
Aaron Williams 10th  
Michael Miller 18th  
Roger Nies 18th  
Tom Templeton 24th  
Joan Porter 25th

### Congratulations Jay Trousdale!

On Tuesday, January 19, the San Diego Union Tribune had an in-depth tribute to Jay Trousdale who was nearing the record for most wins by a Girls High School Basketball Coach in San Diego County. The article included tributes from other coaches and from some of his past and current players. Jay tied the record of 610 wins on Friday, January 22, and may have set the record by the time this Witness is printed.

From this article and knowing Jay, one can sense Jay's "calling" to this "vocation". Blessings on your "ministry"!

### 2016 Council Meets

The newly elected and organized Council met on Monday, January 25. Among the actions taken were:

1. Elected Debbie Attwood to a two year term as a Voting Member (was on non-voting status as Treasurer)
2. Decided Lent Offering Envelope gifts be divided equally between Serra Mesa Food Pantry, TACO, and ELCA World Hunger Appeal (same as 2015).
3. Started building a Calendar of Events for 2016 so we'd have an idea of what our "regular" events are.
4. Voting Members to the Pacifica Synod Assembly in Irvine May 5-7 will be elected in February. If open to serving in this way, talk with Pastor Gloria or President Roxanne Rosengarten.
5. Will explore Andy and Debbie's offer to add two Pop music concerts to the three Gospel Music Concerts this summer.

## Life, Learning, and Serving at Gethsemane

During the season of Lent, we will **"Journey with Jesus to Jerusalem"** (Luke 9:51-19:28) on **Sundays**. (Holy Week begins on Sunday, March 20, with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem at Luke 19:29.) The "Journey to Jerusalem" in Luke's Story of Jesus will be studied in greater depth at the **9:30am Monday morning "Reading the Bible for All Its Worth"** and at the **9am Friday Bible Study** (in Lent, February 19 and 26 and March 11—meets at 10995 Vivaracho Way in Tierrasanta). All are welcome at either study.

**Super Bowl Sunday** offers us the opportunity to have fun and do some good at the same time. On February 7, there will be boxes labeled "Denver", "Carolina", and "I Don't Care!" where you can put cans (plural) or packages of food to "vote". If you arrive on February 7 without cans or packages, you may give \$\$—each \$1 counts as one can or package. Can we predict the winner?? All proceeds will go to the Serra Mesa Food Pantry.

**Coffee with the Pastor** with talk on **"Spirituality and Aging"** happens on the 1st Friday of each month at 10am. Our conversations have been deep and rich, filled with humor and meaning. Come and join us!

As we think about the transitions ahead of us at the end of 2016, we need to have **"Teams"** (active groups of people rather than a "staid" committee?) to focus on Landscaping and also on the Buildings. We have part time staff/contractors to work on buildings and grounds but need a team to coordinate and direct when Pastor Gloria retires. We also will need a "Community Care Team" for Christ Bearers, prayer, and visitation to assist with the transition with an Interim Pastor. Might you have gifts for these?

### An Update on Cyndi Jones...

We received a "Thank You" note from Cyndi Jones for the gift sent to Luther Seminary for tuition support (posted in the narthex). Too bad we were not able to make the weather pleasant when she was in St. Paul, MN, for two weeks in January to take classes in her "Lutheran year". Cyndi managed to be there during the 0 and -0 weather!

Cyndi is finishing her teaching parish time at Shepherd of the Valley in Rancho San Diego and moves on to St. Peter by the Sea in Ocean Beach/Pt. Loma in February. This will be followed by a post-Easter assignment at Clairemont Lutheran. She was recently recommended for Internship which will begin September 2016. Meanwhile, one of her assignments is to study a congregation for a class this spring. She is looking at Gethsemane...some of us will be interviewed for this assignment.

## Preschool News...

The Preschool again ended the year with a positive balance of income over expenses. Along with no tuition hike in 2016, new classroom activities, and an extra check for teachers, the Parking Lot Fund was increased by \$2,000.

## Outreach and Mission Possibilities...

February to May brings us opportunities to serve.

**Storefront** "First Monday" serving nights to bring dinner to the teens at the Storefront Teen Shelter are February 1, March 7, April 4, and May 2. Becky Baker is our Coordinator for this outreach and is willing to help people volunteer. Supplies such as snacks and hygiene items can be brought to the basket in the narthex at any time. Our Christmas gifts enabled them to have two new microwaves and to have gift cards on hand for the teens who find their way there.

**The Chili Cookoff and Cookie Chillout** for Agape House, the Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry at SDSU, is Sunday, April 10, from 3-6pm. What will be our winning strategy this year? Any ideas?? Can someone discover something "more unique" than what Earline can dream up?? We could have a "Cookie Contest" here as a prelude!

**The NAMI Walk** will be Saturday, April 30, at NTC Park in Liberty Station. We participate each year to provide support and commitment to the destigmatization of mental illness. Who wants to walk? New T shirts??

**Empty Bowls** for Third Avenue Charitable Organization takes place on the second Saturday in May, the 14th. Stay tuned for more information. The soup and bread provided by local restaurants and the soup bowls by local potters make this an amazing day.

**The House Building Mission Trip** in partnership with Ascension Lutheran and Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry will happen in the fall. It's not too early to start thinking about going. Planning meetings will begin soon.

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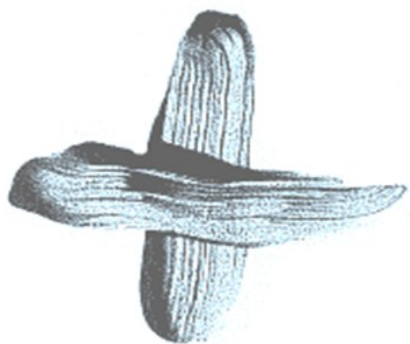
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**Check out our Website  
at  
[www.gethsemanesd.org](http://www.gethsemanesd.org)**



***Gethsemane Lutheran Church...**  
grounded in the gospel, anchored in Word  
and Sacrament, traditional yet creative,  
seeking to be God's people in this time  
and place.*

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



## Ash Wednesday

February 10, 2016

11:30am Contemplative Communion  
with the imposition of Ashes

7:00pm Ash Wednesday Liturgy  
with the imposition of Ashes

(shared with Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community)

## Sundays in February

February 7 Transfiguration Sunday

February 14, 21, 28 Sundays in Lent

8:00am Contemplative Communion

9:30am Lenten Liturgy of Word, Meal, and Prayer  
(Gospel Hour on the 28th)