

## THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church

27 Lyons Road, Fleetwood, PA 19522

Ruth F. Doty, Pastor

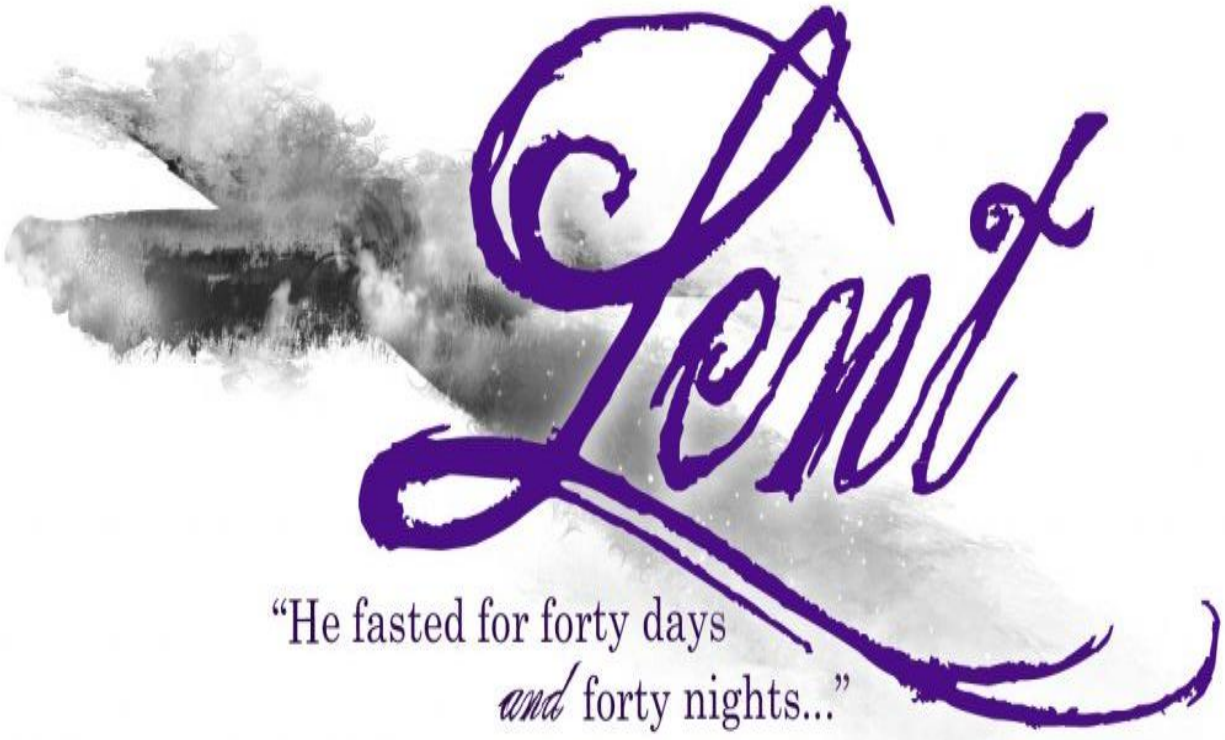
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WEBSITE: <https://NewJerusalemLutheran.weebly.com>

OFFICE PHONE: 610.682.6064

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

(Normally Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon, but during the current times, please call ahead to make sure someone is there.)



THE MISSION OF  
NEW JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH:

*We are a group of people who  
gather together in friendship and love  
to worship God, to spread God’s Word,  
and to care for God’s people.*



*Oh Lord, throughout these forty days you prayed and kept the fast.<sup>1</sup>*

Dear Friends,

Forty days. Jesus was in the wilderness forty days. Jesus was in the wilderness forty nights. I just finished writing the sermon that goes with this lesson. Forty days and forty nights. Noah and his family were in the ark watching it rain for forty days and forty nights. This is the lesson that is paired with Jesus' time in the wilderness. When you see the number forty in the Bible, whether it refers to days or weeks, months or years, it signifies a very, very, very long time.

A very, very, very long time. We've been in the midst of this pandemic for a very, very, very long time. Most of us feel like Noah's family must have felt: cooped up. Noah's family was cooped up not only with one another but also with those animals, those smelly, noisy, hard to manage animals. Some of us feel that way while others feel isolated and would even long for a monkey or two to play with. "Enough, already! We've had enough!" I'm sure Noah's family felt like screaming that. I know I do. I know we do.

Forty years. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness forty years. There were many times they, and their leader, Moses, just wanted to scream, "Enough, already! We've/I've had enough!" It wasn't just the long journey that got to them. There was so much else to cope with along the way: not enough food, not enough water, constant complaints, people who wouldn't co-operate with the others, who wouldn't follow the rules, and who challenged the leadership. On top of that, there were snakes and sickness and . . . , well, you name it. We know the feeling. It was hard to cope. It was hard to believe they would ever reach the promised land.

It *is* hard to cope. It *is* hard to cope with all the fears and worries. It's hard to cope with not being able to be with loved ones and friends or meet at church. It's hard to cope with all the changes in guidance for what we should and shouldn't do in order to prevent the spread of infection. It's hard to cope with all the frustrations around getting a vaccine. It's hard to cope with trying to conduct business. It's hard to cope with not being able to count on the mail, even though our postal workers are working as hard as they can. It's *so* hard for parents and teachers to figure out how to educate our children. And it is *so* very, very, very hard for our children, for our students, to figure out what is going on. The list of difficulties goes on and on and on. As I write today even the snow, which is so beautiful and so good for our earth, adds to our list of things to cope with.

And yet, there is something else that goes on and on and on, something else that lasts a very, very, very long time, so long that it is, in fact, endless. That is God's love, God's promise to be with us, no matter what.

When Noah was in the ark, he was in touch with God. God told him when to send out the birds to determine when it might be safe to get out of the boat. When the Israelites were traveling through the wilderness, God led them with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night, and whenever they stopped for a break, God set up God's tent of presence in the middle of the camp. When Jesus ended his fast and his testing in the wilderness, God's angels came and ministered to him.

God is ready and continues to keep in touch with us, listening to and caring about our frustrations, worries, and giving us hope. God guides us and lights our way, be that through readings, art, music, and others. God's angels do come to minister to us, most often in human form. God not only comes to us directly and God not only sends us others, but God sends and empowers *us* to be the presence and light and help that others need.

Forty days. Lent lasts forty days. (We don't count Sundays. Those are always "little Easters.") As we journey through these forty days and beyond, may you know the assurance of God's presence, even in the midst of the many tests you face. May you experience and be the light and the helpers we all need to cope with this very, very, very long time, time we can endure because we *know* that Lent will end, our trials will end, and that Easter, new life, is coming, that we will reach the "promised land". - *Pastor Ruth*

*Be with us in this season, Lord, and all our earthly days,  
that when the final Easter dawns, we join in heaven's praise. <sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Claudia Hernaman, paraphrased by Gilbert Doan, printed by permission.*

# NEWS & EVENTS

## in New Jerusalem and the Synod

### COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Immediately following the Congregational Meeting on **January 31**, the following officers were elected from the council:

Co-Presidents: Ted Eshbach and Ty Rissmiller  
Secretary: Gladys Kline

(For legal purposes, Ted will be designated as President and Ty as Vice President. In actuality, they will share the leadership role.)

We send out a very big thank you to Cheryl Wiltrout, Elaine Seip, and Amy Hahn who have completed their terms on council.

The following items were discussed and decisions made at our council meeting on **February 8**:

- Rita Kayhart, the liaison for our Boy Scout Troop #585, provided council with an update as to how the scouts are doing.
- A discussion took place about what it means to be a council at this time and what will help us function effectively.
- Pastor reported that our new bishop, Pastor Christopher deForest, laid out what he sees the synod focusing on for the next 6 years. The first is Growing Young – developing leadership. The second is Gaining Strengths – build on our strengths. The third is Building Beyond Death to Life – working to help every congregation know what their mission is. There is one Assistant to the Bishop whose area of expertise includes the third area. (See article about Travis Woodfield in the attached Synod News.)

### WORSHIP AT NEW JERUSALEM

As present, we will continue worshipping via **Zoom**. Services are scheduled for **Sundays, March 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 10:00 a.m. and Wednesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 21, and 28 at 7:00 p.m.**

You can connect with Zoom worship via internet, phone, and other methods. If you are not already receiving information about how to connect, please contact the church office. Links will now also be listed in the bulletins.

Bulletins are being mailed or emailed to those who request them so that they can worship at home.

Those not able to join a service, can watch them on our Facebook page or on our website at <https://newjerusalemlutheran.weebly.com> under the “Zoom Worship Services” tab.

If you would like to receive a bulletin via mail or email, please let us know at 610.682.6064 or [njelchurch@windstream.net](mailto:njelchurch@windstream.net). Bulletins are also available on our website at <http://NewJerusalemLutheran.weebly.com>.

### MID-WEEK LENTEN COMMUNITY WORSHIP

The Brandywine Area Ministerium is pleased to share a mid-week Lenten worship series, “Parables: Pointing to a Greater Truth,” on Wednesday evenings, February 24–March 31 at 7:00 p.m. Six pastors from area congregations are each developing one week’s service surrounding a specific parable of Jesus. Video sermons will be shared from each week’s “host” pastor.

Some congregations will be offering live in-person worship and they welcome anyone who wishes to attend. Some will also live stream. Details will be shared as available. **New Jerusalem will be sharing these services via Zoom each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.** Check-in will be the same as for Sunday services. Recordings of these services can be also be accessed on our Facebook page or on our website at <https://newjerusalemlutheran.weebly.com> under the “Zoom Worship Services” tab.

Be blessed together with our neighboring sisters and brothers in faith as we journey through Lent toward the cross with the hope of an empty tomb beyond.

### SCHEDULE SO FAR

- March 3 – New Jerusalem: Wheat and Tares
- March 10 – Hope, Bowers: The Prodigal Son
- March 17 – St. Paul's, Mertztown: The Persistent Woman (in-person worship available)
- March 24 – Christ Mertz, Dryville: Good Samaritan (in-person worship available)
- March 31 – St. Peter's, Topton (parable to be announced)

**REMEMBER:** Each week the service will be available via Zoom from New Jerusalem at 7 p.m.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

The Bible Study group has finished its study of the Book of Acts. We are currently studying the Letter to the Galatians. Bible Study will be held on **Mondays, March 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 11:00 a.m.** Let Pastor Ruth know if you would like to join.

## **COLORING GROUP**

Our Coloring Group continues meeting monthly to color Bible-themed pages while visiting with one another. The next meeting is **Thursday, March 11, at 10:00 a.m.** Pages and supplies provided, but feel free to bring your own. There is plenty of room to maintain a safe distance from one another. Participants are asked to wear masks. Friends are welcome.

If you are interested please let Phyllis Fenstermacher (610.682.2423) or Diane Keller (610.682.4152) know.

Not able to get to church or don't feel comfortable getting together there? Just let them know and pages will be sent to you and you can visit with other members by phone.

## **THREADS FOR OTHERS**

Keep on knitting and crocheting for the Seafarers. If you need material to make masks or yarn for cowls and hats for seafarers, let Pastor Ruth know.

## **MARCH WORSHIP SPONSORS**

The cost to sponsor bulletins for a week is still \$7.00 and sponsorship of the Sanctuary Candle is \$15.00 for a month. If you would like to sponsor any of the available dates below, please leave a message on the church answering machine with your dedication. Thank you!

Since the pandemic limits our ability to gather, we are now mailing bulletins to members. The cost for that is about \$45 per week. Any contributions to help offset this cost are appreciated.

### **Bulletin Sponsors for March:**

March 7 – Gladys Kline  
March 14 – sponsor needed  
March 21 – sponsor needed  
March 28 – sponsor needed

### **Sanctuary Candle Sponsor for March:**

Gladys Kline

## **APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for the March 2021 newsletter is **Sunday, March 14.** Please have all articles and announcements to the church office by this date.

## **UPDATE ON STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS**

As of the end of February, **5 clean-up buckets for disaster relief** have been filled and we have some extra supplies. All will be taken to a distribution site as soon as we are told to do so. Each bucket is valued at approximately \$75. Our thanks to Thrivent Financial for the grant that enabled us to multiply the contributions of our members and friends

We have also delivered supplies for the **Kutztown University Food Pantry at the Lutheran Center** which were purchased through a Thrivent Grant and added to the generous donations of our members and friends. We are thankful we can help the students that are now back in session.

Our thanks to all who contributed and especially those who did the extra shopping.

## **STEWARDSHIP PLANS FOR 2021**

At its February 14 meeting, Stewardship Committee announced the following:

A Festival featuring The Majestics – September 11. We will be asking for a Thrivent Grant to help support this along with grants for:

- 1) Fleece blankets for Camp Noah – to begin shortly
- 2) Additional support for the Lutheran Center Food Pantry – will start shortly
- 3) Additional support for the Brandywine Food Pantry – end date September 30
- 4) Supplemental supplies for Seafarer's satchels – end date October 31
- 5) Supplemental gifts children – end date December 10

In addition to these drives, Stewardship Committee will be working on developing an inventory of our resources, as a way of assisting the congregation in discernment of our call to ministry.

## **FAITH FORMATION**

At its February 16 meeting, the Faith Formation Committee worked on the following plans:

- 1) Have people color pages on the Seven Last Words of the Cross. These will be used as part of worship on Good Friday.
- 2) Send out coloring pages of butterflies for people to color and hang in their windows or elsewhere in their houses for Easter. (One is included in this newsletter.)
- 3) Have children and adults color tiles for a large butterfly poster which we will put together for the Sunday after Easter.

- 4) Produce a virtual Easter Pageant for worship the Sunday after Easter, much like the one we did the Sunday after Christmas.
- 5) Plan outdoor Faith Formation for Youth gatherings at a pavilion starting in the Spring.
- 6) Explore starting a Bible Study/discussion group for adults immediately following worship that would meet every 4 to 6 weeks.

Committee members also discussed ways to support others during this continued pandemic. One suggestion was to find ways to post inspirational thoughts on Facebook. We need help to figure this out. A second discussion was around how to support our teachers, students and parents with the extreme stress they are experiencing as learning continues to flip back and forth from in-person to virtual, leaving children especially confused.

Below is a list of our students in elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school. Please think of ways you can express care and concern for each of them and their families. Please also correct any information and inform us of additional names to add:

Lilly Lambert – pre-K  
 Caleb Keller – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
 Annie Keller – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
 Amanda Cleaver – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Logan Seip – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Abby Keller – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Carson Seip – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Logan Santee – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Justin Keller – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Baylee Cleaver – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 Olivia Moyer – Freshman  
 Sara Moyer – Junior  
 Emily Jones – Senior  
 David Moyer, Jr. – Senior  
 Charli Rissmiller – Senior

Addresses and contact information can be found in our church directory. If you need a copy, please contact the office.

## PASTORAL CARE DURING THE CURRENT SITUATION

Please let Pastor Ruth know if pastoral care is needed for anyone. At present, she is able to respond via phone and electronic means. Currently she is not entering hospitals or nursing homes. At times she has been able to “meet” and even offer communion while standing outside a window or door and speaking on the phone. Please also continue to let her know when someone enters the

hospital or when anyone is experiencing a change in health or situation.

Pastoral care services (chaplains) are available at each hospital to support and attend to patients’ diverse spiritual needs. So, even if Pastor Ruth cannot enter a facility, care is available. Some of our parishioners have reported excellent response from these servants and, at times, when given permission, pastor Ruth can be in dialogue with a chaplain in order to enhance that care.

## SUPER SATURDAYS

The Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team presents Super Saturdays. The first workshop will be held on Saturday, March 13. The workshops will be held virtually from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The first session is “How Lutherans Read the Bible” presented by Deacon Joy Gerhart, member of the Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team and graduate of the former Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia. Cost is \$5.00 and the registration deadline is Wednesday, March 10. Log-in information will be sent to registrants two days before the event. To register, click on the following link: [event.com/d/fjq1wn](https://event.com/d/fjq1wn) For a description of the first session, check out the synod website at [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org).

## PA’s YELLOW DOT PROGRAM

Pennsylvania’s Yellow Dot Program was created to assist citizens in the “golden hour” of emergency care following a traffic crash when they may not be able to communicate themselves. Placing a yellow dot in your vehicle’s rear window alerts first responders to check your glove compartment for vital information to ensure that you receive the critical medical attention you need. Email PennDOT at [www.yellowdot.pa.gov](http://www.yellowdot.pa.gov) and complete a participation form online to have PennDOT mail you a Yellow Dot kit.



## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS



Daylight Saving Time begins on **Sunday, March 14, 2021** at 2:00 a.m., so don’t forget, on Saturday night, set your clocks forward one hour thereby losing one hour of sleep.



- 3 Linda Guinther
- 13 Judith Kemmerer
- 18 Sara Moyer
- 19 Lucille Jones
- 21 Cindy Rissmiller
- 25 Barbara Johnson
- 25 Lillian Jones
- 26 Donald Gajewski
- 28 Jerry Keller



5 Gladys Kline and Earl Derr (5 years)

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### PAYING IT BACK — AND FORWARD

During the pandemic, acts of kindness seemed especially meaningful. Last spring, as COVID-19 hit Native American communities particularly hard, an interesting transatlantic outreach occurred. Donations from Ireland began appearing in a relief fund for Navajo and Hopi families, leading administrators to suspect the account had been hacked. Then they realized a cross-generational payback was underway.

In 1847, Choctaw Tribe members sent \$170 overseas to Ireland to help with Potato Famine relief. That generosity was never forgotten, and by May 2020, people in Ireland had contributed more than \$4 million toward pandemic assistance for relatives of people who'd helped their ancestors. Many donors included an Irish proverb meaning "In each other's shadows the people live."

The concept of paying it forward dates back to a 1784 letter by Benjamin Franklin. It also echoes Jesus' Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). How might you live out this practice today?

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*



**PRAYERS FOR AWARENESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE for Those with Limited Mobility or in Care Facilities:** Anna Angstadt, Bertha Bennecoff, Verna Guinther, Shirley Hertzog, Leon Moyer, and Irene Noll.

**PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT Members:** Myles Angstadt, Dallas Bennecoff, Sara Jane Beshore, George DeLong, Erma Guinther, Virginia Guinther, Lucille Jones, Patricia Keck, Sheila Long, Forrest Merkel, Roy Merkel, Edna Miller, Grace Miller, Lloyd and Linda Moyer, Betty Musser, Horace and Joyce Rothermel, Gabriele Sanders, Dale Schwoyer, Gary and Vikie Seyfert.

**Friends of the congregation:** Carrie Bausch, Adam Bell, Darlene Bogert, Bob Bright, Thelma Bright, Joshua Buck, Anne Cunningham, Mark Derr, Randy Dreibelbis, Jennifer Engle, Nicole F., Harry Geidner, Jason Grof, Mamie Guinther, Denise Haage, Shirley Hahn, Nancy Harnish, Johnson-Agiri Family, Debra Kenny, Angie Kistler, Kelly Kline, The Koontz Family, Edna Kramer, Cayden Kresge, Mary Kring, Michelle Kurtz, Catherine Lenio, Ella Loose, Joe M., Family and friends of Nancy Meck, Rodney Miller, Johnathan Naugle, Ruth Ramsey, Patricia Sigfried, Carol Spigelmeyer, Thomas Spraut, Robert Taylor, Leticia Weaver, Linda Wegman, Terry White, Althea Young, Alton Zentner, Barry, Lynn, Pat, Sam, and Tim.

**OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS:** We pray for all seeking to respond responsibly to COVID-19, especially healthcare workers; our nation, including our president, congress, judicial system, and leaders of our communities; an end to the many ways prejudice and systemic racism maintain inequality between people and injustice; an end to threats between nations; peace in the world; our military personnel serving around the world; areas enduring disaster; and migrants and refugees.

**LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST:** Gary DeWees, Don Gajewski, Erma Gajewski, Lorelai Gold, Amanda Herman, David Jenkins, Anh La, Michelle Meck, Joanne Pauley, Arlene Reider, Leilani Rodriquez, Andrew S., Joshua S., Roger Schollenberger, Donna Schwoyer, the Spatz Family, and Leah Wiest.

## New Jerusalem Lutheran Church Statement of Accounts

January 31, 2021

<u>Asset Accounts</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Memorial	\$ 21,240.62
Thrivent	9,871.31
Checking	5,801.49
Youth	406.52
Fidelity	82,318.91
Cash Reserve	34,412.24
Mission Investment	11,565.11
Local Care	2,065.31
Total:	<u>\$ 167,681.51</u>

Total Balance of Asset Accounts  
from **January 31, 2020** \$ 183,373.24

### January 2021 – ‘Actual’ vs. ‘Required’ Income

	Income Required	Actual	
<u>Used For:</u>	<u>Per Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Operating Expenses	\$ 9,651.25	\$ 4,492.00	(\$ 5,159.25)

*Income Required per Month — Based on 2021  
Budget Passed by Congregation  
Less Budgeted Benevolence Contribution*

### A BOUNTIFUL LIFE

“Life is given to you like a flat piece of land,” said actress Jeanne Moreau. “I hope that when I’m finished, my piece of land will be a beautiful garden.”

God, who put the first human in a garden to care for creation, blesses us with talents and resources to wisely manage. In gardening terms, God gives us the plot of ground, the seed, the wisdom and strength to bring forth beauty and abundance. Yet we do the work, with God’s help, to make it a reality. Like Adam, we till, but God gives the increase. God’s provisions and our labor bring the garden — and our lives of stewardship — to fulfillment.

As stewards, we ponder: When God calls us home, what will our garden be like, and what will it have produced?



## BRANDYWINE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS (updated as of January 19, 2021)

In the light of concerns about increased food needs in response to COVID-19 and possible challenges of delivering items to the food bank – please consider a generous monetary donation. We will keep you posted with information from the food pantry. You can make out a check to “**Brandywine Food Pantry,**” and mail it to **Brandywine Food Pantry, c/o St. Peter’s United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin St., Tipton, PA, 19562.**

Donated items in “much” need right now: coffee, fruit juices, sugar, flour, mayonnaise, ketchup, spaghetti sauce, ramen noodles or cup of noodles, beef stew, Chicken-ala-King, canned meat (such as tuna, chicken breast or Spam), Chef Boyardee style canned items (such as beefaroni, lasagna, etc.), instant potatoes, pasta or rice sides, snacks of all kinds (cookies, chips, pretzels, pudding, etc.), shampoo, bar soap, body wash, and laundry detergent. ***We do not currently need: corn, green beans, mixed vegetables, or tomato soup.***

The pantry is always in need of the following items:

**Canned fruits:** pears, mandarin oranges, fruit cocktail, applesauce, etc.

**Canned vegetables:** creamed corn, sweet peas, carrots, beets, sliced potatoes, yams

**Canned goods:** diced tomatoes, tomato sauce

**Condiments:** yellow and brown mustard, pickles, salad dressings, vinegar, cooking oil

**Drinks:** hot or cold tea, water

**Extra:** peanut butter, marshmallow fluff, jelly

**Dry goods:** stuffing mix, Rice-a-Roni, ramen noodles, rice

**Baking items:** cake or brownie mix, frosting

**Breakfast food:** oatmeal, pop tarts, cereal bars

**Paper products:** tissues, toilet paper, paper towels

**Personal care items:** combs and hairbrushes

**Cleaning and disinfectant products:** dish soap and laundry detergent.

Gluten-free and sugar-free food is also greatly appreciated.

**Please check dates on donated food products.**

**As always, thank you for your support. It is greatly appreciated.**

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“Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people, and hallelujah is our song.”

—Pope John Paul II

## LENT: TIME TO GO THE SECOND MILE

*“If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them.” -*

**Leviticus 25:35a**

Thanks to vaccines, we can expect an end to the pandemic this year, but the economic recovery will linger much longer. Our government reports that half the families in our nation lost income in 2020, with many of them forced into desperate poverty.

Billions of dollars in federal assistance and a moratorium on evictions have helped ease the pain, but many are suffering. The pandemic’s economic victims may include you, your family members, and people in your community or congregation.

Lent has begun, but it’s not too late to adopt a discipline that may simultaneously help bring you closer to God, increase your faith and help your neighbor. Pray for guidance on how best to respond to the need. Here are some ideas:

- Pray. Set aside time each day to talk and listen to God.
- If you can afford to make a financial contribution, give sacrificially to a ministry that’s helping people get by. A food pantry, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, clothing closet. Can you make a weekly donation through Lent, and beyond?
- If you cannot afford to make a financial contribution, can you volunteer? Are there special talents – writing, online communications, organizing, fund-raising, etc. – that you might be able to donate?
- In your congregation, start or expand a helping ministry. Alternatively, lead your church to become a ministry that’s already doing a good job.
- Learn about the needs in your congregation and community, and then educate others.
- Advocate on issues of poverty and economic justice.

The pandemic’s bruising effects will take years to heal. As God’s people, we can help by praying, serving and supporting those in need.

—Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). He blogs at [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com)

## LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

Did you know that there is an organization within our national church called Lutheran Men in Mission? Its vision is for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ. Its mission is, “by God’s grace to help congregations build life-changing ministries with men; to strengthen men’s faith in relationships for witness and service; to equip followers of Jesus Christ through events, resources and leadership development.”

This ministry is about men encountering Jesus Christ and our churchwide expression assisting the local congregation in helping that to happen. Check out the website: [www.lutheranmeninmission.org](http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org). Men and women, be sure to check **Oscar winning short video “Hair Love”** found under “Project 12.”

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## THE COMFORT CONNECTION

Amid suffering, we might feel alone and wonder what good can come of it. But later we may discover ourselves equipped to serve precisely because of what we experienced.

Writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin stated: “You think your pain and heartbreak are unprecedented ... but then you read. [Books] taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive or who had ever been alive.”

Whether through books or direct human interaction, we often learn that our suffering connects us to other people and that our pain gains meaning by moving us to support someone else who’s hurting.

Paul writes of such connection: “Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV). May you share the comfort you have received from God with others in pain. As a bonus, along the way you’ll realize you’re not – and never have been – alone.



Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

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“Always show kindness and love to others. Your words might be filling the empty places in someone's heart.”

—Mandy Hale



*While many of us know about the legacy we share from Lutherans who came from Europe, we don't know much about the legacy we have received from other ethnic groups. The following article was written by a professor I had and greatly admired while in seminary. It was shared on our synod website as part of February's observance of Black History month. – Pastor Ruth*

## Historically significant Black lives that matter: A Lutheran legacy

By [Richard N. Stewart](#)

February 1, 2021



Daniel Alexander Payne

Care for and by children of God in Black skin has a long history in the Lutheran church, despite the impression one might have of the ELCA as currently a predominantly “white” denomination. What follows is a glimpse of significant early Black Lutheran contributions and records.

Historical records show that the first Lutheran baptism of an American of African descent occurred on Palm Sunday in 1669, when a man named Emmanuel was baptized at [Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew](#) in New Amsterdam (now New York City).

Not long after, in what is now Ghana, Anton Wilhelm Amo was born around 1700. Taken in 1704 as a slave to Germany, Amo was “gifted” to Anthony Ulrich, duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. He was raised in the household with the duke’s sons, attended the universities of Halle, Wittenberg and Jena, and eventually taught at those schools. His first dissertation, loosely translated, was “The Rights of an African in Eighteenth Century Europe” (no copy exists). A second work was “The Apathy of the Human Mind.”

Today at [Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg](#) in Germany, Amo is among the professors commemorated in the quadrangle, alongside reformers Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon.

By 1860, 200 Black members worshiped at St. John Lutheran Church in Charleston, S.C., with a Sunday school of 150 served by 32 teachers.

The congregation of [Zion Lutheran](#), Oldwick, N.J., remembers that their history began in the living room of Aree Van Guinea. He had purchased his and his family’s freedom while in New York City. Van Guinea bought land in the Raritan Valley, in what is now Oldwick. The first worship service, July 14, 1714, was at his house, when Van Guinea invited his pastor, Justus Falckner, to preach to his newly arrived neighbors who were Palatine Germans. Van Guinea deeded a portion of his property to build the first church there, which still stands on a corner in Oldwick.

[Henry Melchior Muhlenberg](#), often described as North America’s Lutheran patriarch, disembarked in Charleston, S.C., in 1742 to serve German immigrants in the colonies. He wondered in his journal whether the large population of Black people he first witnessed in North America had been “saved by grace.” Muhlenberg was aware of the status of Black people in Charleston as he had, during his transatlantic crossing aboard a packet ship, raised a question regarding a Black stowaway. Once in Charleston, he put together a gathering of Lutherans before his departure for Philadelphia. [St. John Lutheran Church](#) traces its origin to that early gathering.

John Bachman, after accepting the call to the Charleston congregation in 1815, asked St. John’s leadership whether he could invite Black people into membership. Their affirmation led St. John to include Black congregants in worship and to develop a separate Sunday school. By 1860, 200 Black members worshiped there, with a Sunday school of 150 served by 32 teachers. Bachman also sent three Black men to serve the church in other places.

In 1832, [Jehu Jones](#), a 46-year-old freedman, was sent north for certification by the New York Synod, but his age was seen as a detriment to his serving as a missionary to Africa. He thus moved to Philadelphia with his family and started St. Paul Lutheran Church in 1834. He received minimal and sometimes no financial or other support from his colleagues in the city. The undercroft of the church survives inside the University of Pennsylvania's Mask and Wig Club.

An abolitionist speaker, Daniel Alexander Payne drew the attention of the Franckean Synod—a Lutheran church body formed by pastors who were dissatisfied by the church's position on slavery—which offered him ordination.

[Daniel Alexander Payne](#), a Black 19-year-old schoolteacher, turned to Bachman, who had written biology books with noted naturalist John Audubon, for advice and information about his future. When Black people were denied the right to teach or run schools in South Carolina, Bachman, among others, gave letters of introduction as they assisted Payne in moving north.

The Mission Society of Gettysburg (Pa.) Seminary offered Payne a scholarship, with the understanding that he did not want to be an ordained minister. An abolitionist speaker, he drew the attention of the Franckean Synod—a Lutheran church body formed in 1837 by New York pastors who were dissatisfied by the church's position on slavery—which chose to offer him ordination. Within two years Payne had relocated to Philadelphia, reaffiliated with his Methodist roots and became a pastor, bishop and the president of [Wilberforce \(Ohio\) University](#).

Black leader Boston J. Drayton was ordained by Bachman as a missionary and sent to Liberia in 1845. He started a missionary compound in Maryland (which became part of Liberia). Drayton occasionally returned to seek funds for his efforts. He was even bold enough to go beyond Lutheran sources, thus giving Southern Baptist churches a link to this shared history. He died in 1866 as the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

Historical records are spotty during the years of Reconstruction (1863-1877) and in the 1890s, but records can be found to identify the following early contributions by Lutheran Black pastors:

- **1868: Michael Coble** is licensed to preach by the North Carolina Synod.
- **1880: J. Koontz** is ordained by the General Synod.
- **1884: Nathan Clapp** and **Samuel Holt** are ordained by the North Carolina Synod—but not granted full pastoral privileges nor financial support.
- **1888: William Philo Phifer**, educated in Baltimore, is licensed by the Maryland Synod in 1888, received by the North Carolina Synod in 1889 and ordained in 1890.
- **1889: Coble, Koontz, Clapp** and **Holt**, not receiving support from the North Carolina Synod, form the **Alpha Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Freedmen in America**.
- **1890: Koontz** dies.
- **1891:** In seeking funds for support, the Synodical Conference sends Nils J. Bakke to supervise. He persuades all to resign, except **Phifer**, who professes that his ministry is just as valid as Bakke's. He uses the constitutional autonomy of the congregation to refuse to move.

*A grant from the [Louisville Foundation](#) is underwriting the author's research into Black Lutheran history.*

**(The Alleluia butterfly is for you to color and hang in your window or home for Easter.)**

ALLELUIA



WHY DO YOU LOOK FOR THE LIVING AMONG

THE DEAD? CHRIST IS NOT HERE. HE HAS RISEN!

## FOR THE BIRDS

Display this recycled craft to care for feathered friends.



### What you need:

- Peanut butter or vegetable shortening
- Plastic knife
- Empty toilet paper tube
- Bird seed
- A plate
- String

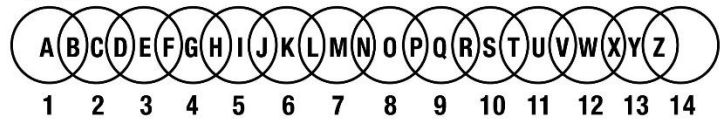
### What you do:

1. Spread peanut butter or vegetable shortening on the tube, covering the entire outside surface.
2. Pour bird seed on a plate and roll the tube in the seeds.
3. Thread string through the tube and tie it to make a loop.
4. Hang the bird feeder outside. When seeds are eaten, coat the roll again.

# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:



1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10

3,4 8 9,10 4 5 11,12 5 7,8 4 3 1 2 4,5

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10

5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Answer: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV

# SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

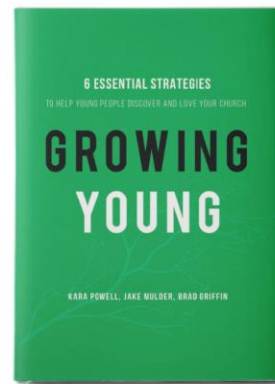
## Save the Dates: June 3-5, 2021

### Synod Assembly 2021

We are still moving forward on our Synod Assembly for June 3-5, 2021. The theme will be "Growing Young and Vital" and will feature new ideas for ministry around three *vital signs* – healing the hurting, loving the land, and engaging the stranger. By the first week in March, a final decision will be made about whether the Assembly will be all online, or in-person at the Kalahari resort – even if that may mean delaying some portions to a later date. It will depend on the progress of the vaccine distribution and how well we can make arrangements that keep everyone safe. **SAFETY IS OUR HIGHEST CONCERN.** Registration will begin after March 31. We will also know by the end of March, more details about the program and the hours of each day's schedule. For now, save the dates and stay tuned for more information coming soon, over the next few weeks.

## Growing Young

Want to reverse the effects of aging? Need more energy in your life? Sick of fine lines and wrinkles? Check out Growing Young! **What is Growing Young?** It is a movement in NEPA and throughout the greater ELCA and beyond that is based on a book of the same name which studied churches of all sizes, denominations and locations throughout the country who are maintaining and attracting youth and young adults in their congregations.



The authors of Growing Young have identified **6 key strategies** that these congregations have and that others congregations can utilize to help youth and young people discover and love the church. They are: **Unlocking keychain leadership, Empathizing with today's young people, Taking Jesus' message seriously, Fuel a warm**



### Meet Deacon Travis Woodfield, Director of Congregational Legacy

Hello! I have been fortunate to have a colorful adventure of a life, so, here's a little of my story. I studied Philosophy from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, and Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University. I've been fortunate to have life experience ranging from a fishmonger, admissions counselor, Franciscan friar, hospital chaplain, and Campus Minister. I also have a MDiv. from Wake Forest University. Studying at Wake allowed me the chance to intern and work with the Center For Congregational Health. While I was working there, I found a vocation that combined many of the things I was interested in. When I was a hospital chaplain, I loved getting to walk alongside people when they were making meaning of changes in their life. I am honored that I get to do the same with churches in their meaning-making work, whether that be launching to a new vision, reconsidering what ministry the church is called to, or even considering what end-of-life care and legacy-making might look like.

Rachael, my wife, and I have been married 7 years. We have one cat who runs the house. In my spare time I love to play video games, cooking dinner, and playing guitar. I am also an amateur magician. When I get the pleasure of meeting you ask me if I have a deck of cards and I'll show you something!

**community, Prioritize young people everywhere, and Be the best neighbors.** These are not just strategies to help you attract young people, but are also 6 great strategies for great ministry, regardless if another young person ever walks through the doors of your church building or logs onto your worship service.

Growing Young cannot help you personally look or feel younger; it will not get rid of your wrinkles. But these strategies can help your congregation feel and be younger by reigniting energy in your members and attracting new younger worshipers that will reverse the effects of aging within our congregations.

**For more information about Growing Young, read the book "Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church" by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder and Brad M. Griffin from Fuller Youth Institute.**

Join the "Growing Young"  
BOOK STUDY hosted by  
Sammy Kelly and YoYoFa

The first, third, and fifth  
Wednesdays of the month starting  
March 3rd at 12 p.m. (March 3, 17,  
31, April 7, 21, May 5, 19). All at 12  
p.m. and all via Zoom.

For more information or to sign up  
contact [sammy@nepsynod.org](mailto:sammy@nepsynod.org)  
or sign up for the "Youth" emails  
for updates and links, which can be  
accessed through our Synod  
website.

# MARCH 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 11:00am-Bible Study via Zoom 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	2	3 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Community Lenten Service, Worship on Zoom, New Jerusalem	4	5 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	6
7 Third Sunday in Lent 10:00am-Worship on Zoom	8 11:00am-Bible Study via Zoom 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Council Meeting	9	10 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Community Lenten Service, Worship on Zoom, Hope Lutheran	11 10:00am-Coloring Group	12 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	13 9:00-11:00am-Super Saturdays (virtual)
14 Fourth Sunday in Lent 10:00am-Worship on Zoom  <b>Daylight Savings Time Begins</b>	15 11:00am-Bible Study via Zoom 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	16 10:00am-Worship and Music Committee Mtg.	17 11:30am-Tentative Fellowship Luncheon (location TBD) 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Community Lenten Service, Worship on Zoom, St. Paul's	18	19 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	20
21 Fifth Sunday in Lent 10:00am-Worship on Zoom Stewardship Committee meeting after worship	22 11:00am-Bible Study via Zoom 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	23	24 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Community Lenten Service, Worship on Zoom, Christ Mertz	25  <b>Annunciation of Our Lord</b>	26 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	27
28 Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday 10:00am-Worship on Zoom	29 11:00am-Bible Study via Zoom 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	30	31 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Community Lenten Service, Worship on Zoom, St. Peter's			