



ST. LUKE'S UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
DENTON, MD

THE VOICE

FEBRUARY 2021

MUSINGS FROM PASTOR DAN

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This year, the Lenten season begins Wednesday February 17. We will mark this time with an Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00pm. This season continues for 40 days, not including Sundays, and ends on Holy Saturday, that is the Saturday before Easter, April 3.

The word "Lent" derives from the anglo-saxon term *lencten*, meaning "spring." During this time we earnestly recount all that God accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ. We experience this period every year in the life of the church, but often, we forget, or sometimes we never knew what this time of year is about. The Dictionary for United Methodists defines Lent as a forty-day period of focus on penitence and preparation for the Resurrection Event of Easter. Today, we tend to observe Lent as a time of penance, by abstaining from festivals, by almsgiving, and by devoting more than the usual time to exercises of the faith. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on these aspects than the physical fasting that marked this season in the early church. This month, our focus is on Ash Wednesday.



Ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. The uses of ashes dates

back to ancient Jewish tradition and often were associated with sacrifices, mourning, and fasting. A person would properly express grief, humiliation, and repentance by sitting in ashes or placing them on their head. See 2nd Samuel 13:19; Esther 4:1-4; Matthew 11:21 for examples of this custom.

At one time, during the early centuries of the church, public penitents at Rome were ceremonially admitted on this day to begin their penance. This ceremony fell into disuse between the eighth and tenth centuries as general penance of the entire congregation began to take place. This penance was symbolized through the imposition of ashes.

Another use for ashes in the early church (2nd century) included a regular ceremony of public confession and penance. This use had acquired so much significance that Tertullian (a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa) spoke of "the substitution of sackcloth and ashes for a man's usual habit."

Penitents under excommunication used to sprinkle their heads with ashes and ask those who were permitted to enter the church for prayers of restoration to the Communion. Ashes symbolized the sincerity of the penitent and their desire to be "right with God."

Today, ashes symbolize the same meanings though the ceremonial customs have since vanished. The one exception to this is Ash Wednesday.

The United Methodist Book of Worship states that “Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and the content of the service focus on the themes of sin and death in the light of God’s redeeming love in Jesus Christ...and the imposition of ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.”

Ash Wednesday is a serious but blessed means to begin the Lenten season. I pray you can participate in our upcoming service.

Peace.

Pastor Dan

REMINDERS:

- **Next Leadership Meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.**
- **March *Voice* articles, updates, and pictures due Wednesday, February 17, 2021.**
- **Ash Wednesday Service: February 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**

Thank you!

Thank you for your continued financial support during these difficult times.

News from the United Methodist Women
Submitted by Becky Schoonover

St. Luke's UMW met to discuss our annual fundraiser of making and selling Easter eggs. As much as the UMW depends on this income for missions, it was decided to not offer the eggs for sale this year. Due to health concerns, we felt it would not be safe to work together making the eggs. Handling food was also a concern.

We are offering Easter lilies for sale, to decorate the altar on Easter Sunday, April 4. If you would like to purchase a lily in honor or in memory of someone, please use the order form provided in the Voice. The cost for each plant (4-6 blooms) is \$13.50. Orders and money will be collected until March 19.



Easter Lilies 2021

The Flower Committee of St. Luke's United Methodist Women is taking orders for **Easter Lilies** to beautify the chancel area of the sanctuary for **Easter Sunday, April 4th**. The cost for each (4 to 6 bloom) plant is \$13.50. Please make your check payable to: **U.M.W. of St. Luke's** and include it with your order. You may place your order in the offering plate or bring or mail it to: **St. Luke's U. M. Church, 100 S. Fifth Ave., Denton, MD 21629. Orders must be in by Friday, March 19th**. You may take your lily home following 11:00 a.m. worship on Easter Sunday. Please let us know if you will NOT be picking up your plants.

How many plants? _____ Total Cost? _____

Your Name _____ Phone number _____

Given in memory of _____

Given by _____

Given in honor of _____

Given by _____

(If you have any questions, please call me, Mrs. Carol Rouse at 410-479-0233)

Update From United Methodist Men Submitted By George Lacy

The United Methodist Men will not hold their breakfast on February 6, 2021 due to the ongoing concerns of the Covid-19 Virus.

The decision as to whether we will hold future breakfasts will be determined at a later date.

Sunday School Season Greetings!!!!

One of the blessings of St. Luke's Church is having a Sunday School Program for almost any age. Sunday School meets from 9:30a - 10:30a. As with all things church related, we ask that participants wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash hands frequently. We hope you and/or yours take advantage of all that is offered. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact the church office.

Here's an update from Jim Orr regarding the Elementary School Class!

All is well with our elementary Sunday School family! Classes over the last month have been conducted virtually.

Topic wise, our class has been studying the life of Christ. This will lead to Easter! The remainder of April and May, we'll study the early church and the ministry of Paul. We have also been learning about prayer (how to CHAT with God), components of the Bible, and memorizing verses.

It is hoped that a face to face elementary class can resume soon. A guess would be mid-February or so..... however, there is God's timing, not mine. I will keep folks abreast in our Voice and our group email.

In the spring, St. Luke's is planning to give Bibles to 3rd/4th graders. In addition, if there are older students who never received a Bible in the past, we want to include them now as well. Bottom line: Parents, help us develop an accurate list of eligible children. Contact either Jim Orr (jto327@yahoo.com) or contact the church office with the information and we will add to our list of those to receive their Bibles.

If someone is interested in discussing Sunday School, joining the elementary class - or any of our classes - contact the church or Jim Orr (jto327@yahoo.com). I can not end this report without shouting out to our most every Sunday attenders: Julia, Paight, Lily, Jake and recently Gwendolyn, Dean and Kyleigh!

Prayer Concerns.....

Rev. Carol Svecz, Brooke Schroder, Roger Clark, Sharon Eaton, Jared (Sue Algier's son), Laura Patrick, Paula Penn, Gary Griffith, Terry Griffith, Kimberly Wooters, Sharon Eaton, Amy Clopper, Billy Shull, Brad Lynch, Renee Barringer, Colleen MacFarland, Robbin Ritter, Luther Lee, Herb Granger, Wendy Bradley, Walt Nemcek, Alex Slonin, Mitchell Wheatly, Archie Carroll, Brooke Drawdy, Susan Bunker, Joshua Breeding, Jenny Jusell, Gary Simpson, Sylvia Holland, Anne Jusell, Alan and Gloria Vandam, Robbie Lister, Pat Browne, Lisa Barge, Jim Johnson, Phyllis Harrison, Carol Stockley, Dale Nygren, Hayden Semans, Don Homesley, Ruth Dore, Mary and Aaron Gamble, Su Jusell-Lappin, Conrad Rosemere, Tommy Thomason, Rob Cohee, Elaine Friel, Sarah & Abby Price, our country and its leaders on both sides of the aisle.

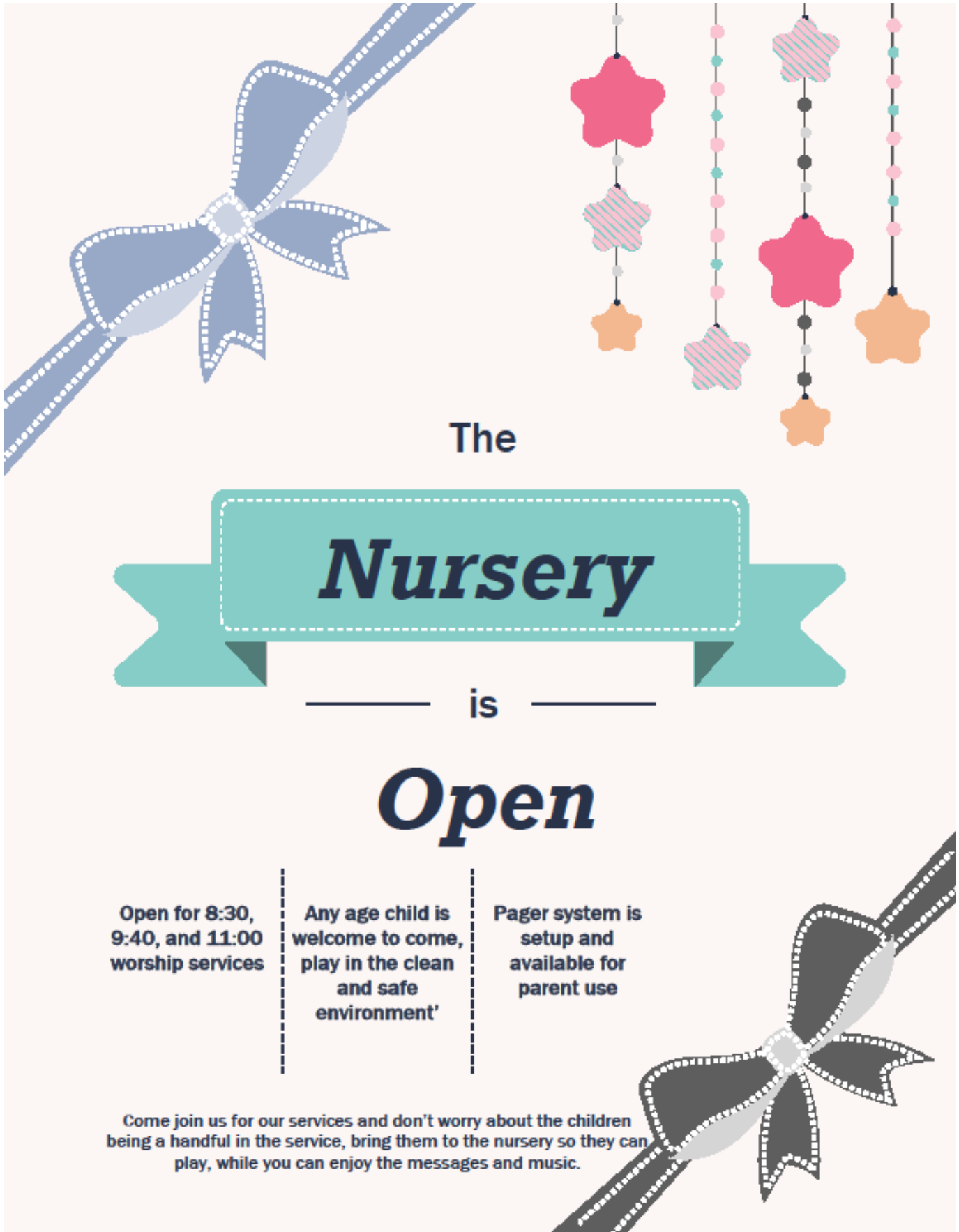


Sympathy to the family and friends of Mark Bilbrough, Hugh Butler, and Kathryn Watts

Prayers for those serving in the U.S. Military: John Biddle, Jake Brown, Chelsea Bunker, Sean George, Seth Gill, Brockman Harris, Jr. Mann, Mitchell Mann, Justin Moore, Andrew Robbins, Dale Tuel, and James Wright.

To add names to these lists, we ask that you either call (410-479-2171), e-mail (stlukes@goeaston.com), or drop-off/mail to 100 South 5th Avenue, Denton. Please be sure to include your name and telephone number so that we can contact you regarding the status of the person needing prayer; otherwise the name will be removed after a couple of months.

Thank you to all who remember those named on our prayer lists. Only God knows how many are blessed because you care enough to pray.



The

Nursery

is

Open

Open for 8:30,
9:40, and 11:00
worship services

Any age child is
welcome to come,
play in the clean
and safe
environment'

Pager system is
setup and
available for
parent use

Come join us for our services and don't worry about the children being a handful in the service, bring them to the nursery so they can play, while you can enjoy the messages and music.

WE NEED ALTAR FLOWERS!!



We need your altar flower dedications. We only have two dates taken for the entire year.

Dedicating flowers is a beautiful way to honor a loved one's memory, a birthday or anniversary. Call Carol Rouse to choose a date for your dedication at 410-479-0233 or 410-714-2999.

St. Luke's UMC Fiscal Year 2020 Treasurer's Report

The events of 2020 have impacted St. Luke's and our community in many ways. We've dealt with worship restrictions, separation, illness, anxiety and financial stress. I realized many of you may not be aware of how your continued faithful financial support has allowed us to maintain our viability as a functioning church. I believe our church family honors 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each of you should give what you have decided in our heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." I also believe giving isn't about God needing our money; it's about Him wanting to be first in our lives.

There are many opportunities for giving at St. Luke's. Following is a summary of activity in all our financial accounts:

General Fund Income and Expense Report is published monthly in the Voice. The year-end data show us that budget offerings were at 93.3% and expenses at 89.6%. It is important to note that through October we were at \$20,000 cash flow loss. Along with year-end giving and cutting operating costs where possible we ended the year with \$9,600 gain.

The 2021 budget for General Fund is 10% lower than 2020. We accomplished this by evaluating every line item for opportunities to save without hindering our mission. Winterizing the parsonage and the Trustees plan for sale of the house are included in the expense savings. Proceeds from the house sale will be set aside in a protected investment account for future use if needed for a parsonage.

Special Accounts are designated funds for items such as MYF, Backpack Fund, Neighbors United To Serve (NUTS), Woven Women Ministry, Operation Christmas Child, REACH, UMCOR, and VBS. These funds are disbursed as programs need them and are an opportunity to give in addition to general funds. The December balance in the account was \$20,997. (Continued on next page).

Memorial Funds are both designated and undesignated bequests honoring the loss of loved ones. There are 15 accounts including Camp Pecometh Scholarships, Organ, Sunday school, Nursery, Music, Choir Robes, Hand bells, Technology, and Landscaping. An example of spending is using funds designated for technology upgrades for our Sunday school. This is an on-going project. In 2020 the account had income of \$6,675 and disbursed \$8,208 leaving an ending balance of \$34,751.

United Methodist Women (UMW) income is derived from sales of nuts, Easter eggs, Easter and Christmas flowers, and annual Pledge/Prayer & Self Denial campaign. Covid-19 prevented Easter egg income, our biggest source of funds. Donations were made to several outreach programs including Samaritan House, Compass Regional Hospital, Board of Child Care, Denton Child Development Center, and Pastor's Discretionary Fund. December balance in checking account was \$13,719 and CD investment \$7,015.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund income is derived from designated church offerings and UMW donations. The fund is a benevolence set aside for the pastor to use at his discretion to meet the needs of requests from the community or church members. All the funds are managed with confidentiality and are used for items such as rent, utility bills, transportation, and medical costs. The winter months create the biggest demand for help. The December balance was \$8,750.

Again, thank you church family for your faithfulness.

Louise Webb, Treasurer
louisewebb44@gmail.com



St. Luke's United Methodist Church Treasurer's Report

For Period January through December 2020 as of December 31, 2020

Description	Annual Budget 2020	Actual Income or Expense To Date	Variance	% Budg Used
<u>Income</u>				
Offerings	250,612.00	236,612.70	13,999.30	94.41%
Offerings - Sunday School	100.00	79.00	21.00	79.00%
Interest Income	25.00	45.71	(20.71)	182.84%
Building Use	8,000.00	4,655.00	3,345.00	58.19%
Administrative Building Use	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Income	258,737.00	241,392.41	17,344.59	93.30%
<u>Expenses</u>				
Pastor Expenses				
Salary	47,722.00	52,861.02	(5,139.02)	110.77%
Travel Reimbursement	2,400.00	562.03	1,837.97	23.42%
Cable TV at parsonage	1,600.00	860.40	739.60	53.78%
Hospitalization/Dental	18,180.00	16,260.00	1,920.00	89.44%
Bishop's Retreat	550.00	0.00	550.00	0.00%
Continuing Education	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Pension Plan	9,783.00	8,427.04	1,355.96	86.14%
Pastor Expenses - other		267.84	(267.84)	
Total Pastor Expenses	81,235.00	79,238.33	1,996.67	97.54%
Staff Expenses				
Staff Salaries	73,580.00	70,241.28	3,338.72	95.46%
Wage and Tax Expenses	7,358.00	8,868.84	(1,510.84)	120.53%
Worker's Compensation	1,092.00	904.00	188.00	82.78%
Expenses - other		246.91	(246.91)	
Total Staff Expenses	82,030.00	80,261.03	1,541.79	97.84%
Other Operational Expenses				
Accounting & Legal	200.00	576.95	(376.95)	288.48%
Annual Conference expense	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
Christian Education/Sunday School	2,500.00	1,394.95	1,105.05	55.80%
Conference Apportionments	23,586.00	23,586.00	0.00	100.00%
Easton District Office	1,415.00	1,415.00	0.00	100.00%
Janitorial Supplies	1,000.00	499.59	500.41	49.96%
Electricity/Oil	18,000.00	10,798.73	7,201.27	59.99%
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	5,871.00	4,884.05	986.95	83.19%
Fuel (parsonage)	6,500.00	3,222.47	3,277.53	49.58%
Grass and Shrubbery Maintenance	3,000.00	2,225.00	775.00	74.17%
Insurance	10,300.00	8,595.00	1,705.00	83.45%
Maintenance and Repairs	6,800.00	4,486.24	2,313.76	65.97%
Miscellaneous	100.00	84.08	15.92	84.08%
Music Committee	1,200.00	1,520.00	(320.00)	126.67%
MYF Program	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Office Supplies	2,250.00	1,798.82	451.18	79.95%
Postage	1,500.00	1,020.00	480.00	68.00%
Pastor/Organist, Substitutes	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Pastor's Moving Exp Escrow Acct	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Stewardship	1,500.00	1,038.22	461.78	69.21%
Telephone	1,500.00	1,795.16	(295.16)	119.68%
Water and Sewer	1,750.00	1,745.98	4.02	99.77%
Spiritual Life	2,500.00	1,068.80	1,431.20	42.75%
Worship Materials	1,200.00	519.54	680.46	43.30%
Total Operational Expenses	95,472.00	72,274.58	23,574.37	75.70%
Total Expenses	258,737.00	231,773.94	25,571.04	89.58%
Net Income over Expenses	0.00	9,618.47	(8,226.45)	

The Voice

of St. Luke's
February 2021

St. Luke's UMC Staff:

Rev. Dan T. Gedman- Minister

Administrative Assistant: Ann Willey

Director of Music: Rebecca Zinser

Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Director: VACANT

Nursery Coordinator: Alex Penn

Sexton: Dennis R. Weaver, Sr.

Voice Editor: Stacey Reid

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