

THE GRACE VINE

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**16 Ridgecrest Road
Wheeling, WV 26003
Church Telephone: (304) 242-5830
Sunday Morning Worship - 10:00 AM**

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit" John 15:5

FEBRUARY 2021

Rev. Timothy Spence, Pastor
Home Telephone: 304-905-6188 - gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net

Called by God's grace, we commit to a life of worship, discipleship, and service in the name of Jesus Christ

Ash Wednesday is early this year, reflecting an early date for Easter (April 4). This date will be the second earliest than any other date for the next ten years. In 2022, Ash Wednesday will push forward two full weeks to March 2.

There was some consideration as to whether or not we would hold services for Ash Wednesday this year. How would we do imposition of ashes? Would people come out knowing that we had to be six feet apart? Unlike the Roman Catholics, Lutherans do not have any "days of obligation", so would people respond to Ash Wednesday during a pandemic?

We've solved the distribution question and Council has approved my recommendation that we continue to hold services with modifications.

But I think a (rather lengthy) reflection from Bishop Riegel as to what we are doing for Ash Wednesday to be helpful. Specifically, Ash Wednesday is a day to call the church to repentance for the Lenten Season that follows.

Now I try to keep up with technology – I really do! But having come late into the game (unlike those who are raised with cell phones in their hands practically as soon as they come out of the womb!), I struggle to keep up with "the next big thing". Those of us who are older may remember the days not so very long ago when Lutheran churches did not hold services on Ash Wednesday, or, if they did, it was simply a preaching service with no Imposition of Ashes or communion.

In fact, the very idea of getting smudged with ashes on your forehead was WAAAAAAAAAAY too Catholic for good Protestant Lutherans to even consider. The transition took place about the time I was in college and seminary with the addition of the Manual on the Liturgy post 1978. I introduced ashes to one congregation early in my ministry with the comment, "Why do you think they call it ASH Wednesday?"

So I was surprised (though maybe I shouldn't have been) to read in Bishop Riegel's missal on Ash Wednesday about "Ashies". Now for those of you (like me) who haven't heard about this yet, an "ashie" is a selfie taken and sent out on the web (Facebook, Messenger, whatever) to show that you have received ashes. (If you don't know what a selfie is, we need to have a whole other conversation and you should maybe stop reading now. But I digress.)

This flies in the very face of the counter argument from the early 1980's about not getting ashes because, due to the admonition from Matthew 6:16 to "not disfigure (your) faces as to show others that (you) are fasting". (I sometimes wonder how many of those older Lutherans who used this passage as a basis for objecting to receiving ashes were actually fasting during Lent – some, no doubt, but probably not so many as to really make this scripture passage particularly relevant. But again, I digress.)

But more than that, posting your ashie misses the point of Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of the season of Lent.

Lent is a time to reflect and consider: To reflect on our mortality and consider what it means to be made of the dust of the earth and to recognize that, no matter what we do, one day our bodies will return to the dust from which they are made. In a year of a pandemic that, by the time of Ash Wednesday, will have taken the lives of about 500,000 people just in our own country, it seems a good time to reflect on our mortality. We are dusty people, made of dust, and to dust one day we will all return.

But ashes are also a sign of our repentance. In the First Lesson from January 24, we heard how the people of Nineveh responded to Jonah's preaching by putting on sackcloth (basically scratchy burlap) and by covering their heads with ashes. In Biblical times, ashes were also smeared on the face and arms.

Ashes are a way of saying to God, "We have messed up and we are sorry. We want to do better. Please forgive us."

We can do that on Ash Wednesday. And we don't need to brag to our friends that our lives and relationships are sometimes not what God want or intends them to be by posting an "ashie". Instead of posting an ashie, why not show our friends our repentance by DOING something to show that our lives are changing; that we have, in fact, changed our ways and are living our lives differently? THAT is what true repentance looks like!

Ashes are a symbol. But the real significance of Ash Wednesday is to hear again the call to repentance and to make the commitment to engage in the discipline, the struggle of Lent, with prayer, fasting, and meditation. We can do that with or without ashes. But I find that, when I go home and try to wash the ashes off my face before I go to bed, the ashes don't wash away so easily. My mortality confronts me, and I remember that I am dust, and to dust I shall return.

So I begin again to say to God, "I have not loved you with all my heart and all my mind and all my soul, and all my strength, and I have not loved my neighbor as myself. Forgive me and help me to do better."

That's Ash Wednesday. Not a smudged face on a selfie, but a changed heart. Not an act of obligation, but an act of devotion. And not a symbolic giving up, but a recognition that we are dust and our life belong to God, and so we give up that life to the God who saves and redeems us.

Have a blessed Ash Wednesday. And remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Ash Wednesday

This year's Ash Wednesday service will look a bit different.

For the first time since March 14, 2020, the congregation will gather in the nave for a regularly scheduled worship service. Pews have been taped off to provide for social distancing and you will be assigned a seat based on the size of your party (family, individual, couple, etc.).

Ashes will be administered using a Q-tip for safety and communion will not be celebrated.

The service will be held on Wednesday, February 17 beginning at 7:00 PM

Shrove Tuesday

Due to continuing concerns over social distancing, indoor dining, and other issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be no Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper this year.

Put March 1 on your calendar for 2022 and plan to come next year with a friend!!!

Mid-week Lenten Services

As was our practice for Advent, the weekly dinner prior to the mid-week services for Lent will not be held.

However, a short reflective prayer and preaching service will be held each Wednesday in Lent. Services will begin at 7:00 PM.

Lenten Home Devotions

Many members of the Grace congregation are hesitant to come out to worship because they are taking precautions and avoiding large group indoor gatherings.

At the same time, the season of Lent calls us to increase our attention to devotion, prayer, and the reading of scripture.

Council recently began to discuss the completion of the Cloister area between the three sections of the building, which would include a prayer labyrinth laid in the pavement.

With the idea of a prayer labyrinth as a possible addition to the Grace campus, it seemed appropriate for our Lenten devotions to include a “finger labyrinth”, which is a prayer labyrinth drawn on paper and followed with the finger instead of actually walking the labyrinth.

In early February, each household will receive a packet of materials which will include suggested prayers, scripture readings, and a finger labyrinth to use for daily devotion during the Lenten season. It is hoped that these resources will enhance your devotional life as we move through Lent towards the joy of the Easter celebration.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, March 14, immediately after worship. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend worship that day.

As required by our constitution, the Bulletin of Reports for the meeting will be available through the office beginning on March 4 and at worship on March 7.



About Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday

Palm Sunday is March 28 this year and Easter is April 4. While it is hoped that there will be substantial progress towards having a large percentage of the population vaccinated by then, we know that there will still be people waiting to receive a vaccination and that some restrictions like masks and social distancing will still be in place.

Because these restrictions will still be in place, both of these services will be TICKETED events. What this means is that you will have to call the office to get a ticket in order to attend that morning's worship.

Reservations for Palm Sunday and Easter will be taken at the church office beginning MARCH 1. Please do not call this month. There will be a reminder in the March Vine. AFTER MARCH 1, please call to let us know your name and the number of people who will be attending with you. If no one is in the office, please leave a message on the machine. You will also be able to make a reservation when you attend worship on Sunday mornings in March.

This information will be used to assign seats that will preserve social distancing requirements while still allowing the maximum number of people in the nave.

When you come in, your ticket will indicate where your assigned seat or group of seats is. As much as possible, we will try to assign your seats close to where you traditionally sat in the nave "pre-Covid". Once the capacity of seating in the nave is reached, overflow seating will be assigned in the Gathering Room. When all the seats in the Gathering Room are full, you may still attend by doing "drive-in church" in your car in the parking lot.

Please note that, if you do not have a ticket indicating a seating assignment, we may still be able to accommodate you for worship IF there are seats available. However, once all seats are taken you will not be able to be seated for Palm Sunday and Easter services.

Drive in Church A Success

Beginning with the First Sunday of Christmas, we began broadcasting our services live into the parking lot. The limited range transmitter permits us to broadcast on an available FM station within 300 feet of our building.

Thanks to some special giving and some long hours by volunteers Patrick and David Coughlan, we now have a system that is capable of handling our Facebook broadcasts as well as our FM broadcast each Sunday morning.

People arriving who want to participate in the service but are hesitant about coming into the building with a larger group of people in an enclosed space can pull into the parking lot, tune their car radio to FM 102.3, and listen to the service in real time. At the appropriate time, communion will be brought out to the cars for those who desire to receive the sacrament.

AT this time, it is expected that, once we are back in the nave and even after all Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, we will continue to broadcast services each week on Facebook and YouTube. We are working on making some changes so that those broadcasts can happen in real time instead of being downloaded for afternoon viewing. Drive-in broadcasts will continue as long as there is a need and desire for those services, and the technology we have purchased will be available to us for other events in the future.



Ask the Pastor



Question: Over the years I have heard people talking about “giving something up for Lent”. I’ve even done it myself from time to time, but I’ve never been quite sure where this tradition came from or why we do it. Any help?

Answer: This is a loaded question in the sense that there are so many different ways to answer it. Let me give you what I think are the three biggest reasons for the tradition of “giving up” for Lent.

First of all, giving something up for Lent is a form of sacrifice. Therefore it reminds us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross and how he gave up his life for us. Every time we see something or start to do something that is routine and that we take for granted and then stop and remember that we are giving that up for Lent, we are reminded of Jesus’ precious life and how he gave that up for us so that we might live. We are also reminded of how Jesus gave up his heavenly throne to take on the restrictions of a human body and of human life.

Second, in part Lent is about spending more time in increased devotion with prayer, meditation, and worship. Sometimes what we give up takes time – playing video games, watching certain shows on TV, being on Facebook, spending time with hobbies or being with friends – the list could go on and on. By giving one of those things up for Lent, we free up time for worship, prayer, study, and meditation. Therefore we can be more serious and diligent in our Lenten walk with the luxury of sufficient time to truly engage in the Lenten struggle to follow God more closely.

Third, when we give up something we enjoy (I had a friend who regularly gave up chocolate for Lent), we remember that not all of life is pleasure, and we especially remember the cross. Giving up what we enjoy reminds us that Jesus gave it all up for us even to the point of death. He gave up his home, his family, his mother, his friends, and all the things he enjoyed in order to take up the cross and die.

Giving up something for Lent is not a requirement. But some people find it helpful. It is about sacrifice and remembrance and dedicating ourselves more fully to explore how to follow Jesus more closely. If that works for you, then by all means include giving up something for Lent as part of your spiritual discipline. But if it is something you see as simply an obligation instead of a spiritual practice, it may not be meaningful and may actually become a burden that you resent.

Just don’t make a game of it by giving up something convenient. I had a friend in high school whose boyfriend broke up with her on Shrove Tuesday, so she decided to give up dating for Lent. Big deal! If you give something up, make it meaningful. Make it some thing you enjoy or use the time that is freed up for other pursuits that draw you closer to God.

Like so much of Lutheranism, giving something up for Lent is not a command, but an option. If it works for you, good! Make it part of your spiritual tool kit to draw closer to God and deepen your faith.

Hope this helps, and as always, thanks for asking!



POWER *of* **PRAYER**

PRAYER LIST

Ryan Deegan
Henri Fontaine
George Myers
Stephanie Moore-Vetanze
Andrew Lemasters
Barbara Knollinger
Jodi Ennis (Hunt)
Dona'e Albert
Nick Riggle
Jim Gallaher Family
Linda Dunnell
Bob McDonald
Art Henry
Sean Datson
Don Taylor Family

Hines Rotriga
Amelia DaGrava
Thelma Moore
Addison Lucas
Bill Scholley
Keith McMannis
Susan Falbo
Carolyn Polverini
Peggy Frazier
Richard Chrisfield
Kristin McGavitt
Sister Mary
Jerry Findel
Brian Lester
Mike Speaker

Betty Swartz
David Ausdenmoore
Becky Frazier
Cindy Roshak
Linda Porter
Doris Schafer
Dorothy Miller
Zane Neuhardt
Coy Davenport
Willow Hollingsworth
Minnie Taylor
Shari Sedilko
Karen Walker
Premature baby

ON MILITARY DUTY

Brian Coughlan

Casey Young

Parker Euri

HOMEBOUND

Dorothy Cox
Good Shepherd Nursing Home
Room 214
159 Edginton Lane
Wheeling, WV. 26003

Howard & Betty Shackelford
333 Dement Road
Triadelphia, WV 26059

Bertha Loth
c/o Grace Lutheran Church
16 Ridgecrest Road
Wheeling, WV. 26003

Debbie Hawkins
Peterson Rehabilitation Hospital
20 Homestead Ave.
Wheeling, WV 26003

Kitty Hagedorn
18 Willow Avenue
Wheeling, WV 26003

Chris Roshak
River Park Hospital
1230 6th Avenue
Huntington, WV. 25701

Eileen Hempelmann
207 Boggs Hill Road
Wheeling, WV 26003



GRACE COUNCIL 2021

<i>Perri Cook</i>	<i>February 1st</i>
<i>Doris Albrecht</i>	<i>February 4th</i>
<i>Apollo Nelson</i>	<i>February 7th</i>
<i>Marty McNabb</i>	<i>February 9th</i>
<i>Charles Koehler</i>	<i>February 10th</i>
<i>Nettie McClure</i>	<i>February 10th</i>
<i>Shari Sedilko</i>	<i>February 10th</i>
<i>Judith Myers</i>	<i>February 11th</i>
<i>Kevin Blashchak</i>	<i>February 11th</i>
<i>Evelyn Birch</i>	<i>February 15th</i>
<i>Jordan Keller</i>	<i>February 15th</i>
<i>Mark Danehart</i>	<i>February 17th</i>
<i>Howard Shackelford</i>	<i>February 20th</i>
<i>Philip Van Dam</i>	<i>February 20th</i>
<i>Sandra Smith</i>	<i>February 26th</i>
<i>Edna McClure</i>	<i>February 27th</i>
<i>Elaine Strauch</i>	<i>February 28th</i>

- Nancy Weeks, President*
Dennis Niess, Vice-President
Lutz Albrecht
Diane "Dee" Coughlan
Brian Crawford
Linda Dunnell
Pat Franklin
Vicki Gilmore
Tami Tysk
Shawn Gilmore, Treasurer
Amanda Keller, Secretary



Tom & Linda Porter

February 20th

**happy
Birthday**

FEBRUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Dance 5:00 pm	2 Strands of Comfort 4:30 pm	3 Handbell practice 9:30 am	4	5	6
7 Worship 10:00 am Sunday school 10:45 am	8 Dance 5:00 pm	9	10 Handbell practice 9:30 am	11	12	13
14 Worship 10:00 am Sunday school 10:45 am	15 Dance 5:00 pm Council 6:30 pm	16 Strands of Comfort 4:30 pm	17 Handbell practice 9:30 am Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm	18	19	20
21 Worship 10:00 am Sunday school 10:45 am	22 Dance 5:00 pm	23 Baton twirling 6:00 pm	24 Handbell practice 9:30 am Lent Service 7:00 pm	25	26	27
28 Worship 10:00 am Sunday school 10:45 am						

WORSHIP LEADERS FEBRUARY - MARCH 2021

Date	Acolyte	Altar Guild	Bread	Crucifer	Greeters
February 7, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 14, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 21, 2021		Tami Tysk			
February 28, 2021		Tami Tysk			
March 7, 2021		Vickie Crawford			
March 14, 2021		Vickie Crawford			
March 21, 2021		Vickie Crawford			
March 28, 2021		Vickie Crawford			
	Welcome Desk	Lector	PA/Sound	Prayer Leader	Ushers
February 7, 2021		Brian Crawford		Pastor Spence	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 14, 2021		Jeanie Deem		Nancy Weeks	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 21, 2021		Pat Franklin		Lutz Albrecht	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
February 28, 2021		Kim Kochy		Pat Franklin	Joe Kochy, Bill Stees & Jay Wallace
March 7, 2021		Elaine Sedilko		Pastor Spence	Nancy & Brad Weeks
March 14, 2021		Tami Tysk		Nancy Weeks	Nancy & Brad Weeks
March 21, 2021		Nancy Weeks		Lutz Albrecht	Nancy & Brad Weeks
March 28, 2021		Marcie Woloshan		Pat Franklin	Nancy & Brad Weeks
	Flowers for	Flowers given by	Counters	Assisting Minister	Distribution Minister
February 7, 2021	None		Joe & Kim Kochy	Pat Franklin	Nancy Weeks
February 14, 2021	Memory of Jim Gallaher	Tami & Family	Joe & Kim Kochy	Shawn Gilmore	Nancy Weeks
February 21, 2021	None		Joe & Kim Kochy	Vickie Gilmore	Nancy Weeks
February 28, 2021	Honor M. Davis 90th BD	Buffy & Chris Schenkel	Joe & Kim Kochy	Don McNabb	Nancy Weeks
March 7, 2021	None		Dr. Dennis & Donna Niess	Tami Tysk	Nancy Weeks
March 14, 2021	Honor D. Hawkins BD	Tysk Family	Dr. Dennis & Donna Niess	Nancy Weeks	Marcie Woloshan
March 21, 2021	None		Dr. Dennis & Donna Niess	Marcie Woloshan	Nancy Weeks
March 28, 2021	None		Dr. Dennis & Donna Niess	Brian Crawford	Nancy Weeks

**GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
16 RIDGECREST ROAD
BETHLEHEM
WHEELING WV 26003**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SAVE THE DATE!

THINGS TO REMEMBER/ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Cans for Watch

Grace members are collecting aluminum cans for WATCH. They will crush, recycle, and use the proceeds for client events. Please bring them at any time, and place them in the large box behind the kitchen door.

Riesbeck Gift Cards

Riesbeck Gift Cards to benefit Thrivent are available from either Judith Myers or Tami Tysk.

Ash Wednesday Service

February 17th beginning at 7:00 PM.

Mid Week Lent Services

February 24th beginning at 7:00 PM

Drive in Church

Sunday mornings beginning at 10:00 AM., in our parking lot, FM 102.3

