

Grace News

40 Shades of Purple

Easter was the first festival to emerge as a season of the Christian year. It was a season of 50 days that celebrated the good news of the resurrection. In preparation to enter this important season, early Christians fasted on Saturday. They met for worship at 6:00 p.m. and continued in prayer and meditation until about 3 a.m. on Sunday, when they celebrated communion. Later, the fasting was extended to include Friday, a period of 40 hours, to commemorate the time Jesus' body lay in the tomb. Later still, the period of fasting was extended to include Monday to Saturday or "Holy Week" as we know it.

The Season of Lent emerged out of the practice of preparing new converts for baptism on Easter Eve or Easter Day. By the middle of the 4th century, a 40-day preparation period had been established. During that time converts fasted, and were taught the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Later, Lent became a time for all Christians to prepare for Easter. It remains a 40-day-long period, not counting Sundays. Sundays are considered "little Easters," celebrating the resurrection.

Although this 40-day period of preparation was originally intended for converts (called "catechumens") to Christianity, over the centuries many church members have voluntarily undertaken for their own self-discipline these 40 days of penitence, fasting, and reflection on their baptismal vows. In some denominations, the season of Lent is the principal period for the preparation and nurture of those who seek baptism, which often occurs at the Easter Vigil. Today the Easter Vigil provides an opportunity for all of us to renew our baptismal vows.

The color used during Lent and Holy Week is purple, indicating a penitential period. Some churches use a deep red on Passion/Palm Sunday and throughout Holy Week. "Alleluias" are traditionally omitted from songs and prayers during Lent in order to make the joyful alleluias of Easter more meaningful. Lent is also

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Shades of Purple*

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Special points of interest

- The color used during Lent and Holy Week is purple
- Reflect on how the Reformation can continue to guide us today
- Baptism is a covenant relationship between you and God in the midst of community
- We remember the words God said about Jesus and how Jesus changed



Grace Gathering

August 10–13
New Orleans

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is an opportunity to rejoice in the life-giving, liberating power of the gospel. As part of the observance, we invite you to attend the Grace Gathering, in partnership with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. This will be an opportunity to experience the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) when gathered as the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, prepare for further observances of the 500th anniversary and reflect on how the Reformation can continue to guide us today.

“The Grace Gathering will bring people together from all across the ELCA. Participants will see the church in action, worship with churchwide assembly voting members, engage in experiential learning and attend a variety of workshops that will equip congregations and synods with tools to prepare for the 500th anniversary observances. And, you know that when you get a couple of thousand Lutherans together, the singing will be great!”

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

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Save The Date...



all anew

WOMEN OF THE ELCA
TENTH TRIENNIAL GATHERING
JULY 13-16, 2017

Are you ready for new challenges? by Eva James Yeo

It's a new year! Take time to imagine how you can continue to boldly redefine women's ministry for 2016. Are you ready for the challenge? Our mission statement — “Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ” — should give you the charge you need to help all women find their place in Women of the ELCA

I want to invite you to consider how you might mobilize the next generation of girls, young adults and women of all ages to become a part of this community of women.

As you gather in your congregational units, I invite you to think about transformation and growth in a new way. Transformation can be challenging because it is part of the unknown. It is unpredictable, exciting and possibly radically different.

Have you evaluated your model for mission lately?

If not, discuss what has worked for your unit and what has not. Begin to redefine your unit's mission by encouraging women to participate for the first time. You might tweak what has worked and let go of what hasn't. Evaluating and assessing your model for mission can help you target areas of weakness, growth and renewal.

Personally invite all women in your congregation to be a part of your evaluation and planning for the new year. Provide a place in your discussion for young adult women to share what interests them. Hearing the voices of all women — those who participate now and those who might not know about the organization yet — may spark interests and ideas and offer a place for women to be heard and supported.

Taken from: interchange, Leadership News From Women of the ELCA, Winter 2016

The Tenth Triennial Gathering will be held July 13-16, 2017, in Minneapolis, Minn. "All Anew" is the theme. While the planning continues, think about ways in which God is calling our organization to new ventures.



Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran World Relief Releases the 2016 Early Warning Forecast

An annual survey of the countries and regions LWR is monitoring for potential humanitarian crises and disasters

BALTIMORE, Dec. 1, 2015—Lutheran World Relief, an international NGO working in 35 countries to develop sustainable solutions to poverty and food insecurity, has released its 2016 Early Warning Forecast of regions it is monitoring for potential humanitarian crises over the coming year.

The regions highlighted in the report are those that LWR is actively monitoring and, in many cases, is already in-country working to help mitigate the worst effects of a potential crisis, develop disaster response plans and strengthen community resilience, especially in the most vulnerable rural areas.

LWR President & CEO Daniel V. Speckhard noted that the interconnected nature of today's globalized world means that humanitarian crises overseas will inevitably affect people in the U.S.

"Given these linkages and the rising vulnerability of global populations to both conflict and disaster, there is a vital need for an evolution in the way the international community thinks about humanitarian response that will have a lasting impact," he said. "We need to move beyond short-term mobilization for the latest disaster or applying the Band-Aid approach to an emergency in an isolated 'fragile' state."

"Instead, we need to approach recovery and resilience with a long-term time frame in mind, as well as a more holistic understanding of the importance of sustainable development. Breaking people out of the cycle of poverty will make them more resilient in the face of future disasters," he said.

The countries and regions on the 2016 Watch List include:

- Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Nepal, Iraq, Central America and the Caribbean, Sahel Region of West Africa, South Sudan

In addition, there are several countries and regions where LWR sees signs of hope:

- Colombia, The Philippines, Coffee and Cocoa production in Haiti, East Africa, Central America and Indonesia

Among the immediate challenges facing humanitarian community that are highlighted in the

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Lutheran World Relief*

Happenings in church...

BOOK CLUB

Just when you thought it was safe to put your book/kindle reader/nook down, its time to get ready for the next installment of the Book Club. February's selection is *Astoria*, by Peter Stark who offers a harrowing saga in which a band of explorers battled nature, starvation, and madness to establish the first American settlement in the Pacific Northwest and opened up what would become the Oregon trail, permanently altering the nation's landscape and its global standing. Join us in Tuesday, February 23rd at 5:30ish pm in the Fellowship Room.

TAPPING INTO FAITH

We in the western world take for granted the ability to obtain a loan in order to improve our business and our lives. Unfortunately, hardworking business people around the world may not have access to capital in order to make these improvements.

This is where Kiva comes in. Working with local loan institutions small loans are made available. Money that people at Grace and Mercy have given to Kiva is loaned out, slowly repaid back into our Kiva account and then re loaned to other entrepreneurs.

Join us Friday evening, February 26 @ 7pm @ the Hermiston Tavern for good company, drink and conversation.

BENEVOLENCE FOR FEBRUARY

The ARC, we are a dedicated group of volunteers working together to enhance the dignity, expand the opportunities, and protect the rights of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

The Age of the Believer

Children in the first through third grades are enthusiastic and eager, creative and curious. They're ready to learn. This zest for learning applies to their religion, too. This stage of life is sometimes called "the age of the believer." Church educators consider it to be one of the prime times for teaching students how to use the Bible, introducing them to church liturgies and rituals, and encouraging their participation in worship and other church functions.

As parents and caregivers, we can assist in this faith growth spurt by continuing to teach and reinforce their faith at home and by making every effort to see that they are able to attend Sunday school, worship, and other church activities. Positive experiences within their church family promote affirmative attitudes toward God and faith. They foster a sense of belonging to God and to the Christian community. This identity and these attitudes are important vehicles for the future growth of our children's faith.

A Time to Be Dirty

People can get very dirty playing ball or running around outside. If that happens to you, someone may tell you to go inside and take a bath. But things are different on Ash Wednesday. During that day you may see people with smudges of dirt on their foreheads. Those people have gone to church and had the dirt put on their foreheads on purpose. The smudge stays on their foreheads all day.

Actually the dirt is not dirt at all, but ashes. Ashes are put on people's foreheads to remind them that their lives follow the natural cycle of all life. People live, and people die. But that's not all that Ash Wednesday has to tell us. That day marks the beginning of Lent, and during Lent we find out that our lives don't end with death. Instead we find out that nothing separates us from God's love. God loves us now, and God always will. Putting ashes on people's foreheads also reminds us to look to God and remember all that God has

done for us. We ask God to help us live in ways that are good and which don't hurt other people or damage our world.

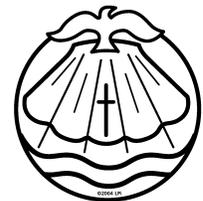
During Lent the music changes in church. We don't sing "Alleluia!" again until Easter, to help us remember that Jesus died for us. "Alleluia" means "praise the Lord," and we shout that word to express our joy on Easter. On Ash Wednesday, make a sign with the word "alleluia" on it and put the sign in a box until Easter.



A sign of mortality and of repentance

Promises at Baptism

Baptism is a covenant relationship between you and God, wherein your child is claimed as one of God's children and given the gift of the Holy Spirit. In response to the promises God makes, parents make several promises. Many parents leave the keeping of those promises to the Christian education, confirmation, and youth programs of their congregation. Unfortunately, if these programs work in isolation and without the support of a faith nurturing environment in the home, they lose a great deal of their potential effectiveness. How many hours a week is your family in church? At home? A child's faith grows as he or she experiences the faith attitudes and practices of his or her parents and caregivers.



St. Valentine's Day



On February 14, many Christians celebrate Valentine's Day. Valentine, a Roman priest, was made a martyr in 270 A.D. because of his love of Christ and his persistence in the Christian way of life. He often ended his kind and helpful letters to others with the words "Your Valentine." Later, as Christians remembered and honored this saint, they signed their letters of affection with the same words.

St. Valentine is considered by some Christians to be the patron saint of lovers and the helper of those who are unhappily in love. Some Christians call St. Valentine's Day a feast day. It seems fitting for all Christians to make it a "love feast" day. Make it a day when we joyfully share our love and appreciation for our dear friends, family members and all those who are part of the family of God.

What Lies Ahead?

It is said that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

Now, I wouldn't suggest that we step out that door and head off in some direction for the next one thousand miles but, in a manner we have begun that journey.

For the past few months, I have met with differing groups of people to remember and reflect. We have gathered around food and drink and I prodded with a couple of questions and then allowed the stories to flow. The process of remembering was to provide a means to look forward at the possibilities that lie before us. At the same time the question has arisen about the possibility of **Adult Forums**, to which I replied, "hold on, its coming."

Well, these two events are about to collide. Beginning with the season of Lent I will lead a process where we will indeed reflect as a committee of the whole, remembering our story. We will chart out the significant events that have brought us to this point, looking also at some of the events that have taken place around us to mark their impact. But mostly we will dream, look ahead to where we think God is leading and how this will be accomplished—in other words, we will identify our passion(s) and how this will look. See you in Lent.



It means change, especially an awesome change, in a person or thing.

Right Before Your Eyes

"Transfiguration" is a big word. It means change, especially an awesome change, in a person or thing. We all change as we get older. But we don't have to get older to look different. A smile can change a person's face and make everyone else feel happier, too. People who run movie cameras and computers can make it appear as though people change right before our eyes.

In Jesus' time, there were no cameras or computers. Instead, we read in the Bible that Jesus changed in some amazing ways. His friends Peter, James, and John saw it happen. They had all gone up a high mountain. Right before their eyes, Jesus' face started to shine like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white. After that they saw Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus. (These men had lived hundreds of years before them.) Peter was so shocked that he offered to set up three tents to mark the spot: one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses. And as if that wasn't enough, a voice from a bright cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased."

On the Sunday called The Transfiguration of

Our Lord, we remember the words God said about Jesus and how Jesus changed, right before his friends' eyes. The liturgical color for this day is white. Read Matthew 17:1-8 and wear white clothes on this day!

Where's your bell? by tim brown

I have a meditation bell that sits on my desk. Our communications director came in the other day to show me something on her computer, and instead of functionality we got the spinning rainbow wheel of death indicating that the computer was upgrading. I knew I was visibly frustrated, so I went over to the bell and rang it. She looked at me, surprised. "Why did you do that?" She was curious. "Because we needed to take a break quickly. We were frustrated ... or at least I was." "Huh," she said. "And no movement until we can't hear the tone anymore, right?" "Right," I said. I've used the bell this way for a few years, getting the idea from a mentor of mine.

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Where's Your Bell?*



Grace and Mercy Welcomes You

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and ministries.

Grace and Mercy L.C.

POB 1108

Hermiston, OR 97838

(541) 289-4535 (church phone)

(509) 398-0258 (pastor's cell)

gandmlutheran@gmail.com

Visit us on Facebook at [Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church](#)

EMO Refugee Resettlement

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) will continue to receive and resettle all refugees referred to its Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) program.

"Our service to refugees is based upon a commitment to respond to the needs of the suffering in our world, regardless of race or religion," stated Jan Elfers, interim executive director of EMO. "These values are deeply embedded in our mission. Refugees are fleeing their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution and grave danger for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion. Our nation has a long history of welcoming the oppressed and the persecuted. SOAR accepts refugees from all over the world, including war torn areas such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq."

EMO's Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees has been resettling refugees since the 1970's. The program provides comprehensive and compassionate resettlement services to hundreds of families and individuals every year. SOAR's affiliate, Church World Service, is just one of ten national resettlement agencies; six of them are faith-based. Collectively, they all state that the U.S. vetting process for refugees is one of the most extensive and rigorous in the world. The United States was built on the principles of welcoming the refugee. EMO urges all people of goodwill, and especially our elected leaders, to remain true to these principles.



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Shades of Purple

a time to change the mood of the sanctuary through its decorations. Flowers are not used. Candlesticks and crosses are simple wood, and banners and vestments are simple in design and material.

Lent is no longer a time to enter into a period of excessive introspection, gloom, and self-denial. However, it is appropriate to use the season as an opportunity to take stock of our own lives, to remember our baptism, to reflect on the life that we are given in Jesus and how that life may be lived out through and for the community. For so many of us there are too few opportunities to slow down and reflect upon the direction of our hectic, consumer-driven lives. The season of Lent invites us to take time to attend to those aspects of our lives that we often neglect.



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Lutheran World Relief

2016 Early Warning Forecast:

- The continuing refugee crisis, as the unprecedented migration we're seeing shows no sign of abating. The Syrian civil war and terrorism wrought by ISIS is not only pushing out millions of refugees, but is destabilizing Northern Iraq. Refugee resettlement, complicated by security fears expressed by some communities and political figures, will be difficult.
- What some are calling a "gorilla" El Niño is causing drought conditions in some places and will bring damaging rain and flooding in others. We must be prepared for disaster response. Food crises in Central America could spur migration.
- The fuel blockade in Nepal has brought the post-earthquake rebuilding to a virtual halt. As winter approaches, isolated mountain communities will be cut off from supply deliveries, possibly auguring a second national crisis.
- Drought and conflict have displaced more than 3.5 million people in the Sahel region of West Africa. Instability caused by the recent coup attempt in Burkina Faso, as well as terrorism-related incidents and threats in Mali and south-eastern Niger will continue to be push factors for migration and make the lives of already impoverished people even more miserable.

February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:32a Next Text 1p Choir	2 Presentation of our Lord 8a Coffee 6:30p Leadership Mtg	3	4 9a Quilters	5	6
Pastor Inch — Hermiston						
7 Transfiguration 9a Worship 10:15a Ed Hour 	8 6:32a Next Text 1p Choir	9 8a Coffee	10 Ash Wednesday 10a Gather Study 7p Worship	11 9a Quilters	12	13
Pastor Inch — Hermiston						
14 1 Lent 9a Worship 10:15a Ed Hour — Adult Forum 	15 6:32a Next Text 1p Choir 	16 8a Coffee	17 9:30a Foot Clinic 6 Soup Supper/ Worship @ G&M	18 9a Quilters	19	20
Pastor Inch — Hermiston						
21 2 Lent 9a Worship 10:15a Ed Hour — Adult Forum	22 6:32a Next Text 1p Choir	23 8a Coffee 5:30p Book Club	24 10a Gather Study 6p Soup Supper/ Worship @ St. John's	25 9a Quilters	26	27 7p Tapping Into Faith
Pastor Inch — Hermiston						
28 3 Lent 9a Worship 10:15a Ed Hour — Adult Forum	29 6:32a Next Text 1p Choir					
Pastor Inch — Hermiston						

Serving God's People

<i>Date</i>	<i>Reader</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Acolyte</i>
Feb 7	George Meyers	Cindy and Jean Ruhl	Emilee & Mischa
Feb 14	Janet Boyd	Barbara, Ruth, JoAn	Micah & Chloé
Feb 21	Regina Marks	David & Regina	Mickenzie & Karlee
Feb 28	John Larson	Flora & John	Daniel & Laura

Celebrations

<i>Date</i>	<i>Celebration</i>	<i>Celebrant</i>
Feb 4	Anniversary	George & Bea Luciani
Feb 6	Birthday	Joni Anderson
Feb 6	Birthday	Bea Luciani
Feb 12	Birthday	Casey Arstein
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Misty Wilkinson
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Cheyenne Wilkinson
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Dylan Wilkinson
Feb 12	Birthday	Tom Inch
Feb 26	Birthday	Kris Large

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Where's Your Bell?

Judy Brown, in her poem "Fire," writes:

What makes a fire burn
 is space between the logs,
 a breathing space.

It's one of the reasons why intentional silence is built into worship services, or should be. After the sermon. After communion. In moments of holy contemplation God invites us, as an extension of the Sabbath command, to refrain in those moments and just burn.

The bell on my desk rings a silent tone. It's audible, sure. But it calls me to silence, especially when my impulse is to rage or rant. Raging causes me to burn out. I want to burn in life.

It's the wisdom Elijah found when he realized God was not in the hurricane or the earthquake but in the silence that followed. It's the wisdom Jesus embraced when he went up to the garden to pray amidst the turmoil of Maundy Thursday.

It's the wisdom of space between the words on this page that allow us to read.

It's the wisdom that counteracts the spinning wheels of death that we're constantly on in life, bombarded by noise and frustration and the invitation to burn out. We're made to burn.

It's the wisdom of the Sabbath, the wisdom of the sigh that the Spirit of God uses as an opportunity to intercede for us when our own words are absent, allowing God to speak volumes while we refrain.

Where's your bell?