

Grace News

The Journey Begins . . .

“On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain . . .”

Luke 9:37

And so it begins. Hardly will the glow of the Transfiguration have dimmed when we will descend once again and begin that tedious journey to Jerusalem. It is a journey that begins in ashes and ends in a borrowed tomb; a journey that we travel every year during the season of Lent. It is a journey that gives us pause about our broken condition yet allows us to place our hope in the One who leads us beyond the tomb to the resurrection.

Lent holds a rather unique position in the Church. Its history is one of journey and preparation – a time that was spent in deep reflection by those who were preparing for baptism, a time spent in deep reflection by those who prayed for those who would be baptized. Along the way layers began to be added – denial of this or that, the eating of fish on Fridays – all as a way to begin to focus and enter into the suffering of Jesus. It is unfortunate that this later trend, even in jest, is probably the most remembered part of Lent. But I wonder if Mardi Gras wouldn't be more appropriate.

Lent, meaning springtime, and baptism, the grace of God revealed and conferred through water and word for the salvation of the recipient, is not about denial, but about the graciousness and love of God. The focus of this season, this journey is not my/our brokenness but about God and God's graciousness. It is indeed the recognition of my/our sin and separation but more about grace and redemption. This is a journey, one that takes us from ashes and confession to absolution and celebration. Maybe this is why Mardi Gras might be a good image – it's a party that builds, that gains momentum as Carnival nears its completion in Shrove Tuesday – Mardi Gras.

Our journey begins again with words of confession and a smudge of ash on our forehead. These acts remind us of our need, our mortality. They also point us in a direction that speaks of God's love for us who addresses our brokenness with words and actions of healing.

May your journey be a fruitful one as together we again consider our journey from ashes to grace to an empty tomb.



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- The Bible calls us to welcome the stranger and treat the sojourner as we would our own citizens
- Our journey begins again with words of confession and a smudge of ash on our forehead. These acts remind us of our need, our mortality.



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

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Right Before your Eyes*

A smile can change a person's face and make everyone else feel happier

ALL GOD'S PEOPLE

In church school children hear and read stories about people like Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman who were shunned by the Jewish people, but who were loved by Jesus. How do these stories affect our children's attitude and behavior toward other people? That depends on us. Do our children see us reflecting Jesus' love when we deal with difficult neighbors, coworkers, and relatives? Do they hear us speaking about others in respectful or biased ways? Is our treatment of others based on their value to God or their net worth in the world? None of us can possibly measure up to Jesus when it comes to loving people. If we try to love like Jesus, it will make a lasting impression on our children.

When we struggle to reflect Jesus' love in our lives, we're helping our children learn the importance of demonstrating this kind of love in their own lives. We're teaching them to stop and ask: What would Jesus do in this situation? Hopefully, they'll remember the Bible stories and follow his example.

LIGHT UP THE WORLD

Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 5:14, and John 9:5 say that Jesus is the light of the world. What a powerful image this conveys. Read the verses from your Bible. Think about the fact that many people in today's world don't have electricity. What would it be like to live in without it? How does light help us?

Talk together about ways that we as Christians can "light up the world." Collect candles with special meanings such as baptismal candles and Christmas candles. Light one and watch the flame. Talk together about our lives as believers: how do we get "fuel" to shine for Jesus. (Answers might include going to church, reading the Bible, and praying.) To show others your love for Jesus, try some of the crafts below.

One way to let your light shine for Jesus is to make luminaria. Obtain paper lunch or gift bags—brown, white, pastel, or colored bags work equally well. Make cardboard patterns of Christian symbols, such as: a cross, Christmas tree, butterfly, or heart. Trace around them on one or both sides of the bags. With a hole punch, punch out holes along the lines. For safety, fill the bags 1/4 full of sand or cat litter. Set a votive candle in the sand or cat litter. Arrange a row of bags along a porch or path outside, and light the candles after dark.

Make a doorknob hanger to show that your light shines for Jesus. Cut a 4" x 15" strip of cardboard. Cut a 1" hole and 3" slit at the top so that it will slip over the doorknob.

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Light Up The World



ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP ADDRESSES PRESIDENT TRUMP'S REFUGEE EXECUTIVE ORDER

CHICAGO (Jan. 30, 2017) – The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), has issued a pastoral message addressing President Trump's executive order to restrict entry by refugees and visitors into the United States from seven predominately Muslim countries.

Eaton's message follows.

January 30, 2017

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Yesterday, we heard these words in the Gospel reading from Matthew 5:1-12, the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, Jesus lays out a vision for life in God's realm, characterized by seeing those who are often most disregarded, including the meek, the mourning and the peacemaker, as bearers of God's blessing. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to hear this Gospel, including Jesus' call for his disciples to be carriers of God's light and hope and reconciliation to a world deeply in need of them.

In this spirit, earlier last week I communicated with the Trump administration asking that it not stop the U.S. refugee admissions program or stop resettlement from any country for any period of time. The Bible calls us to welcome the stranger and treat the sojourner as we would our own citizens. I agree with the importance of keeping our country secure as the administration stated in its executive order last Friday, but I am convinced that temporarily banning vulnerable refugees will not enhance our safety nor does it reflect our values as Christians. Instead, it will cause immediate harm by separating families, disrupting lives, and denying safety and hope to brothers and sisters who are already suffering.

Refugees being resettled in the United States have fled persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political views and/or associations. They wait

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Bishop Eaton's Letter*

Dwelling in the Word

3rd Sunday after Epiphany - January 22,
2017

Matthew 4:12-23

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Matthew 4:17-18

"Epiphany," manifestation - revelation - light. This Sunday's Gospel lesson proclaims light in the darkness and calls us to repentance, that is reorientation to the light manifested in our darkness.

Sunday morning as we gather for worship around the state Donald Trump will have been inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States. We give thanks for a peaceful transition of power in our country. We will pray for God's blessing and support of our new, national leaders. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will have joined other religious leaders from across the country for a presidential prayer breakfast on Saturday. Also Saturday, there will have been demonstrations in D.C. and across the country protesting statements and behaviors of our new president. This is the context into which the Gospel will speak.

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

This kingdom is not our government. This kingdom pre-dates, post-dates, engulfs and surrounds all we do. It is light in darkness, hope in confusion, care in desolation. In times of want or plenty, joy or concern, privilege of suffering, the kingdom is ours - both saving us and placing a claim on our souls.

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Repentance is about first things, our primary focal point in life, our joy and our obedience. This Sunday might be a good opportunity to speak about first things - as Jesus does at the beginning of his ministry. The kingdom is "good news." It is the "curing of every disease" and "every sickness among the people."

May Jesus teach in your synagogue, your church, this Sunday as he did of old. Light has dawned. You have been called. Like Peter and Andrew we either follow or we stay behind. There is a choice here that you are invited to make.

Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke

GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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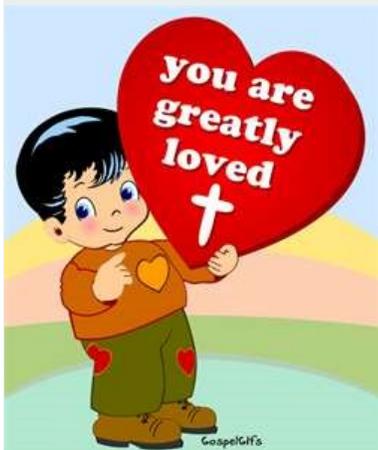
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Visit us on Facebook at Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church

Worship: Sunday Morning @ 8:45 @
First United Methodist Church, 191
E. Gladys



United Methodist Men **Sweetheart Dinner**

Tuesday, February 14, 2017 in
Davis Hall at 6:30 pm

Sign up at the church
by Monday February 6th

\$20 per person payable to Sharon's Sweet Treats

For all of Grace and Mercy and
United Methodist, date not
required!!

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Bishop Eaton's Letter

for years for the chance to go home. But sometimes, there is no home for them to go back to. We know from our partners at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) that only 1 percent of all refugees are chosen for resettlement.

People of faith helped start and still sustain the refugee resettlement program in the United States following World War II. As Lutherans, many of our ancestors faced the pain of having to flee their homes and the joy of being welcomed in new communities across the United States. As we have done throughout history, millions of Lutherans across the country honor our shared biblical values as well as the best of our nation's traditions by offering refuge to those most in need. We are committed to continuing ministries of welcome that support and build communities around the country and stand firmly against any policies that result in scaling back the refugee resettlement program.

We must offer safety to people fleeing religious persecution regardless of their faith tradition. Christians and other religious minorities suffer persecution and rightly deserve protection, but including additional criteria based on religion could have discriminatory effects that would go against our nation's fundamental values related to freedom of religion.

I invite ELCA congregations into learning, prayer and action on behalf of those who seek refuge on our shores. The ELCA "Social Message on Immigration," AMMPARO strategy and LIRS resources are good places to start. You can also make a donation to Lutheran Disaster Response. Those who have been part of resettling refugees or have their own immigration experience have important stories to share with their communities and testimony to make. I also encourage you to consider adding your voice by calling your members of Congress to share your support for refugees and using online advocacy opportunities through current alerts at ELCA Advocacy and LIRS.

In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Our Lord not only commanded us to welcome the stranger, Jesus made it clear that when we welcome the stranger into our homes and our hearts – we welcome him.

God's peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop

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Light Up The World

Draw a candle and flame on the lower part of the hangar. For sparkle, glue sequins or glitter to the flame shape. Print "Jesus, the Light of the World" on the card.

Create sewing cards for preschool or kindergarten Sunday school students. Across the top edge of poster board cards, print: "Let your light shine for Jesus!" Draw a candle and flame in the rest of the space. Cover the cards with clear adhesive paper. Punch out holes along the lines at 1/2" intervals. Cut lengths of 3-ply yarn that are long enough to sew around the design outline plus a few inches. Dip one inch of each end of yarn in white glue and let it dry on aluminum foil. This will stiffen it and make it easy for young children to use.

Create candle bookmarks for your Bibles. Have each person glue narrow strips of felt to both sides of a spring clothes pin. Glue felt flame shapes on top. Light a few candles and dim the lights. Or, gather out of doors around your luminaria. Together, thank God for sending Jesus to be the light of the world.

Serving God's People

<i>Date</i>	<i>Reader</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Acolyte</i>
Feb 5	Steve Anderson	Steve & Joni Anderson	Daniel & Laura
Feb 12	Regina Marks	Dave & Regina Marks	Karlee & Mickenzie
Feb 19	Steve or Phil	Jean & Cindy Ruhl	Lucas & Joseph
Feb 26	Jerry McMichael	Katja & Jerry McMichael	Chloé & Michah

Celebrations

<i>Date</i>	<i>Celebration</i>	<i>Celebrant</i>
Feb 4	Anniversary	Bea & George Luciani
Feb 6	Birthday	Joni Anderson
Feb 6	Birthday	Bea Luciani
Feb 12	Birthday	Casey Arstein
Feb 12	Birthday	Tom Inch
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Misty Wilkinson
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Cheyenne Wilkinson
Feb 12	Baptismal Birthday	Dylan Wilkinson
Feb 19	Birthday	Sutton Osborne
Feb 26	Birthday	Kris Largé

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Right Before Your Eyes!

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!

February 2017

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2	3	4
				Presentation of Our Lord 10a Quilters		
				Groundhog Day		
Pastor Inch						

5 Epiphany 5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	6:32a Next Text Classic 9:30a Next Text 2.0	8a Coffee		10a Quilters 10a Gather Study		

Pastor Inch—Hermiston						
12 Epiphany 6	13	14	15	16	17	18
	6:32a Next Text Classic 9:30a Next Text 2.0	8a Coffee 6:30p Leadership Team <i>Valentine's Day</i>	9a Foot Clinic	10a Quilters		

Pastor Inch—Hermiston						
19 Epiphany 7	20	21	22	23	24	25
	6:32a Next Text Classic 9:30a Next Text 2.0	8a Coffee		10a Quilters 10a Gather Study		7p Tapping Into Faith
	President's Day					

Pastor Inch—Hermiston						
26	27	28				
Transfiguration 8:45a Worship and Communion 10:15a Education & Fellowship	6:32a Next Text Classic 9:30a Next Text 2.0	8a Coffee 5:30p Novel Ideas Book Club				

Pastor Inch—Hermiston