



## The Messenger – February 2024

Grace and Peace,

Valentine's Day is just around the corner with its cultural celebration of all things Love.

The mood is usually light-hearted, romantic, and festive. Though we know that there is another side as many years for the love celebrated on this holiday. Ash Wednesday is also just around the corner. The mood with Ash Wednesday is usually somber, and penitential. The words most often heard are "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." The themes of penance, and mortality dominate the day. Curiously, this year Ash Wednesday is celebrated on Valentine's Day, February 14. How might these two celebrations meet as they appear to be opposites, and even paradoxical? Ash Wednesday begins the Christian season of Lent, which comes from the Latin word for Spring. Contrition, and remorse are well known themes of Lent. However, the core theme of Lent is clearing away distractions to embrace what is essential. It is a spiritual Spring cleaning to prepare for the flowering of new Life. Love is at the very heart of Christianity. Thus, our theme for Ash Wednesday is Love: The Heart of all that Is.

We will then look at some spiritual essentials on the Sundays of Lent. I am including Emmanuel's Mission and Vision statement. We have identified these as the essentials of who we are called to be and to do. I invite and encourage you to pause and read them over. You may want to save these so that you can read and reflect upon them through Lent and beyond.

### **OUR MISSION**

"The Grace of God has brought us together  
to become Christs  
to become the New Community  
to be Light and Leaven for the World."

### **OUR VISION**

We are called to...

**\*Study and Practice the Spirituality of Jesus**

\*Live as a Safe and Healing Spiritual Community for all who come, regardless of economic conditions, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or spiritual path.

\*Become instruments of God's Grace by:

-Promoting understanding and unity between religious traditions, encouraging the healing of the soul and the community through Sacred Arts (chant, ritual, dance, poetry, visual arts, music) and Spiritual practice.

-Reaching all those who suffer, through food pantry ministry, LGBTQ+ support, RAASE partnership, raising awareness about injustices and racism in the world, and hosting addiction recovery groups.

-Working toward the healing and protection of God's Sacred Creation.

You may have noticed that the first bullet point under Our Vision is in bold print. This will be our focus on the Sundays in Lent. We will be taking these 6 weeks of early spring to reflect on and consider how we participate in the spirituality of Jesus. We will be looking at six pathways in the spirituality of Jesus. These pathways are drawn from Pastor Jim Roberts book, Saving the Soul of Jesus, as well other modern and ancient practitioners of spirituality. (If you would like to have copy of this book, I have some in my office or you can contact Jim.) Each pathway has a wide variety of practices which can feed our unique spiritualities. There is a twofold movement within the spirituality of Jesus. Three of the pathways lead us within, and three lead us outward. I invite and encourage to join in exploring the Spirituality of Jesus during the Lent. The following are the themes of our gatherings beginning with Ash Wednesday.

### **Ash Wednesday**

Feb 14. - Centered. In Love

### **The Pathways**

Feb 18- Daily Practice.

Feb 25. Immersion in the Beloved

March 3. Owning our Darkness

March 10. Compassion

March 17. Community

March 24. Call

I will be writing about each of these pathways in my midweek letters. I will be inviting folks to share their experience of walking these six pathways. We will then explore where they lead us as we enter the Easter season at the end of March. I invite you to look for further information of our shared journey into these Lent disciplines this year

Blessings

Pastor Frank

**The 2023 Annual meeting** was held on Sunday, January 28 after the 10:30 Service. All the resolutions and the 2024 budget were passed. The new council members for 2024 are: Susan Hurley-Whitacre and Rich Lundin. Returning members for a second term are Karen Van Howe and Marcia Terrill. They will be joining current members, Holly Blair Cascio, Taj Guzzardo, Sally Susan, Dan Goldberg, Jack Ream, and Kathlyn Wright. Officers will be elected at the February 20<sup>th</sup> Council Mtg.

**The 2024 members of the Nominating Committee** are: Ann Downie, Eric Johnson, and Catherine Rennert.

The 2024 Audit Committee members are: David Whitacre, Can Vorsanger, and Lou Ann Johnson.

**Lay Voting members for the 2024 Northern IL Synod Assembly** in June are Rocio Aldana, Linda Aldana, and Harlan Johnson.



**MOVIE NIGHT - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9<sup>th</sup> AT 7:00PM**

The next movie is still under consideration. We will meet in the Youth Lounge straight down the stairs when you enter by the North doors. Bring snacks to share.

For more information, text Christyn, 815-289-7110

**WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Church of America)**

**Our next WELCA meeting will be on Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Come and join us. Leader: Karen Van Howe**



## Winnebago County Forest Preserves Interest Hikes

Join Soul Garden for continued hiking experiences in the Winnebago County Forest Preserves. Dress for the weather! Contact Holly if you want to join the hikes. 815-543-1191  
All hikes start at 9:00am

Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves

<https://www.winnebagoforest.org/items>

Monday, February 12, 2024

Kishwaukee River  
Forest Preserve  
5757 Blackhawk Rd  
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Saturday, February 24, 2024  
Severson Dells Forest Preserve  
8786 Montague Road  
Rockford, IL 61102

### We Pray for Healing:

Jonathan Chell	Susan Lippert	Shannon
Julaine Lofquist-Birch	Harold Ogden	Jeff Birch
Ian, Joel, and Rick	Josie Peebles	Jim Petzold
Peg Burns	Karen Johnson	Bena & Vince Holland

### Birthdays in February



2/2 David Johnson  
2/2 David Lippert  
2/4 Frida Aldana  
2/6 Cameron Sanden  
2/13 Dena Rasmusson  
2/14 Andrew Bachman  
2/15 Charles Englund  
2/16 Nash Anderson  
2/17 Noah Ekwall

2/19 Lynn Laney  
2/19 Karen Swenson  
2/20 Kenny Douglas  
2/20 Aksel Koch  
2/24 Kaia Anderson  
2/24 Leonard Walter  
2/25 Marcia Terrill  
2/27 Kathryn Ekwall  
2/28 Eric Anderson

**From the Food Pantry:** In February, we will be requesting canned pasta (such as Chef Boyardee), canned beef stew, baked beans. Thank you for your generosity in January.



## **Got a minute? You should read this!**

**Respiratory Syncytial Virus, often called RSV, is a common respiratory virus.** Nearly all children will contract RSV by the time they're two, and it affects about 65 million people every year.

**For most people,** RSV involves mild, cold-like symptoms, and you'll probably feel better in a week or two. But for others, especially in high-risk groups like infants and older adults, RSV can be serious and can even lead to hospitalization.

### **Diagnosing RSV and preventing its spread**

**Many people think** of RSV as a seasonal illness that starts in the fall and peaks in winter. But COVID-19 disrupted some of its predictability in 2020, and experts are uncertain what to expect into the future.

**It can be difficult** to distinguish RSV from other seasonal respiratory illnesses, like influenza and the cold, because they share many symptoms including coughing, sneezing, and congestion. Your doctor can conduct special tests to determine the specifics of your illness.

### **Are you at risk?**

**If you're an older adult** or an adult with chronic medical conditions, you may face an increased risk of severe RSV and cardiovascular complications. Some people who face the highest risk of RSV include:

- Adults over 60, Adults with weakened immune systems, Adults with chronic medical conditions like lung disease, cardiovascular diseases, kidney disorders and neurologic conditions.

### **How it's diagnosed**

**If you think you have RSV,** it can be confirmed or ruled out by a nasal swab. Symptoms start within four to six days of getting infected and can include:

- Runny nose, Decrease in appetite, Coughing, Sneezing, Fever, Wheezing.

### **How it's treated**

**Most RSV infections** go away on their own in a week or two, and antiviral medication isn't usually recommended. But there are some things you can do to relieve symptoms.

**Drink enough fluids.** Don't forget to drink plenty of fluids. You'll prevent dehydration (loss of body fluids).

**Stay on top of fever and pain** with over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers, including acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

**Talk to your health care professional** if your symptoms become severe, i.e. trouble breathing or dehydration.

## **Complications from RSV**

**When an adult gets RSV** infection, they typically have mild cold-like symptoms, but some may develop a lung infection or pneumonia. RSV can sometimes also lead to worsening of serious conditions such as: asthma, COPD, congestive heart failure, which could lead to bronchitis, pneumonia, irregular heart rhythms, stroke.

**Older adults** who get very sick from RSV may need to be hospitalized. Some may even die. Older adults are at greater risk than young adults for serious complications from RSV because our immune systems weaken when we are older.

**It's important to understand** the heightened risks you could face and the best way to protect yourselves and your loved ones, especially if you're in a more vulnerable population.

## **A Promising new Vaccine**

If you have questions about the RSV vaccine, talk to your health care professional. Two new vaccines were recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration and recommended for adults over 60 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They are currently available at many retail pharmacies.

**Research shows one shot** could reduce the risk of symptomatic illness by 83% and of severe illness by 94%. It's especially important for older patients with cardiopulmonary issues to get the vaccine.

*Written by American Heart Association editorial staff and reviewed by science and medicine advisors.*

**Ash Wednesday is February 14<sup>th</sup>**, Emmanuel will be having a Taizé Service in the Sanctuary at 6:30 pm. Calvary's Service in the Chapel will be at 7:00 pm.

**The Midtown Lenten Services are all at Noon, preceded by exercise class with the Faith Community**

## **Nurses. There will be a simple lunch after the services.**

- February 21 at Zion Lutheran Church at Noon  
Preacher: Pastor Frank Langholf
- February 28 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church at Noon  
Preacher: Pastor Michael Thomas
- March 6 at Salem Lutheran Church at Noon  
Preacher: Pastor Chuck Olson
- March 13 at Calvary Lutheran Church at Noon  
(The Chapel at Emmanuel Lutheran)  
Preacher: Pastor Bill Dahlberg
- March 20 at First Lutheran Church at Noon  
Preacher: Intern Rachel Perkins

### **Lenten Exercise Class to start again!**

Join Sue & Mary, Faith Community Nurses on Wednesdays, 11:00 am, for 40 min. of gentle exercises designed to improve balance, coordination, and strength.

We'll make sure you have adequate time to get to service!

- Wed. Feb. 21 Zion Lutheran Church Youth Room
- Wed. Feb. 28 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Library
- Wed. March 6 Salem Lutheran Church Fireside Room
- Wed. March 13 Calvary hosting at Emmanuel's Library
- Wed. March 20 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran Church Friendship Hall

Wear comfortable clothes & supportive shoes.

Exercises are done seated or standing near a chair for stability.

### **"SIGHT/UNSEEN"**

The new Art Show Opening will be Friday, February 2, 2024, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm in the Celebration Room.

All the art is

works of Norm Knott when he was going through a period prior to an angioplasty followed by cataract surgery of both eyes and a recuperation from a head injury. His art was his healing therapy. Please join us for the opening of this deeply personal exhibit and meet the artist while he creates a new drawing and talks with the public.

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