

# CORNERSTONE

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“THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT ST. PAUL’S”

February 2018

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

Volume 24, Issue 2

## ASHES AND VALENTINES

In the middle of February this year two observances collide on the 14<sup>th</sup>: Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day. Naturally I started to think about the connection between “Ashes and Valentines.” Is there one?

First I checked my sources and read about the historic (or legendary) character St. Valentine. This Christian man was a physician and priest around 270 AD in Rome. Since the Christian Church was outlawed in those days, Valentine performed many weddings in secret. He also gave assistance to martyrs who were imprisoned under Caesar Claudius II. These activities led to his arrest and, ultimately, to his death. He was stoned and clubbed but refused to renounce his faith. Therefore he was beheaded. It is said that he wrote a note to a girl whose sight Valentine miraculously restored. Valentine signed the note: “From your Valentine.”

I thought Valentine’s Day was invented by Hallmark or some other card company. Turns out to have a sort of religious meaning after all.

We all know that the purpose of ashes on Ash Wednesday is to strike a somber note at the beginning of the Lenten Season. The ashes remind us of the shortness of our life and of our death. It further reminds us of the great love God has for us. As John wrote: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Ash Wednesday proclaims the deep, unconditional love God has for us and all creation. Although the imposition of ashes is not a warm, happy symbol, it does begin us on a spiritual journey that ends with

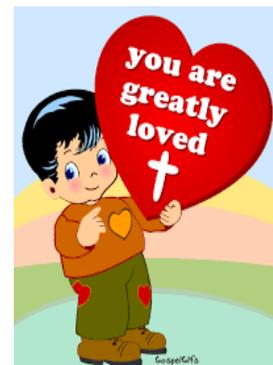
the glorious resurrection of Jesus, our Savior, on a Saturday evening at the Great Vigil of Easter.

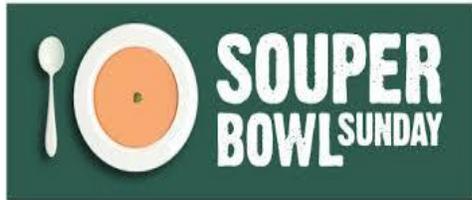
So there may be a connection between ashes and valentines. If you participate in the customs of Valentine’s Day and you are signing your name on that special card, recall God’s Valentine greeting to us. As you feast again on heart-shaped cookies or cake, picture God’s heart, broken for us on Calvary’s cross and mended with the rolling away of a gravestone and the re-appearance of Jesus.

As you move on your Lenten journey this year, give some consideration to the traditional disciplines: daily prayer, acts of charity, and fasting. Remember prayer might be as simple as reading a short meditation from a Lenten devotional booklet. Acts of charity might be as simple as giving a dollar to a beggar or bringing in a donation for the food cupboard. Fasting might mean giving up some habit that is unhealthy or something that you dearly love to do.

May your Lenten journey bring you into a closer relationship with our Lord. May you see God walking beside you. May you always be assured that God’s Spirit is constantly whispering in your ear: “I love you. You are my daughter/my son.”

*+Pastor Paul Koch*





On Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup> we will collect donations for the Canonsburg Food Pantry. There will be a soup pot on the table in the rear of the Sanctuary for these donations. Non-perishable food items will also be collected. A box will be on the pew in the rear of the Sanctuary for these donations. The items will be taken to the Canonsburg Houston Food Pantry for their February distribution on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.



World Hunger is the monthly mission for February. All donations received during the month will be sent to the synod. When making a contribution, remember to use an envelope found in the rear of the Sanctuary and place your name and envelope number on it. Thank you



### **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

The Hospitality Committee has planned a Pancake Supper for Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Pancakes and sausage will be served from 5:00-6:00 p.m. We are inviting the members of PLUM to join us in fellowship that evening. Following the dinner, Pastor Melba will be leading everyone in a game of Bible Trivia (there will be prizes, so brush up on your Bible). If you are planning on attending contact the church office (724)-745-5962 by Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Come join us on Shrove Tuesday for some good food and Christian fellowship.



On Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday service will be held beginning at 7:00 p.m. There will be Imposition of Ashes and also Holy Eucharist. Rev. Blair Morgan will be presiding at the service. Mark your calendar and plan on attending this service as we begin our 2018 Lenten Journey.



Dear friend,

Thank you again for your generous support of Lutheran Disaster Response in 2017. As we reflect and begin a new year, I'd like to share some thoughts with you.

Because of your generosity, our church is able to walk alongside disaster survivors, meeting urgent needs and helping with the long road to recovery.

- **In Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands**, we provided relief supplies to survivors and supported pastors so that they can focus on caring for their congregations and communities. We are currently assisting Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean Synod to build their capacities to respond to the disaster.
- **In Haiti and Cuba**, we've replaced lost tools for farmers affected by the hurricane so they can get back to work, helped woman-headed households with cash assistance, and helped families get daily life back to normal with dishes, cookware and blankets.
- **In Texas**, we're part of a group doing case management for survivors of disasters, and plans are underway for a respite retreat for rostered ministers.

- **In Florida**, we've supported our affiliate in providing crisis counseling for thousands of people in 20 counties

**And much, much more** is in the works as we continue to work closely with our affiliates, synods, companions and other partners.

**Our goal?** To have more resilient communities that are less vulnerable to the next disaster. Thanks to you, we're on the way there. I've already been impressed by the resiliency of our neighbors who survived disasters. Here are a few quotes that stuck with me recently:

*"Virgin Islanders are strong and caring people. We have been hit hard, and so many are suffering. Despite this, people are joining together and supporting each other and forging a recovery out of the devastation."*

– Christopher Finch, St. Croix

*"Every day when I get up the first thing I do is give thanks to the Lord because I can see the light of a new day, not the electric light, a new opportunity to be alive and do the thing the Lord has called me to do."*

– The Rev. Idalia Negron, Puerto Rico

*"People are overwhelmed with the process, but they are also overwhelmed with love of the church, the neighbor and the stranger."*

– Beverly Davis, Houston

Thank you again for partnering with us as we answer the invitation to be part of God's renewing work in the world.

With gratitude and fellowship,



The Rev. Daniel Rift  
 Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Everyone is invited to attend a Vacation Bible School workshop on Saturday, February 3, 2018. The workshop will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church in Bethel Park and will begin at 9:00 a.m. This workshop is being held in preparation for a workshop held by Group Publishers for the entire Pittsburgh area.



Asset Mapping

A workshop entitled **The Power of Asset Mapping** will be held on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-12:30 at Christ Lutheran in Duquesne. Asset Mapping is a tool that relies on a core belief of asset-based community development; namely, that good things exist in our churches and that those things can be highlighted and encouraged – **"Your gain is my gain is our gain."**

Part One (9:00-10:30) we will recognize our assets, connecting the dots and vote with your feet. Part Two (10:45-12:30) a more in-depth understanding of the process will be recognized.

Refreshments will be served. Please register at 412-466-7773 or email [christluthduq@gmail.com](mailto:christluthduq@gmail.com)

**Snow Removal** – Bill McWilliams has been contracted by the Church Council to maintain our sidewalks during the winter months. If you wish to contribute to help defray the cost of this service, there are envelopes on the table in the rear of the Sanctuary marked Snow Removal. Don't forget to include your name and envelope number. Thank you.

## February Assistants and Sponsors



### Acolyte

- February 4 – Corey Ferens
- February 11 – Josh Porter
- February 18 – Diamond Dibble
- February 25 – Logan Billingham

### Assisting Minister

- February 4 – Carol Ferens
- February 11 – Ann Morrocco
- February 14 – Jill A. Shook
- February 18 – Jill A. Shook
- February 25 – Ann Morrocco

### Eternal Candle

- The Ferens Family

### Fellowship

- February 4
- February 11 – Mark & Nancy Pollo
- February 18
- February 25 – Karen & Logan Billingham

### Flowers

- February 4 – Carol Jean Straka
- February 11
- February 18
- February 25 – John & Carol Jean Straka

### Lector

- February 4 – Carol Jean Straka
- February 11 – John Straka
- February 18 – Mark Pollo
- February 25 – Charlotte Stemmler

If you are interested in serving as an assistant or sponsoring the eternal candle or flowers, please contact the church office (724-745-5962) or email: [stpaulscbg@verizon.net](mailto:stpaulscbg@verizon.net).

## Worship Schedule

February 4	Rev. Beth Siefert
February 11	Rev. Paul Koch
February 14	Rev. Blair Morgan
February 18	Rev. Melba Dibble
February 25	Rev. Liz Mayforth

**Pastor's schedule is subject to change without notice.**



Kristin Richmond	February 4
Aaron Gilpin	February 17
Diamond Dibble	February 20
David Kraeer	February 21
Cecelia Patterson	February 27
Milt Stemmler	February 27



Ev, Sharlene, Anna Mae, Mark, Virginia, Margaret, Albert, Jim, Eric, Patty, Joyce, Dan, George, Elinor, Edward, Randy, Mary Ann, Jim, Christine, Rich, George, Faith, Anna Mae, Holly, The Richmond Family, Rose, Laura, Andy, Anita, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors and members and our church. If anyone should be added or removed, please contact the church office (724-745-5962) or email: [stpaulscbg@verizon.net](mailto:stpaulscbg@verizon.net).



Dear Lord, As we enter this Solemn and Holy Season, we pray that you would send your Holy Spirit upon us that we might prepare ourselves for these coming 40 days of Lent. Even though we may no longer wear sackcloth and ashes, we do seek to humble ourselves so that we can understand the magnificence of Your Love for us as You humbled Yourself and gave Your Life on the Cross that we might receive the gift of Eternal Glory with You. AMEN.