

**The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
February 12, 2023**

“Ordinary Time”

in the 170^h Year of the Parish

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)

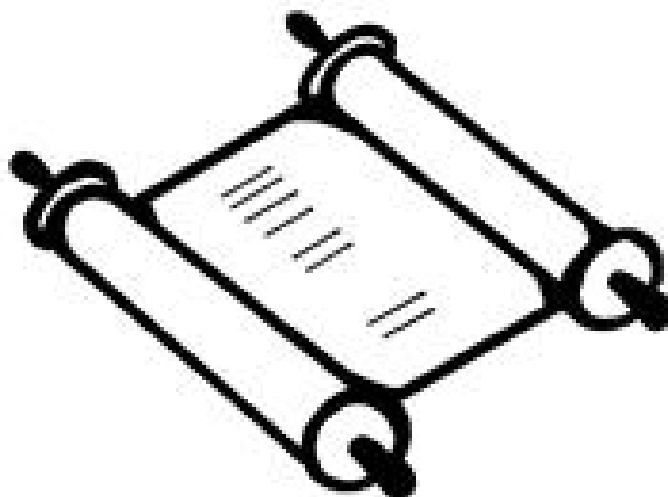
Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Welcome to Saint Mark's!

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Our Mission: “To know Christ and to make Christ known.”



Our COVID-19 Guidelines:

Hand sanitizer is available for your use.

Face masks are optional.

Offerings may be received by way of baskets as you enter or leave.

Please continue to observe social distancing when passing the peace.

A guide to hymnal use: LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book

**Please stand as you are able.*

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross in memory of their baptism

P In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The congregation may kneel.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

***HYMN**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

LBW, "Green", 499

***THE GREETING**

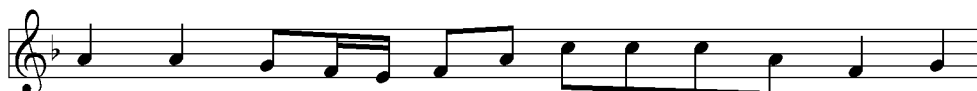
P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



B Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther:



We wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.



You are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - - men

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. O God, the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we accomplish nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S READINGS

In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We too are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

THE FIRST READING.....Deuteronomy 30:15-20

[Moses said to the people:] 15See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. 17But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, 18I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, 20loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 119:1-8

1Happy are they whose | way is blameless,
who follow the teaching | of the LORD!

**2Happy are they who observe | your decrees
and seek you with | all their hearts,**

3who never do | any wrong,
but always walk | in your ways.

**4You laid down | your commandments,
that we should | fully keep them.**

5Oh, that my ways were made | so direct
that I might | keep your statutes!

**6Then I should not be | put to shame,
when I regard all | your commandments.**

7I will thank you with | a true heart,
when I have learned your | righteous judgments.

**8I will | keep your statutes;
do not utter- | ly forsake me.**

THE SECOND READING.....First Corinthians 3:1-9

1Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

5What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. 9For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***THE HOLY GOSPEL.....Matthew 5:21-37**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.



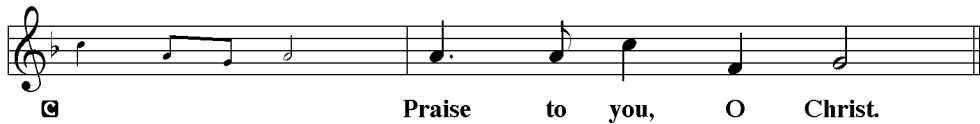
[Jesus said to the disciples:] 21“*You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’* 22*But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire.* 23*So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you,* 24*leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.* 25*Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.* 26*Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.*

27“*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’* 28*But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* 29*If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.* 30*And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.*

31“*It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’* 32*But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

33“*Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’* 34*But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.* 36*And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.* 37*Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”*

The gospel of the Lord.



THE SERMON

***HYMN Oh, that the Lord Would Guide My Ways LBW, “Green”, 480**

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

P Living together in trust and hope, let us confess our faith:

**C I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

After each petition, “Merciful God/Hear our prayer.”

***THE PEACE**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.


C And also with you.

The ministers and congregation greet one another with these or similar words, and/or gestures of peace, limiting physical touch and contact with one another.


***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.



P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. Sharing our life, he lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:



Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

P You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all goodness; you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence.

We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us.

We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all.

We praise you for your grace and promises revealed to your people.

In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son who fulfills your promises.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Send now, we pray your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C Amen. Come Holy Spirit.

P Join our prayers with those of your servants in every time and place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

C Amen.

***OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

P Let us pray in the words our Savior gave us:

C Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

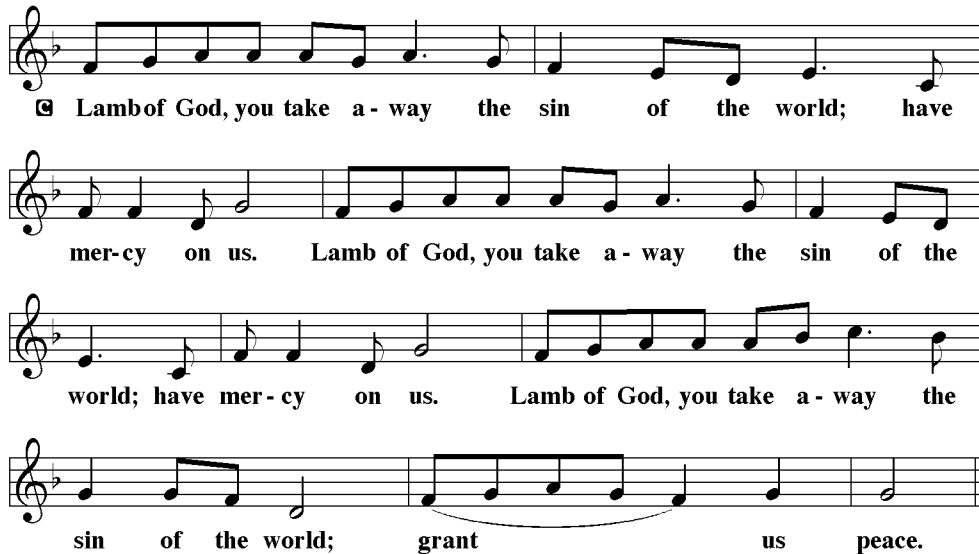
and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

**and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

***LAMB OF GOD**



☞ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Persons may come forward to the chancel to receive Holy Communion. This format will be more “continuous” noting the following procedure:

- *Communicants as directed by ushers are asked to come forward by way of the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread.*
- *Once receiving the bread, communicants will proceed to one of two stations (left or right) to receive wine from the pouring chalice.*
- *After receiving wine, communicants will place the empty cup in the designated tray and return to their pew by way of the side aisles.*

Please do not kneel at the rail.

P Come and taste the joy of the Lord!

C Thanks be to God.

THE COMMUNION

***AFTER COMMUNION**

P The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Let us pray. Holy One,
we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.

C Amen.

***THE BLESSING**

P Almighty God, Father, †, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

***HYMN Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing LBW, “Green”, 196**

***DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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Prayer List: Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Liz Ruesskamp, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, Diana Zeigler, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Susan Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Roy and Gloria Meyer, the people of Ukraine and Eastern Europe, Storm, Hurricane and Earthquake Victims, Ezra Buckman, Sheila Brassard, Kevin Rosini, Kathy Eshelman, Micah, Ray Huff, Matt Fortin, The Hershberger Family, Steve Beiber, Lorraine Kershinski, Carl Hieber

WORSHIP LEADERS (February 12, 2023)

Lector	8:00 a.m.	Becky Pryor
	10:30 a.m.	Ralph Zeigler
Communion Assistants	8:00 a.m.	Jackie Kinney
	10:30 a.m.	Carl and Audrey Albright
Organist		Sam Robinson
Ushers	8:00 a.m.	Richard Miller and Herb Poff
	10:30 a.m.	Matt Fortin, captain Glenn Yaple, Bud Doebler



READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? Faith and Fellowship has temporarily “moved some books” from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the Front Lounge and take a look!



ALTAR FLOWERS today are given to the glory of God:
+In Loving Memory of our parents, Luella and Lawrence Bair by the Children.
+In Loving Memory of Robert and Shirley Campbell by the family.
+In Loving Memory of my husband Frank, by Shirley Vognet.

OUR STEWARDSHIP (February 5, 2023)

Regular Offering	\$4,533.00
Lent	5.00
Bulletin Sponsor	10.00
Initial Offering	20.00
Miscellaneous	50.00
World Hunger	50.00
Food Pantry	50.00
Global Mission	50.00
Sunday School Offering	31.00
Operation Christmas Child	45.00
Disaster Relief	40.00
Family Promise Hosting	30.00
Flower Memorials / Tributes	30.00
Memorials	175.00
Synod Benevolence	5.00
Souper Bowl	95.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	50.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$5,269.00



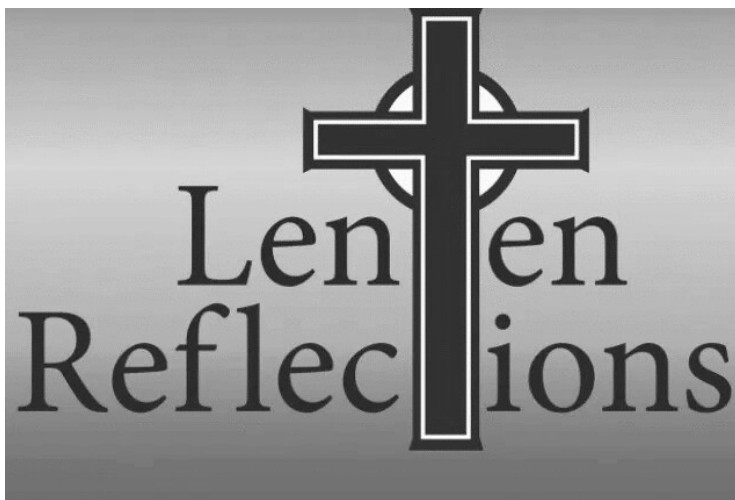
BULLETIN SPONSOR

Thank You Jane Kline for being this week's Bulletin Sponsor.

SHROVE TUESDAY CELEBRATION:

St. Mark's will observe "Shrove Tuesday" (February 21) the day before Ash Wednesday with a special celebration. At 6:30 p.m. we will gather in Fellowship Hall for donuts and light conversation. Remember that in some circles "Shrove Tuesday" is also referred to as "Fastnacht" or Donut Day, a day to remove all fat and sugar from the home in preparation for Lent. Our celebration will also include gathering in our courtyard to burn last year's palms for ashes to be used as our ashes for repentance and mortality on Ash Wednesday. We will conclude our time together with a brief liturgy of prayer and praise as we "Bury the Alleluia" in preparation for Lent. Joined by fellow Lutherans from St. Luke, Williamsport, this promises to be a meaningful day as we begin our Lenten pilgrimage in anticipation of the Easter Season.

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Midweek Lenten Series: Making Change

**Wednesdays in Lent (March 1-29),
12:15 p.m., Chapel**

Change is a constant in our lives. Some changes mark gradual transitions, as when daytime shifts toward twilight or winter turns to spring. Others happen in the blink of an eye, separating time into “before” and “after”. We choose to undergo some changes after carefully considering our options, while others are forced upon us.

In the weeks, days, and hours before Jesus’ crucifixion, the disciples also experienced change: a change of venue as the gates of Jerusalem approached; a change of plans as their long-awaited Messiah was arrested and tried; a change of circumstance as the crowds shouted “Crucify!”

Change is hard. We long for the expected and familiar, but all too often find ourselves in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown. We cannot predict how things will turn out. The hymnwriter Joachim Neander proclaimed God’s steadfast love in the midst of life’s inevitable changes: “All my hope on God is founded who will all my trust renew, who through change and chance will guide me, only good and only true. God unknown, God alone, call my heart to be thine own” (WOV 782).

Each Wednesday in Lent we will explore together how in the midst of change, God in Christ is always with us.

All are welcome!



Camp Mount Luther is participating in The First Community Foundation Partnership of PA’s “**Raise the Region**” on March 8-9, 2023. It is a 30-hour fundraising event starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending the next day at 11:59 p.m. Money donated by the Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships will help stretch donations made to organizations that day. Additional monetary prizes and incentives will be awarded too.

Proceeds raised for Mount Luther these days to the camp’s Annual Fund unless a donor gets in touch with the camp office to designate it for another camp cause. To be part of Raise the Region, visit www.raisetheregion.org during the event and make an online donation to camp. Running totals will be shown throughout the day at the Raise the Region website. Camp Mount Luther has participated in Raise the Region for ten years and has garnered about \$179,000 in donations during this event. The camp hopes you will help us to have another successful year!



Right now, your congregations can rush aid to our neighbors devastated by the earthquake in Turkey. Lutheran World Relief teams are already coordinating a response, and it is your congregations' compassion and generosity that will rush emergency care. Gifts to LWR's emergency response fund will deliver critically needed care for families like water, medical care, shelter and

essential supplies. Congregations and their members can give online at **lwr.org/quake** or mail a check to Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061. Please write **QUAKE** in the memo.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

“I took each item out of my box one by one. I wanted to rejoice for everything.”

~ Andy, shoe box recipient.

Please consider donating to our shoebox collections this month. The items are small, and yet so meaningful to the child who receives them.

In March, we will be collecting:

Combs/Brushes/Hair Accessories

Toothbrushes

Bar Soap

Mini Flashlights with extra batteries

Monetary donations are also welcome as we are looking into including “Grow With Me” shoes in this year’s boxes. While these are a bit pricey at \$20.00/pair, they adjust over time and can “grow” 5 sizes as the child’s foot grows. These shoes are often needed for children to attend school so receiving them is a huge blessing indeed! Checks may be made to St. Mark’s with OCC in the memo line.

These items (or any others) can be placed in our red, OCC bin located in the narthex. We thank you for your generosity!

*The age ranges for both boy and girl boxes we fill are 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14



The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee and the Women of St. Mark's need donations for our annual Fall Sale that will, after an absence of two years, be held in early September.

We are accepting holiday decorations, housewares, linens, toys, small, working electronics, gadgets, dishes, jewelry, lamps, art work and the list goes on. If you don't want it, we probably can sell it.

Watch the bulletin and "The Lion" for updates on the dates to set up for the sale.



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January/February Newsletter

Rev Linda Johnson Seyenkulo --- ELCA Missionary, Liberia, West Africa

Linda.Seyenkulo@elca.org/ljseyenk@gmail.com Facebook/Messenger Linda Johnson Seyenkulo Phone: +231770119228

There are two women students in the LTBLMTC Evangelist/Deacon/Deaconess training program for this Level 1-4 program that runs for 2 years. They are Rebeca Kpanah Bonah, known as RB from Belleh Yallah and Nowai Bondo from Suahkoko.

RB, in top right hand corner of the picture, is a resident of Belleh Yallah, in the Kuwaa region of Liberia, deep in the interior. Although she has served God and the congregation with dedication, it never occurred to her to go to LTBLMTC for Evangelist training. Based on her commitment, the church thought she was the best candidate for the training program in Totota, a very long way from her home. It was a hard decision for her. As much as she enjoyed sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, she could not imagine leaving home and family, especially her fifteen-month-old child, behind. Students from way in the interior do not go home during the 9 weeks at LTBLMTC. RB is among the youngest in her class.

Nowai, bottom left hand corner of the picture, has served the church as an Evangelist in the St. Luke/Phebe parish of the LCL. Various situations have kept her from being able to go to the Level 1-4 training, not the least of which was family responsibilities during and following the Ebola and Covid epidemics. For awhile it appeared that she would once again not be able to attend, but Nowai was persistent. She told the church leadership, "I'll die if I don't go to LTB this time." She started slowly due to not being in school very much before coming to LTBLMTC. However, she is smart and is quickly catching up. She is not afraid to ask questions and her years of experience bring a richness and depth to classroom discussions.

These are just two of the 18 students who begin Level 2 at LTBLMTC very soon. Their dedication and the dedication and support of their families is a joy to see.

Prayer idea for those reading this newsletter: post this newsletter or at least the picture on it someplace where you can see it and remember our students in your prayers.



GROW in the Snow Looks at Baptism

All youth in 6-12th grade and their youth leaders are invited to attend this synod youth retreat on March 17-18. The theme of this year's will be baptism. Experience your Creator, play winter games and find refreshment in the peace of camp in winter. The retreat is from Friday night to Saturday afternoon, but there is an option for youth and leaders to come

just for the day on Saturday. The cost is \$73 for the whole program. Each registered group should provide one adult (21 or over) for every seven youth and at least one adult for each gender represented. Cabin assignments will be made based on available adults and the number of youth attending. Contact Chad Hershberger at chad@campmountluther.org



The best things about this week

This Week we celebrate the following Birthdays

Lisa Lewis	February 13
Emily Newcomer	February 13
Michele Owen	February 13
Elsie Sechler	February 13
Annette Peluso	February 15
Scott Kimble	February 16
Jarrett Eyer	February 17
Rick Robertson	February 17



UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 – Property Committee Meeting – 6 P.M. – Middle Lounge

Thursday, February 16, 2023 - Faith Formation Committee Meeting – 10:45 A.M. – Middle Lounge

Please update the Administrative Assistant, Joe Baur, of the date of Committee Meetings and Times so they can be included weekly in the bulletin. Thanks.

*There is a folder in the Administrative Assistant Office (Joe Baur) that has copies of committee meeting minutes. Minutes can be reviewed at any time. When possible, please send them to me and I will include them.
Thanks, Joe.*



The Deadline for the March Newsletter is Tuesday, February 21, 2023. Please have your articles in by this date. Thanks.

COMMEMORATIONS



**Cyril, monk, died 869; Methodius, bishop, died 885;
missionaries to the Slavs**

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

These two brothers from Thessalonika, Greece, were monks and were sent to bring Christianity to the Slavic people. In the course of their work they created a written language, inventing the Cyrillic alphabet for it, and translated the Bible and the liturgy.



**Martin Luther, renewer of the
church, died 1546**

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Though he began his adult church life as a simple Augustinian monk, Luther challenged the abuses he saw in the church, and his work eventually led to the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Luther's accomplishments included liturgical reform, translation of the Bible, and creation of the Small and Large Catechisms.