

# The Petra Press

## Newsletter of the Williamstown Lutheran Church

Stephen Sweyko

[www.wlcvermont.org](http://www.wlcvermont.org)

March 2025

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### Pastor's Corner

Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

It's Lent already. Lent is a period of repentance where we see how great our need is for the forgiveness that Jesus has won for us through his life, death and resurrection.

Recently, I attended the monthly meeting of pastors in our circuit, and we were going over the readings for Ash Wednesday. And interestingly, both the Old and New Testament readings mention positively the practice of fasting. Joel 2:12 begins, "'Yet even now,'" declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;" And in the Gospel according to St. Matthew in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. It's not "if" you fast, but "when" you fast. "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting..."

Even in the Small Catechism, it is mentioned positively in the section on worthy reception: "Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Again, fasting is not required, it's not the important thing, but it is fine outward training.

Fasting is not a requirement of the faith, but it is a good devotional practice. It is a way in which we, as Christians, give up eating at a particular meal or time in order to devote that time to prayer and meditation on the Word of God. It reminds that all gifts come from our heavenly Father, that we do not live on bread alone but every word that comes from the mouth of God.

And it's something that we Lutherans don't tend to emphasize all that much. In fact, we tend to do the opposite. When we come together, we eat. Potlucks are staple among us, and I love them. But at the circuit meeting, I suggested that maybe for Lent, we should do something different and have, what I referred to tongue-in-cheek as, an "empty pot" meal instead of a potluck.

At our recent elders meeting, we discussed Midweek Lenten services and when to have them so that more people could attend. We came up with the idea of moving the service back from our traditional 7 pm to 6 pm. Daylight Savings time kicks in on March 9<sup>th</sup> and so it won't be getting dark until after the Wednesday services end. This would make it easier for those who can't drive in the dark to come to services. Plus, those for whom 7 pm is too late may be able to make it at 6 pm.

Ash Wednesday is March 5th. We'll be having a 6 pm Divine Service that evening with the imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. And then through Lent, we'll be having Evening Prayer for our Midweek Lenten Services. They usually last no more than 45 minutes.

But also, we'll be having an "empty pot," beforehand which means we will forgo the usual potluck before the midweek services. Please feel free to eat something before if you need to or have to, but, if possible, please consider fasting before Midweek Services this Lent. This will give us the opportunity to come to church a little hungry. And for Lent, that's a good thing. We come to church hungry to hear of our need for repentance and the forgiveness that we have so graciously received in Jesus Christ.

God's blessings be with you and yours as you prepare to celebrate the season of Lent.

In Christ,

Pastor Stephen Sweyko

### **WORSHIP SERVICES**

Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

### **LENT SERVICES**

Lent Services Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. No Communion

March 26, April 2 and April 9

### **HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

April 13: Palm Sunday with Communion 10:15 a.m.

April 17: Holy Thursday with Communion 6:00 p.m.

April 18: Easter Sunday with Communion 10:15 a.m.

### **Church News/Events**

Adult Bible Study Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m.

March 23 – Confirmation after Service 11:30 a.m.

April 18: Easter Sunday breakfast at 9:00 a.m. The sign-up sheet will be in Narthex

Sign up for Easter Lilies sign up sheet with be in Narthex

## CARD SHOWER FOR BEV SCHUMACHER

Bev Shumacher is currently at Bel-Air Center in Newport Vermont and could use some encouragement. Her son Michael says she is stuck in her room and could use some encouragement. It would be nice if her church family could send her cards to let her know we are thinking about her. The address is:

Beverly Schumacher

Bel Air Center

35 Bel-Aire Drive

Newport VT 05855

Room 134 A

If you would like to call her the direct number to her room is: 802-323-5664



On Sunday March 2nd, Lochlan Oscar Fong Chin, the infant son of Matthew and Sara Chin, was baptized. His sponsors are Troy and Emma Laughlin.



## April Newsletter

The deadline for the April newsletter is Thursday April 10 for publication on Saturday April 12. I need your help to keep the newsletter going. 😊 Kathy Laughlin