

The Petra Press

Newsletter of the Williamstown Lutheran Church

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Pastor's Corner

Blessings in the name of our risen Lord.

A popular word that gets thrown around these days is “gaslighting.” You hear it in the news, on podcasts, and even in conversations between friends. From what I can see, most people really don’t know what it means, but they throw the term around whenever they want to disregard or belittle another person’s opinion. If somebody doesn’t agree with another, they get accused of “gaslighting.” But “gaslighting” is much more than a simple disagreement.

According to an article in Today, “Gaslighters perpetually lie and question the victim’s reality, leading the victim to question their own experience and perception of events.” “Gaslighting” is a form of emotional abuse and manipulation. For instance, one person intentionally hurts another but tells the injured, “It’s not a big deal,” or “I really didn’t mean it.” But it’s obvious that they really did intend to injure. One person publicly insults another but then tries to blunt the injured person’s response by saying, “It was a joke,” or “You’re being too sensitive,” or the apology which isn’t an apology, “I’m sorry if you were offended.” A spouse cheats and then tells the wronged partner, “You were distant so it’s all your fault.”

It struck me in looking at these definitions that “gaslighting” is exactly what we sometimes try to do with God when we sin. We minimize our sin (“It’s not a big deal”). We deflect (“I was just joking”). Or we even go so far as to blame our sin on God (“If you hadn’t placed me in this situation, I wouldn’t have HAD to sin”). Of course, none of these things are true. And we don’t alter God’s reality. We just convince ourselves that our altered reality is true.

And that’s where God’s Law comes in. It shows us what is truly real. God’s Law strips us of our pretenses, and our gaslighting is shown to be the lie that it is in the clear and harsh light of the Word and Will of God.

We need a Savior. The Law shows us that we need a Savior. And that’s why God sent His only begotten Son. While God’s Law shows us our sin and our need for forgiveness, Jesus, the Christ, shows us our salvation. Through His life, death and resurrection, He has made us right with the Father. Through Jesus, we are justified (made right). St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to

God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. (11) More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Lent is a time when we focus on repentance and forgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness, reconciliation and salvation all made real forever to us and for us in Jesus Christ. There's no gaslighting here, only eternal joy.

See you in church.

In Christ,

Pastor Stephen Sweyko



Mid Week Services
w/o communion
Wednesday @ 6:00 p.m.

March 11

March 18

March 25



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

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| March 29 | Palm Sunday – with Communion 10:15 a.m. |
| April 2 | Holy Thursday – with Communion 6:00 p.m. |
| April 3 | Good Friday – w/o Communion 6:00 p.m. |
| April 5 | Resurrection Sunday – with Communion 10:15 a.m. |
| | Easter Breakfast (potluck style) @ 9:00 a.m. |



EASTER LILY SIGN-UP

There will be a sign- up sheet in Narthex starting Sunday March 15. Sign-up and I will pick up the lillies for Easter Sunday.

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EASTER BREAKFAST SIGN UP

There will be sign-up in Narthex for Easter Breakfast (number attending) and dish you will bring.

This will be available Sunday March 22.

Thrivent

Williamstown Lutheran Church is proud to be a Thrivent Choice Dollars®-enrolled organization.

Thank you to everyone who directed Thrivent Choice Dollars® to Williamstown Lutheran Church in 2025.

If you are a Thrivent member, the deadline is March 31, 2026, to direct any remaining 2025 Thrivent Choice Dollars®.

BABY BOTTLE DRIVE

The Central Vermont Pregnancy Services annual baby bottle drive is going on right now. The Baby bottles will be delivered to the Center the 3rd week of March. Coins, bills and checks are welcome. There is still time to pick-up a bottle (they are in Narthex).

Please return all bottles by Sunday March 22. Wendy Bailey will collect these and deliver them to Central Vermont Pregnancy Services. In fact she has already gathered the bottles that have already been returned. Thank you for supporting this great cause

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS



VectorStock

VectorStock.com/50073800

Don't forget Daylight Saving Time starts at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday March 8!

Some of us remember when there were no cell phones that would automatically change the time, when you had to be sure someone else in your household hadn't changed the clocks already (we had to do that manually). When you could call the 'operator' to find out what time it was!

The deadline for the April 2026 Newsletter is Friday April 3, 2026. I would appreciate stories, articles, pictures, cartoons, etc. Feel free to send throughout the month and in subject line Newsletter.

A special THANK YOU Pastor Sweyko, Barb Currier, Wendy Bailey and Sheila Walther for your contributions to this newsletter. Kathy L