

Amaz^{ing}!News

FEBRUARY // 2021



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Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

-1 John 4:7-8

Love songs have been around for a long time, and they're hard to escape in February. But whether you find them on a digital playlist, burnt CD, mixed tape or good old-fashioned radio, the themes are still the same. Burning love. Transforming love. Healing love. Everlasting love.

Since 1 John 4:7-8 tells us God is love, it's no surprise we find these same messages throughout Scripture, and they weave throughout our readings this month. We see imagery of God's burning love in the stories of

Elijah ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:1-12), and Psalm 50:3 describes God surrounded by a "devouring fire." We find reminders of transforming love in the story of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-9). Psalm 147:3 reminds us of God's healing love with, "He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:11 praises God's everlasting love with, "the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His steadfast love." Psalm 25 adds, "All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and His decrees."

Join us this month in worship, praise and reading. As we finish the lessons of Epiphany and prepare our hearts for Lent, let us learn together about God's burning, transforming, healing, everlasting love for us!



from
Pastor Tim
Senior Pastor
pastortim@zoarlutheran.com

An *Infinite* LOVE

Oh my, what a January 2021! Many thought that 2020 was going to meld into a beautiful new year with lots of hope, but here we are. The election crisis has developed into proportions that no one expected; Covid-19 keeps surging, and vacancies are slowly working their way into our arms; we have not addressed the inequalities between people of color and those of European descent; Pastor Cindy has accepted a call to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Toledo; and life keeps going on.

Ah, the Church has a word to say: yes, the world keeps on turning, yes, from the beginning of time humanity has exercised its sin and brokenness, yes things seem to be the same, going down in a handbasket. But then, right there, when everything was lost for Mary Magdalene, she went to the tomb on Easter Morning expecting to find her dead lord, Jesus. His resurrection changes the whole world – nothing is stronger than God’s love – nothing!

This month of February we will have two days of remembrance. The first is on the 14th, St Valentine’s Day, a day to commemorate one who gave his life for his faith in Jesus, sending a love letter to his beloved; the second is on the 17th, Ash Wednesday, a day to remind us of our mortality and of God’s grace.

Oh, how the world would be different if we focused on these two days! First, we would remember the love we have for each other, made in the image of God. Regardless of race or creed or color or politics or orientation what-side-of-the-tracks-we-grew-up-in, or anything we would see Jesus in each other, and love the stranger as well as the well-known. We would exercise the primary call to love one another, to wash each other’s feet. Our world would be different.

Also, if we fully lived into the truth not only of our mortality (and therefore that we are not the most important being in the universe), but that God, in infinite love, became part of our mortality, bringing us into God’s family. Yes, “you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” but it is for this “dust” that Jesus died.

Brothers and sisters, keep your hopes up! Stay safe and healthy! Use this time in February to immerse yourself in the love that God has for you, and how you can share this love. And know, that in God’s good hands, all things will come to good!

Pastor Tim Philabaum





ASH WEDNESDAY

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, will be held on February 17, 2021. In these crazy Covid days so many things that we have done we cannot do, but we are also reaching people electronically in ways we could not have imagined. There will be three elements to our Ash Wednesday observance this year.

First will be an in-person worship service at 11am. This will be a typical Ash-Wednesday service, in which the scriptures are read, sermon is given, ashes are "imposed," and Holy Communion is offered. Of course, there will be no Lenten Meal this year, but we will gather to begin our Lenten Journey.

Second, this worship service will be recorded and placed on YouTube, so that those who are unable to attend may join us on-line. This has become a real benefit for those who are not in this area but wish to connect to the Zoar Community and to our amaZing God. The service will premiere at 7pm.

Third, Pastor Tim will be in Zoar's parking lot from 5-7pm, with ashes in hand. You may drive up, receive a prayer of blessing, ashes "imposed" safely, and thus begin Lent.

In the midst of isolation, Covid disease and Covid deaths, this reminder of our mortality strikes home. But stronger than death or disease is the love of God that holds one to us. Jesus became a mortal to bring us into His blessed Kingdom.

Thanks be to God!

Welcome, Jen!

Zoar Staff welcomed a new member in January! Jennifer (Jen) Milligan comes to the Administrative Manager position of Zoar Lutheran Church with nearly 20 years of accounting and office management experience. A graduate of Bowling Green State University, she has either worked for, served as clients, or been a part of board leadership for a variety of nonprofit organizations, including being Treasurer, among other committee positions, at Zoar. She is a Zoar member and resides in Perrysburg with her husband (Denny) and four daughters. In her spare time, she enjoys watching and participating in theater and choir, watching Disney & Harry Potter movies, and attending the various activities of her daughters. It's great to have you with us, Jen!



GATHER/GROW/GIVE

The ELCA provides daily Prayer Ventures for each month of the year. From the ELCA:

“These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA, as well as for the needs and circumstances of our neighbors, communities and world. Thank you for your continued prayers for the life and mission of this church”.

1 Pray that the Spirit will guide, inspire and shape the Future Church structure being implemented in the churchwide organization to renew our sense of purpose and activate the entire church so that more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.

2 Black History Month Give thanks for the gifts, accomplishments, influence and witness of our African-descent neighbors who stand together with us as partners in the gospel, doing God’s work in the world. Though unified as siblings in Christ, we ask God to guide and help our church in its commitment to socioeconomic equity and racial justice and reconciliation.

3 Give thanks for our freedom in Jesus Christ and pray that we might use that freedom to proclaim the glory of God and serve our neighbor in obedience to God’s word, will and ways.

4 Pray for the children, youth and family ministry leaders of our church participating in the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza, “Holding Loosely.” Pray that they will grow and be strengthened for ministry through this time of spiritual renewal, continuing education, networking and mutual support.

5 Pray for ELCA Global Mission and for our ministry of accompaniment with churches, leaders, institutions and companion agencies in Asia and the Pacific region as we work together to grow the church, share the gospel, equip leaders, serve the needs of communities, address issues of development and justice, and assist with disaster preparedness and relief.

6 Ask God to help us listen to each other with respect and to address and heal the political and ideological divisions that discourage us from treating one another with love and concern as neighbors and siblings in Christ. Pray that the Spirit will unite us and lead us in the work we must do together for the well-being of our communities, nation and neighbors in need.

7 Illness, oppression, desperation and spiritual darkness are no match for the healing and redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior.
Praise God!

8 Pray for all those who experience food insecurity across our nation and around the world. Ask God to help us envision how we can work together to bring relief and hope and to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

9 Give thanks to God for people of all ages, cultures, races, life experiences and perspectives who are new to the ELCA. Pray that, as siblings in Christ, we will nurture and equip one another for participating in God’s work in the world.

10 Give thanks and praise to God for God’s abundant love, which “heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.”



11 Pray for our outdoor ministry organizations and their leaders as they continue to discern and plan for adapting their ministries during the pandemic – especially as they envision what this summer might bring.

12 Thank God for our special relationship with The Episcopal Church, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1999. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we will find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.

13 When have you felt proud, boastful or self-congratulatory for your ministry, witness or service to others? Ask God to forgive you and to refocus your attention on the good news and blessings of grace given to us through Jesus Christ, which we are called to share without bias, hesitation or expectation of recognition or reward.

14 We are not much different from Peter, James or John, who were unsure what they were witnessing when God's glory shined brightly in Jesus during his transfiguration. Pray for patience and for faith in God's promise, that we, too, will someday experience glory and joy in the kingdom of heaven.

15 Pray for our new U.S. president, vice president and members of Congress, that they will find strength, support and unity for their difficult work of serving a diverse nation. Ask the Spirit to help us guide, shape and embolden our culture and nation so that we practice justice, care for our neighbors in need, strive for truth and support our global neighbors.

16 Pray that when people witness our actions and hear our words, they will see the light of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ in us and will be moved to believe in God's love, forgiveness and actions in the world today.

17 Ash Wednesday Someone tracing the sign of the cross on our forehead with ash speaks to our need for physical reassurance that God has done something special and mysterious in the world through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Speak to God about what this smudge of ash – the cross – means to you and says to people who notice it on your forehead.

The rest of February 2021's Prayer Ventures can be found on the ELCA website or by clicking [here](#).



from
Omaldo
Cantor

operez@zoarlutheran.com

There is a good reason why Jesus was known as a healer. According to the gospels, twenty-six different stories give witness to Jesus' concern with human suffering. We read in Mark's gospel that in Jesus' very first day of ministry, he announces his mission (1:14-15), recruits four disciples (1:16-20), and generates what today we would call "buzz" by casting out an "unclean spirit" in the middle of a sabbath worship (1:21-28). *Then he heals the mother-in-law of one of his disciples (1:29-31) and sticks around to heal many who were sick or possessed by demons (1:32-34).* He did this after trekking about twenty-five miles on foot from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, which was not too long after his time in the wilderness (1:12-13). I cannot imagine accomplishing all these things in a day. From a human standpoint, it demonstrates the high priority Jesus gave to physical well-being. Jesus' specific focus is not a mere demonstration of charity but a manifestation of divine solidarity.

Dear friends, I am comforted knowing that God never sleeps even when I tire and see nothing but gloom. As Isaiah wrote, God "does not faint or grow weary." When I feel down or unwell, I hope to pray the words of Shirley Erena Murray's hymn ("Let My Spirit Always Sing" ACS 1020):

*Let my spirit always sing, though my heart be wintering
though the seasons of despair give no sign that you
are there*

*God to whom my days belong, let there always be
a song.*

Omaldo

FEBRUARY YOUTH EVENTS



from
Amanda
Director of Youth Ministries
arich@zoarlutheran.com

7th – Among Us Game Night 4PM on Zoom
14th – Service Sunday 4PM on Zoom Making Cards for Frontline Workers
21st – Painting Night! 4PM on Zoom (Materials will be available for pick up!)
28th – Hot Cocoa and Game Night! 4PM on Zoom

Current Sunday School Operations

Life Long Learning and Youth and Young Adult Committees have decided to continue operations remotely through the month of March. Sunday School for PK-4th Grade students will continue at 10AM via Zoom and 5th-12th grade Sunday School will take place in conjunction with youth group via Zoom at 4PM.

February and March Youth Group Events

All February and March Youth Group events will be held remotely, but that can't stop us from growing in our faith while having fun together! These events are open to all 5th-12th Grade Youth and will be held via Zoom at 4PM on Sundays! Several hands-on activities have been planned! Registration is required. You can learn more in your Weekly Update emails from Amanda! Wish to be added to this list? Please email Amanda at arich@zoarlutheran.com.

First Communion Classes

It is that time again! Our 2021 First Communion Classes will begin Sunday, February 21st-March 28th. These classes are open to all 4th graders and youth in higher grades who may have missed or may desire to participate in the class. Due to current precautions our classes will be held via Zoom from 10:30AM-11:30AM. Specifics for our First Communion Worship Service will be announced at a later date.

Lenten Activity Kits

Prior to the beginning of Lent each PK-4th Grade Sunday School Family will receive a special package of materials to enrich their faith journey during the time of leading up to Easter. More information to come, STAY TUNED!

Dear Friends,

Here we are in February of 2021 where we find ourselves experiencing what feels like a bit of déjà vu. Around this time last year, we were first made aware of COVID-19 and what procedures we would need to take to protect one another. As we experience our second Lenten season under COVID-19 protocol and precautions, I again remind you to set your mind on hope. Reserve some time to spend with God thanking him for the relationships, people and things that give you hope. I find hope in the smiles and joy of our youth and kids during Sunday School and Youth Group on Sundays (even when virtual), I find hope in science and the promise of an end to this madness and I find hope in our community here at Zoar. 2021 is bound give us new challenges, but don't let that cloud your gratitude. Make the time for God and THANK HIM for what brings you hope.

Peace,
Amanda Rich

Z O A R C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S H I G H L I G H T S

FEBRUARY // 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 6:30PM Property 7PM Social Ministry	2 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer with Staff 7:30PM LLL	3 11AM Staff 3:30PM AL 2 6PM Confirmation	4 7PM Evening Vespers	5	6 6PM Worship
7 8:30, 9:45, 11AM Worship 2PM Digging Deeper	8	9 3:14PM Prayer with Staff 5:30PM Communication	10 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation 7PM YAYA	11 7PM Evening Vespers	12	13 6PM Worship
14 8:30, 9:45, 11AM Worship 2PM Digging Deeper	15 7PM Worship Committee	16 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer with Staff 7PM Council	17 11AM ASH Wednesday Service 5PM Ash Wed. Drive-By 7PM Ash Wed. Virtual Service	18 7PM Evening Vespers	19	20 6PM Worship
21 8:30, 9:45, 11AM Worship 10:30 1st Communion Class 2PM Digging Deeper	22	23 3:14PM Prayer with Staff	24 11AM Staff 1:30PM AL 1 6PM Confirmation	25 7PM Evening Vespers	26	27 6PM Worship
28 8:30, 9:45, 11AM Worship 10:30 1st Communion Class 2PM Digging Deeper						

for a complete list of events, please check
the Z-Blast for weekly announcements

ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum
Cantor: Omaldo Perez
Director of Youth Ministry: Amanda Rich

Administrative Manager: Jen Milligan
Secretary: Suzanne DeLaney

Custodian: Paul Cannon
Communications Assistant: Sonia Krolak

WE WISH TO THANK OUR SPONSORS

Would you like to place a birthday announcement or congratulatory message in the Zoar monthly newsletter? Send an email to communications@zoarlutheran.com for pricing and availability.

Deadline is the 5th of the preceding month!

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Business Card Size

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⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11.

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Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum
Senior Pastor

Worship times:

Saturday: 6 PM

Sunday: 8 AM Virtual Worship,
8:30, 9:45 & 11 AM

Youth Sunday School at 9:45 AM

Be
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