

# Amazing!News

FEBRUARY // 2023



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM ZOAR LUTHERAN CHURCH | [WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM](http://WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM)

## INSIDE

Letter from Pastor Paul	Pg. 2
Ash Wednesday and Midweek Lenten Services	Pg. 3
Zoar Youth	Pg. 4
Worship & Music	Pg. 4
Church Council Message	Pg. 5
February Events Calendar	Pg. 6
Thank You Sponsors	Pg. 7
Follow Zoar on Social Media	Pg. 8

## Building Our Capacity to Love

By Kimberly Knowle-Zeller

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. ~ John 13:34-35*

In our homes we are given many opportunities to build our faith and capacity to love. We share love with others by praying together out loud, lighting candles to remember loved ones, baking cookies for neighbors, reading Bible stories, offering a calm presence during meltdowns, forgiving and blessing one another and showing up to church week after week.

What practices do you and your family already incorporate into your daily lives to show and share love? Do you routinely call and check on neighbors or bring food to a family in which someone is sick or has just returned home with a baby? Do you offer prayers together, seeking ways for God to show you how to love more deeply? Do you invite God to increase your resolve to reach out to neighbors? Do you listen to people who have different opinions?

First and foremost, before we offer love to our neighbors, we need to remember that we are loved. In our remembering and with small actions done in love, we can increase our capacity to care for others and respond as God's beloved children.

*Continued on page 5...*



**Pastor Paul**

**Senior Pastor**

[pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com)

# Gather, Grow and Give FOR JESUS



This month, we spend a lot of time in the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew. He begins with the Beatitudes and how God's blessing is not necessarily how they have always thought about it, and he continues calling people to a new kind of living with one another. This is far from the only time that Jesus reminds us that God's Kingdom isn't like every other kingdom.

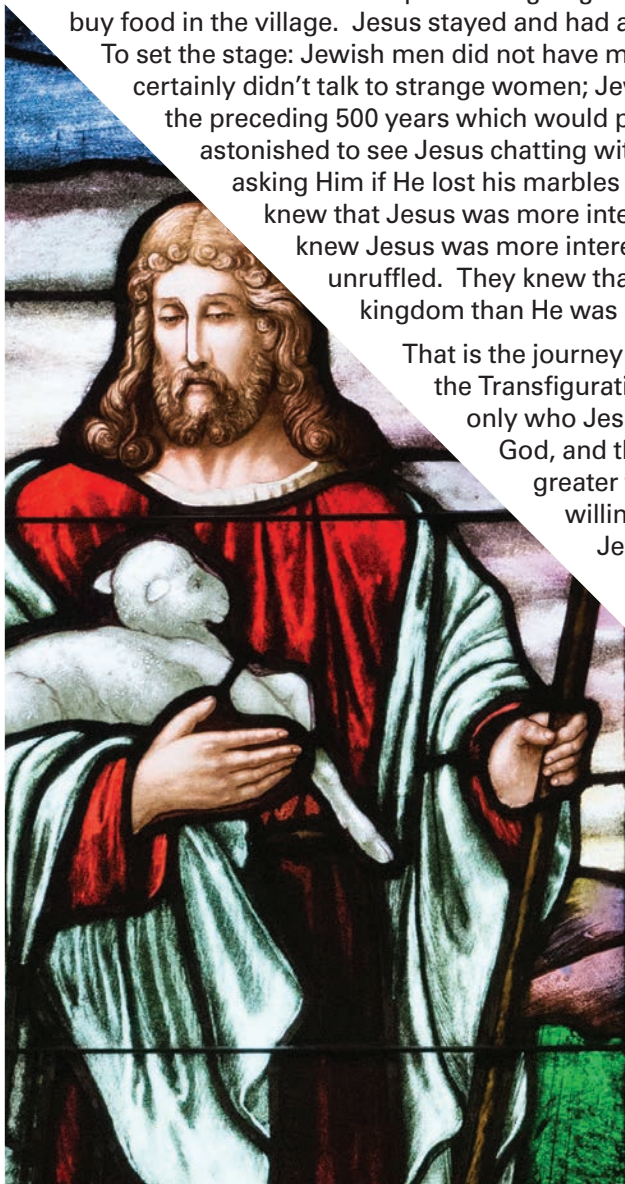
Once when Jesus and His disciples were going through Samaria, they stopped by a well, and the disciples went on to buy food in the village. Jesus stayed and had a profound encounter with a Samaritan woman who came to the well.

To set the stage: Jewish men did not have many conversations with women they weren't related to; Jewish rabbis certainly didn't talk to strange women; Jewish people and Samaritan people pretty much hated each other for the preceding 500 years which would preclude a conversation. When Jesus' disciples come back they are astonished to see Jesus chatting with this woman, but at the same time don't think for a moment about asking Him if He lost his marbles or what in the world he was doing. (John 4:27) Why? Because they knew that Jesus was more interested in welcoming others than keeping up with the Joneses. They knew Jesus was more interested in doing the work of His Father with people than keeping feathers unruffled. They knew that Jesus was more interested in sharing the good news of God's kingdom than He was in gaining fame, prestige, power or riches.

That is the journey of Epiphany from celebrating the visitation of the Magi on January 6 to the Transfiguration – this year on February 19. More and more people recognizing not only who Jesus is, but what His ministry is all about. Jesus reveals the Kingdom of God, and that God's forgiving love for all people is greater than ethnic heritage, greater than our rule-following, greater than the brokenness in our lives. Jesus willingly gives His life on the cross to prove that point, and in His resurrection, Jesus shows us that truly, nothing is greater than God's love for us.

As we complete the season of Epiphany this month, the season of the light of Christ being revealed, we come to the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a season of introspection and examination. Which is another way of saying, "Are we more focused on Gathering, Growing and Giving for Jesus or on ourselves?" Have we spent more time on thinking about Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection for us or on thinking about who is going to win the Super Bowl? It isn't that we are to pretend we don't live in this world. Lent calls us to think about Jesus who wants our faith to be more than an hour on Sunday morning. Jesus has freed us to witness to the saving, freeing love of God in Christ. What could be a better job than that!

Peace,  
Pastor Paul



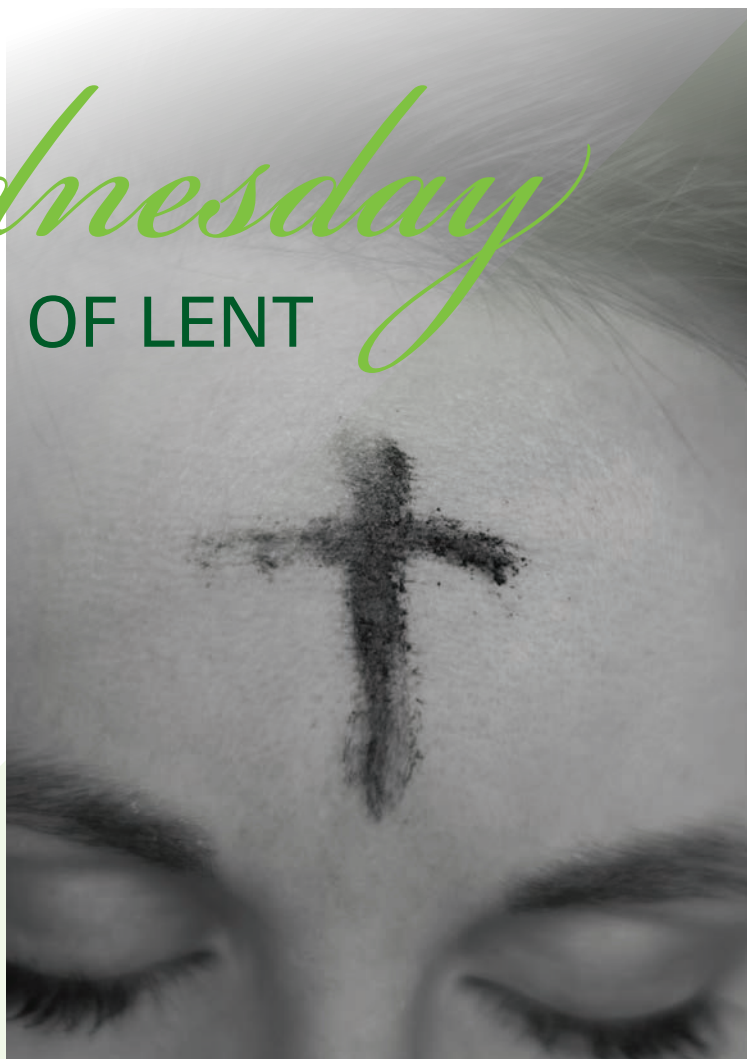


# Ash Wednesday

## BEGINS THE SEASON OF LENT

On Ash Wednesday we begin our 40 day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the Earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

This year's Lenten theme, **Sing with All the Saints in Glory**, takes us from the starting place of Lent reflecting on Jesus' death and resurrection and our own struggle to walk with Christ as we live simultaneously as saints and sinners. Then in the following weeks, we look to Christians from every age who have pointed to Christ in their living and dying. In remembering those who went before us, we are inspired to press on as well.



## Lent Midweek Services

**Join us on Wednesdays during Lent for Midweek Services at 12PM\* and 7PM.**

**Wednesday, February 22**

*Ash Wednesday with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion*

**Wednesday, March 1**

*Inheritance of Faith*

**Wednesday, March 8**

*Perseverance and Endurance*

**Wednesday, March 15**

*Faithful in Prayer*

**Wednesday, March 22**

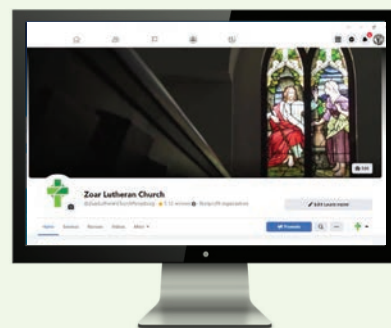
*Striving for Justice*

**Wednesday, March 29**

*Dying and Rising with Christ*

\*12PM service will also be livestreamed on our @ZoarLutheranChurchPerrysburg Facebook Page

## NIGHTLY LENTEN VIDEO DEVOTIONS



Pastor Paul will be leading a nightly devotional during Lent. Devotions will be livestreamed at 8PM on our @ZoarLutheranChurchPerrysburg Facebook Page starting Ash Wednesday, February 22 through Easter Sunday, April 9. Printed copies of the Lent 2023 calendar are available on the Welcome Desk near the media board at the church. We will also share the scripture and verse during the video devotional.



## Zoar Youth — *Lutheran Summer Camps*

Mosquito bites, campfires, sleeping bags, canoes, hikes, Christ-centered, FUN! I loved attending Bible camp as a kid near the North Dakota/Canadian Border for many summers. Being a part of the polar bear plunge and sharing in the songs and fun of Bible camp with my church friends was something I looked forward to every summer. I built lifelong friendships and grew my faith and my leadership skills. I also learned to do new things such as canoeing, leading a morning Bible study with my cabin mates and also how to manage my fun money for candy at the cantina. What camp memories do you have?

For many, outdoor ministry is a life-changing experience. In partnership with congregations, outdoor ministries strive to strengthen, support and lift up the body of Christ by encouraging spiritual growth in outdoor settings. There are 121 ELCA-affiliated camp, retreat and conference center sites in the United States and Puerto Rico. We are SO fortunate to have strong outdoor ministry programs here in Ohio!

Each summer, camps, retreats and conference centers provide experiences for people of all ages. Programs include youth camps, adult and family camps, trip and adventure camps, day camps, servant learning events and more. Through worship, study, games and activities, participants hear and see how active their faith can be by learning how to live and work together in an intentional Christian community. Outdoor ministries offer a wide variety of programs that provide growth experiences for people of all ages, many of whom become leaders in the church and their communities. Youth, in particular, can benefit through camp, which helps growth in areas such as spirituality, self-confidence, independence, making friends, exploring and learning new activities. Want to learn more? **Join us the morning of Sunday, February 26 when Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio shares with us in person all the opportunities for Zoar youth and the young at heart to participate in camp!** Let's send our kids to camp!



**Karen Mathison**  
Chair of Youth and  
Young Adult Committee

*Join us the morning of Sunday, February 26 when Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio shares all the opportunities for Zoar youth and the young at heart to participate in camp!*

## Worship & Music — *This is Who We Are*

Do you know who you really are? That may sound like a silly question. Of course you do — unless you are a teenager still working on defining who you are. I got my 1968 copy of Erik H. Erikson's *Identity: Youth and Crisis* off the top shelf of bookcase number one. (I know who I am: all my books are catalogued by the now out-of-date Dewey Decimal System. So, psychology is on the top shelf, and I am definitely OCD.) Professor Erikson identified eight crises of psycho-social development with the fifth crisis being that of identity versus role confusion, a crisis typically undergone in adolescence. You should have learned/become who you are as a teenager or else you are confused.

The trouble with defining critical stages of development is that we get the idea that once a stage is completed we should never have to revisit them. But we do revisit them as perfectly healthy people. We do reinterpret who we are. We do revisit other stages of development. *Once 'n Done* (my favorite kitchen floor cleaner by Armstrong) is not the way identity works. It's not the way grief with its five stages works.

**Once and done is not the way God works with us, in us, or through us.** Our readings in February continue with Jesus' growing understanding of himself as a teacher in the Sermon on the Mount and as the Son of God revealed in the Transfiguration (February 19). Then, bang, comes Ash Wednesday and Lent, and we remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. (Expletive deleted.)

From Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the Prayer of the Day, the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany: *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. This is who we are.*



**Lee Rupert**  
Chair of Worship and  
Music Committee

## ///// CHURCH COUNCIL MESSAGE /////

# A Devotion for Gratitude and Love

By **Carl Ruetz**, ZOAR CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBER

Here we are in February 2023 with Valentine's Day right around the corner even though most stores are already stocked and selling items for the Easter holiday.

Each week during Sunday services, we give thanks to our Lord through prayer, song, lessons and messages for the abundance of life given to us in the form of time, talents and riches. We use our talents to excel at teaching the young; being a caring nurse, a focused pharmacist, a ship builder, an excellent parent or a fine public servant. Our time is used to volunteer at church, community events and family. We use our riches to sustain others through gifts, support of businesses, church efforts and family.

It is easy to forget or fail to recognize that everyone we know or encounter has also been blessed in the same way. It is simple to thank the doctor for solving a medical question, an EMT or policeman for helping in a very difficult situation or the pastor for comfort in a time of need. But what about others we depend on for routine daily service such as the wait staff at an eatery, a store clerk or cashier?

Keep in mind that everyone shares the same burdens of social disorder, political turmoil and economic uncertainty. This stress weighs more heavily on those working the hardest and doing the best they can. The wait staff covering nine tables rather than the usual six, the cook working alone in the kitchen because no one else is available, the store clerk trying to help three customers while the boss pushes them to stock the shelves, or the cashier working alone as the customer line grows longer and the phone keeps ringing.

This is where our gift of time can help with being patient in those situations. Thank them with a smile for helping. Use your riches to show appreciation to the wait staff with an extra kind word and generous tip. Use your talents to understand what is happening and figure ways to help where needed.

It is written in Ephesians 4:32: "...and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you." Also in 1 Peter 4:9: "Be hospitable to one another without complaining." Or as Luke states more simply in Chapter 6 Verse 31: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." Some have amended that to read "Do to others as you would have them do to you – but do it first." Our moms simplified it even more as we have also told our children and grandkids, "Play nice with the other kids on the playground."

Let us pray. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for the abundance of gifts you have given us. We ask for help in understanding and sharing them with others in ways that honor you. That is the least we can do for you having sacrificed the most for us. In your name we live, laugh, love, share and pray. Amen.

**Church Council meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday  
of each month at 7PM. Zoar Lutheran members  
are always welcome to attend.**

*Continued from page 1...*

### PRACTICES

Cut out hearts for each day of February and write a Bible verse on each one. Read one every day and remember God's love for you and your family.

Take time this month to intentionally share with others what you love about them. Write notes to friends or call family members. Remind them that God created them in love.

Maybe I Can Love My Neighbor Too (Beaming Books, 2019) explores how we can share love with our neighbors.

### PRAYERS

We pray for those facing challenges.

We pray for families navigating hard conversations.

We pray for writers, poets and storytellers.

We give thanks for the gift of relationships in all their diversity and abundance.

We give thanks for cards and letters that connect us across the world.

We give thanks for church leaders and musicians sharing the story of God's love.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

### SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Make a Valentine's Day basket of love for neighbors or nursing home residents. You could include letters of encouragement, baked goods, books and magazines and any small items meant to share your love.

*This article first appeared at [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org) on February 2, 2021. Reprinted with permission.  
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# 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 // 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> 8AM Bible Study 11AM Staff Meeting 1PM Zoar Bridge Club 3:30PM Abundant Life II 7PM Uncorked Faith 7PM All Things New Bible Study on Zoom	<b>2</b> 10AM All Things New Bible Study L1/L2 & Zoom	<b>3</b> 1PM Zoar Book Club	<b>4</b> 6PM Worship
<b>5</b> 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM Sunday School	<b>6</b> 7PM Small Groups Leader Meeting	<b>7</b> 9AM Quilters 1:30PM Pickleball 3:14PM Prayer w/Staff 5:30PM Pickleball 7PM LLL Committee Meeting	<b>8</b> 8AM Bible Study 11AM Staff Meeting 1PM Zoar Bridge Club 1PM Rachel Circle 7PM All Things New Bible Study on Zoom 7:30PM YAYA Meeting	<b>9</b> 10AM All Things New Bible Study L1/L2 & Zoom	<b>10</b> 8AM Men's Breakfast Off-site 1PM Solo Again 7:30PM PSO Concert	<b>11</b> 9AM Council Retreat 10AM Yarns of Love 6PM Worship
<b>12</b> 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM Sunday School	<b>13</b> 5:30PM Property Committee Meeting 7PM Communications Committee Meeting	<b>14</b> 9AM Quilters 1:30PM Pickleball 3:14PM Prayer w/Staff 5:30PM Pickleball 6PM Budget & Finance Committee Meeting 7PM Stewardship Committee Meeting	<b>15</b> 8AM Bible Study 11AM Staff Meeting 1PM Zoar Bridge Club 7PM All Things New Bible Study on Zoom	<b>16</b> 9:15AM Naomi Circle 10AM All Things New Bible Study L1/L2 & Zoom	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10AM Prayer Partners 6PM Worship
<b>19</b> 8:30, 11AM Worship	<b>20</b> 4:30PM Reservation deadline for Kitchen of Hope 7PM Worship & Music Committee Meeting	<b>21</b> 9AM Quilters 1:30PM Pickleball 3:14PM Prayer w/Staff 5:30PM Pickleball 7PM Council Meeting	<b>22 ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 8AM Bible Study <b>12PM Lent Service</b> 1PM Zoar Bridge Club 1:30PM Abundant Life I <b>7PM Lent Service</b> <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	<b>23</b> <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	<b>24</b> <b>12PM Kitchen of Hope</b> <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	<b>25</b> 6PM Worship <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>
<b>26</b> 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM Sunday School 9:45AM Adult Forum with Outdoor Lutheran Ministries <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	<b>27</b> 6PM Popcorn Gang 6:30PM Personnel Committee Meeting <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	<b>28</b> 9AM Quilters 1:30PM Pickleball 3:14PM Prayer w/Staff 5:30PM Pickleball <b>8PM Lenten Devotion on Facebook Live</b>	For more information on these events, please see Announcements in Z-Blast email or Events Calendar at <a href="http://www.zoarlutheran.com">www.zoarlutheran.com</a> .			

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Lent Midweek Services on  
Wednesdays at 12PM\* and 7PM

Zoar Lutheran Church will be holding Lent Midweek Services starting Ash Wednesday, February 22 through Wednesday, March 29.

\*12PM service will also be livestreamed on Facebook

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ZOAR MEMBERS CELEBRATING 85+ YEARS IN FEBRUARY!

February 1 Bob Palmer      February 17 Dee Lowrie  
 February 2 LaDonna Kossow      February 26 Jed Hazel  
 February 2 Lee Odegaard      February 26 Carol Henschen  
 February 28 William King

### ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Paul Reichert, [pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com)  
 Visitation Pastor: Rich Rentner, call Church Office at 419-874-4346 for home visit  
 Director of Church Operations: Tracy Jahns, [admin@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:admin@zoarlutheran.com)  
 Marketing Coordinator: Melissa Ellerbrock, [communications@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:communications@zoarlutheran.com)  
 Church Secretary: Brekke Ell, [bell@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:bell@zoarlutheran.com)  
 Custodian: Paul Cannon, [facilities@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:facilities@zoarlutheran.com)

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**CURRENT RESIDENT OR:**

Pr. Paul Reichert  
Senior Pastor

Worship Times:  
Saturday: 6PM  
Sunday: 8:30 & 11AM  
Sunday School: 9:45AM

*Be*  
**AmaZed!**



[www.zoarlutheran.com](http://www.zoarlutheran.com)

## Follow Us On SOCIAL MEDIA

As the people of Zoar, social media is one of the easiest ways to build our community. Get connected with our latest news and updates by following Zoar on one (or all!) of these social platforms:



on Facebook **@ZoarLutheranChurchPerrysburg**



Zoar also has four private Facebook Groups to connect with people of common interests:  
**Zoar Fellowship, Zoar Youth, Zoar Families and Zoar Young Couples**



on Instagram **zoarlutheran**



on Instagram **zoarlutheranyth**



on YouTube **@ZoarLutheranChurchPerrysburg**