



The Herald

March 2023

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church~Helena, Montana

"Growing in grace, walking by faith, serving in love"

Wednesday Lenten Schedule at St. John's

5:30 pm-Soup Supper (sign-up on the kitchen doors to bring soup or rolls/bread)

Wednesday Offering Schedule

Matthew 25: 35-40 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."



March 1st: God's Love

March 8th: Lutheran Disaster Response Turkey

March 15th: HARRT Helena Afghan Refugee Resettlement Team

March 22nd: Augusta Victoria Hospital LWF Jerusalem

March 29th: Freedom in Christ ELCA Prison Ministry

6:30 pm-Holden Evening Prayer

7:00 pm-Study for all ages, including Lenten bible study with Pr. Keith

March Social Ministry Offering-Lutheran Disaster Response/Middle East Crisis

Our designated offering for March is Lutheran Disaster Response and their on the ground efforts in Türkiye and neighboring Syria following the devastating earthquake on Feb 6. Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to supporting ACT Alliance and other partners in responding to these earthquakes. Mere hours after the earthquakes hit, ACT Alliance member organizations began distributing emergency supplies, including medicines, bedding and other relief items. Lutheran Disaster Response has been active in this region for several years, partnering with ACT Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation and the Middle East Council of Churches to accompany Syrian refugees and internally displaced people with food, water, shelter, health services and sanitation support. The epicenter of one earthquake lies near Turkish provinces that host hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, which will only exacerbate the refugee crisis in the region. Your gifts designated for "Middle East Crisis" will be used entirely (100%) to provide long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by disasters in the region. Please place your offerings in a pew envelope and check the "Social Ministry Box" and put them in the offering plate or you can mail your offerings to the office.

Cottage Meetings with Pastor Keith

Members of Church Council, the Call Committee, and our former Interim Ministry Team will be hosting "cottage meetings"-a time for a small group of folks from St. John's to gather in a host home or at the church to meet with our new pastor for a time of conversation. Be on the lookout for your invitation.



Pastor's Perspective

The Cross, it is one of the most recognizable symbols that we use to identify Christianity. Before we explore the cross further, we should remember that for 800 years the Roman Empire practiced crucifixion to strike fear into the hearts of its people. It was a terrifying death and anyone who witnessed crucifixion was not inclined to violate Roman law. One of the things that made crucifixion such an extremely effective crime deterrent was that they made sure these crucifixions took place along the main roadways where people traveling by with families would see them. Additionally, we must remember the goal of crucifixion was to inflict the maximum amount of pain, suffering, humility, and agony for the longest possible amount of time.

Lent is the forty-day season (excluding Sundays) of penitence and preparation for the Three Days of Holy Week and Easter. Our practice of forty days of Lent recall Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness after his Baptism, as well as Moses' forty-day fast on Mount Sinai. The season of Lent is a time of solemn reflection. It is a time when we as Christians take time to identify those things which separate us from God, and from one another. The season of Lent invites us to examine the illusion of our own ego, which Thomas Merton referred to as the false self, a small self that works to remain anonymous and separate from God. Lent is known as a time of repentance, a turning toward God, a time in which our relationship with God is reconciled, a fresh start, a relationship made anew. It is a time for discovering our true self, the self-created in the image of God, a discovery that opens us to true love, the love that we receive from God, ourselves, and others. A love that we then reciprocate back to God and others. Franciscan priest Father Richard Rohr describes it in this manner "This true believer is tucked away in the cellar of your being, an imago Dei that begs to be allowed, to be fulfilled, and to show itself." he goes on further, writing "The True Self is the Divine Indwelling, the Holy Spirit within you. I would say that the True Self is precisely the divine part of you that is great enough, deep enough, gracious enough to fully accept the human part of you. If you are merely human, you will tend to reject your embarrassingly limited humanity."

As those of us here at Saint John's embark on the forty-day Lenten journey together, we will also be making that journey with Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem and to the foot of the cross, the location where the passion story of his arrest, torture, humiliation, death, resurrection, and new life will unfold. Our journey together will take place as we come together as a community of faith for midweek Lenten services. It is a time that will be spent in a service of evening prayer, meditation, and reflection.

As Lutheran Christians, we hold onto a distinctive understanding of the cost of discipleship. Justification by faith shapes our individual and our corporate lives by knowing that there is nothing we can possibly do to earn enough grace to be made right with God and free ourselves from sin. It is through sola fida,, faith alone, that we receive the free gift of God's grace, through Christ Jesus, and that our sins are forgiven. The doctrine of justification is a Lutheran foundation, and a primary focus for Luther was the consistent teaching and preaching of such throughout the world. With our theology of the cross, we understand the cost of discipleship, not simply as cheap grace, but rather as Christ's humiliation of hanging on the cross as God's direct connection and identification with the suffering of the human situation. For Lutherans, suffering is two-fold: the suffering of God in Christ, and the suffering of the Christian who is united with Christ. By surrendering our own suffering to

the cross of Christ, we find God hidden in that suffering. And we, through the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, share in the forgiveness of sins and receive unconditional love. During this Lenten season, as we identify the feelings of what separates us from God and those around us, as we turn toward God in reconciling our relationship with God, we do so with comfort and knowledge. There is grace, unending grace, for our imperfections. There is hope. In new life, we find hope for healing all the forces that divide, oppress, and continue to inflict wounds upon our broken world, shaping our ministry into one of love.

In Christ Love,
Pastor Keith

WELCA Spring Retreat—April 21-23, 2023—Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp



Register by March 20 to get the EARLY BIRD RATE for the WOMEN'S SPRING RETREAT.

Motivating speaker, Fun, Fellowship, Service projects, Music, Great food (no cooking!).... Bring a friend along for a fun, restful, spirit-filled weekend with women of faith on beautiful Flathead Lake. Our theme this year is Joy, Gratitude, Play, Rest: Bringing our Lives Back in Focus

Registration and more info at

www.imluchurch.org/womensretreat

Questions? Contact Nancy Solum at 406-240-0023 or

WomensSpringRetreat@gmail.com Danyel Bauer also has

printed copies of registration forms and welcomes any

questions about the event. Sponsored by Women of the ELCA

(Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) Five Valleys and Great Divide Cluster



Cool Kids Unit (aka 4th-5th grade class!) We are excited to announce that Brent Bushnell will join us for Midweek Connection starting March 1st for your study time. Together you will pick a story in the bible to study and then build a miniature model to present to the congregation. This has been a long standing tradition at SJLC and we are excited to finally have it back again post-Covid. (He has been advised that some of you may want soldiers and battle scenes in your model....) Get those ideas cooking and we can't wait to see what you come up with!

Save-the-Date: Sunday, March 12th Noon-2:00 pm, Youth ages 4th grade through 12th grade.

We want your creative input on how you would like your youth space to look like. Pizza and snacks will be provided.

Let us know what you need to attend FLBC this summer. Camperships starting at \$100 are available for all kids. Are you an adult who misses summer camp? Volunteer the summer! Speak with Gretchen for more details and let's get you registered!

Save-The-Date: VBS/Day Camp with FLBC June 19-23

The Herald-March 2023
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
1000 Helena Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

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www.helenastjohns.org
email: saintjohns@helenastjohns.org
Pastor email: pastor@helenastjohns.org
Like us on Facebook!

Worship Services

Sunday 9:30 am

Sunday School meets during worship

In-person and online via our Facebook page
Services uploaded to YouTube

Lenten Midweek Connection Schedule

5:30 pm Lent Soup Suppers

6:30 pm Holden Evening Prayer

7:00 pm Study for All Ages

Office Hours

9:00 am-1:00 pm
Monday-Friday



Ministering at

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Witness to the Gospel	Members of SJLC
Pastor	Pastor Keith Weatherford
Organist	Dodie Walsh
Choir Director	Connie Conley
Bell Choir Directors	Renee Slocum Christina Tielking

Director of Youth & Family Ministries

Office Manager	Gretchen Munding
Audio and Video	Angela Conley
Treasurer	Karen Hicks
Financial Secretary	Randy Rake
Missionaries	Anne & Willie Langdji, Cameroon missionaries around the world
Sexton	Pat Gober
Church Council	Bing Crosby, President Paul Hilchen, Vice President Chad Lee, Secretary Jennifer Wintersteen, Kari Ceaicovschi Brian Tetrault, Gail Vennes, Lee Rhodes Amy Smiedala

*St. John's Social Ministry Outreach Offering
for March is Lutheran Disaster Response/Middle East Crisis*