

Happy Ash Valentine's Wednesday

It's going to be a bit of a strange Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 14 – Valentine's Day. So how do we reconcile the romance of Valentine's Day with the solemn repentance of Ash Wednesday? Perhaps by taking a look at the legends about Valentine.

The *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine, compiled around the year 1260, was one of the most widely read books in the Middle Ages. In it, the very brief description of St. Valentine has him refusing to deny Christ before the Emperor Claudius in the year 280. Before his head was cut off, Valentine restored sight and hearing to his jailer's daughter.

Another legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

According to still another legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today.

So how does this relate to Ash Wednesday, a day when we reflect on our mortality and the sacrifice of Christ to save us from sin, death and the devil? The connection is one of love. Valentine has come to represent love, even for our enemies, as seen in the stories of his love for and healing of his jailer's daughter. Jesus Christ is God's Love incarnate, a free gift to all sinners to reconcile us to Him. Valentine may have said, "With love from your Valentine." Jesus prayed for those who crucified him, saying "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So Happy Ash Valentine's Wednesday. Think about your mortality. Thank Jesus for his life-giving sacrifice. Tell those you love that you love them and so does God. And maybe even send a Valentine to your enemies.

With love from your Valentine,

Pastor Keith

Treasurer's Report December 2017

Offerings

Total undesignated offerings in December were \$10,253, which was \$3,252 or 24.1% less than budget.

Total undesignated offerings for December year-to-date are \$107,337, which is \$22,308 or 17.2% lower than budget. Facility use donations are \$2,287 over budget due to Siloam Compassion Church payments.

Expenses

Total December expenses were \$1,076 under budget due primarily to lower health insurance (\$287) and repairs & maintenance (\$458).

For December year-to-date, total expenses are \$5,269 below budget, due mainly to lower repairs and maintenance (\$1,882), natural gas (\$647), pension & health insurance (\$1,841), property insurance (\$460), office supplies (\$341) and stewardship (\$323).

Designated Funds

Designated land sale funds at the end of December remain at \$43,974.

Designated property funds are at \$27,279 after receiving in September an insurance payment of \$25,560 for hail damage.

The Sunday Dollars kitchen fund is at \$2,589.

The memorial fund is at \$10,080.

Undesignated Fund Balance

Undesignated fund balance in the month of December decreased by \$76 to \$12,194.

For December year-to-date, undesignated fund balance has decreased by \$16,207.

The complete financial report is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Abounding Grace Council Meeting
December 11, 2017

Attending:

Pastor Keith Dick Gruentzel Vickie Luthro Walter Brewer Don Foreman
Tim O'Leary Gerri Eberle Jay Froehlich

Guests:

Madge Brewer Jan Foreman

President Gerri Eberle called the meeting to order. A motion to approve the agenda was seconded and passed. Members gave their highs and lows. Pastor Keith led us in lesson and prayer.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the November minutes as written.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the November Treasurer's report as written.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Keith reports that there was not enough participation for the Synod Mission Planning meeting so the meeting has been moved to the 1st weekend in March. We need to have more enthusiasm from both the Council and congregation. Pastor would like to see about 20 people attending. If we are going to expect help we will have to do our part too.

Old Business:

Roof Repairs- Church Mutual wanted an update on the roof repairs so they could close the file. We have an extension until mid- February. Further clarification revealed that we can use the money for what repairs we feel necessary but if there is another incident in the same spot they will not pay. The suggestion was made we call the adjuster for referrals.

Stewardship- We have received \$106,000 in pledges and regular giving. The next step is planning the budget. We can draft one and Dick is willing to review since we don't have a treasurer yet. We need to have this done by January 8th. Pastor Keith will work with Gerri and ask Bill Aurand to join in on January 6th. Dick will attend also.

New Treasurer- We have possibly found a new treasurer thru Top Dog by trading the services of their bookkeeper for use of our space. We will need to have someone from the congregation have the title of treasurer. (Suggestion - Tim O'Leary). A motion was made, seconded and passed to allow Pastor Keith and Tim O'Leary to pursue this option by speaking with Judy Mendelson from Top Dog about trading services (ie space for Top Dog for bookkeeping services.)

Mission Coins- We have \$330 in Mission Coins and will spend them buying 4 goats (worth \$50 each), 10 sets of Chickens (10 chickens per set worth \$10 each) and 2 roosters (worth \$15 each). This was a very successful project this year .

New Business-

Yoga Classes- Timothy Howell of Divine Joy Yoga would like start having classes here. They will do all the advertising. It would pay \$25 per 2 hr session. There would be 2 classes per week (students pay \$6 per class). Mr. Howell has already added us to his insurance. Days and hours for the classes with be Monday and Wednesdays from 9-11am. We must make it clear to Siloam that the floors must be clean. A motion was made, seconded and passed to contact Pastor John Lilley for referral and if favorable to contact Mr. Howell with authorization to start. We will need to have him sign a building usage form before the actual start date.

Cell Phone Tower- Pastor Keith is checking into getting a cell phone tower on our property. This could be a big income booster if there is a need for one in this area.

Benevolence- The question was raised if we should reduce our benevolence to the Synod. After some discussion we decided to continue to pay our amount in full.

Removing Greens- On Sunday January 7th we will take down the greens and box them up for next year. Jay will put a notice in the Gracevine and bulletin.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and passed. The Lord's Prayer was recited.

FEBRUARY 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 4TH IS OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING- held immediately after the service, this is the time we ask all members of our congregation to gather so that we can vote on important issues for our church. This year we will be voting on

- 1) several items that concern our Mission Investment Plan
- 2) our Synod Assembly representative
- 3) representatives for the Congregation Council

Please plan on attending this very crucial meeting.

FEBRUARY 9TH THE LUNCH BUNCH is celebrating Valentine's Day! Bring your resolutions and a dish to share to the church at noon with a game of bingo to follow. Want to be part of the happenings but need more information? Please contact Sheryl Felde at 885-5325.

FEBRUARY 10TH WE WILL HOST A NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE WORKSHOP AND CONCERT WITH RONA YELLOWROBE. Ms. Yellowrobe, the 2014 & 2016 Native American Music Award's "Flutist of the Year" will be a feature in the afternoon workshop where she will share her own experience with the power of Sound Healing with her Singing Bowls, Drums, Rattles, Bells Voice Gong and Flute. She will star in the evening concert starting at 6:30. Abounding Grace attendees get a 50% discount on tickets. For more information or to purchase tickets for either event, please contact Paul Surhoff at 908-917-2307 or psurhoff@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY 12TH OUR COUNCIL WILL GATHER- to discuss the happenings around our church. We hope that you will join us at 7pm in the Conference Rm. If you have something you would like to mention or have discussed, please contact Gerri Eberle or Pastor Keith to have it put on the agenda.

FEBRUARY 14TH IS ASH WEDNESDAY. We will begin the Lenten Season with a Soup Supper (soup and bread only) at 6pm and a Service at 7pm. This is the start of our traditional Wednesday night services which will continue thru March 21st. If you are planning to attend the Soup Suppers and would like to bring either soup or bread please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex. If you are planning on attending the 7pm service, please consider asking a friend to join you.

THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA WILL NOT BE MEETING THIS MONTH.

SIGN UP NOW!

On **Saturday, March 3**, from **9 am to 3 pm**, we will have a meeting with our Director for Evangelical Mission, the Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta to seek a future for Abounding Grace. We must have input and participation from leaders and members who love this church if this meeting is to be successful in charting a course through the troubled waters in which we find ourselves. Please make it a priority to participate in this meeting, and sign up in the Narthex.

ON-GOING EVENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY to

2/7 Will Trembley (son of Artesia Runge)

2/8 Ricky Robnett

2/9 Kay Victorson

2/10 Mait Board

2/11 Alan Helgeson

2/12 Gerri Eberle

2/21 Karen Paye

HAPPY FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY TO

2/14 Jeff and Claudine Williams

2/19/53 Roland and Shirley Berner

2/21 Don and Jan Foreman

DO YOU EVER HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE READINGS? The Thursday Bible Study at 11:30 led by Pastor Keith, are a deeper study of the following Sunday's readings and usually last 60- 90 minutes. It an excellent way to learn the history and context of the readings as well gaining a more meaningful look into what it is that our Lord is trying to teach us. For more information, please call the church office.

IF YOU NEED A RIDE FOR ANY SERVICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE AND WE WILL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU!

CHECK THE SIGN UP BOARD PLEASE! You are needed! Sunday mornings are a busy time around here and you are just what we need! Jobs range from Sunday School teachers/ helpers to communion assistants and everything in between. We will be more than happy to show you how easy some of these tasks are! Just ask any member of council or Pastor Keith.

WHEN WE SENSE GOD CALLING US to make a beginning, at whatever that may be, it's important not to let discourages or opponents or distraction turn us away. What is waiting for a start in your life? Is there anything about which you wonder if it could be God giving you a nudge?

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY TABLE – Who doesn't like to have a chance to sit down with a cup of hot coffee (or tea), a sweet treat, and for a little while, just chat? It could be with a friend you've known for a long time or someone you just met. It's a nice feeling, isn't it? Well that's what we try to provide right after each Sunday service. Here's a place to talk about the sermon or the music. Here's a time to discuss an event that just occurred or will be coming up soon. You may think that you're just giving yourself a little refreshment time, but don't forget the person you greet with conversation. Could it be that person needed somebody to share their thoughts with as well? Could it be you're a blessing to someone and you never knew it? By the way, that's alright, God knew, and it's called... loving your neighbor.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CORRECTIONS TO YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION- please let Jay in the office know as soon as possible.

THE PEACE CANDLE – Our church carries on a tradition that began in Russia, of lighting a candle each week on our altar as a symbol of our prayer for peace in our world. We invite visitors from other congregations to take a Peace Candle along with the literature of its history to your home church to continue the tradition. If you would like to take the Peace Candle to your home church please mention it to the Pastor or an Usher and we will be happy to “pass it on.”

PRAYER CHAIN- Our church has a Prayer Chain. Anyone with a prayer request, please call **Shirley Berner at 885-4892**. Also, anyone that is interested in helping on the Prayer Chain please contact Shirley to lighten the load. **If you have someone on the list that should be taken off or someone to add, please contact Shirley Berner and Jay Froehlich in the office.**

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Donald Stoelting (husband of Hanna), Michael H. Botti, (son of Mike Botti), Chris Camp, John Stum (son of Paul & Martha Stum), Audrey Neymeyer (granddaughter of Cheryl Emtman), Clay Hardwick (grandson of Jane Dunfee), Jessica & Tom Lauwers, James Simpson (from Aspire), Levi Thompson (grandson of Dave Kitner), Jonathon Batchler (nephew of Bill and Jay Froehlich), Travis Dodge (friend of MaKain Willard), Tyler and Jay Jahn, Chip Boyce (friend of Maybelle Armier).

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR FRIENDS

Bob Williamson, Cheryl Emtman, Sarah Williams (niece of Cheryl Emtman), Sara Seagrove, Tiffany (granddaughter of Virginia Reymer), Christopher Lawson (grandson of Maggie Cook), the Robnett Family, Jeannie Van Sickle (daughter Mark Westlake), Virginia Reymer, Robert Lloyd, Ron Briggs (friend of Cheryl Emtman), Eric Leland, Peter Leveratt (brother of Carol Leveratt), Ryan Judd, Alice Yaskanich, Kathie Josephs, Betty Hetler, Mark Westlake, Susan Martinez, and Gretchen Surhoff (niece of Paul & Sharon Surhoff), Walter Brewer, Christine Gilbert, David Glarborg (son of Estelle Glarborg), Police Officer Mike Duffrin, Don and Nancy (brother-in-law and sister of Kathy Peters), Linda Pederson Montoya, Will Trembly (son of Artesia Runge).

February 2018 Sign Up Sheet

	Feb 4	Feb 11	Feb 18	Feb 25
Altar	Marge Smith	Marge Smith	Marge Smith	Marge Smith
Greeter	Jan Foreman	Jan Foreman	Jan Foreman	Jan Foreman
Reader	Sharon Surhoff	Claudine Williams	Vickie Luthro	Don Foreman
Prayers	Jay Froehlich	Don Foreman	Vickie Luthro	Sheryl Felde
Communion Assistant	Ken Luthro	Bill Froehlich	Ken Luthro	Vern Victorson
Acolyte	Robyn Lauwers	Robyn Lauwers	Robyn Lauwers	Robyn Lauwers
Sunday School Teacher	Ashley Judd	Ashley Judd	Jay Froehlich	Jay Froehlich

USHERS-Doug Smith, Austin Lauwers

COUNTERS-Don Mummert, Ardis Grob

February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
Sunday School 8:30am Worship 9:30am <i>-Food Share</i> <i>-Home</i> 10:30 Annual Congregation Meeting	5	6	7	8	9 Noon Lunch Bunch	10 Rona Yellowrobe workshop and concert 1-9pm
11 Sunday School 8:30am Worship 9:30am <i>-Ask Pastor</i>	12 7pm Council	13	14 <u>Ash Wednesday</u> Soup Supper 6pm Service 7pm Valentines Day	15	16	17
18 Sunday School 8:30am Worship 9:30am <i>-10:30 Healing Service</i>	19 Presidents Day	20 No WELCA this month	21 Soup Supper 6pm Service 7pm	22	23	24
25 Sunday School 8:30am Worship 9:30am <i>-Celebration</i>	26	27	28 Soup Supper 6pm Service 7pm			

Monday

Office closed
 NAMI 1-3pm
 Overeaters Anonymous 7pm
 Civil Air Patrol 7pm

Tuesday

Office closed
 Scouts- Girl 4pm; Daisy & Cub 6
 Flute Circle 7pm

Wednesday

Food Pantry 9-11:30
 VITA 9-1pm
 NAMI 1-3pm
 Boy Scouts 6:45pm

Thursday

Quilters 9-11:30
 VITA 9-1pm
Bible Study 11:30-12:30
Food Pantry 9-11:30
 Overeaters Anonymous 7pm
 Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm

Friday

Food Pantry 9-11pm

Saturday

Tucson Strings 7-Noon
 VITA 9-1pm
 Siloam Compassion 3-6pm

Sunday

Siloam Compassion 2-8pm