

The February 2025 Epistle

A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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MESSAGE
from the
MINISTER

*...he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them,
"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

Luke 4:20-21

Last Sunday, we pondered the account in St. Luke's gospel when Jesus stood in the synagogue in Nazareth and read these lines from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good news to
the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim
release to the captives and
recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

We looked in some detail at the first line of this announcement, but time did not permit us to address the rest of the categories Jesus includes in his reading. Allow me to add a few words of commentary for our consideration today.

The good news announced by Jesus is not limited to the poor alone. It is for all people who, as Howard Thurman puts it in his book Jesus and the Disinherited, “have their backs up against the wall.”

The work of God to which we are called is to bring heaven and earth together in such a way that *all* of these ailments and sufferings are eradicated from the earth, not by disposing, locking away, or erasing the people themselves, but by reviving and restoring all people *who have their backs up against the wall*. Restoration is the work of the Church.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “[All people] are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” In the church, there is a way of bearing one another's burdens - at times giving to those in need and at times receiving from others when we are in need - which lightens and even erases the burdens altogether. Because as Emma Lazarus put it, “Until we are all free, none of us are free.”

There are currents at work in our world today that want to degrade, dispose, and even erase the very people to whom Jesus announced “good news” - people who are poor, people in prison, people with disabilities, people who are oppressed. Take time to read Jesus’ words closely today.

Remember, in God’s kingdom we are called to live as a community of people who are practicing the eradication of these ills because *we are our brother/sister/sibling’s keeper*.

Opportunities in the Weeks Ahead

Please take note of some special opportunities to pray, learn, and dialogue together in the weeks to come. These are special events hosted by me so I want to bring them to your attention even though they are announced elsewhere in the *Epistle* and our announcements at our services.

Feb. 9th @ 10:15 a.m. - Coffee and Conversation

Several people approached me in the last couple of months asking for a space to process their concerns and questions about current events and cultural trends in light of their Christian faith. This is an intentional time for conversation and prayer facilitated by Bryce. We will convene once/month on the second Sunday of the month for February, March, and April. If people like the idea we will continue in subsequent months. No sign-up required. All are welcome.

Feb. 12th @ 2:00 p.m. & Feb. 13th @ 6:00 p.m. Adult Prayer and Learning Groups

This month's book is a very short and quick read. (I promise!) It's called *Meditation* by Jim Dowling. You can find a copy on Amazon and read it straight through in a day or two.

Additional details and sign-up sheets are posted in the Narthex. Sign-ups are not required, but are strongly encouraged. If no one signs up we will likely cancel the class.

Lastly, I am happy to report that I finished my January Term course at Wartburg! I will be staying at the Wartburg campus in Dubuque Feb. 3-7 for Prologue Week to kick off the spring semester. If needed, I am available by phone, email, and text while I am away. All regular inquiries can go through the church office.

May God bless you in your work and your rest in the month to come!



Bryce Hewlett, SAM

February Adult Prayer & Learning Group

February: The Dance of Christian Meditation

Date: February 12 at 2:00 p.m., February 13 at 6:00 p.m.

- The Psalms and other places in the Bible talk about meditation. What is meditation for the Christian?
- How is Christian meditation different or the same as other ideas about meditation?

Scripture Study: Jeremiah 17:7-8 and Exodus 40

Recommended Reading: *Meditation* by Jim Downing

ASH WEDNESDAY MARCH 3RD

7AM-8AM

ASHES AND A
BLESSING
AVAILABLE IN
DRIVE-UP FASHION

7PM-8PM

ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE WITH
HOLY COMMUNION

LENT

SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES

Midweek Lenten Services:
each Wednesday during Lent

March 12th

March 19th

March 26th

April 2nd

April 9th

5:45 pm - 6:45 pm

Lenten Meals are coordinated by various church committees. If you would like to assist in serving these meals, please contact the church office to connect with our Committees at (563)355-4161.

7:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Holden Evening Prayer
Service

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy February!

This is my last President's article as I am done with my term and looking forward to concentrating on other areas at St. James. I learned a lot in this position about how St. James works and a lot about myself. Thank you everyone for your always kind words and encouragement.

Our new President, Madeline Schmidt, is one of the best people I have ever known. She will do an amazing job! I am so excited to see what is in the future of St. James. Love you all so much!

Peace and Love,
Angie



Property Committee Update:

The capital improvements are progressing. The concrete work has been completed. Because it is "new" concrete, we will not salt it this year, so there may be periodic closure to these sidewalks, which may require you to use a different entrance.

Demo work will begin soon on the tile in the kitchen & Fellowship Hall. Bear with us on the mess, as we may have to remove glue to prep for new tile. Thank you for your support. Any questions you might have, please feel free to contact any of our committee members:

Steve Miller—563-340-6680

Fritz Voss— 563-370-0084

Here are some fundraisers we've started:

- **Baked Goods Sales**—Located in the Narthex before and after service
- **Dinner & Donate**—committees will be working together to provide a meal and the property committee is gladly accepting any free will donation for these meals!

The meals in February are:

Wednesday 2/12 at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 2/26 at 5:30 p.m.

Come enjoy some good food and consider donating to our Capital Improvement Fund!

Shining a light on the Property Committee!

They have been working diligently to update our lighting throughout the building and have put forth a great effort in doing so! They've spent many mornings, afternoons, and some nights working on this project! They've changed out 30+ lights so far and there are still some more to go!



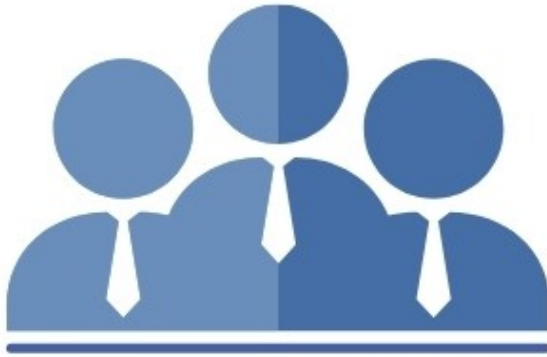
WELCA NEWS



SARAH CIRCLE

Sarah Circle will meet on February 18th
at 1:00 p.m.

Janene Anderson is the host for February!



St James GANG

The St James GANG will meet Feb. 20th in Fellowship Hall at 11:30—Bring your own lunch as usual. Dessert and beverages will be provided.

We will not be having a speaker, but will enjoy our time with some fun games and prizes.

There will be our usual collection to support our Food Pantry.

See you all there!

Pat Larson
563-343-2142



From the Quilt Block

The quilters did not meet in December, but had a very nice meeting in January!

We are in desperate need of cotton fabric, so if you are out at a thrift store please consider buying some cotton fabric to donate—we would greatly appreciate it!

Our next quilting day is Tuesday, February 25th from 12-4PM. No quilting or sewing experience is required—All are welcome!

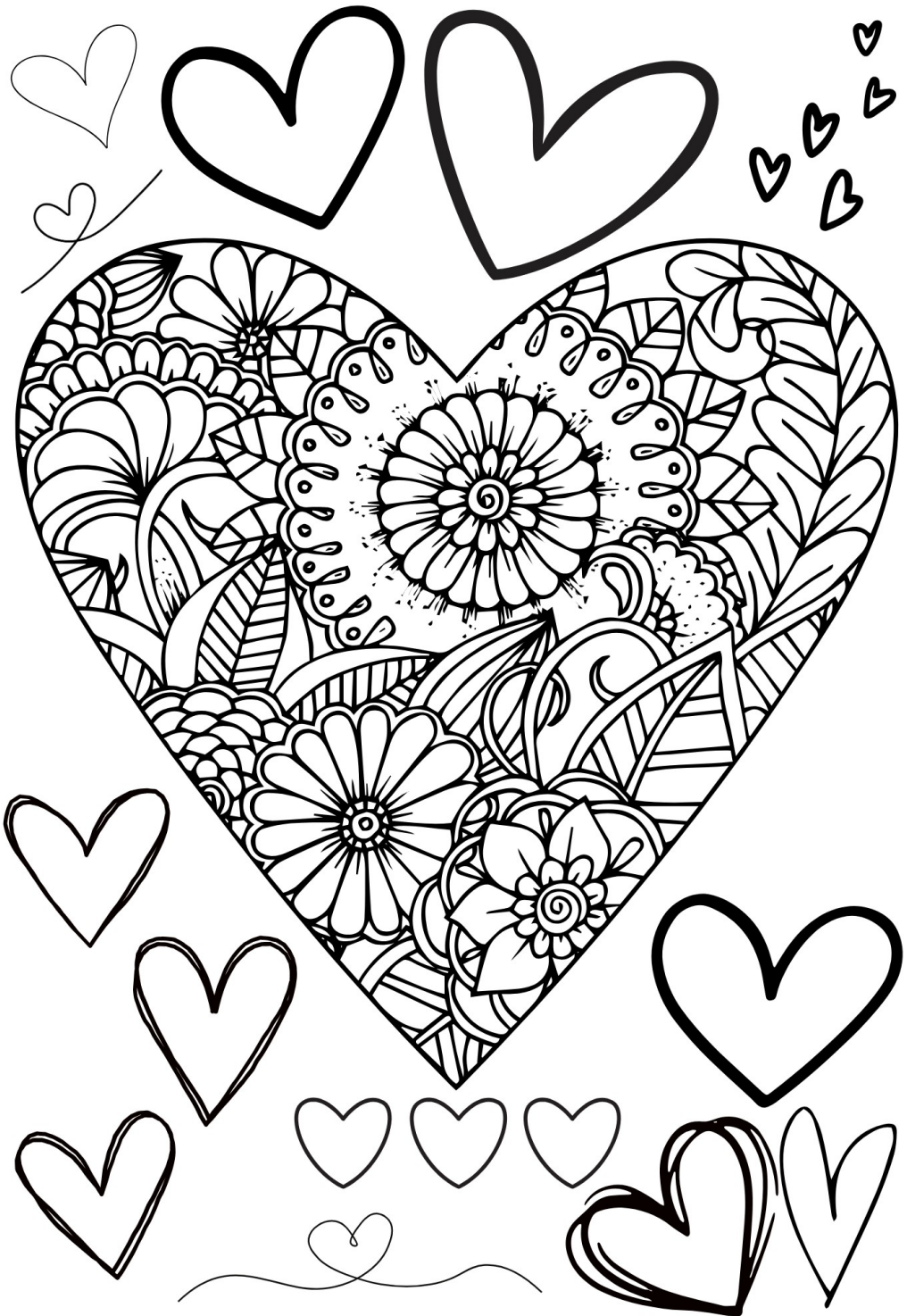
Pieces be with you,

Shirley Richlen

(563) 949-6545; srichlen34@gmail.com

REMINDER!

**Deadline for March Epistle Articles
is Friday, February 21st.**



Council Votes

January 19th, 2025

St. James Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve November 2024 Council meeting minutes by Erik, seconded by Terry.

Motion approved.

Motion to accept Mandy's resignation from Council by Ellen, seconded by Terry. Motion approved.

Motion to use the \$378 collected from Birdies for Charity for the property loan, seconded by Steve. Motion approved.

Motion to approve the 2025 proposed St James budget for submittal to the congregation by Steve, seconded by Jason. Motion approved.

Motion to use the money collected from Lenten meals for the property loan by Ellen, seconded by Erik. Motion approved.

MONDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Monday Morning Fellowship is a group that gets together twice a month via ZOOM to chat and catch up on what is going on in each other's lives.

It is a wonderful way to get to know each other more intimately.

Everyone is welcome to join us!

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 9:30 to 10:30 AM. The Zoom link is sent out to the church email list on the Friday before the meeting.

Come join us! We look forward to seeing you!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at

563-349-6727

or maggieb@bayliss.us



- We are looking for singers to lead the Holden Evening Prayer Service during the 7PM Wednesday Lenten services. Dates are **March 12, 19, 26 and April 2 & 9**. We need 2 singers for each service and you may volunteer for one or more services. If interested, please contact Steve Abel at iamabel213@gmail.com.
- We have 2025 dates available for altar flowers. See the flower chart in the narthex for openings. The cost is \$45 for 2 bouquets. Please indicate on the sign-up if flowers are in memory of/honor of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion. You may take the flowers home after the service to enjoy or donate them to brighten someone's day. We appreciate payment at the time of sign-up. Make checks out to St. James with "flowers" written in the memo or submit payment on our website Giving page at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZCFN/home>.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/3 KEN OSBORN

2/5 KIM HEWLETT

2/7 MAURICIO GARCIA/HOGBIN

2/8 TERESE TOU VELLE

2/9 LYNN STERNER

2/14 EMERSON BILEDDO

2/14 JERYL ANN KRUMBHOLZ

2/14 KANE SCHMIDT

2/15 DON URBATSCH

2/22 ANGIE SCHMIDT

DEB CROOKS

2/28 RON MEKALSON

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

2/15 STEVE & MARILYN PIEART

2/28 RON AND LISA MEKALSON

Check us out online!

YouTube Livestream

We livestream our services on YouTube each week to help us worship together and stay connected even when we are not at full health or out of town!

Youtube Link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjqnGF4g_QWtn_I2SqL5Q

Youtube Channel QR Code:



Sermon Podcast on Spotify!

If you missed a Sunday, click the link below or scan the QR code & listen to the Sermon on Spotify

Please contact the church office if you need assistance accessing it!

Spotify Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/2bmzh6HFSREErSkUX5mlX?si=zG2ldhASSyCDYZi5QhDc1w>

Spotify Channel QR Code:





Social Ministry News

Social Ministry did not meet in January, but the meal at Zion was served on Monday, January 27th! More than 60 people were served at this meal. Thank you to all who help make these meals possible!

If you would like to get involved with making or serving the meals, contact **Judy Larson at 563-340-7902.**

Letter to the Congregation

I want to thank you all for the many many prayers & support through my cancer journey. Thanks for all the cards, texts, phone calls, visits, and the Christmas goodie bag with the children's' cards. I finished chemo #12 the beginning of January and I rang the bell on January 11th. Then hopefully start to get my strength and health back. Again thank you,
Minhon Ridenour

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Lynn Chamberlain, **Bev** Chappen, **Sherry** Germanio,
Sandy Henry, **Jeff** Hicks, **Frieda** Houldsworth, **John** Leder,
LaVonne Mienke, **Jeanne** Peters, **Maggie** Bayliss, **Minhon**
Ridenour

Family and Friends

Addie (Diana Worley's co-worker's daughter), **Barry** (cousin of Ellen Hogbin), **Carol** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Connie** (friend of Maggie Bayliss), **Diane** (friend of Joleen Bakken), **Dotty** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister), **Drew** (Pat Larson's friend), **Grant** (grandson of Carol Leacox), **Hattie** (Frieda's sister) **Jason** (Lynn Chamberlain & Sherry Germanio's son), **Joann** (Frieda's sister-in-law), **Julia** (Keegan's girlfriend), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari), **Michelle** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Michelle** (friend of Jason & Melissa Forari), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Russ** (friend of Steve & Sue Miller, husband to Chris), **Ruthann** (Justina Pessein's mom), **Theo** (Great Nephew to Kathy Melby & Lora Gwin), **Wally** (Frieda's nephew)

Military Personnel

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
Lt. Col. **Brandon** Sandoval USAF (Pat Larson's grandson)
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Samantha Richard (friend of Larson family)

*If you have anyone who needs to be taken off or added,
please notify the church office.*

January 2025 Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Acolyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
2/2/25	Judie Brooks / Dee Worley	Dex & Jude	Pat Larson	Ellen Hogbin	Mary Meumann	Audrey Lovell
2/9/25	Tom Sladky	Dex	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson	Mary Meumann	Audrey Lovell
2/16/25	Janet Brakel	Jude	Ann Larson	Anna Forari	Mary Meumann	Diana Worley
2/23/25	Caroline Hicks	Lennox	Kelly Crooks	Ron Mekalson	Mary Meumann	Diana Worley

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated!
Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138;
marybusdvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:
Janet Brakel (708)207-5515; jbrakel@ameritech.net

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;
kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Ellen Hogbin (309)519-9936;
ehogbin65@gmail.com

Acolytes: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;
madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com