

FEBRUARY 2024

Augustana Lutheran Church Messenger

Pastor - Sharon Van Dam
Secretary - Angela Christie
Pianist - Patty Surguy

Office Hours: 9am - 1pm Monday – Thursday



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church
18499 Twenty Mile Rd.; P.O. Box 198
Tustin, MI 49688
Sunday Worship: 9am
Phone: 231-829-3837



*"We are called through Jesus the Christ to nurture spiritual growth,
welcome all into worship and serve the needs of others."*

Church Mission Statement

Pastor's Message



“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” (Matthew 3:3)

Easter comes early this year and we will begin our 40 day journey of Lent on Ash Wednesday (February 14). At first it seems a bit strange that on this Valentine’s Day we will also have a cross of ashes placed upon our foreheads and listen to the words that remind us all of our

own mortality; “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” But I have to ask are there any Valentine flowers or candy that can truly compare to the love shown to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His love for us was so great that he came to dwell with us here on earth, to teach the way of love, and eventually to die for our sake that we might have eternal life.

Lent is also the time when we eliminate the word “alleluia” from our worship services, waiting to joyfully sing it on Easter Morning. Many of us will fast during Lent by giving up something we truly enjoy; often times a favorite food or activity. Others may choose to add something to their lives, perhaps a daily reading from the Bible or committing to some type of physical exercise. It really doesn't matter how we chose to make our Lenten journey, what's most important is understanding these 40 days as a time of preparation. This is a time when we allow ourselves to lament, to grieve our losses, to look beyond instant gratification, and open our hearts to God's unimaginable love for us.

The season of Lent will conclude at 6:00 PM on March 28, Maundy Thursday. The word “maundy” comes from Latin and reminds us that Jesus gives a new commandment. It commemorates Jesus washing the feet of his disciples after this last supper. Jesus commands us to love others as he loves us. The ritual act of washing each other’s feet is an opportunity for us to experience the love of Jesus for his followers. Many Christians have never had to opportunity to participate in foot washing. As your pastor, I look forward to washing your feet. If you chose to come forward, I'll pour warm water over your feet into a basin and then gently dry them off with a towel. I'm sharing this information early so you'll have to time ask questions, share concerns, and hopefully prepare yourself for this special observance.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Sharon

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING



There was no Council meeting in January

Approved Minutes from the November & December 2023 and meeting will be published in the March MESSENGER.



WELCA Meeting

There was no WELCA meeting in January

Approved Minutes from the December, 2023 meeting will be published in the March MESSENGER.

Ash Wednesday wake-up call

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

With these ancient words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into the season of Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of all that God entrusts to us.

The essential teaching of Ash Wednesday – that we are just mortals, after all – crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions and drives us deep into God’s mysteries. Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What’s *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

We are dust. Yes, but we are *God’s* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each one a speck of “dust” created by of God, billions of years ago. God put us together from the very stuff of the universe.

- Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. Part of creation, we work to preserve and sustain the health of God’s.
- Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy.

We are breath. We are “dust,” but not *only* dust. We are “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life” (Genesis 2:7).

- Therefore, every breath we take is holy. Every breath is a prayer that reminds us of God’s life force in us.
- Therefore, we look to God to align our lives and ourselves with God’s holy reality that arcs towards peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

Our time is brief. Because our “dust” will return to the earth, we live a finite number of minutes on earth.

- Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
- Therefore, we do not cling to our possessions, knowing that we only hold onto them for a little while.
- Therefore, we nourish our lives with world treasures of real value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday.

“Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

--Rob Blezard

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HEART



Make this heartfelt craft as a decoration or gift.

What you need:

- Yarn
- Scissors
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ½ cup water
- Adult help



What you do:

1. Cut yarn into 12-inch pieces.
2. Place cookie cutters atop a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Combine cornstarch and water in a saucepan. Heat mixture over medium heat, stirring until thick and smooth. Remove from heat and cool to form a "glue."
4. Dip each piece of yarn into the mixture to coat completely. Squeeze off any excess.
5. Place yarn in the cookie cutters, allowing pieces to cross and loop within the heart. Add more until the cookie cutter is filled and the yarn looks like a heart.
6. Remove cookie cutters and bake the sheet for two hours at 150°F, or until hearts are dry and hard.

Augustana Members-

The quilt group needs your help!

A quilt is being planned for the 150th Anniversary. We are asking members to decorate a 6X6" square for the quilt. We need you to get your creative juices flowing. Starting in late February, we will have samples out so you can decide what your square will look like. We'll provide fabric markers. All artistic endeavors are **DUE April 24th**, no exceptions, so our project can be completed on time.

Thanks, The Quilters



Learning to forgive

Forgiveness is great in theory, and it's a wonderful blessing to receive. But granting forgiveness can be another story. As C.S. Lewis said, "Everybody says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive." Likewise, forgiveness doesn't simply happen over time, as forgetting often does. Instead, it's "an act of volition," said Simon Wiesenthal, "and only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision."

Because forgiveness has many spiritual, emotional and even physical benefits, the secular world is taking notice. Colleges now offer classes about forgiveness skills and strategies. "You practically never hear sermons on forgiveness that are practical and give clear instructions on how to approach it," Professor Robert Enright tells the Washington Post.

Graduate student Shyanne Sporrer says a forgiveness class helped her realize the danger of holding grudges. "Forgiving does not mean you are giving up power," she says. "On the contrary, when you forgive, you are the person who is in control. By forgiving, you can empower yourself to move forward from the anger and resentment to be a better version of yourself."

Spring training for Christians

The word Lent comes from Middle English and German words for springtime. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season “spring training for Christians.” This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God’s favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we’ll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.

Hebrews describes spiritual discipline as challenging in the moment but yielding righteousness later. The writer urges us, “Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed” (12:11-13, ESV). May the spring training of Lent strengthen and heal us all.

Invaluable!

“The kingdom of heaven,” said Jesus, “is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46, NRSV).

In 2021, the Good News Network reported that a crab fisherman in Thailand stumbled upon a valuable Melo pearl while cutting up a snail for lunch. In wonder, he brought it to his brother to verify the discovery. “My family had been fishing for generations,” said Prasarnphon Phunwan, “but I believe our fate is about to change because of my lunch.” Several months prior, another fisherman had been offered \$351,000 for a similar pearl.

Likewise, God’s priceless love immeasurably alters our eternal fate. If we fully comprehended the value of that love, we’d give up everything to obtain it. But the greater wonder is that we don’t have to buy it. God gives it to us as a gift! Whether we seemed to encounter Jesus by chance or someone joyfully shared the Gospel with us, our Savior is the merchant who “sold all that he had” — even his life. So priceless is salvation! So valuable are we!

—Heidi Hyland Mann



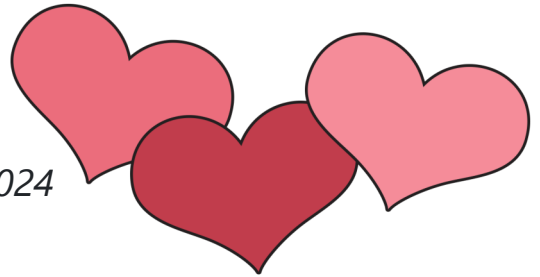
PRAYER CONCERNS: Janice Peterson; Jeff N.; Anissa; Mary Annette Gorden; Musk Family; Dave Dickinson; Vicky Grandi; Jack Forsberg; Ellen A; The family of Gary Nostrandt; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

February 2024 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
Feb 4	Julie Seguin	Becky Miller	Sue & George Klinger	Arv & Jeanette Otberg		Becky Miller Julie Seguin	Jeanette Otberg
Feb 11							
Feb 14 7pm	Julie Seguin					X	X
Feb 18	Julie Seguin		Sue & George Klinger	Ken Forsberg & Connie Burgess	Harvey Miller	Julie Seguin	Connie Burgess
Feb 25			Sue Carmody		Jim Carmody		Sue Carmody

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Groundhog Day, *February 2, 2024*
- Food Pantry, *February 5, 2024 9-12pm*
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, *February 11, 2024*
- Ash Wednesday, *February 14, 2024*
- Valentine's Day, *February 14, 2024*
- Anniversary Committee Meeting, *February 18, 2024*
- Presidents Day, *February 19, 2024*
- Food Pantry, *February 19, 2024 9-12pm*
- Council Meeting, *February 19, 2024 6:30pm*
- WELCA Meeting, *February 20, 2024 10:30am*
- Deadline for March Messenger, *February 28*
- Leap Day, *February 29, 2024*



Happy Birthday!

Yvonne Peterson—Feb. 2
Neil Christie— Feb.3
Sandra Goddard—Feb. 10
Kurt Hammar-Feb. 12
Pastor Phil Van Dam— Feb. 20

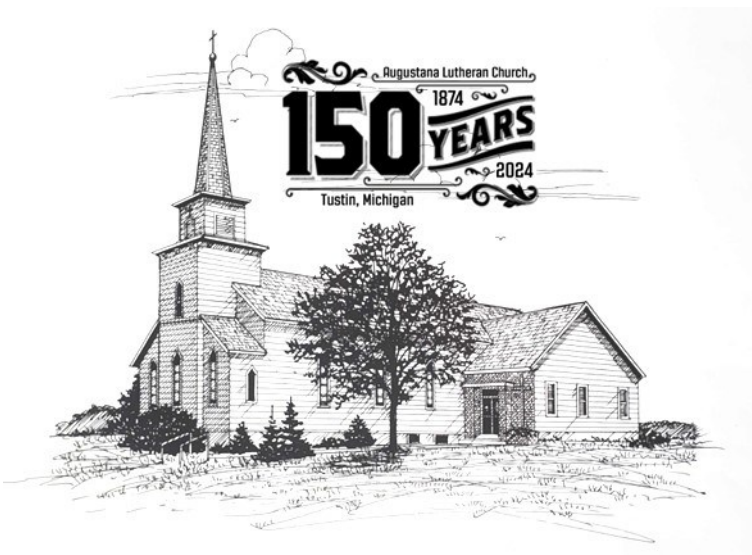


Happy Anniversary

Arvid & Jeanette Otberg— Feb. 9

SAVE THE DATE

July 14th 2024 We celebrate 150 years!



Open invitation

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not be one left behind,
For God hath bidden all humankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.




Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

—Charles Wesley (18th century)



February 2024

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		Quilting Club every Tuesday 1pm 	Bell Choir every Wednesday 6pm 	1	2	3
4	5 Food Pantry 9-12pm 	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Ash Wednesday Service 7pm Valentine's Day	15	16	17
18	19 Food Pantry 9-12pm Council Mtg 6:30pm	20 WELCA 10:30am	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 March Newsletter Due	29		