



St. John Lutheran Church

MESSENGER



ADULT FORUM BIBLE STUDY

Sundays at
10:30am
Via Zoom

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17, 2021

Worship Service
will be

available by broadcast only.

Please watch the Messenger,
Yellow Page, Facebook, and
website for updates on scheduled
times.



Ash
WEDNESDAY

LENTEN SCHEDULE



Lenten Services will be
available by
broadcast only
for all of Lent.

Please watch the Messenger,
Yellow Page, Facebook, and
website for updates on scheduled
times.

ECHO COMMUNITY MEAL

February 27, 2021

at 12:00pm

Friendship Hall
Carry out only.



Lent begins

Saint John Lutheran Church

*A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin*

St John Lutheran Church
302 N. Parker Drive,
Janesville, WI 53545-3024
Congregation Office Tel. (608) 752-3159
E-mail saintjohnlutheran@sbcglobal.net
Web-site:
<http://saintjohnlutheran.blogspot.com>

Usual Congregation Office Hours:
Monday through Thursday: 8am-Noon,
and 1-5pm.

Ministers: All the members of Saint John
Lutheran Church.

Programmatic Staff:
Rev. Bond Haldeman, Pastor
Mobile Tel. 608-208-0283
E-mail pastor.bond@sbcglobal.net
Rev. David Nelsestuen, Visitation Pastor

Support Staff:
Melissa Van Tassell, Administrative
Assistant
Patricia Meehan, Clerical Assistant
Judi Magnus, Parish Nurse
Jennifer Hein, Custodian
Josh Upham, Maintenance
Les Meehan, Maintenance Mechanic

Music Staff:

Ellen Westlund, Accompanist
Megan Rebout - Accompanist
Londa Rusch, Contemporary Group
Director
Becky Weber-Johnson – New Hope Choir
Director
Kidist Haldeman – Videotaping Ministry

*Many other volunteer Servants ministering
to and through the congregation in a variety
of ways!*

**Congregation Council:
(as of January 28, 2021)**

Ron Johnson, Acting President
Kathy Severson, Secretary
Tim Johnson, Treasurer
Ted Grund
David Moore
Heidi Pennycook

*The Congregation Council meets on the
first and third Tuesday of each month.*



Regular Worship Celebrations:

Sundays: Services at 9:00am and 10:30am.

Thursdays: Mid-week Worship at 1:30 pm.

Hospitalizations — Pastor Bond wants to know if you or a loved one is hospitalized, but hospitals *cannot* be relied upon to let him know. Please call, or have a relative call, if you are hospitalized. Pastor Bond can be contacted through the Congregation Office or on his mobile phone at 608-208-0283.

Rite for Healing — Prayer, laying on of hands and anointing of the ill are available each week during our Sunday worship celebrations (just let the pastor know), or by request at hospital or home.

Sacrament of Holy Communion — The Eucharist is celebrated each week during the regular Sunday worship celebrations. Additionally, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is available anytime the pastor is visiting at hospital or home. Please call for special requests. 608-752-3159.

Sending of Holy Communion occurs during worship celebrations on the first Sunday of each month. Those who are unable to leave their homes can have a lay communion minister bring the elements regularly. Communion may also be brought from those worship celebrations by a family member. Please contact Pastor Bond for more information.

Sacrament of Holy Baptism - Except in an emergency, Baptisms will take place as part of our regular Sunday worship celebration. Contact Pastor Bond for information about Baptism and sponsors. Baptism education will be planned in addition to scheduling the date for Baptism.

Rite of Marriage — Please contact Pastor Bond at least six months in advance of a desired date for a wedding service. Pre-marriage meetings with the pastor are required and usually one person should be a member of the congregation.

Rite of Individual Confession and Forgiveness — Contact Pastor Bond for information or appointment.

Room Reservations — Contact the Congregation Office to arrange for use of space in Saint John's building.

Your Contact Information — Moving? New Telephone Number? Different E-mail address? Please notify the Congregation Office when you have changes in your contact information. Help us stay in touch with you.

Publication Deadlines:

Yellow page (weekly bulletin) — information is due by noon Tuesday.
Messenger (monthly newsletter) — information is due by the 15th day of the month.

Publications Editor:

Melissa Van Tassell



A Message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton “Connected, generous, free to serve”



Presiding Bishop
Elizabeth Eaton

Dear church,

We have been living with this pandemic for nearly a year. So much has changed. Bubbles, personal protective equipment, social distancing

and one-way grocery aisles are part of our lexicon and everyday experience. Who knew, a year ago, that face masks would be advertised as ideal stocking stuffers? Our homes have become offices, schools and gyms. Our commutes have been cut down from hours of traffic to walking over to the dining room table. I do not look forward to the weekly summary from my iPhone that tells me how many hours a day I am staring at a screen.

But the pandemic has also revealed the remarkable resilience and creativity of this church. Within weeks of shelter-in-place restrictions, thousands of our congregations converted to online worship, Bible studies and coffee hours. As the economy stuttered and people lost jobs, you stepped up the work of your food pantries. When kids needed internet access to go to virtual school, you became neighborhood hot spots.

We became more connected. And the gospel was heard by people who, in the “Before Times,” would never have come to church. There is a story about the devil bragging to a pastor, saying that the pandemic was the devil’s tool to close all the churches—to which the pastor replied, “We have opened a church in every home.”

You have been generous. In March and April we began to hear concern from our bishops about synod ministries. What would happen to camps and campus ministries? What would happen to congregations that were anchors in communities and were already stressed before the pandemic? We offered [Daily Bread grants](#)—\$500 from the churchwide organization/\$500 from the local congregation. We hoped that 50 congregations might be able to raise the matching funds. So far 374 grants have been awarded. Working with synod bishops we launched the [COVID-19 Appeal](#), which is designed to support key ministries in synods. You stepped up and in eight months have given over \$1.7 million. These grants have been distributed to ministries in 62 of our 65 synods.

Now it’s 2021. The pandemic is still with us. Yes, there are vaccines and distribution is being sorted out. There is an end in sight. But now is not the time to let down our guard. We’ll keep washing our hands, wearing masks and avoiding crowds. We will do this for ourselves and for each other. We will respect the disease and give

thanks to God for the gift of science. And we will continue to worship, pray and serve.

There is a model of such self-giving, self-limiting love. “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to

the point of death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:4-8).

I pray that we all live in such freedom.

Peace. Be well.
Liz

The pandemic has also taught us something about ourselves. Though we are physically distant, we are connected. Paul put it this way in a letter to the Corinthians: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).

It is our joyful duty to care for one another, particularly the most vulnerable. It is an act of faithfulness when we limit ourselves so that the pandemic is brought to heel. It is an act of love when we restrict our travel or wear a mask. As Martin Luther pointed out in [The Freedom of a Christian](#), it is the freedom we have in Christ that makes us servants of all.

The pandemic has revealed the remarkable resilience and creativity of this church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America





South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Friends in Christ,

The preacher C.H. Spurgeon once said, "By perseverance the snail reached the ark." Sit with that for just a moment. 2020 felt to me a lot like the journey the snail undertook to the ark. So much of 2020 seemed like a slow crawl along a muddy, unknown, and uncertain path. Like the snail, we may have had days when we forgot what we were crawling toward or what the journey was all about. We may have lost track of the summons to go to the ark altogether.

But, by perseverance the snail reached the ark. This is incredible grace. This too was 2020. The 138 congregations and ministries of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin proclaimed God's Word, provided places and spaces for people to keep connecting to their community of faith, and reached out in generosity to neighbors. You persevered. Even as we felt it to be a muddy, unknown, unending path beneath us, the church kept crawling forward with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

You are reading this report because you care about your congregation. Thank you for that care, especially this year, and thank you for attending your congregation's annual meeting. I know you have had to adapt in ways you never imagined. Thank you for persisting.

Please know that your synod, the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, is committed to being your partner in ministry. CARE-CONNECT-EQUIP are our values. In 2021 we will continue to foster partnerships that help us live out these values. We will persevere on the path together:

- With conferences, the synod council, and the office of bishop
- Among and between congregations
- Among and between rostered and lay leaders
- With ecumenical and global partners
- Between ELCA congregations, the synod and the national church

I am deeply grateful for this new calling to serve with you as bishop. I am honored to call this synod my home and believe that God is leading us forward together. Together may we find new ways to share God's grace, build community and to be Christ's presence along the path.

In Christ,

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe



“Ask the Pastor”

Rev. Bond Haldeman

“You are my witnesses”

When the disciples had come together [on Ascension Day], they asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8)

Perhaps we feel pretty comfortable, unprovoked, unchallenged by Jesus calling us to be “witnesses.” Our image may be of a person sitting calmly in court, next to a judge, being asked, in the safety of a courtroom what they have seen or heard. The witness talks, tells stories, makes a report. It seems easy enough on first thought.

As I mentioned in a recent sermon, I have been doing some reading in Church history to learn more about how the Church has faced pandemics and plagues before. Of course, I begin with Martin Luther, as he addressed the bubonic plague (the Black Death) in his day

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/20>

[20/may-web-only/martin-luther-plague-pandemic-coronavirus-covid-flee-letter.html](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/20/may-web-only/martin-luther-plague-pandemic-coronavirus-covid-flee-letter.html)).

But soon thereafter, I found myself reading again Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which recounts the first few centuries of the Church. Although perhaps inaccurate in places, Eusebius makes it clear that the early Church endured persecutions, of the kind that involved imprisonment, torture and death. And yet the Church grew because of its witness.

Just recently I came across a startling reminder that arose from a translational issue. I was reading a theology of family and marriage that asserted that the goal of both singleness and marriage is martyrdom. (There must be some jokes there for both married and single people.) The translational issue arises when we recognize that the Greek word *martus* is usually translated “witness” in the Scriptures. In English we take “martyr” to mean a special extreme witness, even unto death. But that is not from the Greek, not from the Bible.

Even in the example above, from the very beginning of the Book of Acts, the word translated “witnesses” is *martures*, martyrs. “You will be my martyrs.” In the Book of Acts, we hear

of opposition and persecutions, and we read of the death of Stephen, the proto-martyr, and we should remember that the book ends with the Apostle Paul being taken off to Rome, where we know he and the Apostle Peter are killed for the Faith.

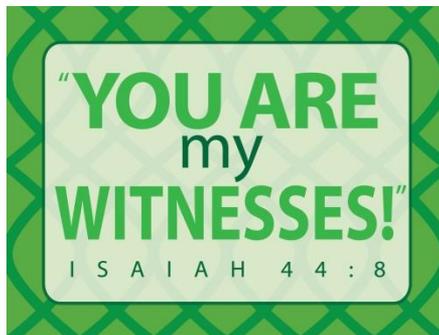
All of this is to say that I have been thinking again of the mission statement of the congregation from a few decades ago, “Jesus’ witnesses, proclaiming God’s grace.” That claim to be Jesus’ witnesses may mean a lot more than our first thought suggests. Perhaps we are called to something much larger, more significant. Perhaps we must consider ourselves among the great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1) that desire to be commended for our faith (Heb. 11:39) and of whom the world was not worthy (Heb. 11:38). What witness are you providing?

Now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the LORD

who made you, who formed you in the womb and will help you: Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, “The Upright One” whom I have chosen. Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let them proclaim it, let them declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one. (Isaiah 44:1-2, 6-8)

Yours in Christ.

+ Pastor Bond



READINGS FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 7

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

Sunday, February 21

First Sunday in Lent

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

Sunday, February 14

Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday in Lent

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38



Are you eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine?

1/22/2021

We are currently in PHASE 1A of the vaccine rollout. Some 1B groups have also been approved to receive the vaccine. This means that the following groups are eligible to receive the vaccine:



- Healthcare workers (including unaffiliated healthcare workers)
- Skilled nursing facility staff and residents
- Police and Fire
- Community members who are 65 years and older
- Other long term care facilities (beginning Jan. 25)



If you do not fall into one of the categories above, stay tuned for more information. Additional groups may be eligible to receive the vaccine soon.

The Rock County Health Department wants everyone who wants a vaccine to be able to get one. Unfortunately, there are not enough doses to vaccinate everyone right away. The vaccination process will take some time. As mentioned above the following groups are now eligible:



• **Healthcare workers, first responders, police, and fire:**
Healthcare systems have been reaching out to this group.

• **People age 65 and older:**
Healthcare providers are reaching out to their existing patients with further instructions. Those without a regular healthcare provider can request a vaccination by filling out the **65+ COVID-19 Vaccine Request Form** at the web-site: <https://www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth-familycommunity/publichealth-communicabledisease/coronavirus-disease-2019/232-departments-category/health-department/coronavirus/2436-coronavirus-vaccine>

If you do not currently qualify to receive a COVID-19 vaccination: More information will be provided as it becomes available. Due to the limited number of doses available and the amount of planning and work that goes into the process, it will take time to vaccinate everyone who wants to receive the vaccine. We appreciate your patience as we navigate through this process.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



1-Feb	Matthew Shumann
2-Feb	Lindsey Snyder
2-Feb	Elizabeth Baird
2-Feb	Jeni Flynn
2-Feb	Nick Patterson
2-Feb	Ken Hanson
2-Feb	Marie Elliott
3-Feb	Leonard Duckworth
4-Feb	Jennifer Hornsey
4-Feb	Robert Reinke
4-Feb	Mariah Reinke
4-Feb	Shelly Malterer
5-Feb	Bruce Haugen *
5-Feb	Mark Martin
5-Feb	Randy Luek
5-Feb	Jeffery Peters
5-Feb	Orella Schrader *
5-Feb	Skylar Nightengale
5-Feb	Carson Burdick
5-Feb	August Hohl *
6-Feb	Joseph Strunz
6-Feb	Caryn Oleston
6-Feb	Debra Savage
6-Feb	Tanner Lietz
6-Feb	Stanley Smythe *
6-Feb	Amanda Story
7-Feb	Jerry Churchill *
7-Feb	Zachary DeWitt
7-Feb	Rona Dolgner *
7-Feb	Alicia Scalissi

7-Feb	Leslie Jones
7-Feb	Sue Martin
7-Feb	Jesslyn Spry
8-Feb	Rachel Newlin
8-Feb	Matt Jensen
9-Feb	Kyleigh Fenton
9-Feb	Tod Martin
9-Feb	Sarah Peters
9-Feb	Jeremy Moe
9-Feb	Judith Magnus
10-Feb	Steven Wright
10-Feb	Allison Grund
11-Feb	Sue Erdman
11-Feb	Matt Bumgarner
11-Feb	Vi Zastoupil *
12-Feb	Jennifer Youmans
12-Feb	Rebecca Weber-Johnson
13-Feb	Randy Luek
13-Feb	Thyra Fosmoen
13-Feb	Tanya Brudos
14-Feb	Emily Truckey
14-Feb	Alex Thompson
15-Feb	Nedra Hanson
15-Feb	Jane Johnson
15-Feb	Graham Randall
15-Feb	Skylar Lukas
15-Feb	Beth Cramer
15-Feb	Natalia Voegeli
16-Feb	Chuck Flynn
16-Feb	Jake Meyers

17-Feb	Loren Hanson
17-Feb	Sylvia Harrison *
17-Feb	Penny Johnson
17-Feb	Scott Bumgarner
17-Feb	Bonnie Smythe *
18-Feb	James Parker
18-Feb	James Trumpy *
18-Feb	Lexie Monday
18-Feb	Connor Bucholtz
20-Feb	Joshua Mallu
20-Feb	Maddie Johnson
21-Feb	Meagen Bumgarner

22-Feb	Kristine Harmel
23-Feb	Keith Parker *
23-Feb	Elvira Fazel *
24-Feb	Matthew Baker
24-Feb	David Utterberg
25-Feb	Elizabeth Shultz
26-Feb	Thomas Presny
26-Feb	Tyler Knoke
26-Feb	Tammy Vike
28-Feb	Casandra Roehl
28-Feb	T.J. Bump

* - indicates 80 years-plus birthdays!

Please let us know if we have missed your birthday, if you would prefer not to have your 80+ birthday acknowledged, or if there are any errors!



ECHO Current needs: Peanut butter and jelly, instant oatmeal, spaghetti sauce, tuna, beef stew, soup and crackers, dish soap, tampons, toothpaste, bar soap, laundry soap, deodorant, diapers (sizes 4-6), and cash for bus passes and housing. **Once again, they DO HAVE A NEED FOR 20 oz. bottles, egg cartons and reusable cloth shopping bags.** The next ECHO Community Meal will be held at St John Lutheran Church

on Saturday, February 27, 2021 from 12:00 pm until 1:00 pm.

Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry!
 Supplies can be dropped off at the ECHO office, Monday-Friday 9am – 12p.m. and Monday – Thursday 1pm – 4pm. More details at: www.echojanesville.org/



NEWS AT ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

CURRENT WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

- Thursday, 1:30 p.m., Holy Communion (spoken, no singing)
- Sunday, 9:00 a.m., Holy Communion (with accompaniment but no singing)

Each week, Saint John Lutheran Church is open for worship. In-person worship attendance is allowed with reservations and social distancing is strictly observed. Masks are required at all times. There will be no singing at any services. There is currently one Worship Service on Sunday morning, as well as one on Thursday afternoon. Come, worship the Lord!

Opportunities for viewing the worship service include:

- A recording of live worship can be viewed on Sundays at 9:00am on the congregation's web-site or Facebook, www.sjlc-elca.org/worship-online/
- A video recording of the Sunday worship service, with music accompaniment, is available for viewing at your convenience, usually by Monday morning, at your congregation's web-site, www.sjlc-elca.org
- The worship service is broadcast on JATV, cable channel 994, one week delayed on Sunday at 9:00 a.m.



We currently have one Sunday morning worship service at 9:00 a.m., with reservations required and limited capacity. It is hoped that this will meet the needs of worshipers at this time. Thursday 1:30 p.m. services will continue as usual, no reservations required, unless we approach the attendance capacity. All of this is currently in effect, so those who desire to worship this weekend must call Pastor Bond, (608) 208-0283. He will be the only one keeping the reservations for worship services. Sunday morning reservations will be taken only one week in advance. Please remember that if you reserve a place, that may prevent someone else from attending worship so please keep your appointment or call as soon as possible to cancel if you will be unable to use your reservation.

The Council is continuing to work on a plan that will coordinate with the Rock County Dashboard Phases, to include attendance limits, reservations, and perhaps singing. The result of that work will be made available when complete. **Please watch the congregation website or our Facebook page for the latest updates as they become available.** Thank you for your continued patience and understanding in these matters.



ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENTEN WORSHIP

February 17th is Ash Wednesday this year. Due to rapidly changing State and Federal mandates and scientific advice, our schedule is still under construction. Please check the Yellow Page, our website at www.sjlc-elca.org, or call the church office at 608-752-3159 for current information about service formats and times.

PARISH RECORDS FEBRUARY 2021



WE HAVE PRAYED FOR: The Family of Clarice Spoerry, The Family of Doris Pardee, Kim, Ron Johnson, Tim and Becky Weber-Johnson, The Family of Elaine Snyder, Larry Fry, Karlhene Thom, Jennifer, Mary Ellen Martin, John, Ada Brudos, Teri Colson, Judi Magnus, Jean Thom, Karl Thom, Lorraine Whitehead, Virginia Ziegler, Bill and Roseann Dooley, Judy Bever, Al Williams, Lorenzo, Caryl, Melanie, Jodi, Dick, Chris,

Wanda Zillmer, Jessica Upham Whitford, Janet Jacobson, Annette Udulutch, Lois Berg, Karen, Patty Meehan, Bev McClellan, Jennifer McClellan, Penny Johnson, Kidist Haldeman, Ruth, Family of Doris Stuhr, all those effected by Covid-19, and healthcare workers.

FUNERALS:

Our congregation extends their sympathy and prayers to the family of Doris A. Stuhr, who died on January 19, 2021. Private services for Doris were held on January 25, 2021 at Whitcomb-Lynch Funeral Home. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



MEMORIALS

\$125.00 was given in memory of Elaine Snyder by Kim, Kevin and Bryon Everson and Jan Jackson



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

PRAYER VENTURES

FEBRUARY 2021

These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA, as well as for the needs and circumstances of our neighbors, communities and world. Thank you for your continued prayers for the life and mission of this church.

1 Pray that the Spirit will guide, inspire and shape the Future Church structure being implemented in the churchwide organization to renew our sense of purpose and activate the entire church so that more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.

2 *Black History Month* Give thanks for the gifts, accomplishments, influence and witness of our African-descent neighbors who stand together with us as partners in the gospel, doing God's work in the world. Though unified as siblings in Christ, we ask God to guide and help our church in its commitment to socioeconomic equity and racial justice and reconciliation.

3 Give thanks for our freedom in Jesus Christ and pray that we might use that freedom to proclaim the glory of God and serve our neighbor in obedience to God's word, will and ways.

4 Pray for the children, youth and family ministry leaders of our church participating in the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza, "Holding Loosely." Pray that they will grow and be strengthened for ministry through this time of spiritual renewal, continuing education, networking and mutual support.

5 Pray for ELCA Global Mission and for our ministry of accompaniment with churches, leaders, institutions and companion agencies in Asia and the Pacific region as we work together to grow the church, share the gospel, equip leaders, serve the needs of communities, address issues of development and justice, and assist with disaster preparedness and relief.

6 Ask God to help us listen to each other with respect and to address and heal the political and ideological divisions that discourage us from treating one another with love and concern as neighbors and siblings in Christ. Pray that the Spirit will unite us and lead us in the work we must do together for the well-being of our communities, nation and neighbors in need.

7 Illness, oppression, desperation and spiritual darkness are no match for the healing and redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior. Praise God!

8 Pray for all those who experience food insecurity across our nation and around the world. Ask God to help us envision how we can work together to bring relief and hope and to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

9 Give thanks to God for people of all ages, cultures, races, life experiences and perspectives who are new to the ELCA. Pray that, as siblings in Christ, we will nurture and equip one another for participating in God's work in the world.

10 Give thanks and praise to God for God's abundant love, which "heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds."

11 Pray for our outdoor ministry organizations and their leaders as they continue to discern and plan for adapting their ministries during the pandemic – especially as they envision what this summer might bring.

12 Thank God for our special relationship with The Episcopal Church, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1999. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we will find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.

13 When have you felt proud, boastful or self-congratulatory for your ministry, witness or service to others? Ask God to forgive you and to refocus your attention on the good news and blessings of grace given to us through Jesus Christ, which we are called to share without bias, hesitation or expectation of recognition or reward.

14 We are not much different from Peter, James or John, who were unsure what they were witnessing when God's glory shined brightly in Jesus during his transfiguration. Pray for patience and for faith in God's promise, that we, too, will someday experience glory and joy in the kingdom of heaven.

15 Pray for our new U.S. president, vice president and members of Congress, that they will find strength, support and unity for their difficult work of serving a diverse nation. Ask the Spirit to help us guide, shape and embolden our culture and nation so that we practice justice, care for our neighbors in need, strive for truth and support our global neighbors.

16 Pray that when people witness our actions and hear our words, they will see the light of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ in us and will be moved to believe in God's love, forgiveness and actions in the world today.

17 Ash Wednesday Someone tracing the sign of the cross on our forehead with ash speaks to our need for physical reassurance that God has done something special and mysterious in the world through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Speak to God about what this smudge of ash – the cross – means to you and says to people who notice it on your forehead.

18 Ask the Spirit to teach us humility and to remind us that God made us to care for one another, love one another, be generous with what we have and participate in God's good, reconciling work in the world.

19 Pray for families, caregivers and friends who cannot be physically present with hospitalized loved ones. Pray that we will support and comfort them through their time of separation and worry and reassure them of God's very real presence and love.

20 God knows our complexities, vulnerabilities and shortcomings yet still considers us with the wisdom of a fair and merciful judge. With a deep sigh of relief, lift up thanks and praise to God!

21 Renewed, claimed and sent forth through the word and the waters of baptism, we pray that our life in the Spirit will help us resist temptations that draw us away from God and God's ways and will keep us focused on our baptismal journey of faith, learning, service and sharing the good news.

22 Give thanks for everyone involved in the extensive effort to vaccinate people against COVID-19 even as we work to prevent its spread and treat those who are ill. Pray that the hope and the emotional, spiritual and physical stamina of these workers will be sustained for the long haul.

23 Let our prayers and yearnings echo those of the psalmist who wrote, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation."

24 Pray that throughout Lent we will reflect on our faith, lives and endeavors with honesty and humility while trusting in God's grace to restore our spirit and to reassure us that we will always be disciples of Christ and loved children of God.

25 Remember in prayer the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. Give thanks and pray for women who respond to God's call to serve as deaconesses and who use their passions, spiritual gifts and education to serve in a wide variety of roles and ministry settings worldwide.

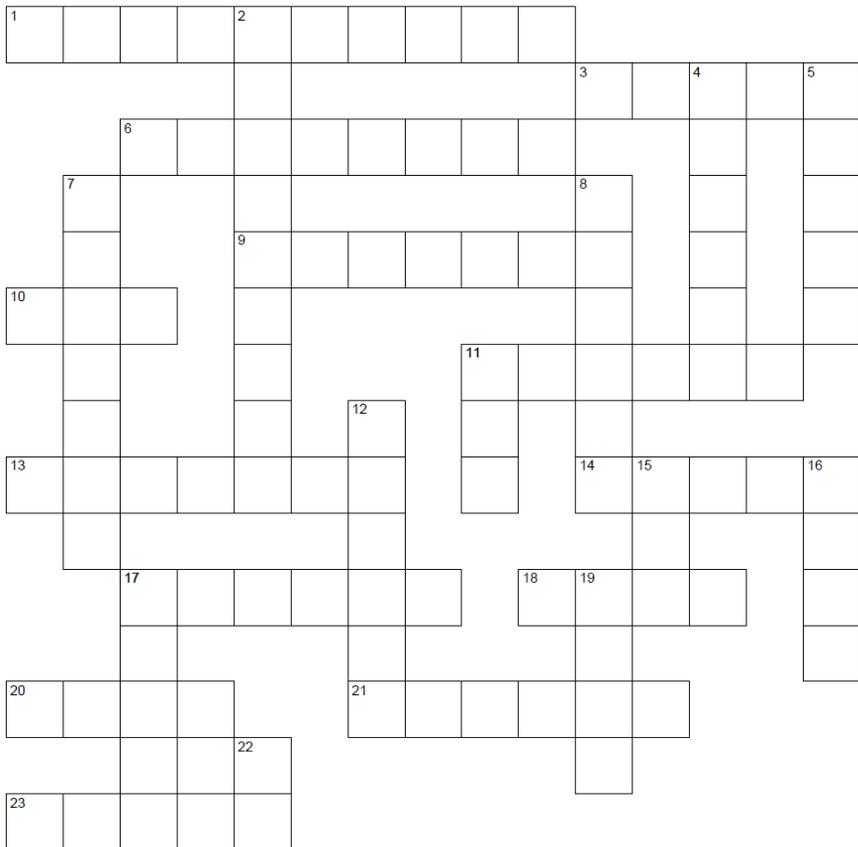
26 Praise God for being patient and loving toward us and for saving us in our desperation and darkness through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

27 Pray for the ELCA Young Adult Ministry's work with young adults ages 18 to 30 and for leaders who facilitate young adult ministry in their communities of faith. Pray that young adults will find places in our communities of faith where they belong and ministries both at home and abroad where they can grow in faith, discern and use their unique gifts and passions, and engage in acts of service, justice and peace in the world.

28 We cannot fully comprehend God's ways or what Jesus has accomplished for our sake and salvation. Pray daily to be alert and receptive to what God is revealing to us and to how the Spirit stirs in us faith, wisdom and understanding.

This resource may be copied and shared among members and friends of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Contact info@elca.org for additional information. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101. Telephone: 800-638-3522, ext. 2458.

Mark Chapter 1, Puzzle 1



Across

1. what God baptizes with
3. unclean one
6. serve
9. Northern Israel
10. male child
11. good news
13. accept as true
14. the devil
17. go after
18. comply
20. white bird
21. shoe
23. days in the wilderness

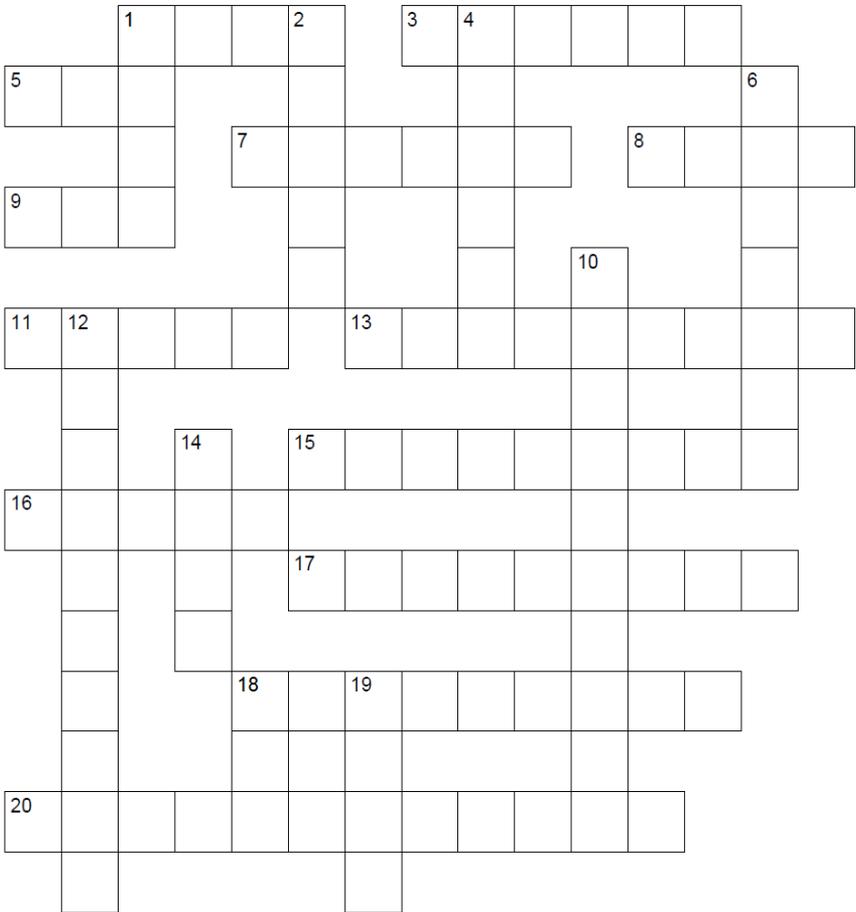
Down

2. temple of worship
4. persons
5. flowing water
7. oracle
8. wild animals
11. Creator
12. people were possessed with these
15. consumed
16. fishing tool
17. temperature
19. ship
22. personal possession

Word List

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| ate | leper |
| beasts | minister |
| believe | my |
| boat | nets |
| demons | obey |
| dove | people |
| fever | prophet |
| follow | river |
| forty | sandal |
| Galilee | Satan |
| God | son |
| gospel | synagogue |
| Holy Spirit | |

Mark Chapter 8, Puzzle 1



Across

- 1. as well
- 3. collect
- 5. a small number of
- 7. savior
- 8. sea worthy vessel
- 9. path
- 11. once more
- 13. disregarded
- 15. apostles
- 16. started
- 17. argued with and tried to test Jesus
- 18. what the people were after eating
- 20. number of people fed

Down

- 1. gone
- 2. additional
- 4. respond
- 6. seven of these full of food were left
- 10. Jesus felt this for the people
- 12. age group
- 14. time period
- 18. put
- 19. obtained

Word List

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| again | four thousand |
| also | gather |
| answer | generation |
| away | other |
| baskets | Pharisees |
| began | satisfied |
| boat | set |
| Christ | took |
| compassion | way |
| days | |
| disciples | |
| few | |
| forgotten | |