

FEBRUARY-MARCH NEWSLETTER



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Mt. Olivet family of faith,

We are just a few weeks away from the start of Lent! With moving into a new house in December, I didn't get started on my Lent preparations as early as I like to. I figured that would be okay though because I thought January would go on forever and I would have lots and lots of time to prepare for Lent. Even though January feels really cold, dark, and long, it doesn't last forever though. Ash Wednesday will be here in just a few short weeks.

Having a meaningful Lenten time is not something that we have really been able to do since I have been the pastor at Mt. Olivet and I hope that this year we can finally find something that works for us. The challenge of sharing me as pastor with Immanuel has made finding our Lenten groove a little difficult. I have learned from what we attempted the previous two years and I appreciate all of you who took time to fill out a Lenten survey with your preferences for our midweek services. These have been really valuable for planning. I hope this year is the year we can take what we have learned and create some meaningful spiritual opportunities for the whole congregation.

Traditionally Lent is meant to be a time of spiritual preparation for Easter. It included things like fasting or giving something up, charity or generosity towards those in need, and prayer. I want to spin off of those traditional Lenten disciplines and be intentional about caring for ourselves as beloved children of God this Lent.

This means that I would like to see Lent be for us a time to connect with ourselves and others, embracing our gift for being a community that is welcoming and friendly. Lent will also bring an opportunity to continue to support Mt. Olivet through your generosity and a special time to support our incredible Sleep Space ministry to the community. Finally, Lent will bring opportunities to grow closer to God and understanding ourselves as sacred and beloved children of God through midweek worship at 5:30 on Wednesdays, a book study, and a special community women's event Pastor Andrea from First Christian Church and I will be hosting. Information on all of these things is in this newsletter and will be in the weekly emails from the church.

I hope that with all that is being offered, you will find something that will help you connect a little deeper with yourself and with God. There is no point in our journey of faith where we are not called to be intentional about stewarding and caring for our spiritual growth. God is always wanting us to grow closer to God, to one another, and in caring for ourselves. So now is the perfect time and I hope that you will find something this season that will work for you. I deeply desire for Mt. Olivet to be a community of faith that helps people grow close to Jesus, both members of our church and those in the community God might be calling and equipping us to reach with the gospel.

I am thankful for you and the ways you already live out and express your faith. I look forward to growing with you during these next couple of months.

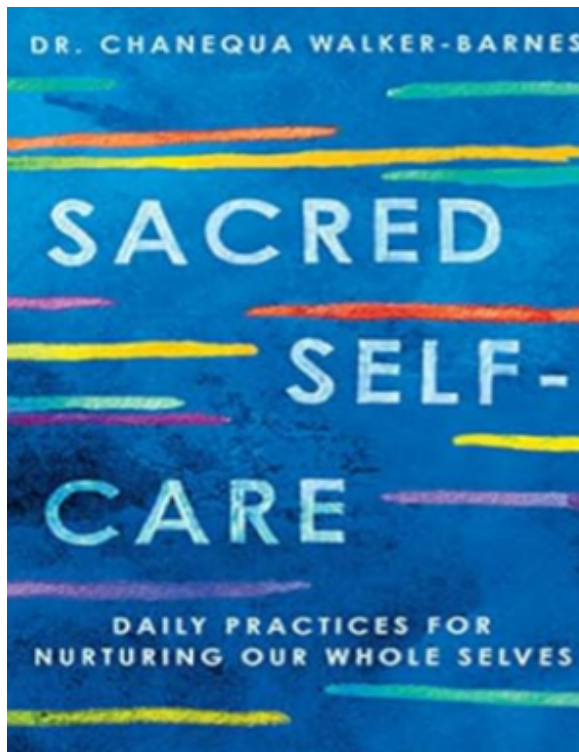
In Christ,
Pastor Kimberly

BREAD BREAKERS

Introducing Bread Breakers, a fellowship group for seniors and retired folk who like to eat together! We will have our first luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 11 at noon at Mt. Olivet. Lunch will be a Valentine's potluck so bring a dish to share and enjoy some time with your church family. Please bring a friend!



LENTEN BOOK GROUP



You are invited to participate in Southeastern Iowa Synod. All Synod Reads during Lent. Church members across our synod will all be reading the book *Sacred Self Care: Daily Practices for Nurturing Our Whole Selves* by Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes. We will have our own group at Mt. Olivet to discuss the book together and will meet weekly on Monday nights at 7pm during Lent (first meeting is Monday, Feb. 23). If you are interested in participating, please let Pastor Kimberly now. She has books available for purchase for \$16 and you can pay her directly for yours and take it home today. Spend a little time this Lent with this devotional resource and discussing it in community to deepen your faith life.

WOMEN OF THE WORD



The Women of the Word book group is reading *The Measure* during the month of February and will meet Thursday, February 12 at 7pm to discuss the book. Copies of the book are available in the fellowship hall for you to borrow or as an Audiobook on Hoopla if you are interested in participating.

STAR WORDS

On Sunday January 4, worshippers were given a “star word” to guide them through the year this year. These words are to be used to help us reflect on God’s activity in our life and how God is calling us to live out our faith. As you continue your journey with your word for this year consider the following questions:

- What initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers come to mind because of your word?
- What struggles, challenges, and or uncomfortable growing areas have you encountered through your star word?
- And for Lent, how can your star word guide your repentance and self-examination this season?

If you didn’t get a star word but would like one (or if you already lost yours), please talk to Pastor Kimberly. I have lots left over and would be happy to give you another. More reflection prompts will be shared in our newsletters throughout the year.

NEW ADDRESS

Pastor Kimberly has purchased a house here in town. Her new address is 1902 W 4th St in Perry.

FRIENDS IN FAITH

All elementary school aged children are invited for an afternoon of faith and fun at the church hosted by Lutheran Lakeside Camp. We will have games, kid friendly camp style worship, crafts, and snacks. It will be Sunday, March 22 from 2-5pm. Please let Pastor Kim know if your kids are interested in attending. Your kids are welcome to bring a friend or two as well!

LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICES

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 5:30pm

Midweek Holden Evening Prayer Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18, and 25 at 5:30pm

Maundy Thursday April 2 at 5:30pm

Good Friday April 3 at 5:30pm

Easter Sunday, April 5 at 8:45am

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Several members of the congregation have expressed that they would like to be more up to date on our finances throughout the year. In order to help do that, we will be publishing some information in this weekly email and in our newsletter. Please feel free to talk to Pastor or one of the council members if you have any questions.

Giving need per week to meet budget \$2,140.25

General Fund offerings so far this year (includes online giving):

Jan. 4: \$2,233.43

Jan. 11: \$3,176.50

Jan. 18: \$1,380.43

Jan. 25: \$2,448.11

Thank you for your generosity.

SLEEP SPACE STUFF THE ALTAR



Stuff the Altar is coming for Lent, but with a twist! This time instead of collecting items for the Perry Emergency Food Pantry, we will be collecting bedding items for the Mt. Olivet Sleep Space. The sleep space is a partnership with the Optimist Club, but we need support from the congregation to continue to receive those grant funds. You can show your support by purchasing a new bedding item and bringing it during Lent to stuff the altar. Even something as simple as a new \$4 pillow from Walmart would be appreciated. In 2025 we

over forty individuals in the Perry school district. Most of the people served were children or low-income seniors. They are referred to us by several different community agencies and the Perry Public Schools. Every person who comes to Sleep Space has different needs and we were fortunate that in 2025 we did not have to turn anyone away. Some people have no bed but have misc. bedding items, some need only bedding, and some need it all! Therefore, we always can use new twin, full, and queen bedding items (pillows, sheets, mattress pads, comforters, and bed sized fleece blankets) to go with the beds that we order with grant funds. The most given away bedding items in 2025 were pillows and bed sized fleece blankets so donating one of those items would be especially appreciated. New items only please!

THANK YOU

Thank you so much for getting my son and I mattresses and bedding for our new home. We recently moved to Perry because I started work at Aspire and we did not have all of the home items we needed. Having a bed is the best Christmas present and we are so glad not to be sleeping on the floor.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, MS

Hosted by Mt. Olivet
Lutheran Church and First
Christian Church

Women's Soul Care Cafe

A time for women in our community to get
away and engage in some sacred self care.

Learning, conversation, and
hands-on activities!

Saturday, March 28

10:00am-12:00pm

**Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church
920 15th St, Perry Iowa 50220**

\$10 for supplies and snacks

Can be paid at door

**Contact Pastor Andrea
Brownlee to register**

Call or Text

515-259-1982

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH - BOUTON

Dear Mt. Olivet,

Thank you for the lovely poinsettia, our congregation received honoring our shared congregational history.

St. Paul's last scheduled worship service was Christmas Eve when 78 people gathered for the Celebration of Jesus (God With Us.) For our congregation this is a time of grief, yet we know as the writer of Ecclesiastes declares, "For everything there is a season..." (Ecc. 3:1)

During this season we also experience ourselves alongside Mary, mother of Jesus, when the scriptures report following the shepherds' visit, "she treasured all these words (memories and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:20b)

Many decisions are yet to be made regarding dispositions of St. Pauls' assets. These decisions, however, are being made with an assurance that God is with us.

With thanksgiving for the past and the future,

Kenneth H Ahnholz, Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church

HYMN MADNESS IS COMING!

At the end of March, we will be celebrating March Madness with our own Hymn madness to vote on our favorite hymn. In preparation for this, we need to know what your favorite hymns are so please list up to three favorites on the survey sheets that will be available in worship during February. We will try to work as many of these hymns as possible into our worship during March so that when the brackets come out, you will recognize the hymns on there! Please let Pastor Kimberly or Linda Huntington know if you have any questions.

CHURCH COUNCIL

President Randy Reuter

Vice President Roger Niemeyer

Secretary Meg Menke

Social Concerns Kendra Norman

Education Meg Menke

Property Mike Ramsey

Evangelism/Stewardship Roger Niemeyer

Worship Randy Reuter

We are looking for one more council member to complete an unfinished term of a council member who had to set down. If you would be willing to serve a 1 year term on council, please let Pastor or Randy Reuter know.

THANK YOU

Dear Mt. Olivet family,

Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift that you gave me. I am saving the money because my family is taking a trip together later this year to Iceland. Your Christmas gift helps make it possible for me to join them on this trip and I am so excited. Going to Iceland and seeing the northern lights has been on my bucket list and I am deeply touched that you have helped make it possible for me to fulfill this dream! Thank you so very, very much.

In Christ,

Pastor Kimberly

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR 2026

JANUARY

4: Reuter
11: Lamm
18: Hayes/Higbee
25: Golay

FEBRUARY

1: Sackett
8: Nelson
15: Gregory
22: Hardy

MARCH

1: Seeman/M.
Johnson
8: Renken/T. Olsen
15: Gregory
22: Stetzel
29: Neimeyer

APRIL

5: Reuter
12: Van Kirk
19: Huntington/
Kingsley
26: Niemeyer

MAY

3: Hayes/Higbee
10: Melson
17: Lamm
24: Golay
31: Burgett

JUNE

7: Sackett
14: Weyer/Lyons
21: Norman
28: Menke

JULY

5: Reuter
12: Hardy
19: Seeman/M.
Johnson
26: Renken/T. Olsen

AUGUST

2: Burgett
9: Gregory
16: Stetzel
23: Norman
30: Van Kirk

SEPTEMBER

6: Huntington/Kinglsey
13: Niemeyer
20: Menke
27: Nelson

OCTOBER

4: Golay
11: Burgett
18: Hayes/Higbee
25: Huntington/Kingsley

NOVEMBER

1: Sackett
8: Van Kirk
15: Renken/T. Olsen
22: Lamm
29: Norman

DECEMBER

6: Hardy
13: Seeman/M.
Johnson
20: Gregory
24: Reuter
27: Stetzel