



HOPE NOTES

February ~ March 2024

Hope Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 234

E. Pittsburgh, PA 15112

412-242-4476

hopeforesthills@aol.com

Serving the Community with Love

*Hope is a congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America*

Sunday Worship

11:15 am in-person

at

McMasters

United Methodist Church

200 Church Street, Turtle Creek

and 3:00 pm on zoom

Taize Prayer Service

7:00 pm on zoom

first Wednesday of every month
(except July & August)

P.L.U.M. Pastoral Team

plumofpa.com

Rev. John Gropp-412-680-7867

Rev. Brenda Henry-412-390-8005

Pastor Susan Devine-412-496-4889

Church Council:

Jane Cushion, President
Barb Kochuba, Vice President
Kathie Nelson, Secretary
Dave Hauser, Treasurer
Bev Koch, Vice Treasurer
Pam Hall, Member
Lynda Joyce, Member
Janet Moberg, Member
Arnold Wlahofsky, Member

Love and Lent

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Blessings to you from your pastoral team. Here we are, in mid-winter. We have celebrated the birth of our Savior and the Epiphany of our Lord. In this month, when the secular world celebrates love, many of us will be spending a portion of our Valentine's Day in church, hearing again those familiar words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" while we receive the mark of ashes on our foreheads. In the bleak mid-winter, we begin the season of Lent.

The season of Lent derives from the ancient Church's period of preparation for those who were to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. That preparation included instruction, fasting, repentance, prayers and special acts of devotion. Today, the Church uses this same period and some of those practices to prepare for the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ. The word "Lent" comes from the old English word "Lenten" which means lengthen. You have probably noticed that each day is getting longer. Spring is on the way. We are seeing signs of rebirth in the earth; small green shoots are starting to appear. Just as the earth is being renewed, Lent is a time when we can consider our rebirth in our baptism and focus on our spiritual renewal in preparation for Easter. Lent is 40 days long, beginning on Ash Wednesday. We do not include the six Sundays, these are little celebrations of the resurrection. The 40 days identify with Jesus' 40 days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness as he prepared for his ministry, and with Moses' 40 days of fasting and prayer on Mt. Sinai as he waited to receive the Law from God.

Lent is a time when we are invited to examine ourselves and determine what it is that leads us away from our love for God and neighbor. This examination will give us areas to focus on during this Lenten season and will direct us to disciplines that will renew our relationships with God and neighbor. Examining ourselves is never easy. Sometimes we discover things about ourselves that we do not like. Sometimes we learn that we are not doing things that we should be doing, and we make excuses about not having enough time or resources. We learn that we need to change something about ourselves and change is never easy. It has been shown that in order for an old habit to be broken and a new habit formed, that it takes at least thirty days for this change to occur. We have forty days before us. What is it that you want to stop doing - or start doing - that will allow you to grow in your relationship with God? What is it that will keep you from experiencing the full joy of the resurrection? What are the disciplines of Lent that you want to practice?

Perhaps one of your Lenten disciplines is to increase and add meaning to your prayer life. The purpose of prayer is to communicate with God, not to God. When you pray, don't forget to pause and listen for God's response to you. Take time to be still. Perhaps the answer to your prayer may come as a thought, a phone call from a friend, or something that you

observe. Take note of these responses. Be intentional about your prayers; set aside a specific time and/or place. If you are searching for prayers to use, look to the Psalms. They are a great source of prayers for every situation – lament, praise and thanksgiving.

Perhaps you are thinking about fasting. Fasting is a practice designed to strengthen the spiritual life by weakening one's attractions to pleasures of the senses. Fasting should be coupled with prayer and spiritual preparation. Many people refrain from eating meat on all the Fridays of Lent. People give up sweets, tv, social media. The focus should not be on what is given up, but on what the giving up allows you to do. It should allow you to give more time to prayer and to spiritual work. What else can it allow you to do? Perhaps you are giving up your morning Starbucks coffee. You can donate the money that you are saving to a food bank or other charity. You can pray for God to bless this offering for his use. Remember that it should be a voluntary, conscious decision to abstain from something, that is the discipline of it.

What of our almsgiving? We can set aside an extra offering during this time. Our churches offer Lenten envelopes, these should be over and above our regular offerings. Perhaps there is a cause that you have been wanting to get involved with? Lent is a good time to devote some of your time and talents to this.

We can use this season to devote more of our time to works of love. The possibilities here are endless. You can send cards to those who are sick or shut in. You can visit those in the hospital. Send a care package to the person in the armed forces, who is far away from home. Offer to do some chores for

someone who is recovering from an illness. Shovel your neighbor's sidewalk when it snows. Bake some cookies and deliver them to the local firefighters or senior center. What other things can you think of that you can do? When you do these things, remember the words of Matthew 25:40, "As you do it for the least of these, you do it for me."

We are offering Bible Study on Thursdays, beginning on February 22nd. We are using the Lenten Study created by ELCA World Hunger. You will find the materials for this study on our website or can get a printed copy at your congregation. Take advantage of the worship services available to you where we make our public confession. Our pastors are always willing to offer private confession to you for those sins that are weighing heavily on your heart. Contact us if you would like to make a private confession.



We encourage you to use the next 40 days to prepare spiritually for the events of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter.

May God Bless you during this Lenten season.

Pastor Sue on behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

*Final worship service in "Hope" Building
February 25, 2024
11:15 am*

*As of Sunday, March 3, Hope will worship
at McMasters United Methodist Church,
200 Church Street, Turtle Creek.*

Please RSVP to 412-242-4476 or hopeforesthills@aol.com



**February 22 & 29;
March 7, 14, & 21
7:00 pm on zoom**

Using the 2024 Lenten Study created by ELCA World Hunger, we will study scripture and explore how we experience the living God today.

Along the way we will reflect on what it means to encounter God in experiences of reconciliation, transfiguration, crucifixion, restoration and resurrection.



We are looking for anyone who would like to help us

perform and record music for PLUM's joint live services and our weekly ZOOM worship services.

All experience levels and all voice types are welcome. We will have in person practices prior to performances. Attend as often as you can, we will try to work around schedules. Prayerfully consider joining this endeavor. Please contact Karen Brown by Thursday, February 15th at either:

Bethany, Dormont: 412-531-

9363 [bethany-](mailto:bethany-dormont@verizon.net)

dormont@verizon.net

or St. Andrew, East Carnegie:

412-279-3615

standrew3@aol.com

READERS NEEDED

PLUM's ZOOM worship has become an important part of PLUM's ministry, as it helps to keep many of our compromised members and non-members vital and included in worship and fellowship.

The PLUM Worship Committee is reaching out to all PLUM members to prayerfully consider joining the 3pm Sunday ZOOM worship services to assist the Pastors in the reading of the service. Readers are asked to read the lessons and also provide the congregational voice throughout the service.

You can choose the day you can help, be it monthly, quarterly, etc. You can volunteer individually or encourage a fellow member to join you in the experience. Bulletins are provided well in advance, so that you can read through and prepare. We hope you will consider assisting us in this worthwhile ministry. If interested or to schedule a day to read, please contact Deann George at Christ, Duquesne at 412-466-7773 or deann.george@plumofpa.com. Thank you for your assistance.

Thrivent Choice Dollars®

We are excited to share that a deposit of \$133.00 is to your account. We hope this gift on behalf of Thrivent Choice® helps to further support your important work. into Hope's account on behalf of Thrivent Choice Dollars®. We hope this gift will help support your important work.

February Birthdays

4th Susan Dase
11th Samantha Gayso

March Birthdays

4th Amanda Padavan
7th Betty Jackson
9th Elise Fannell
27th Jack Bellas, Jr.

Hope Prays Every Day

Mike Ciavarella, heart problems 1/24
James Brizzi, esophageal cancer 1/24
Greg Macintyre 11/23
Dawn Dietz, cancer 8/23
Don Pearrell, cancer 7/23
Jill Ann Swick, breast cancer 7/23
Bob Leech, brain tumor & myasthenia gravis 7/23
Alecia Francis, bladder cancer 7/23
Ken Noll, pinched nerve
Don Furtivo, throat cancer 5/23
Connie Leach, health issues 4/23
Diane Armstrong, clots in lung & leg 3/23
Alan Milloy, prostate cancer 2/23
Val, health issues 2/23
Bob Koschik, cancer 11/22
Amy T, health concerns 11/22
Bob B, cancer 11/22
Peter B, 11/22
Karen V, difficult life situation 11/22
Dick Dougherty, breathing problems 11/22
Doug McIntyre, health concerns 11/22
June Perry, health concerns 11/22

*We pray for members of our armed forces
*We pray for those facing difficult life situations
*We pray for our loved ones who are homebound, in Care facilities, or in need of on-going prayer, including: Mary Beth Tomo-Gardner, Peg Portera, Esther Harris and Doris Hoffman
*We pray for our congregation and for our leadership: Jane, Barb, Lynda, Dave, Kathie, Janet, Pam, Bev and Arnold
*We pray for Bishop Eaton, Bishop Kusserow and their Staff
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Lent



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PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 2023

Electronic Service
Requested

Time Value

*Serving
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with Love*

February ~ March '24

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Worship

11:15 am ~ in person Worship
McMasters United Methodist Church
200 Church Street Turtle Creek 15145

3:00 pm ~ zoom Worship

www.plumofpa.com

for additional news and event updates.

Please call our Pastoral Team at 412-496-4889 for pastoral concerns and emergencies.

Let us remember that GOD is with us ALWAYS.