

# MESSENGER

ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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**Pastors**  
Rev. Brenda Henry, Rev. Susan Devine  
and Rev. John Gropp

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

### 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 "Lencten" 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 22<sup>nd</sup>. 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



# ST ANDREW NEWS

## SAL COUNCIL MEETING

St. Andrew's next Church Council Meeting will be on **Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm via ZOOM.** All Council members are asked to attend. Thank you.



## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2-1 Katherine Hrabovsky  
2-16 Karen Brown  
2-21 Steve McGrogan

2-28 Pat McCarthy  
Andrew Rectenwald



**EVERYONE ENJOY YOUR SPECIAL DAY!**



## LET US REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:



Patrick Murphy, Dylan Baker, Dan Hoover, Teresa Kuehl, Marie Pastorius, Margaret Hrabovsky, Justin Gloor, Keith Malizio, Elaine Moore, Chris Biery, Jazz, Anita, Toni, Faith, Lisa, Bob Kraus, Janet Comber, Kit Stockman, Dave Keblish, Kpannah K. Sumo, Robert Seaton, Lenroy Bright, Teresa Stacy, Harry Bodnar Jr; Carol Redlawsk, Dan Rogers, Pastor Paul Koch, All those who are suffering from disease, Covid-19, violence or distress; All frontline health care workers; All those who protect and serve our country and community; All those who have suffered the loss of a family member or a friend; The Churches of PLUM and their Pastors and Staff; The Community of East Carnegie and the Congregation of St. Andrew.



## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR FEBRUARY

**USHER:** Anyone Available

**TREASURER'S ASSISTANTS:** Anyone Available

**ALTAR GUILD:** Lynn Gloor

**STAIR GLIDE:** Anyone Available



### FEBRUARY 4:

**Greeters:** Marilyn & Tim Rogers

**Lector:** Barb Malizio

### FEBRUARY 11:

**Greeters:** Bobbie Everly

**Lector:** Marilyn Rogers

### FEBRUARY 18:

**Greeter:** Jess & Tom Hrabovsky

**Lector:** Steve McGrogan

### FEBRUARY 25:

**Greeters:** Marilyn & Tim Rogers

**Lector:** Barb Malizio



## SAL'S ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

St. Andrew's Ash Wednesday worship service will take place at 7pm on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Once again this year, we have invited Bethany, Dormont to worship with us. In return, Bethany has invited us to join them for this year's Maundy Thursday worship service. We are excited to be able to worship with our sister church for these special services.





**DECEMBER'S FINANCIAL APPEAL**

The appeal letter that was sent out in December was well received, and the Church was able to pay the December and January bills and salaries. It is very important to bring or send your weekly offerings on a regular basis. Even if you are unable to come to worship, the bills and salaries must be paid promptly. Some people have chosen to bring their entire offering for the month in one check. Please continue to give as you are able. Thank you for your continued support.



**OFFERING ENVELOPES**

This will be our last year to use offering envelopes. They have become too expensive (\$420.00 per year), and Council has voted to eliminate them beginning in 2025. If you have unused envelopes, hold onto them for use in 2025. Thank you.



**SAL'S BOOK CLUB**

The Book Club will next meet on **Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11am**. Their book is *"Summer of 69"* by Elin Hilterbrand. Join them in Fellowship Hall for lively conversation and fellowship.



**MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD**

Thank you to all who donated macaroni and cheese and tuna in January for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. In February, we are asking for donations of crackers, peanut butter, or \$10.00 gift cards for Shop & Save. Thank you for supporting this community ministry.



**ST. ANDREW'S COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR 2024**

- |                         |                       |                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>ROSE MARIE BAKER</b> | <b>TOM HRABOVSKY</b>  |                    |
| <b>KEITH DEVINE</b>     | <b>STEVE MCGROGAN</b> | <b>(President)</b> |
| <b>BOBBIE EVERLY</b>    | <b>MARILYN ROGERS</b> | <b>(Secretary)</b> |
| <b>JACKY HAMBLETT</b>   | <b>TIM ROGERS</b>     |                    |
| <b>BRENDA HENRY</b>     | <b>PATTY SPOTTI</b>   | <b>(Treasurer)</b> |

**ST. ANDREW'S PLUM BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024**

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>KEITH DEVINE</b>  | <b>TOM HRABOVSKY</b>  |
| <b>BOBBIE EVERLY</b> | <b>STEVE MCGROGAN</b> |



**PLUM NEWS**

**AT HOME TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICE:** Please join us in Taizé Prayer from the safety of your homes on **Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 7:00 pm via ZOOM.**



**PLUM WORSHIP AND MEETINGS VIA ZOOM:** We continue to gather for Worship, meeting bible studies and fellowship by connecting on the ZOOM format. Just use the information below and you can be a part of all we are currently doing.

**Zoom online:** <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

**Zoom by phone:** (646) 876-9923

**Meeting ID:** 401 596 541



**JOIN PLUM FOR A LENTEN STUDY:**

**5 THURSDAYS: FEBRUARY 22 & 29; MARCH 7, 14 & 21 AT 7 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.*



**LOVE THE MUSIC IN CHURCH? DO YOU MISS SINGING IN THE CHOIR? HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO SING IN THE CHURCH CHOIR?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may want to join your fellow PLUM members in a Combined PLUM Choir. 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 15<sup>th</sup> at either:

**Bethany, Dormont: 412-531-9363 [bethany-dormont@verizon.net](mailto:bethany-dormont@verizon.net)  
or St. Andrew, East Carnegie: 412-279-3615 [standrew3@aol.com](mailto:standrew3@aol.com)**

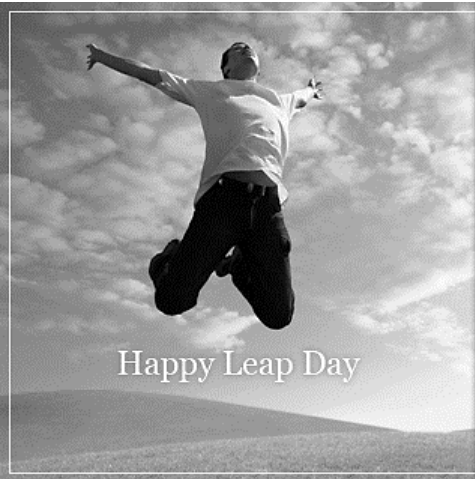


**READERS NEEDED:** PLUM's ZOOM worship has become an important part of PLUM's ministry, as it helps to keep many of our compromised members and non-members vital and included in worship and fellowship.

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](mailto:deann.george@plumofpa.com). Thank you for your assistance.



















Happy Leap Day

Then will the lame  
leap like a deer,  
and the mute  
tongue shout for  
joy. Water will  
gush forth in the  
wilderness and  
streams in the  
desert.

Isaiah 35:6

# St. Andrew Lutheran Church

# February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b>  MHC 11:30AM  BIBLE STUDY 7PM ZOOM	<b>2</b>  Groundhog Day	<b>3</b> 
<b>4</b>  WORSHIP 9:15 ZOOM 3PM Farewell to Pastor Alex	<b>5</b> 	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> TAIZE WORSHIP 7PM ZOOM	<b>8</b>  BIBLE STUDY 7PM ZOOM	<b>9</b> 	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>  WORSHIP 9:15 ZOOM 3PM	<b>12</b> SAL COUNCIL MEETING 5PM ZOOM	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  VALENTINE'S DAY ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 7PM	<b>15</b>  MHC 11:30AM	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 
<b>18</b>  WORSHIP 9:15 ZOOM 3PM	<b>19</b>  President's Day	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 	<b>23</b>  SAL BOOK CLUB 1PM	<b>24</b> 
<b>25</b>  WORSHIP 9:15 ZOOM 3PM	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 		

# FEBRUARY

## FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Dear PLUM Congregations,

Due to family concerns and a need to return to Ohio to care for his family, Pr. Alexander Sumo has submitted his resignation (resignation letter below). The PLUM Board accepted Pastor Alex's resignation effective Sunday, February 4. To provide care for Pr. Alex and his family during this time of transition, the board approved a severance package.

Please join us this Sunday, February 4th at 3 pm on Zoom for a service of farewell and Godspeed for Pr. Alex.

### LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM MY CALL WITH PLUM

January 18, 2024

The Rev. Dr. Alexander Y. Sumo Pastor  
Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM)

Sis. Susan Smith, PhD.  
President of the Board Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM)

Dear Madam President:

After careful conversations with the PLUM Pastors and a meaningful consultation with Bishop Kurt Kusserow of our synod, it is with heavy heart that I write to submit to you a "Letter of resignation from my call" with the Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM) to enable me to provide urgent care for my family. Please let this action take effect as of February 4, 2024. This decision did not come easily, we are taking it because our children in Columbus are in crisis and are going through difficult times both at home and in school and they need my urgent fatherly intervention. It is in this regard that we are leaving PLUM at this time. It has been truly a remarkable and rewarding ministry experience here at PLUM. The people are loving and caring and faithful and gracious. The ministry opportunities are enormous, the future of the congregations is bright and beautiful. We hope to continue to remain in touch even while our paths are separated. Please bring our warm gratitude and blessed sentiments to all our siblings across PLUM. We will forever remain grateful for the opportunity they afforded us to serve and to share our lives and ministry with you all. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we go through this difficult chapter of our ministry and family journeys. We will need all your moral and financial support as we navigate through this challenging era.

Blessings, Pr. Alexander Y. Sumo