



## Lent Habits

The season of Lent will soon be upon us. In the "olden days," when I was growing up, the stress was more on a somber time of year, with services each Wednesday of Lent, beginning, of course, with Ash Wednesday. Our church did not offer the ashes but they had communion on that Holy Day and then stressed giving up things the rest of the season to help us get closer to God and remember the sacrifice of Jesus. Holy Week was filled with services most of the week, until the glorious celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For many years now, the emphasis has changed, to not be so somber and penitent. However, just as a discipline, I still give up chocolate for Lent each year. Let me say, the first few years, because I love anything and everything chocolate, it was very hard and I had to calm myself and ask God for strength throughout Lent.

Now, after over 25 years, it is second nature to me, and now what I do is something different along with giving up the chocolate.

And that is what I would challenge you to do this Lenten season. Instead of giving up something for Lent, TAKE SOMETHING ON.

What do I mean by that?

Simple: It is what our Lord Jesus asks of us...reach out and help; reach out and see; reach out and respond. Reach out and be the light in someone's life, like Jesus is in your life.

Here are a few examples where you can reach out and be that light:

1. Drop a short note to people who know who are homebound or need an extra lift.
2. Make a list of people to pray for during Lent and then let them know you did.
3. Smile at the stranger you pass on the street.
4. Say Hello to the people you pass on the way into or out of a store
5. Send an extra check (it doesn't have to be much; it's the thought that counts!) to your favorite charity.
6. Pay for the person/car behind you in the coffee shop line (tell the cashier at the window you are also paying for the car behind you).
7. Take a bag full of canned goods to your local food pantry.
8. Pay for a family, when you are out to eat, perhaps sitting near you, but do it secretly.
9. Tell someone you love them (or a lot of some ones!)
10. Read stories to your special little ones and give them an extra hug when they ask you to read it again!

You get my drift and you can make up your own list and don't forget to come to worship as you can during this holy season:

I am going to share "Holy Habits of Lent" for four Sundays during this special time for another way to journey through this holy season.

Then you can find ways to have your own habits of Lent.

Blessings upon you during this Holy Season.

Pastor Pat

The Rev. Patricia Ludwig, supply pastor

Mark your calendar...



February 14, 2024  
7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service

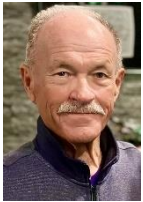


Easter Sunday is March 31, 2024



Karen & John Kaitanowski, Helen Mellerski, Kathee & Ed Simon; our elderly members & friends in assisted living or homebound: Lola Donner, Marilyn Fenske, Joan Haney, Jewell McFarland, Reta Rauker, Yvonne Shearer, Helen Wilson, those serving in the military: Alex Steinbroner, Aydan Stormer

## In Memory ...



**Ronald ("Skip") Larson** passed peacefully from this life into the eternal care of our Savior on Saturday, December 2, 2023, in their home in Florida. Ron is survived by his wife Cheryl and their two daughters Sarah (Tyler) Ferster and Andrea (Tim) Hacic and granddaughters Charlie Rose and Corrina Hacic.



**Ruth Bernhardt**, a member of St. Matthew's since 2010, passed away December 10, at the age of 101. She enjoyed the Activity Group until her move to The Manor House in Batavia 10 years ago. You may remember her name from February 2014, from the news; her dog had been lost for two years and came home.



*Thank you for remembering Ron Larson, for your calls, cards and especially your prayers- we felt them. We are grateful for the love and support received from Pastor Lynn, Pastor Gary and Pastor Paula.*

*We are grateful for the good care Ron received at Roswell Park, right in our community. Although the past two years were difficult, Ron pushed through and was blessed with many good days to spend with his granddaughters, time golfing in Florida and taking photos. Your presence at Ron's services meant the world to us and we know you will miss Ron too.*

*Cheryl Larson Sarah Ferster Andrea Hacic*

**Pastoral Care** If you, or someone you know, is hospitalized, needs pastoral care, or would appreciate a visit or communion at home, you can call Michelle in the church office, or you can contact the Rev. Paula Gustafson directly at 716-476-9261. Pastor Paula will be providing pastoral care while we are without a called pastor.

## Happy Birthday!

**January:** 1/4 Clayton Errington, 1/5 Carl Waible, 1/8 Bill Asboth, 1/14 Kim Hamm, 1/20 Jewell McFarland, 1/20 Sharon Mooney; 1/21 Gail Burdick, 1/26 Barbara Middaugh

**February:** 2/2 Don McMillan, 2/4, Jeanette Haberer, 2/10 Lauren Zdrojewski, 2/22 Bill Hamm, 2/27 Robynn Rich

## Happy Anniversary

**January:** 1/22/1985 Tracy Meyers & Marna Pritchard

**February:** 2/1/1969 Steve & Nancy Jankowski, 2/15/1955 Clayton & Dolly Errington, 2/18/1965 Ken & Sharon Mooney



## Installation of Officers & Committee Members - January 21

Due to our service on the 14<sup>th</sup> being cancelled, we will do the installation portion during worship on January 21. Both those newly elected and those continuing in their terms will be installed and commissioned to serve Christ's church in their various capacities.



## Update from Church Council President (dated December 31, 2023, by Tracy Meyers)

As I write my final Church Council update as President, I want to say thank you for all of your support these past two years. Many of you have had a direct hand in helping us to achieve all we have accomplished, others have supported us through encouragement and faithful prayer. It has been an honor to have served and I am so grateful for all the church leaders before me who without doubt were great role models. Now the Council will be passing the torch to Brenda Carver who will serve as our next Church Council President. I know we will welcome her warmly and continue to show our support in accomplishing the Lord's work.

I also want to welcome Tom Chmielowiec to the Council. Tom stepped forward to fill the open position and the Council officially appointed him to a three-year term at our December meeting. Tom and his wife Dawn have been members for several years. Tom has completed most, if not all, our electrical needs the last few years. He comes with a wealth of knowledge and community experience and we look forward to the gifts he will bring to our church.

I also want to share we are progressing in our Search & Call process. Our committee continues to meet and are very close to finalizing our profile. We do expect it to be submitted and to become active sometime in mid to late January. We then can begin to receive matches with pastoral profiles. Please continue to pray for us in these next steps and for God to be preparing the next called minister for us.

We continue to be fortunate to have Pastor Pat Ludwig and Pastor Paula Gustafson continue to meet our ministerial needs as we continue through this transition period. Pastor Pat Ludwig has agreed to

stay with us through Easter as our supply minister. Pastor Paula will remain as our minister of visitation until a new minister is called. We remain grateful to each of them for their service and guidance. Please continue to pray for them as they carry out God's calling as faithful and dedicated servants.

Our next two Sundays, Pastor Ludwig is away. She and Mark are on a cruise down the Mississippi celebrating their anniversary. We hope they enjoy their time away and the weather is good for them. I'm sure they will have a story or two to share upon their return.

We welcomed Pastor Alva Looze last Sunday and will welcome Reverend Marna Pritchard this coming Sunday. Thank you for filling our pulpit and sharing your messages with us which we know will be just what we need to hear.

Lastly, near and dear to me is our music program. Wow what a few weeks we have had! The special music has been top notch. Norm continues to share his talents each week in his playing and directing and again is sharing music he has composed for the Choir to perform. Ken and the Praise Band continue to enrich our service with upbeat and contemporary music and we are so very grateful. Music is a big part of worship for me and I expect a few others and I have truly enjoyed the enrichment our program brings. I look forward to what is yet to come and have no doubt it will be great.

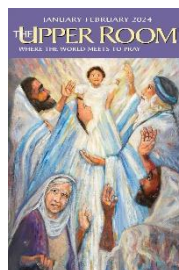
New is the year, new are the hopes, new is the resolution, new are the spirits, and new are my warm wishes for each of you.

Blessings,  
Tracy Meyers



### Mother-Daughter Day

Pastor Alva Looze and Debbie Zdrojewski as Lay Reader lead worship on Sunday, December 31 - the first time in Alva's many years of ministry.



### Daily Devotionals

The new January-February issue of The Upper Room is available. You can find them in the magazine rack in the Narthex or on small table in the Fellowship Hall. Help yourself and give one to a friend!

**St. Matthew's United Church of Christ**

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[www.stmattsucc.org](http://www.stmattsucc.org)



Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

† Worship Service: 10:00am Sunday morning



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