



THE ECHO

FEBRUARY 2021

MT. ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

4065 Mt. Zion Rd. Lucas, Ohio 44843 419-892-2023

Sunday School at 9:15 a.m. ~ Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Email us at mtzionsec4065@gmail.com Visit our website at www.mtzionlutheranchurch.org

Join us on Facebook at Mt Zion Lutheran Church

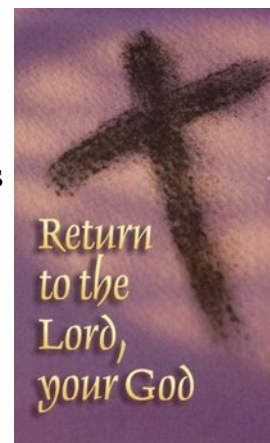
From Ashes to Alleluias: Return to the Lord

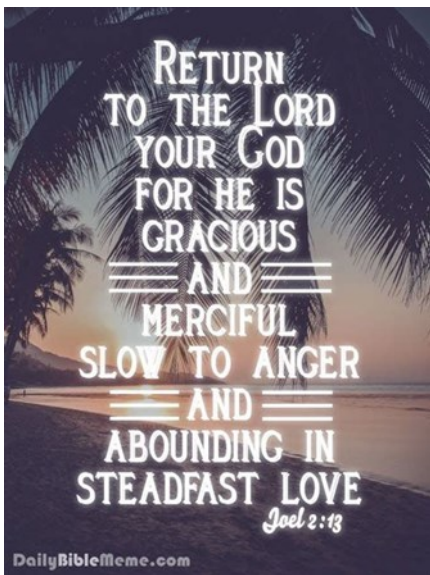


Yes, it is that time of year again in which my cover letter attempts to explain Lent. Historically, Lent was developed as a season of preparation for Holy Baptism. Liturgically and theologically, Lent is the Church's refocus on the significance of Holy Baptism. The daily drowning of the old Adam in us through contrition and repentance, which characterizes the entire Christian life of discipleship, is deliberately intensified during Lent as a renewal of faith and life in Christ. This repentance is always the divine work of the Holy Spirit through the Law and the Gospel. The Law crucifies the old Adam, and the Gospel raises up the new man in us. Thus, a Lenten focus on the cross and Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ is not aimed at an emotional response

but is a pointed proclamation and confession of the Law and the Gospel, a preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The lengthening of days (which is what Lent means) is both literal (the days are getting longer) and spiritual as it is properly penitential when it brings the cross to sinners and sinners to the cross of Christ as the fountain and source of forgiveness, life, and salvation. .

Lent is a 40-day season (not to include Sundays which are feast days) to repent over sin, lament over the rebellion in our hearts, and anticipate the power of Christ's death and resurrection. Often, Christians have fasted or abstained from things or behaviors (food, sweets, meat, coffee, television, social media, etc.). In addition to abstaining, some Christians also add something to their lives during Lent (more church attendance, prayer, giving, Bible reading, etc.). However, the Lenten fast goes deeper than denying yourself chocolate or alcohol for a couple weeks. Rather, it invites, it summons, it urges you back to Someone, and that Someone is the Lord: A Lent that is anything less than a return in faith to the Lord is only a religious game, and quite frankly, worthless. Rather than play games with God in this sacred season He summons you to come back to Him. He does not want just a piece of you, some outward display, torn garments and such, a few minutes tossed His way one day a week. No! He wants you, your heart—the center of your affections, worship, and worldview. With this in mind, I have chosen our Lenten Theme.





In the Book of Joel, the prophet paints a vivid picture of the coming judgment of God, the Day of the Lord. The imagery is bold and terrifying: hordes of locusts swarming over the land and decimating everything. Joel's prophecy has teeth even today as wars rage, natural disasters threaten and destroy, and our culture seems to be unraveling. But right in the middle of this frightening portent, we find a tender invitation from the Lord: "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster" (Joel 2:13). God's invitation and promise finds its fullness in Jesus Christ, who personifies and accomplishes all that God declares. During this season of Lent, we will consider the theme "Return to the Lord" and examine how the call to return played out in practical ways for the people who walked alongside Christ as He demonstrated and carried out God's grace and mercy on our behalf, taking God's wrath upon Himself, setting the stage for God to

"turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him" (Joel 2:14)..

And that's the true marvel of this season: Jesus became dust for you! Dust we are, and to dust we shall return, and so the ashes. Many people ask why Christians bother smearing ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. Why do we gather and remember what we are this day? The answer is that while we gather to remember who we are, we also gather more importantly to remember who God is and what He has done for us in and through Jesus. God has given us a way out of our plight of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." It is the way of the cross. The death of Jesus was God's way of placing a sign of infinite value upon that which would otherwise be worthless. Today it is for us to know and trust that God has chosen to give us some other life than that which leads to the dust heap and the ash pit.

So in our theme of return, this is how it will play out.

Ash Wednesday: *"A Call to Return"*. Joel's prophecy is dark and terrifying, and the imagery is vivid. It sets the stage for God's invitation and promise: "You have turned away from me in your hearts and minds, and I have now shown you where that path will take you. But it is not too late. Turn back! Return to the Lord! I am gracious and merciful, and I will bless you." This service sets the stage for the Lenten path that we will follow together.

Wednesday of Lent 1: *"Return to Prayer"*. We focus our attention on Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane, and explores the topic of prayer. Our prayer life ebbs and flows; we have seasons of abundant prayer and seasons of drought. Throughout all of it, though, Jesus prays consistently. Indeed, "the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). When God calls us to pray, He provides the means to do so and even fulfills what we ourselves are unable to do. So also Jesus takes our sins upon Himself and dies on the cross, satisfying the wrath of God and fulfilling what we ourselves are unable to do.

Wednesday of Lent 2: *"Return from Betrayal"*. Judas appears in the in the Garden of Gethsemane and betrays Jesus into the "hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). This service explores the theme of betrayal, specifically the ways that we betray one another and Jesus through our denials and rejection of the faith.

Wednesday of Lent 3: *"Return from False Witness"*. Judas' betrayal brings Jesus before Caiphas and the Council. Here we examine what God actually means in the Eighth Commandment when He said that you should "not bear false witness against your neighbor?" (Exodus 20:16) and what to do when our failure here leads us away from God. Thankfully, God calls us to turn from our sin, to look to Him, and to find our rest and identity in Him.

Wednesday of Lent 4: "Return from Denial". Peter stands in the courtyard, watching his Lord and master being wrongfully accused, having promised that he was ready to follow Jesus both to prison and to death. But when asked directly, Peter denies Jesus. But Jesus will have the last word. He calls us to return to Him . . . to return from denial.

Wednesday of Lent 5: "Return to the Kingdom of God". Pontius Pilate reigns at his Headquarters and is forced to wrestle with the question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38), but the real question is "Who is truth?" We will see that a King calls us to return to His rule and reign so that He can pour out blessings on us.

Holy (Maundy) Thursday: "Return to the Table". Jesus' invitation is such that He draws us into a place where we have fellowship with all believers. And yet, our fellowship is stained by sin. Our Lord's invitation to return is accompanied by His promise to make all things new, when once again we will share the fruit of the vine with Christ Himself.

Good Friday: "Return to Truth". On this solemn night, we remember the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for each of us. Our focus is on the One who is the way, and the truth, and the light, even as He hangs on the cross, wracked with pain and writhing in agony.

Easter Sunday: "Return and See". Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! In this most joyous of services, we rejoice that our Lord's call to return was issued so that we might have life in abundance through the one who lived, died, and rose again to secure our salvation.

Won't you Join us for a time of reflection and worship each and every week as we go through this "40" day journey. Covid again has made some changes as we will not be joining with St Michael and instead all events will be here at Mt Zion.

LENT SCHEDULE

DATE/TIME	EVENT
Tues 16 February, 6 – 7:30	Shrove Tuesday
Wed 17 February 7-8	Ash Wednesday
Wed 24 February 6:30-8	Lent Service 1 (supper)
Wed 3 March 6:30- 8	Lent Service 2 (supper)
Wed 10 March 6:30-8	Lent Service 3 (supper)
Wed 17 March 6:30 – 8	Lent Service 4 (supper)
Wed 24 March 6:30 – 8	Lent Service 5 (supper)
Thur 1 April 7 – 8	Mandy Thursday
Fri 2 April 7-8	Good Friday
Sun 4 April 7 am	Sunrise Service
Sun 4 April 8 am	Breakfast
Sun 4 Apr 10:30	Easter Service

Finances

	DECEMBER	YEAR TO DATE
Income	\$14,331.00	\$109,147.55
Expenses	\$7,206.82	\$92,541.31
Net	\$7,124.18	\$16,606.24

Well done as we finished the year in the black. On top of that, we also gave over 10% of our total giving to those outside the church. This does not include our donations in kind we do each month.

Council President's Letter

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." **1 Samuel 3:10**

God is calling us At Mt. Zion Lutheran Church

We have been given a great opportunity to let our lite shine from our little church on the hill. When we reach out and help in the community and witness to others we are passing on God's love.

God calls us daily, let us stop and take the time to listen to what he is saying to us.

With our busy lives we should set aside time to study the scripture and pray. It is like when you clean your dirty glasses, the world will look different.

In Christ Love

Ralph Hall

Outreach for February

This month we are gathering toiletries and toilet paper for the Lucas food pantry. Toiletries include soap, shampoo, and deodorant. If you do not want to donate items, then monetary donations will also be accepted. This is our time to show support for our local food pantry.



Included In Our Prayers Today Are:



Members: Mary Fowler, Kate Steward. Family and others: Bev and Julio Alonso, Mark Alt, Tyler Duckworth, Darell Harless, Cindy Gapter, Sharon Keiser, Lou Leasor, Tom Lyons, Analisa Pawlokoski, Kathy Reining, Sara Schwendeman, Diane Seifert, Avalyn Stepp, Rae Walker, Matt Williams, Charlie Winger, and Kay Zgela. Our first responders and those that are keeping the economy going. And, also, any of those who may have been stricken by the virus.

Dec 10, 2020

Attendance: Nate Arnold, Ethel Briggs (via Zoom), Audrey Cook, David Culler III, Michael Dourson, Ashlee Hall (via Zoom), Ralph Hall, Pastor Eric

Pastor started the meeting with devotions.

Minutes were handed out. Motion to accept minutes as amended made by Mike, seconded by Nate. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the month of Nov. Receipts of \$9,032.22 expenses of \$8,368.91. We were +663.31 for the month. YTD +9,482.06

Motion to accept treasurer's report for Nov. made by Nate, seconded by Mike. Motion carried.

Pastoral Acts

Home Communion: 0

Home Visits: 2

Phone Visits: 5

Worship

Sermons Preached: 4

Ordination and Installation

Children's Sermons: 4

Administrative and Preparation

Administrative: Echo, bulletin, notebook, email and misc.

Preparation: Sunday School/Wed. Bible Study: Sermon and worship

Other Counseling: 1

Teaching

Adult Sunday School: 5

Bible Jeopardy

Wednesday Night Bible Study: 3

Catechism: 2

Meeting and Activities

Church Council: 1

Advent kickoff

People Helping People

Upcoming Events

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols candlelight service – Dec. 24th and 7p,

Epiphany kickoff/party: - Wed. Bible Study will be an Epiphany celebration

Outreach for January

Congregational Meeting: January 24th

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Finance Committee – nothing to report
- Property - one company returned a quote of \$5 to \$7/sq. ft to remove asbestos from roof
- Spider Signs said it would be approx. \$900 to reface the sign in front of church
- Youth Group - did virtual shopping for Christmas family. Freda's work collected food for a Christmas dinner. Pastor Eric will deliver gifts and food to the family

NEW BUSINESS

Outreach - January – Domestic Violence
February – Food Pantry (hygiene products and toilet paper)
March - People Helping People

OLD BUSINESS

- Messiah Star - cost for copyright approximately \$1700. Any profits from the movie to be used as outreach unless there is a real need for something to be done at Mt. Zion. Mike will check with an attorney and see what it would cost to have her do a Zoom call to answer possible questions
- Let the congregation know we are considering doing the movie – Info has been in Echo, that we have so far.
- **Nate made a motion to pursue responsibilities and liabilities involved with the movie. Seconded by David. Motion passed.**
- Pastor Eric brought up the sign that is being discussed for the corner of St. Rt. 39 and St. Rt. 603. Mike D. stated that Brad Sweval would like to get involved in possibly designing a sign.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nate, seconded by Mike. Motion carried.

Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Cook, Council Sec

THE LENTEN DISCIPLINES

On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, we are invited “to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor” by exercising the Discipline of Lent: repentance, fasting, prayer and works of love. These become the specific occasions and opportunities for spiritual renewal during this season of renewal.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent – self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love – strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

REPENTANCE

Repentance means turning 180 degrees away from sin to walk toward God. Repentance includes an examination of our lives and our actions in light of God's grace and love, which comes to us free and undeserved through Christ's death and resurrection.

Here are some ways in which we can make that return to our Baptism through repentance:

1. Remember your Baptism each day when you rise and before you retire by placing a small bowl of water in your bedroom, dipping your fingers in it and making the sign of the cross while saying the Invocation: “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”
2. Attend worship each Sunday when corporate confession is made.
3. During your daily prayers, examine your life in light of the Ten Commandments and ask God to forgive you and to lead you into ways of loving him and your neighbor more deeply.

PRAYER

Prayer may generally be described as that activity in which we are drawn closer to God in contemplation and communication. Prayer is our half of a conversation with God. That means that prayer is not only speaking, but listening as well. Daily prayer might include these things:

1. Begin by signing yourself with the cross and the words of Invocation. Then simply be quiet for a moment in God's presence.
2. Use a devotional aid and/or the Daily Prayer or Responsive Prayer services in the front of the LBW (pp.131-164), following the lessons in the Daily Lectionary (LBW p.178f).
3. The Psalms are a wonderful treasure for prayer.

FASTING & ABSTINENCE

Fasting comes to us from Judaism and was recommended by Jesus both in example and teaching (Luke 4:2, Matt.6:16-18, Mark 2:20). It is a practice that is designed to strengthen the spiritual life by weakening one's attractions to pleasures of the senses. Thus fasting is always coupled with prayer and spiritual preparation. It does not necessarily mean giving up food for a day. More frequently it is the giving up or limiting of a particular food or food group (sweets, desserts, chocolate, butter, fat, eggs, etc.). Water is never given up in a fast.

Abstinence from some activity (such as television, movies, entertainment, etc.) on certain days, at certain hours or throughout the season is another way to observe the Lenten fast. This is designed to give more time for prayer and spiritual work. Many of the following suggestions for fasting have been practiced by Christians for centuries:

1. Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday with only one simple meal during the day, usually without meat.
2. Refrain from eating meat on all Fridays in Lent, substituting fish for example.
3. Eliminate a food or food group for the entire season. Especially consider saving rich and fatty foods for Easter.
4. Abstain from or limit a favorite activity (television, movies, etc.) for the entire season, and spend more time in prayer, Bible study, and reading devotional material.

WORKS OF LOVE

The intention of this part of the Lenten Discipline is to connect our faith in God's love for us with actions that are loving of others in the world. Consider one or more of these suggestions for this portion of your Lenten Discipline:

1. Use Matthew 25:31-40&Luke 4:18-19 as guides for choosing to do a work of love.
2. Go out of your way to do something nice for somebody at least once a week during Lent.
3. Volunteer a portion of your time with a local service organization that serves the poor.
4. Visit shut-in members of the church. Perhaps make something and take it as a gift (check on diet restrictions) or offer to take them for errands or go for them.

Beginning Your Discipline

As with all things, begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance in choosing those things that would best fit you for your Lenten Discipline. Prayerfully dedicate all your choices to God as a commitment for the six weeks of Lent, and ask that your Lenten Discipline move you closer to God for the sake of the sufferings and death of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Keeping Your Discipline

After making your choices and beginning your discipline, it is not necessary to share your choices or your acts of love with anyone else. In fact, anonymity is regarded as better (Matt.6:1-7, 16-18). Don't be too hard on yourself, too rigorous, or too legalistic. The idea is to have a discipline that moves you spiritually closer to God, not one that focuses you solely on your discipline.

Meet our New Missionary Family

The Briggs Family

Serving with the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf at the Jamaica Deaf Village since 2018.

We have been ministering with the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf in one fashion or another for over 20 years and together as a family in Jamaica for almost three years.

I originally visited CCCD on a short-term mission trip in the summer of 1999. During that week, I had several experiences that confirmed I was being called to full-time ministry and I returned as a missionary the following spring.



Ren's first on-island experience with CCCD was also with a short-term mission team in April of 2002. God did some amazing work in her and through her during the trip and spoke very strongly to her that her connection to Jamaica and CCCD would go far beyond that week.

I returned to the US in mid-November of 2002 - a little more than two weeks before our wedding (just over a year from meeting to nuptials). Our initial intent was to spend about a year in the US figuring out what it meant to live as a husband and wife and to also work on support raising to return to Jamaica and CCCD. During that time, however, God closed the door on us coming back to Jamaica. We were obviously disappointed but fully understood why it was happening. We continued to stay connected to the ministry through making personal visits, leading teams, supporting missionaries, and sponsoring students, and in 2004 I was asked to join the board of directors. This eventually led back to full-time service when I was asked to take on the role of the vice-president of US operations in 2010. We loved the way that God had provided new opportunities for us to serve with CCCD, but a part of our hearts still longed to be back in Jamaica.

In 2016, our family was asked to pray about moving to Jamaica to serve at the Jamaica Deaf Village. After a couple of months, Ren and I felt confident about the calling but we said we could not commit to anything until Caitlin was on the same page. Caitlin was just finishing up the fourth grade and was ready to move to middle school the following year. She had visited CCCD many times (the first when she was only four) and loved the schools and the Village, but there had been a lot of transition in her young life and she wasn't sure what a "call to missions" even sounded like. At one point, she jokingly asked us if it would involve a dove or a burning bush...even at ten, she had a great sense of humor. During her week at camp that summer, Caitlin had an opportunity to spend some one-on-one time with the chaplain and his wife, and they discussed what she was feeling and thinking. She was so excited when we arrived at the end of the week; she ran up to us and said, "God spoke to my heart. I don't know exactly what He has planned for me in Jamaica, but I know I am being called and that we are supposed to go." All of our hearts were a little happier that day. We didn't know for certain everything God had in store for us, but we knew that He had a plan to use us as a family in Jamaica.

As we approach the end of our third year here at JDV, we can look back and see a broad mix of highs and lows in the tapestry that has been woven, but throughout it all we can see the threads of God's faithfulness, love, and grace tying it all together. We have been blessed with so many wonderful new relationships during this time - Deaf, hearing, Jamaican, American...even a few Canadians (wink). We also have the most amazing supporters (both individuals and churches), who faithfully pray for us, check in to see how we are doing, visit, counsel, and of course provide the funding to support our ministry. Without all of you partnering with us physically and spiritually, I doubt that we would have made it past the first few trials. We can't thank you enough for walking this path with us and we look forward to continuing the journey for years to come!

Prayer Requests and Updates

- Water – Praise God! After a little more than 6 weeks, we finally have a working pump and running water again! By God's grace, we always had an ample supply of water a short walk from our house, so we were never without, but it was really nice to have a shower that didn't require dumping a jug of water over my head. We would appreciate your continued prayers because there still seems to be a leak that is buried somewhere under the concrete in the floor and there is also a possible/probable leak in the cistern...but one step/repair at a time.
- Internet – While the service has still been hit and miss, we have been blessed to at least have enough bandwidth when it is most needed for video meetings or sending out reports. Please keep this in your prayers as we expect it to continue for the foreseeable future.
- Caitlin's visa – Another praise! While we did have to pay another fee, it appears that Caitlin's visa has been approved and is in the works. This is great news...especially considering the new travel requirements for coming back into the US.
- Speaking of travel requirements, please pray for CCCD/JDV and Jamaica as a whole with respect to these new regulations. The USA, Canada and UK (3 largest with respect to Jamaican travel) have all announced this month that negative COVID tests will be required to enter from abroad. Because of apprehension over the shorter 3-day testing window and the additional cost, many tourists and some of our teams are considering their options regarding planned visits. We know that God is fully in control and knows all our needs, but at the same time it is hard to think of another year like the last one in regard to our visiting LIFE teams. In addition to the impact to CCCD/JDV, we know so many friends who have been really struggling across the island because of the lack of tourism this past year. The ripples from another depressed year would be horrendous.

Finally, we would like to ask for prayers for a young friend back home, "C" (we didn't have time to ask permission, so I am not sharing a lot of details). She had a serious health issue come up earlier this month, but God's hand of protection was there to keep her with us. She has been receiving treatment, and things are going well, but we would appreciate your prayers for her and her family.

We wish to thank you for the kind expressions of sympathy during the loss of our mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great-great grandmother.

The family of Ethel Oaklief



The Fowler family would like to thank everyone for all their support the last five years. Dropping by to deliver food brought smiles and happiness to us. All your prayers and thoughts and generosity helped keep Al with us an additional five years. Helping with the yardwork when Al could not get out there to do it himself was such a blessing to us.

During the month of February, you are encouraged to greet and pray for these members and friends of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.



2	Tina Steward	17	Xavier Hall
4	Julia Ferrell	17	Ralph Hall
6	Shelby Grover	18	Lillian Fraizer
8	Beth Johnson	20	Michael Dourson
8	Allyson Cook	23	Benjamin Graham
9	Kathleen Steward	23	Marilyn Zody
11	Melvin McKenna Jr.	27	Brad Sweval
12	Thomas Boggs	28	Kim Smollen
		28	Ken Frayer

No February Anniversaries



During the month of February, we THANK these members who are offering their service to the church in various ways:

<u>Lector</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Fellowship Time</u>	<u>Nursery</u>
7 Ashlee Hall	Andrew Smollen	Martha Dourson	Shelby/Jamie
14 Dave Culler	Lilly Fraizer	Karen Frayer	Tammy Cooper
21 Audrey Cook	Shelby Grover	Ayesha Fraizer	Freda Steward
28 Martha Dourson	Keegan Arnold	Jan Grubaugh	Kim Smollen

<u>Ushers</u>	Brad and Linda Sweval
<u>Communion</u>	Nate Arnold
<u>Offering Counters</u>	Mike Dourson & Ralph Hall
<u>Altar Guild</u>	Linda Sweval & Vanessa Barrett



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

February 2021

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

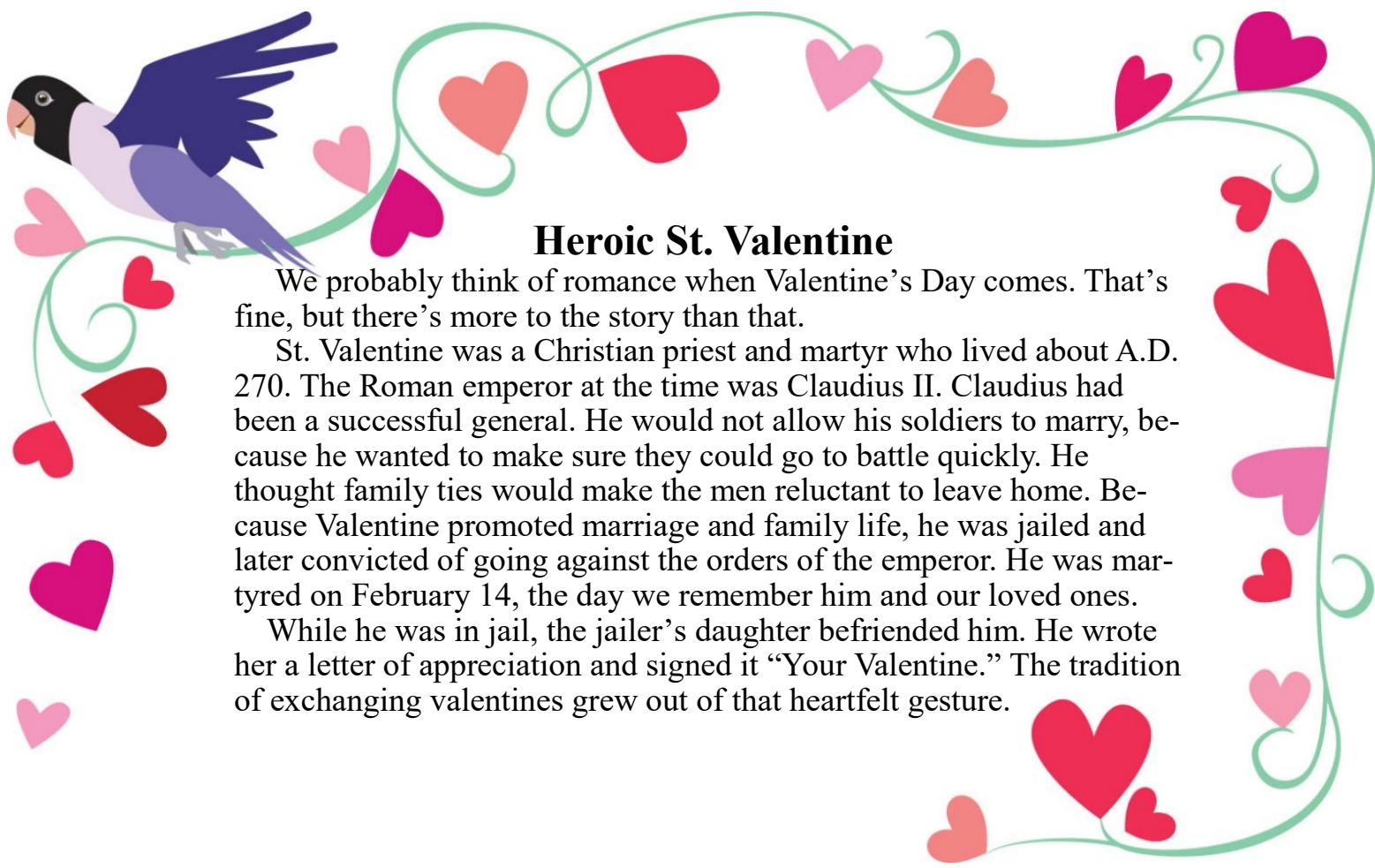
Thu

Fri

Sat

	1 <i>Pastor in office 11-4 Karen in office</i>	2 <i>Pastor in office 10-4 Karen in office</i>	3 <i>Pastor in office 11-8 Bible study 6:45-8</i>	4 <i>Pastor in office 9-4; Elaine in office</i>	5 <i>Pastor in office 10-5</i>	6
7 <i>Communion</i>	8 <i>Pastor in office 11-4 Karen in office</i>	9 <i>Pastor in office 10-4 Karen in office</i>	10 <i>Pastor out of town</i>	11 <i>Pastor out of town Elaine in office</i>	12 <i>Pastor out of town LAFP Delivery</i>	13 <i>Pastor out of town LAFP Distribution</i>
14 <i>Pastor out of town</i>	15 <i>Pastor out of town Karen in office</i>	16 <i>Pastor in office 10-4 Karen in office Shrove Tuesday Dinner 6-7:30</i>	17 <i>Pastor in office 11-8 Ash Wednesday 7 pm</i>	18 <i>Pastor in office 9-4; Elaine in office</i>	19 <i>Pastor in office 10-5</i>	20
21 <i>Communion</i>	22 <i>Pastor in office 11-4 Karen in office</i>	23 <i>Pastor in office 10-4 Karen in office</i>	24 <i>Pastor in office 11-8 Lent Services 7 pm</i>	25 <i>Pastor in office 9-4; Elaine in office</i>	26 <i>Pastor in office 10-5 LAFP Delivery</i>	27 <i>LAFP Distribution</i>
28 <i>Catechism 6-8</i>						

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
4065 Mt. Zion Road
Lucas, OH 44843



Heroic St. Valentine

We probably think of romance when Valentine's Day comes. That's fine, but there's more to the story than that.

St. Valentine was a Christian priest and martyr who lived about A.D. 270. The Roman emperor at the time was Claudius II. Claudius had been a successful general. He would not allow his soldiers to marry, because he wanted to make sure they could go to battle quickly. He thought family ties would make the men reluctant to leave home. Because Valentine promoted marriage and family life, he was jailed and later convicted of going against the orders of the emperor. He was martyred on February 14, the day we remember him and our loved ones.

While he was in jail, the jailer's daughter befriended him. He wrote her a letter of appreciation and signed it "Your Valentine." The tradition of exchanging valentines grew out of that heartfelt gesture.