

the Messenger



February 2024

Epiphany/Lent



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Lost and Found in Grace Lent 2024

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace—only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us." — Anne Lamott

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent and our 40-day pilgrimage accompanying Jesus to the cross. On this day we acknowledge our mortality and our human limitations. The spiritual mystic Thomas Merton reminds us, *"Ash Wednesday is full of joy...the source of all sorrow is the illusion that of ourselves we are anything but dust."*

This year Ash Wednesday also lands on February 14, Valentine's Day ❤️. Stripping away the secular commercialism surrounding this holiday, at its heart, it is a celebration of love. So too, in our Lenten journey, we engage in the contemplative practices of prayer, fasting and alms-giving that strip away that which stands between us and Divine love. God's love for us and all God's people is the heart of our baptismal call. It is a reconciling love that does not leave us where it finds us. It is a steadfast love that has the power to transform us and our world with its grace.

This Lent, there are many opportunities to engage in worship, bible study, devotional reflection, and fellowship.

- **Ash Wednesday worship** will be February 14 at 12noon and 7:30pm
- Beginning February 21, we will offer a **Lent Prayer Circle** Wednesdays at 12noon in the Café.
- Saturday, March 2 will be a **Dinner Church Event**. If you have never experienced *Dinner Church*, it can be described as "a dinner party with a spiritual twist."
- Christian Education opportunities include the **Adult Faith & Life** series, *Down + Out: Where Grace Takes You*, a **Confirmation/Youth** series, *Warm + Cozy*, and a **Sunday School Lenten Event** on Sunday, February 18.
- Our **Annual Women's Retreat**, *Open the Doors to your Heart* will be led by Pastor Dale Selover at God's Love Saturday, February 10.
- Our small group gatherings and bible studies will continue to meet weekly and monthly throughout the season.



I encourage you to participate as you are able. It is my prayer that these experiences will strengthen your connections with one another and with God's love through the mysterious grace of our Lord and Savior.
+Pastor Brandi

The Annual Congregation Meeting was held on Sunday, January 28.

The congregation approved the 2024 budget as proposed: a balanced budget with \$460,018 of projected income and \$460,018 of planned expenditures. The congregation also elected the following persons:

- **Congregation Council:** Don Ginelli, John Ortendahl, John Rozolis, Linda Sartor
- **Nominating Committee:** Sandy Anthony, Kathy MacDonald, Robin Pecuch, Lori Ranniello, Meredith Webber, Nate Webber
- **Synod Assembly Representatives:** Carol and Larry Zetterberg
- **Investment Committee:** Will Toppin (1-year term), Eric Nordberg (3-year term)

Thank you to all those who participated in the meeting, submitted a report, ran for office, or helped prepare the budget and [Annual Report](#).



Introducing Teri Lanan

Teri serves as our synod's Transition Consultant, a lay leader who supports congregations undergoing a pastoral transition. She will be working with God's Love this year, guiding us through the discernment and visioning work needed before we enter a Call Process.



Teri attended our January Council meeting as well as the Annual Meeting. We are grateful for her presence and look forward to working with her.

Scripture Readings for February 11

Transfiguration of Our Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah taken up to heaven

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

God's light seen in Christ

Mark 9:2-9

Christ is God's beloved Son



Lent Begins

Ash Wednesday, February 14

Worship at 12:00 Noon and 7:30pm

*Holy Communion with
Imposition of Ashes at both services*

Beginning Wednesday, February 21, we will offer a mid-week Lent Prayer Circle at 12noon in the Café.



Red Cross Blood Drive

Friday, March 1

12:00 NOON – 5:00pm
Fellowship Hall

Our first blood drive of 2024 is upon us. **PLEASE NOTE** the time change.
Appointments at redcrossblood.org



Women's Retreat

"Open the Doors of Your Heart"

led by Pr. Dale Selover

Saturday, February 10
9:00am – 3:00pm • God's Love

Women of all ages are encouraged to attend as we listen for the Spirit's invitation in our lives.

Registration deadline EXTENDED to February 4, just a few spots remain. Register at the **SignUp Hub** or [THIS LINK](#). The cost is **\$25/person**; continental breakfast and box lunch included. Financial assistance is available. More information is available in the Commons.
Questions? Contact **Pastor Brandi**.



Scan code to access Registration Form

HOPE Supporting Those in Need

Spring is a time for newness and rebirth. Let's help the *Reach Out Center* give homeless folks a sense of hope by providing them a meal every week. God's Love delivers bagged lunches every Tuesday, and could use your donations of sandwiches, fruit, snacks, dessert, juice or water.

[SIGNUP FOR MARCH](#), or visit the **SignUp Hub**, to provide an item(s) for the Tuesday bagged lunches. **NOTE:** There is bologna, pre-portioned, in the freezer in the church kitchen. Each bag includes enough lunch meat to make the 25 sandwiches needed. Help yourself. Donations due in the **Lobby of Love**♥ **Tuesdays by 10:30am. Questions?** Sandy Anthony.



"Soup-er" Bowl of Caring Food Drive

February 4 through February 11

Please join us in making this a super "Soup-er"-Bowl of Caring. Donations benefit **Interfaith Food Alliance (IFA)**. Donations of soup and other non-perishable items due in the **Lobby of Love**♥ **by February 11**.

IFA is a faith-based organization fighting hunger in Lower Bucks County through education, advocacy and feeding. They operate the Family Backpack Center which provides supplemental food for food-insecure children and families in the Morrisville School District. **Questions?** Contact **Janet Nordberg**.



Sundays in February and March

10:00am • Fellowship Hall

"The Priesthood of All Believers"

- **February 4:** "What is the Priesthood of All Believers?" A look at this foundational Lutheran tenet and its implications for faithful living, led by Pastor Brandi
- **February 11:** "Reconciling Works" An introduction to the advocacy work of this Lutheran organization with **guest speaker, Rev. JJ Simpson-Keelan** of Living Waters Lutheran Church in Ringoes, NJ
- **February 18 to March 24:** "Down & Out: Where Grace Takes You" A video series for Lent on the life-changing reality of God's promises, and how to live as part of the priesthood of all believers.



Highlighted Collection for February

Grocery Store Gift Cards

During February we will collect grocery store gift cards to benefit *Manor Food Bank* located at Manor Elementary School in Levittown, PA which serves families identified by the Pennsbury School District as having food insecurities. Manor Food Bank teams up with *Neighbors In Need of Yardley*, who supplies many of their needs.



Cards for any amount are acceptable, however smaller denominations are preferred. Please consider the following stores: **Acme, Aldi, Giant, Walmart, and ShopRite**. Please do **NOT** leave donated cards in the lobby.

1. Place in offering plate or marked box in the Commons
2. Drop at church office (M – F, 9am – 2pm)
3. Mail to the church: 791 Newtown Yardley Road, Newtown, PA 18940

Donations due **February 29. Questions?** Contact **Amy Carr**.



Gals' Book Club

Thursday, February 29 • 7:00pm • the Lounge

"Our Missing Hearts" by Celeste Ng

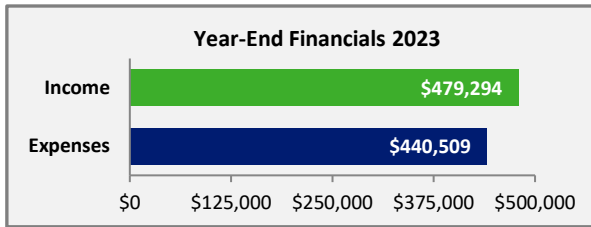
Didn't read the book? Please join us anyway.
Questions? Contact Sharon Sottung.



Men's Bible Study

Mondays, February 5 and 19

7:00pm • the Lounge
"The Gospel of Mark"



Questions? Contact Treasurer, **Bob Smoose**, or Financial Secretary, **John Tidd**.

Ways you can SERVE

Usher, Reader, Altar Guild, Acolyte, Communion Assistant, Basket Bearer

There are many opportunities for adults and youth to assist during worship services. Any of these roles are wonderful opportunities to engage in service, meet new people, and deepen your own worship experience.

[FEBRUARY SIGNUP](#), [MARCH/APRIL SIGNUP](#), or visit the [SignUp Hub](#) to choose weeks and roles convenient for you.

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday March 24 - 8:45am and 11:00am

Maundy Thursday March 28 - 7:30pm

Good Friday March 29 - 12:00noon and 7:30pm

Easter Sunday March 31 - 8:45am and 11:00am
(no Sunday School on Easter Sunday)

Devotions for Lent

Lenten devotional booklets are now available on the Ministry Resource Table.

The book includes a scripture passage, reflection, and prayer for each day in Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 14. Using passages from 1 Corinthians, the theme focuses on unity amid diversity, through Christ. Please take one book per household.

Welcome!



2024 Altar Flower Dedications

The Altar Flowers can be dedicated on any Sunday in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a special occasion. The *requested donation* is **\$50** per dedication; payable to *Lutheran Church of God's Love*. [CLICK HERE](#) or visit the [SignUp Hub](#) to select a week(s).

Grapevine of Friends

Friday, March 8 • 11:30am
Fellowship Hall

This fellowship event evolved from Senior Saints and is now open to all in the congregation looking for small group connection. The group gathers quarterly for lunch and socializing, and occasionally planning an outside event. Bring a friend! **RSVP** to the church office **by March 4**.

Future 2024 dates include June 25, September 25 and December 17.

If inclement weather forces a change in worship schedule or church events, we will do our best to get the word out as early and efficiently as possible.

Sunday morning changes will be **announced by 7:30am**.

Please watch your **email** and the **church website** godslovenewtown.org and the church **Facebook page** for announcements about possible cancellations or schedule changes. If no announcement is made, we will operate as planned.

As always, use your own judgement in determining whether to travel to church. Your safety and comfort are the priority! If you do choose to stay at home, remember that online worship is available weekly at godslovenewtown.org/worship/.



- **Redeemer Lutheran Church in Penn del** Thank you for donating food from your Advent collection. We continually restock the shelves of our food pantry and your donation was a huge help. Thank you for being a blessing to those in need.
- **Seafarers International House** We gratefully acknowledge a gift of \$50 for general support. Thank you for helping us light the way for seafarers and immigrants.
- **Bethanna in Southampton** Thank you for supporting our 2023 Christmas Wish list campaign [through St. Nicholas Day gifts]. You were a major part of our success in reaching our goal this year and we are truly grateful for you.
- **Advocates for Homeless & Those in Need** Thank you for your gift of \$2,500. The cost of insurance, maintenance, and fuel for our transport vehicles are one of our largest expense items. Your support toward our mission is deeply appreciated.



- **Family Service Association of Bucks County** Thank you for supporting our 2023 Gift Shop with your generous donation of gifts. We appreciate your shopping for residents of the Bucks County Emergency Homeless Shelter. As a result of your kindness, we were able to bring joy to 600 children and teens.
- **Woods Services in Langhorne** We are so grateful for God's Love church. Thank you for participating in our Secret Santa gift collection.
- **ELCA** Thank you for your gift of \$1,035 for World Hunger. The glory of God shines through you. Amanda White, Director of Congregational Generosity of ELCA

God's Caring Stitchers

Friday, February 16

1:00pm • Room A1/A2



It's a busy month making hats and scarves for the *Reach Out Foundation* in Penndel in addition to our continued work on lap robes, prayer shawls, and chemo hats, and washcloths for the blessing bags to be given out at the *AHTN Shared Meal* in March. Please join us.

Questions? Contact **Cindy Sundstrom**.

Garden Angels are volunteers that agree to maintain a specific landscaped area around the church throughout the growing season. Garden Angels choose an available garden then stop by as their schedule permits to weed, prune, and do general light landscape maintenance.



Joyce and Don Ginelli will be in the Commons between services on **February 11 and 18** to talk to anyone who is interested in being a Garden Angel in 2024. We have a total of 26 gardens but some of our 2023 ANGELS have already agreed to maintain the same garden! Please stop by to find out more.



We love February—a month filled with showing our love for books, favorite authors, and those in need. The hallway is filled with hearts labeled with the names of the books the children have read. The focus is on beloved authors such as Alice Schertle, Leo Lionni, Doreen Cronin, Eric Carle, Oliver Jeffers, James Dean, and Margaret and H.A. Rey.

The 2s and 3s are busy assembling Breakfast Bags for *Caring for Friends*, and the 4s will jump away to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in the annual *Sue Heinze Memorial Hop-A-Thon*. We look forward to a visit from *Newtown Dentistry for Kids*.

Registration for the 2024 – 2025 school year is open to the community. We offer classes for 2s, 3s, and 4s. For more information, please call the office 215-497-0506 or email the school preschool@godslovenewtown.org. Registration forms are available at godslovenewtown.org/preschool.



Designer Bag B-I-N-G-O

Friday, April 12

A fun night of bingo and fabulous raffle baskets. Invite your friends!
Details to follow.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>As you feed us, Lord, with your own body and blood, move us to feed the world—with food, with peace, with love.</i>				1	2	3
4 Worship 8:45a & 11a Education 10a Worship Min Noon	5 Counters 9:30a Men's Bible Study 7p	6 Women's Bible Study 6:30p Mutual Ministry 7:30p Rejoice! 7:30p	7 Sunday School Teachers Mtg 6:30p Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	8 Musicians Mtg 11a	9 Knit & Crochet 1p	10 Fellowship Dinner 6:30p Women's Retreat 9a –3p Quilters 10a –3p
11 "SOUP-ER" BOWL Worship 8:45a & 11a Education 10a	12 Counters 9:30a	13 Women's Bible Study 6:30p Rejoice! 7:30p	14 ♥ Lent Begins ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES Noon and 7:30p	15 Adult Ed Mtg 10a Church Council 7p	16 Knit & Crochet 1p	17
18 Worship 8:45a & 11a Education & Lent Event 10a	19 OFFICE CLOSED Men's Bible Study 7p	20 Counters 9:30a Women's Bible Study 6:30p Rejoice! 7:30p	21 Lent Prayer Circle 12p NO CHOIRS	22	23	24 Quilters 10a –3p
25 Worship 8:45a & 11a Education 10a	26 Counters 9:30a Care Team TLC 11a	27 Property Team 1p Women's Bible Study 6:30p Rejoice! 7:30p	28 Lent Prayer Circle 12p Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	29 Gals' Book Club 7p	<i>"Pray, and let God worry." —Martin Luther</i>	



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