

A New Journey Lutheran Parish

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Ness Lutheran Church
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Gary Lutheran Church
PO Box 96
Gary, MN 56545

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MARCH 2023



Reminder from Pastor René about Her Day-off and Office Hours

As I've lived into one month of setting a schedule, it's a bit more fluid than I thought. The days I designated to be in certain places are evolving week by week and sometimes even after the bulletin is printed because of weather. My goal is to be in Gary at least once a week (Monday or Tuesday), McIntosh twice a week (usually Wednesdays and another day), and Bejou as needed. My schedule is flexible depending on pastoral care needs that arise, online meetings that may work best at home, winter weather, or a fuller week than usual because of additional commitments such as funerals. My weekly schedule will be included in the weekly bulletin announcements, while also subject to change. Friday remains my day off.

Know that I will travel anywhere as needed or requested. You can always reach me on my cell phone (call or text) or by email.

As I keep saying, "We are figuring this out" and "We will learn together."

Reminder to Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars

It's that time of year for any Thrivent members to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars to their congregation or the parish. Choice Dollars designated during the calendar year can be directed until March 31 of the following year. You can direct dollars online or by phone. Contact your Thrivent representative with any questions.

Online:

1. Visit **Thrivent.com/thriventchoice**
2. Click on the section that says "Direct Choice Dollars"
3. Click on the link that says "Direct Choice Dollars"
4. Log into your Thrivent Account
5. Follow the prompts to complete the request

By Phone:

1. Call 800-847-4836 and when prompted say, "Thrivent Choice"
2. Press 1 to direct Choice Dollars or 2 to hear Thrivent Choice program Terms and Conditions. (If prompted, say or enter your phone number and date of birth.)
3. A representative will work with you to direct Choice Dollars.

Northwestern Minnesota Synod's Great Synod Get Together

On Saturday, March 18, people from throughout the NWMN Synod get together in Bemidji for a day of fellowship, learning, worship, and fun! Representing ANJLP will be Katie DeMarais, Rachel Roggenbuck, and Pastor René. Rachel and Pastor René will be presenting workshops on their respective leadership areas of coachability and storytelling. Look for a report on the Get Together in our April newsletter or ask them all about their experience.

Additional Announcements:

- The Norman Lutheran Cemetery Corporation will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, March 5, 2023, at Faaberg Lutheran Church beginning at noon with a potluck dinner and the meeting to follow. All are welcome.

“Good Gossip”

Souper Bowl of Caring Offering Report: For most of the last 14 years, youth in the Gary-Rindal Parish (and the last two years including Confirmation Students from Immanuel/Calvary/Our Savior's) have raised funds to Tackle Hunger by taking an offering during Worship the day of the Big Game.

This year, we as A New Journey raised over \$875 to donate (at time of printing)! We also had overflowing boxes of food donated. Amazing!

We will split donations between 3 local food shelves (hosted at Grace Lutheran in Erskine, Helping Hands in Mahnomen, and Good Samaritan in Twin Valley) so that we can help folks in our entire mission field who are struggling with food insecurity.

If you or someone you know are in need, each of these locations are kind, discreet, and open places that you can go to receive food. This is why we as a faith community support them, so that there is no stigma attached for those who need their services. Jesus fed the hungry, and called us to do so as well. We can't feed others if we don't have food ourselves!

Thank you for your continued support of folks in our communities.

A New Journey Youth Group

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÉ L. MEHLBERG...

Dear Beloved Children of God:

First, a big THANK YOU to those who attended, shared their gifts and talents, or held ANJLP in prayer as part of the February 5 installation service. It was wonderful to see so many from throughout the parish as part of the joyous celebration, making it a very memorable day! Let's use that Holy Spirit energy to keep moving us forward as we share God's love with all!

As you read this, the season of Lent has started. Lent is the time we are faced remembering all the things we would rather forget: suffering, sin, death, and ash.

On Ash Wednesday we are marked with an ashy cross hearing the words, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." For many of us, it was at our baptism that we were first marked with the sign of the cross, as we hear the promise: "child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."

It's the sign of the cross we often hold onto, wear around our necks, forgetting that it was actual a torture device. The approved state sanctioned method for capital punishment and execution in its day. It's the sign of the cross we tightly hold onto, perhaps thinking more of Easter morning and the end of the story, wanting to forget all the hard, messy stuff that came before that glorious resurrection day.

Ash Wednesday and Lent don't let us do that. Our daily lives often don't either. Yes, we want more happy moments than sad or an easier life than harder, but that's not what we've been promised. We have been promised Emmanuel, "God with us" through it all. And the cross reminds us of that.

As we mark this holy time, remember all the cross represents. We don't get to Easter without Good Friday, Maundy Thursday, or the whole season of Lent. God has been, is, and will always be with us as we travel through the suffering, sin, death, and ash of this life. May we journey in faith and trust knowing that Easter will one day come.

Prayers for you~
Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

I once heard a very wise person say, “How freeing would it be for a congregation if the church burned to the ground?!?” Now they meant by an act of God, with no injuries, but their point was that sometimes congregations and individuals can become so preoccupied by the church as a building, that they fail to think of Church as the body of Christ, the hands and feet of God in the world, a community of believers who are out in their towns spreading God’s love and serving their neighbors.

In our Gospel for Transfiguration Sunday (Matthew 17:1-9), we heard how God showed 3 disciples a glimpse of the post-resurrection, heavenly body of Jesus. The disciples were amazed. They wanted that feeling of amazement to continue, so Peter said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Before he was even done speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” Peter got the message so wrong. He saw Jesus glowing, transfigured into his heavenly body, with Moses and Elijah, and he wanted to capture that moment forever. He wanted to build them dwellings, so that they might remain on that mountain, on earth, there with them forever. He didn’t understand, again, what Jesus was trying to teach them. That is what we want to do too at times, isn’t it? We want to contain Jesus to 4 walls, to our hallowed dwelling places. We call these buildings our church, sanctuary, God’s house.

While yes it is, so is the street corner, so is the park, so is the school, so is the bar, so is the homeless shelter, so is the prison, and so are our own bodies. We are God’s dwelling places, and if we give God control of our bodies and minds, then God can be anywhere and do good deeds everywhere. We know that. And still, we hang on to these buildings, sometimes to the harm of ourselves, our relationships, and the potential ministry we could be doing in the world.

What is it about church buildings that mean so much to us? We come here to praise and worship, to be filled, to hear the word of God and learn about how it could be active in our lives. We gather in these walls as a community of faith, to support each other, to help each other when we falter, when we are struggling, through illness and grief and doubt. We cheer with one another when things are going well, and we form a village to raise up God’s children. I too am like the disciples and want to hang on the feelings of joy and community and the presence of God I have felt here. I want to contain it and take care of it, so that others can feel the same feelings within these walls.

I get it, I love this place. But if I love it more than I love God, if I spend more time, money, and stress worrying about its future than visiting shut ins, raising food for the hungry, praying for healing, and sharing the hope of the promised resurrection, then maybe I should strike the first match. When we place all our time, energy, and resources in just keeping the lights on in a building for use on Sundays, then we have done as the disciples did and tried to box in Jesus. Let us still continue to come here, to be fed from the Lord’s Table, to hear the Word proclaimed, but then let us go out into the world, as Jesus commanded.

(continued)

If we spend 1 hour here a week, that means that we have 167 hours left in our week to be the Church active in the world. If we took an hour a day to be God's hands and feet, think of what we could accomplish: who we could visit, bring food and companionship, pray for, and how many people could hear that God loves them. I'm not saying we shouldn't love this place, I'm just saying, we should love our neighbors more.

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK...
ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator

On February 5th, we came together in joyful support and celebration as Pastor René was installed as our Parish Pastor/Mission Developer. The energy, singing, red attire and smiling faces made the day even more amazing. We are thankful for Pastor René and look forward to what we will learn and how we will grow!!

Lent is here. But what is Lent? These 40 days are a season to reflect and remember, to look forward and ahead. These are not easy times for many of us. We know the challenges our world faces. Yet the season of Lent reminds us that God is not yet through with us or our world. You may notice a change to our worship Service during Lent, and that is the absence of Alleluias. Based on the Hebrew word, *hallelu yah*, meaning "Praise the Lord," alleluia has been a word of great praise to God in the life of the church and was prominent in early Christian liturgies. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the quality of our baptismal faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice.

Look for announcements in the bulletin and via text about an upcoming Worship Team meeting. It's time to start planning for future events!!

In peace,

Rachel Roggenbuck
ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Special Council Meeting

(6:35 p.m. on February 8, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou,, MN)

Members attending: Pastor René, Rachel Roggenbuck, Jim Steinmetz, Katie DeMarais, Teresa Werpy, Mary Nell Preisler, Stacey Knudson, Tanya Hamre, Peggy Hanson, Mike Nelson

Mike called meeting to order @ 6:35p. Introductions were made. Mike led devotions. Mike read minutes from January meeting. 1st and 2nd to approve the minutes Jim, Stacey. Motion approved.

Treasurer's report will be at the regular meeting on Feb 15th. We are doing fine - Mike Nelson

Pastor René thanked everyone for the support and representation at the installation on Feb 5th. Also discussed the Great Synod Get Together on March 18th in Bemidji, how to register is included in the information. Anyone can attend.

Katie - confirmation, asked for names of adults for mentors for the 6 weeks of lent. Need 10 people. A commitment to come to each Lenten service at 6:30 to meet with the student, then attend worship together.

Old business

Pastor René's housing plan: talked about a house 7 miles East of Bejou to be more centrally located in the parish. Month by month 'contract'. In town is fine, but she would like to be more centrally located. \$1200/month heat and electricity paid. Internet extra. It is already there but just needs to be hooked up. 3 bedroom/2 bath. Tanya asked about snow removal and mowing. Jim Steinmetz said he would take care of that. There is \$1250 in the budget for housing. Jill and Pastor Rene will discuss which way is easier/tax beneficial on who should pay the rent - parish or Pastor René.

Discussion on if this is temporary or not. We want Pastor René to be comfortable, she hasn't been here long enough to really know where she wants to be.

A motion to rent this place until Pastor René knows where she wants to live made by Mary Nell Preisler, second Teresa Werpy. All in favor. Motion passed

Sundal will pay \$50/month for newsletter and bulletins, plus \$200 to Parish if Pastor René preaches. They will pay any other pulpit supply directly, including Katie. \$175 plus mileage.

New business:

Amend Continual Parish agreement to reflect proper percentages under financial obligations section. Proper are Gary 29.95, Immanuel 29.19, Ness 15.51, Our Savior's 25.35 the agreement states other percentages. Discussed listing the

formula of how these percentages came to be - instead of having actual percentages in this agreement. 180,000 is accepted budget for the parish in 2023 This will be addressed at the regular meeting February 15th. Please include the date to which the numbers used, set deadline for the numbers that are used for these percentages. Numbers are based on confirmed members.

Mike read a letter regarding these numbers and where the Gary church is at with offerings, the members who are still on the rolls and do not live here or contribute.

Talk about putting all annual reports on the website. We also need to address where each church is financially.

Discussion of meeting time and day of the month. To be addressed next meeting on Feb 15.

Election of Officers, since Ness is not present, we put together a slate of proposed nominees for each position. Sue Gunderson will be the parish secretary, but does not want a vote. As our rules state right now, she would have voice, but no vote, because she is a paid employee of the parish.

Proposed:

Past President: Mike Nelson

President: Jim Steinmetz

VP: Teresa Werpy

Secretary: Sue Gunderson

Treasurer: Jill Nelson?

Other members:

Mary Preisler

Peggy Hanson

Wanda Stordahl

Stacey Knudson

Karen Carlsrud?

Any other business?

Pastor René: Lenten services, Good Friday, Maundy Thursday. Looking for input on what and where. Car pooling for church services. How to get the word out.

Motion to adjourn by Jim, Stacey 2nd.

(In Karen's absence, Rachel Roggenbuck took and prepared these meeting minutes.)

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting

(6:00 p.m. on February 15, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

Council members present: Mike Nelson, Jim Steinmetz, Karen Carlsrud, Stacey Knudson, Peggy Hanson, Teresa Werpy, Mary Preisler and Tanya Hamre (for Wanda Stordahl). Others in attendance: Pastor René Mehlberg, Rachel Roggenbuck, Sue Gunderson and Jill Nelson.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Nelson and he led us in devotions.

Secretary's report: Minutes were passed out. Motion was made by Jim, seconded by Teresa and carried, to approve the minutes of the special parish council meeting held February 8, 2023.

Treasurer's report: Reports were passed out and reviewed by Jill. Motion was made by Jim, seconded by Peggy and carried, to approve reports as presented.

Staff report: Pastor René indicated she, Rachel and Katie plan to attend the Great Synod Get Together in Bemidji on March 18. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Stacey and carried, to authorize their registration fees be paid by the Parish.

Old Business:

Plans were discussed to assist Pastor René in moving into the home east of Bejou rented by the Parish in March, as well as some furnishings that may be needed.

Pastor René reported that Katie is working on getting mentors for the 10 confirmands (5 girls and 5 boys). They will meet with the confirmands at 6:30 p.m. prior to the 7 p.m. Lenten services. Katie is also working on arranging carpooling.

New Business:

Mike indicated that a date needed to be set for each congregation to submit their membership information for budget purposes in accordance with the Parish Agreement. There may need to be some group meetings held to discuss how members are counted so that the information reported by congregations is consistent. A motion was made by Jim, seconded by Teresa and carried to set October 1, 2023, as the date each congregation needs to provide their correct membership information, which will be a starting point for determining each congregation's 2024 financial obligations to the Parish budget.

The list of Parish Council officers and members nominated for 2023 was presented and reviewed. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Tanya and

carried to cease nominations. A motion was made by Jim, seconded by Mary and carried to approve the 2023 ballot as follows: (* designates voting member)

President: Jim Steinmetz (ILC)*

Vice President: Teresa Werpy (GLC)*

Past President: Mike Nelson (GLC) non-voting member

Secretary: Sue Gunderson (ILC) non-voting member

Treasurer: Jill Nelson (GLC) non-voting member

Other members:

Mary Preisler (ILC)*

Stacey Knudson (OSLC)*

Karen Carlsrud (NLC)*

Wanda Stordahl (OSLC)*

Peggy Hanson (GLC)*

Note: A second representative from NLC is still being sought.

Pastor René noted that Lenten services in March have been set but that decisions will have to be made in March concerning services scheduled for Holy Week in April (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday).

The next ANJLP Parish Council meeting was scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou.

Rachel requested the Parish authorize the purchase of an estimated \$1,200 from the Go For It Grant for portable audio/visual equipment. A motion was made by Jim, seconded by Teresa and carried, to approve this purchase.

Mike read a letter he drafted to members of ANJLP. No action was taken. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Jim and carried to adjourn.

Sue Gunderson, Parish Secretary

News from Gary Parish...

Altar Guild, Usher/Greeters and Janitor Assignments

- Gary Lutheran Church Ushers/Greeters, including any midweek services in their timeframe. (NOTE: Please plug in lamp prior to service & unplug after services.):
 - March 5: Ray & Stacy Gunderson
 - March 12 & 19: Joe & Carrie Heisler
 - March 26 & April 2: Curt & Candy Robertson
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for March: Teresa Werpy & Bonnie Werpy
- Ness Lutheran Church: None

News from Our Savior's...

Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2023

Meeting called to order by Vice President Stacey Knudson. Pastor René Mehlberg opened up with devotions.

Election of officers was held for the council. Motion was made by Kristi Skeie and seconded by Marilyn Graff to have Anita Roy as secretary, motion passed. Wanda Stordahl made a motion and Marilyn Graff seconded it for Jane Aakhus to be Treasurer, motion passed. The parsonage committee was tabled for now. Motion by Jane Aakhus and seconded by Tanya Hamre to have Kristi Skeie as communion director, motion passed. Fundraiser committee tabled for now as well.

Stacey Knudson read January meeting minutes. Motion by Jane Aakhus and seconded by Marilyn Graff to approve January minutes, motion passed.

Stacey Knudson gave an update on the parsonage and the work that Bryce Stordahl still has to finish up.

Anita Roy gave an update on the family events that we have been hosting. She would like to do one in March again and needs some help with it. Our next family event will be on Sunday, March 12, 2023 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at Our Savior's Church.

Lenten Service schedule will be as follows. We will host an Ash Wednesday service at noon and then Wednesday, March 1st at 7:00 pm. There will be a soup and sandwich supper starting at 6:00 pm for the March 1st service. There will also be a Good Friday service on Friday, April 7th at 7:00 pm. For Easter we will have a Sunrise service (time to be determined) and a 10:30 am service.

Pastor René Mehlberg gave her report.

Installation of officers will be on Sunday, May 7, 2023.

Stacey Knudson adjourned the meeting. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Additional Our Savior's Information:

■ Sunday, March 12 ~ 1:00-3:00pm ~ Our Savior's ~ FAMILY ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENT

All families are invited to come for an afternoon of family fun, decorating St. Patty's cookies, planting seeds to bring home, and share in church family fellowship. This is a free event to families of all ages and will include everything needed. Please RSVP to Anita by March 9 so they have supplies ready. All are welcome!

News from Immanuel...

Summary of February 15, 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting Minutes

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Peggy Gunderson, Gloria Steinbrenner, Cindy Large, Jon Large, Darrell Lende, Terry McCollum, Duane Gunderson and Delane Schaumburg. Others in attendance: Pastor René Mehlberg and Rachel Roggenbuck.

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were provided and approved.

Pastor René's Report:

- Ash Wednesday is February 22 and services will be held at Our Savior's and at Gary. Car pooling to Lenten services was suggested. Preference was also discussed to have a 3:00 p.m. Good Friday service at Immanuel and an 8:30 a.m. Easter service.
- Confirmation mentors are needed.
- Pastor René, Katie and Rachel will be attending the Great Synod Get Together in Bemidji on March 18.
- The Parish worship team will meet in March
- The next Parish council meeting will be held at Immanuel on Monday, March 13, at 6:30 p.m.

Other Business:

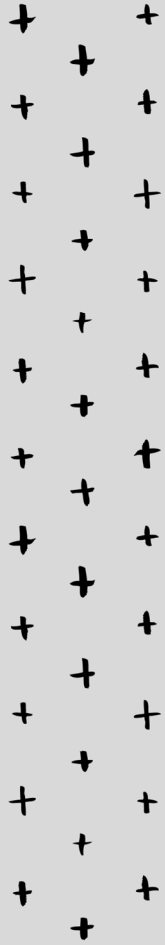
It was reported that the replacement value for the bell tower was reduced for insurance purposes.

Donations were authorized to the Brady Oberg Foundation and to the Bejou Township Cemetery.

Immanuel's auction sale will be held Saturday, June 24, at 10:00 a.m. In lieu of raffling a side-by-side this year, it was decided to sell \$5 raffle tickets for chances for cash prizes in the amount of \$5,000, \$2,500 and \$1,000.

Additional Immanuel Info:

- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, March 15, serving from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Becky Dahl, Kathy Omang and Sue Gunderson. (Note: Confirmation at 6:30 p.m., Lenten service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)



A New Journey **Lutheran Parish** *Wednesday Lenten Services*

Theme: "Making Change"

All Wed. evening services will begin at 7:00pm.
Watch bulletins and announcements for possible supper events hosted before worship.

2/22: ASH WED. AT GARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
~NOON ASH WED. SERVICE AT OUR SAVIOR'S

3/1: OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/8: NESS LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/15: IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/22: SUNDAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/29: NESS LUTHERAN CHURCH

All Are Welcome!

A NEW JOURNEY LUTHERAN PARISH

Family St. Patrick's Day Event



Sunday, March 12 ~ 1:00-3:00pm

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, McIntosh

All families are invited to come for an afternoon of family fun, decorating St. Patty's Day cookies, planting seeds to bring home, and sharing in church family fellowship. This is a free event and will include everything needed.

Please RSVP to Anita by Mar. 9, so we can have supplies ready.

ALL FAMILIES OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME.

Church Ladies' Night Out



All ladies are welcome! Bring a friend!
Each month we will gather at a local
restaurant for food, fellowship,
and fun.

Tuesday, March 21

6:30pm

Moran's Supperclub, Winger



Youth Group Gaming Hangout



Open to all 6-12 Graders.
All are welcome. Bring a friend!

Come play video games or board games, have pizza,
and hang out! Free game time and snacks during
Youth Group time! Courtesy of A New Journey
Lutheran Parish LYO Group.
Contact Katie for more info.

Sunday, March 26 ~ 4:00-6:00pm
The Warp Zone, Twin Valley

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Brady Bauer, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Susan Bendickson, Ron Dahl, Alex Gullingsrud, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Pat Larson, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Marla (Johnson) Miller, Kathy Motteberg, Marilyn Natwick, Stacey Prestegord, and Jean Uhler.

Ministers:	Members of the Congregations
	Pastor René Mehlberg (218) 308-7898 pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com
Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM)	Katie DeMarais (218) 820-8287 or demarais.katie@gmail.com
Worship Life Coordinator:	Rachel Roggenbuck (701) 741-0976 or athomerachel@gmail.com
ANJLP Secretary:	Sue Gunderson (218) 280-8678 or immanuel@gvtel.com
Gary/Ness Secretary:	Julie Gevik (218) 280-3356 or garyrindaloffice@gmail.com
Our Savior's Secretary:	Anita Roy (218) 849-3791 or oursaviors@gvtel.com
Parish Website:	anewjourneyparish.org
Find Us Online:	linktr.ee/anewjourneyparish

MARCH 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

WORSHIP	IMMANUEL (Bejou)	OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL
Wed., March 1 (purple)		7 pm - Lenten Service			
Sunday, March 5 (purple) Communion	8:30 am - Worship 9:30 am - Sunday School	10:30 am - Worship	8:30 am - Worship 9:30 am - Sunday School	10:30 am - Worship	
Wed., March 8 (purple)				7 pm – Lenten Service	
Sunday, March 12 (purple)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am – Worship followed by Council Meeting	9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship		
Wed., March 15 (purple)	7 pm – Lenten Service				
Sunday, March 19 (purple) Communion	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am - Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship	9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am – Worship	8:30 am – Worship	
Wed., March 22 (purple)					7 pm – Lenten Service
Sunday, March 26 (purple)	8:30 am - Worship	10:30 am - Worship	9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am – Worship		
Wed., March 29 (purple)				7:00 pm – Lenten Service	

