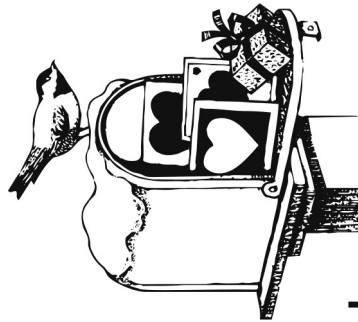


FAITH CONNECTS (Conversation and Devotion) Monday @ 7:00 pm Online. Weekly Worship: Saturday @ 5:00 pm Live Stream Online & on our Facebook Page and In-Person Sunday @ 9am (starting Feb 7.)
Worship Updates will be posted on [www. faithlutheraneldridge.com](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com) and on our Facebook page.

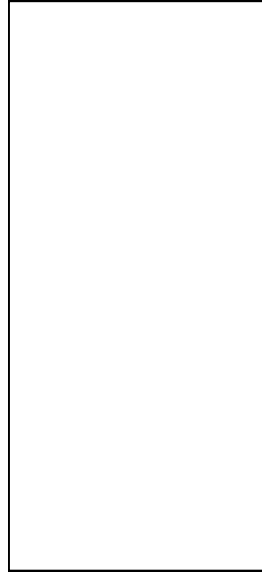
Faith Lutheran Church
 500 W. LeClaire Road
 Eldridge, IA 52748

Non-Profit Organization
 PERMIT NO. 1
 Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



February



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR

February 2021

Rev. Dr. Carrie Lewis La Plante
Rev. Heather Geest

500 W. LeClaire Road
 Eldridge, IA 52748
 (563) 285-4501

www.faithlutheraneldridge.com
faitheldridge@netins.net



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Grace-Gifted, Faith-Lifted
Called to Share, Seek, and Serve Christ



FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to start with a huge “Thank You!” As you will see in the Council report, considering all that 2020 held for us, we were able to end the year very well, meeting the obligations to which we had committed and more. Thank you for your generosity and all of the ways in which your faithfulness to God’s calling in your life made that possible so that we could continue to share in God’s mission in this place, albeit in very different ways than we had planned.

It is hard to believe that we have already made it to the month of February. Time seems to be going faster, which I have to admit is not a sad thing for me as I am ready to see some warmer and longer days. However, sometimes it seems like it is going too fast, especially when the things that we may normally be doing in these times are having to be done so differently.

When I think of February, of course, I think of Valentine’s Day, that day when we celebrate the love that we have, particularly for our significant others, but also for our children and grandchildren, our friends, our neighbors, and others in our lives. As I was thinking about this day that is set aside for celebrating love and reflecting on the ways that we might celebrate that love this year, these words from Jesus came to mind:

[Jesus] said to [the lawyer], “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

If we remember the story, this saying comes toward the end of Matthew’s Gospel when the religious and secular authorities have had just about enough of Jesus, and they are trying to find a way to trap him so that they can discredit him and remove him from the spotlight. In the middle of one of these times of testing, a Pharisee, a lawyer, asks Jesus a question to test him, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Now, there are somewhere around 630 laws in the Hebrew scriptures, and so the idea of asking Jesus to come up with just one seems preposterous. How could Jesus choose only one? Are they not all important?

But Jesus skillfully comes to the solution. Obviously, the first and most important commandment is the first one in the law of Moses – you shall love the Lord your God with everything you have. This should not have been a surprise, for God’s people loving God and God loving God’s people



february BIRTHDAYS

Fred Jansen	February 2	Dennis Mohr	February 14
Bill Wittkowski	February 3	Jill Kuhl	February 16
Walt Dengler	February 5	John Kuhl	February 16
Lou Ann Petersen	February 8	Duane Miller	February 19
Karen Schmitt	February 13	Janet Bowman	February 20
Jean Keppy	February 14		




FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Delores and Don Rathjen on February 15, 1958

Bible Quiz

The precise number varies depending on the Bible version, but roughly how many times does the word “love” occur in the Old and New Testaments combined?

A. 200-300
B. 400-500
C. 600-700
D. 800-900



Answer: C

Food Pantry Needs:

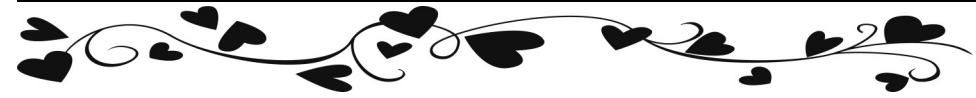
- Canned Meats
- Canned Meals
- Granola Bars



FEBRUARY



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP Thank you to Chris Schroeder & Rhonda Webber for sponsoring the Bencke family, John Chima, and Denisse Grefa in February. The cost for sponsorship is \$40/month each for our Compassion Children John and Denisse and \$45/month for the Bencke family. We are looking for sponsors for the remainder of the year. You can sign up online on Faith’s web page, or by calling the office at 285-4501. Thank you for your support!



Dialogues On Race 2.0

DIALOGUES
ON RACE

In light of recent events in this country surrounding issues of race, this past fall, a small group of members and friends of Faith gathered to have a conversation about the difficult topic of race in this country in a safe environment using a study called *Dialogues on Race*. Over the last several months, you have had the opportunity to read testimonials from the participants in that group here in the Ambassador. As you have read, this small group grew so much in our understanding of race and so valued the opportunity for conversation on this important topic with others with varying viewpoints on the issue that we would like to offer this opportunity again for others to join the conversation. Therefore, Pastor Carrie La Plante will lead another series of these conversations on Zoom beginning Sunday, February 7. These conversations will begin at 10:30 am on Sunday morning, and we will aim to keep to 60 to 75 minutes of conversation. The study will last for eight weeks.

In order to try to keep this conversation as safe as possible and to protect against Zoom-bombing, we ask that all who wish to participate (friends who are not members of the congregation are welcome) to register for the class so that we can send the Zoom link to those who would like to be part of this study. Please register using this sign-up here (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A49ADA62FAAFF2-dialogues1>) or by calling the church office (563-285-4501). Please let us know whether you would like to order your own book (you can purchase them at www.augsburgfortress.org) or would like to buy one from the church (\$11).

We look forward to having these conversations together.



If you or someone you know needs home-delivered meals, please contact the church office and we will make arrangements.



This year's Lenten drama series will begin on Wednesday, February 24, with an introduction and overview of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The following four Wednesdays after that, we'll hear some words of wisdom from Paul himself, as he continues writing (and answering!) letters in the 21st century. He's sure to have a unique perspective on today's world. Come join us, or make sure to tune in (depending on which scenario we'll be in during Lent) to experience this year's drama series entitled, "Dear Paul".

is the reason to follow any of the laws. However, Jesus cannot simply leave it there. Jesus goes on to add that there is another commandment that has to go right along with the first, and that is that you must love your neighbor as yourself. You must see the needs of those around you as being just as important as your own. On these two commandments all of the rest of the law and the prophets hang, Jesus tells them. You see, all of the laws, all of the warnings that the prophets bring, all that Jesus ultimately is about is showing us how to best love God and love our neighbors so that we can live together when we are the best of friends and when we cannot seem to see eye-to-eye.

The Greek word that is translated as "love" in these verses is *agape* (*ἀγάπη*). This kind of love is the unconditional love that God shows for us, and that we are called to show God and one another. It is the love that we are called to show our neighbors, **all of our neighbors**, each and every day, whether next door or around the world, whether we can agree with one another or not. And believe me, I know just how hard this can be, and it is all that much harder when seeing eye-to-eye seems to be nearly impossible some days. Still, Jesus calls us to love one another at all times, to love one another and care for the needs of each other even when we might not like one another all that much.

I am quite convinced that there are days that God does not like us so much, especially on those days when we insist on our own ways, when we think we can do life on our own, when we do things that hurt other people. However, I am also quite convinced that no matter how much God likes us on any given day, God always loves us, God always wants the best for us, God always protects us. And I believe that is what God calls us to do for one another. Even in our disputes and disagreements, Jesus asks us to continue to care for one another, seek the best for one another, and protect one another from harm. This is how we show the love of God and shine that light for the world to see.

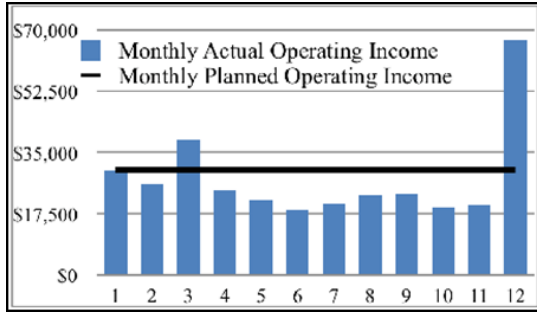
This Valentine's Day, may we shine that kind of love in the world, showing our love for God in the ways that we love and care for our neighbors, all of our neighbors. What a celebration that will be!

Blessings and love to all of you,
Pastor Carrie

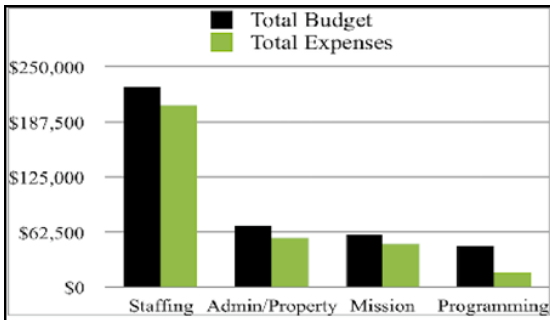


Thanks for your Financial Support of our Ministries in 2020!

As you may recall, at the end of November, we were concerned about whether or not our operating income would cover our expenses for the year. We are very excited to tell you that we had record offerings in December and ended the year ahead of expenses by about \$2,200. *We are so blessed to have financial stability when so many congregations are struggling to meet financial obligations*



Overall, we underspent our planned budget by about \$76,000. Since our planned budget is aspirational, we typically operate below our budget in most areas. However, we were able to meet our operational expenses, and still donated almost \$49,000 to budgeted missions. Our largest area of underspend was about \$22,000 in family ministry largely due to canceled camps and mission trips beyond our control. *We pray that this year, our family ministries are made possible again!*

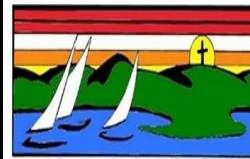
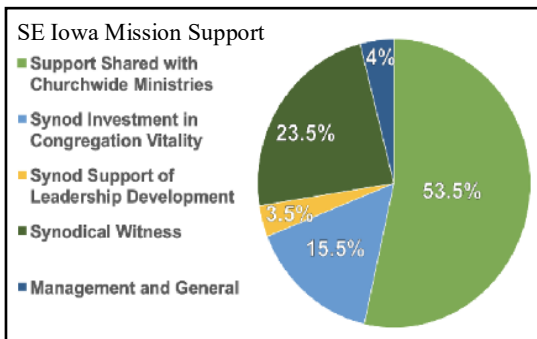


Our mission support from the

operating fund was:

- SE Iowa Synod - \$43,200
- Iowa City Chaplaincy - \$1,000
- Lutheran Lakeside - \$1,500
- North Scott Clergy - \$1,400
- Compassion Child - \$972
- Seminary Student Fund - \$920

The Southeast Iowa Synod Mission Support funds were used as shown in the chart to the left. The Churchwide Ministries supported were: ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, and Good Gifts.



Lutheran Lakeside Camp

Summer Camp Registration is Here!!

Lutheran Lakeside is moving ahead with plans to hold camp this summer with precautions in place, and registration is now open. We are planning to attend camp during week 6 which **July 18-23**. There is Junior Camp for those who have completed grades 3-5 and Confirmation Camp for those who have completed grades 6-8. This year, registration is risk-free, so if you register now, and either the camp cancels due to COVID or you decide later not to send your child due to COVID-related concerns (numbers increasing, need to quarantine, diagnosed with COVID, etc.), you will receive a refund of any money that you have already paid, unless you decide to donate it to camp. How we will get to camp will be determined at a later date.

For more information about camp, please go to www.lutheranlakeside.com and click on the Summer Camp tabs for more information and the Register Here tab if you are ready to register. The total cost for a week at camp is \$465 for the first child. If you send more than one child from your household, there is a \$15 sibling discount for the second and subsequent children. A \$100 deposit is due at registration. **There is an Early Bird Discount of \$50 for all those who register by February 28.** As in years past, Faith will cover \$150 of the cost of camp per child (including friends that they might invite). Therefore, the out-of-pocket cost, if you register by February 28, would be \$265 for your first child and \$250 for any additional children from your household. When you register, be sure to let them know that you are going with Faith Lutheran Church so that they apply the \$150 discount. Also let Pastor Carrie know when you have registered so that she can make sure that the discount is applied and have an accurate count of who is planning to go to help with transportation plans.

Also, adults are invited to join us for the adult mission trip to do work around the camp that week as well, so if that is something that would interest you, please let Pastor Carrie know.

If you have any questions about camp, please contact Pastor Carrie pastorcarrie@ctsteldridge.com or call or text 641-275-1326).



It's the time of the year when we need help with snow removal. Please call the office at 285-8661 or sign up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805094EABA62CAAF85-snow>

Thank you for your service!



On January 6, Confirmation students returned from Christmas break. Classes continued on Zoom. We began the New Year with studies in the New Testament, learning about Jesus and Matthew. Wednesday, January 27 has been designated as a time the students will be spending with their Mentors, instead of Confirmation Class. You may

recall, as suggested in our study of *Growing Young*, the students each chose an adult Mentor to meet with once a month, as another outlet to talk to, and help guide to them throughout their lives.

We are thrilled that the Church Council has decided to allow the return to learning inside our church, beginning Wednesday, February 3. I believe this will be a welcome move, as the students are "Zoomed out", learning via Zoom in both school and church. Of course, masks, social distancing, and different entering and exit protocol will be required.

The High School Youth will resume their activities beginning Wednesday, January 20, inside the church, following CDC Guidelines for the Coronavirus. The talk prior to the meeting has been positive. They too, have not been very receptive to Zoom, and regardless of our attempts to create a fun experience, we have seen a huge decline in High School attendance while on Zoom. Now that we are meeting live inside, I feel the attendance will increase substantially. The kids just want to be with their friends, and have so little opportunities to do so during this Covid outbreak.

Respectfully submitted,
Joni King, Youth Chair



Coming soon—family Sunday School in your living room! Open the word of God in your own home through the Zoom link on Faith's website, and watch the lessons while participating. Each week a guest host will share the lesson on Sunday mornings. If your family would like to host a session, please contact Theresa White (563)-370-3767. The spring curriculum will be available by February 21st. Watch for an email from Christian Ed for more info as we develop this new way of sharing these great lessons for our youth.

Return to Indoor Gatherings with Precautions

We are excited to be gradually returning to indoor gatherings! High School Youth began January 21 and Confirmation will begin February 3. Indoor worship will begin February 7 on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., and will be shorter than normal for awhile. Online worship will still be available on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m. Attendance will tell us if additional indoor worship services are needed. We will continue to assess the community spread of COVID-19 weekly, and we will return to other indoor gatherings over the next month. Please stay tuned to our communications for further updates!

As a reminder, all in-person gatherings will continue to follow the precautions outlined in our guidelines but some amount of risk exists in attending. Please follow CDC recommendations and stay home, especially if you are ill, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to COVID-19, or are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Other Council Business

Steven Fahrenkrog, LPA, EA has been providing payroll services to our congregation over the past few years and we are continuing to utilize these services in 2021. Also, we have a \$10,000 operating loan that expired recently. We will be renewing the loan in 2021 so that it is available in case of need. Thankfully, we have not needed to borrow from the loan for the past several years.

Respectfully,
Linda Golinghorst
Faith Lutheran Church Council

January Poll Results

In this difficult time, where are the areas in the community and beyond in which we can respond to make a difference in people's lives? Check all that apply.

- Spiritual: 100%
- Food: 71%
- Clothing: 29%
- Personal Services: 14%
- Other: 14%
- Isolation/Loneliness: 86%
- Family Support: 71%
- Educational: 14%
- Financial Management: 14%



A number of suggestions were commented upon which we will share with ministry team leaders to take action on where possible. Thanks!

February Poll Question

We are looking forward to spring! As we prepare for the Easter season, we are hoping to gather outdoors, if possible, in order to accommodate more people. For planning purposes, it would help us to know at what minimum temperature you would be willing to participate in outdoor gatherings. Please select one.

- 40 degrees
- 50 degrees
- 60 degrees
- 70 degrees

Will you provide any comments you have to help us better understand your thoughts, and any ideas you have for how to utilize our outdoor space this spring?

Shine Your Light



For Jesus

Shining Your Light for Jesus, While Serving Others

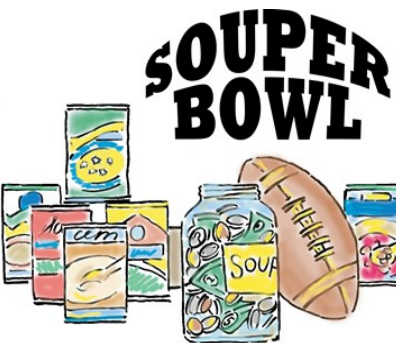
For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

If there can be one consensus about 2020, it is the agreement that each and every day, essential workers around our community continually shined their light for Jesus while serving others. Whether it was the medical field, first responders, military, retail or educators, the service towards others during the challenging year of 2020 was a perfect example of Shining Your Light for Jesus.

Patients were tended to, while medical personnel faced Covid head on. First responders still did not hesitate to help in an emergency. Military personnel stayed the course, staying focused on their ultimate responsibilities to serve and protect. Retail workers kept access to key and necessary items, while managing shortages. Our educators kept their classrooms open—whether in person or virtually, fostering to the tender hearts of god's children.

It is important to remember that although 2020 brought about many dark shadows, members of our congregation who so faithfully served in these essential worker roles "let light shine out of darkness". And although we wish we could name each congregation member individually who has so selflessly given, we know that in our hearts and prayers we name and pray for the safety of our neighbors and fellow congregational members.

Please join me in thanking and praying for our essential workers in our congregation for their selfless acts of shining their light for Jesus.



Tampa Bay Buccaneers vs. Kansas City Chiefs

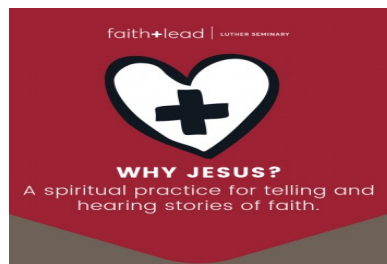
Root for Your Favorite Team and
Support the North Scott Food Pantry
By Dropping off Your Canned Soup
Donations at North Scott Foods
January 31-February 7

Help us "Bury the Alleluias" this Lent. Please cut out and color this Alleluia and drop it off or send it to Faith by February 12th. We will bury them until our Easter Celebration on April 4th.. More color pages can be found on Faith's web page.



“Why Jesus?”

It's a big question to lean into, isn't it? How do we give witness and testimony to the truth that is within us? Lutherans are notoriously uncomfortable sharing personal stories and testimonies, especially when it comes to matters of personal faith. As a church we believe there is only one God who is made known to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ as revealed on the cross. And yet, many of us wonder how we are individually connected to God's larger story. And so, we ask questions about how God is working in the world and our lives.



During the month of February, Pastor Heather will be hosting and facilitating an on-line community gathering entitled: “Why Jesus?” All are welcome tune in every Tuesday evening from 7:00-7:45PM as Pastor Heather hosts four guests from our congregation. These organic, real time conversations will explore the big questions of faith through the sharing of personal stories that give witness to the power and purpose of God's love made known to us in Christ Jesus.

The format of “Why Jesus” is simple. Go to Faith's website and click on the designated Zoom Link to attend. The first 30 minutes of the hour, Pastor Heather will be in live conversation with our designated guest for the week, the last 15 minutes all participants will be given a time for reflection questions and answers as directed to our weekly guest, as well as to Pastor Heather. Week 1: Tim Broberg, Week 2: Carol Judge, Week 3: Scott Rochau, Week 4: Melody Sawvell

Hope to see you online as we manifest the light of Christ being made known to all.

THANKS
FROM THE
HEART

Thank you to Carolyn Scheibe, Rita Smith and Rhonda Webber, who filled in for me while I attended my mother in her final days. Thank you to all who have sent cards and prayed for us. We appreciate your kind words and acts of love during this difficult time.
~ Beth Ann, Darin, & family

Thank you to the January Ambassador folding crew, who braved snow and ice to get the job done: Carol Strobbe, Carol Marten, Sue Braack, and Donna Benskin. ~ Beth Ann



Cheeseburger In Paradise – Quarantine Style

The Cheeseburger In Paradise - Tropical Event will be featured on the Website starting Saturday, February 13th, 2021 at www.faithlutheraneldridge.com <<http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com>>

So sit back, relax and enjoy the show!

* Thank you to all who submitted pictures this year! We also added some additional pictures from prior events for your viewing pleasure!

Aloha! - *The Fellowship Team*































Romans 13:8, NRSV

Be a Steward of Relationships

Your relationships with others are a reflection of your relationship with God. Your family, the most precious people in your life, should come first - before work, hobbies, even friends!

Base all relationships in Christian values of love and trust. Negative emotions can ruin relationships.

You are a member of a very special community - the body of Christ. Be sure to care for and serve members of your faith community.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Souper Bowl collection thru 2/7 @ North Scott Foods</p>	<p>1 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>2 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm</p>  <p>7:00 pm Why Jesus?</p> 	<p>3 10:30 am Chime Choir 5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations 7:00 pm High School Youth Group</p>	<p>4 6:30 pm Team Night</p>	<p>5 Food Pantry 9:30-11:00am</p> 	<p>6 5:00 PM Online Worship</p> 
<p>7 9am Worship in Person 5th Sunday in Epiphany</p>  <p><i>And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message...</i> MARK 1:39, NRSV</p>	<p>8 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>9 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm</p>  <p>7:00 pm Why Jesus?</p> 	<p>10 10:30 am Chime Choir 5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations 7:00 pm High School Youth Group</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am</p> 	<p>13 5:00 PM Online Worship</p> 
<p>14 9am Worship in Person</p>  <p>Transfiguration <i>Valentine's Day</i></p>	<p>15 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>16 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm</p>  <p>7:00 pm Why Jesus?</p>  <p>7:00 pm Executive Mtg.</p>	<p>17 ASH WEDNESDAY</p>  <p>Ash WEDNESDAY 7pm—Worship</p>	<p>18 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting</p> 	<p>19 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am</p>  <p>Ambassador DEADLINE</p> 	<p>20 5:00 PM Online Worship & Baptism</p> 
<p>21 9am Worship In-Person 1st Sunday in Lent</p> 	<p>22 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>23 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm</p>  <p>7:00 pm Why Jesus?</p> 	<p>24 10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal 5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations 7:00 pm Lenten Worship 7:30 pm High School Youth</p>	<p>25 9:00 am Ambassador Folding</p> 	<p>26 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am</p> 	<p>27 5:00 PM Online Worship</p> 
<p>28 9am Worship In-Person 2nd Sunday in Lent</p> 	<p>We are hoping to return to worship according to this calendar. A final decision will be made and communicated soon.</p>					