

THE TIMOTHIAN

NEWSLETTER for ST. TIMOTHY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH of GRAND ISLAND

1453 Staley Road, Grand Island, NY 14072

Our Pastor: Thomas Glasoe

Our website: www.sttimothygrandisland.com

Our emails: communications@sttimothygrandisland.com

and office@sttimothygrandisland.com

Our phone number: 716-773-4400

Our fax number: 716-773-4413

Our Vision:

*Christ Being the Cornerstone of
Grand Island*

Our Mission:

Sending Forth Disciples of Christ



March, 2021

Here's what's inside:

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From the Pastor's Study

As you read this, we are at least knee deep into Lent and by the time March ends, we will be plunging into Holy Week.

This makes this new month a critical month for our lives. In meteorological terms, March is a transition month from winter to spring and eventually, summer. In the sports calendar, March is when the winter sport seasons come to an end and the games of summer begin. In gardening, this month is when we see the first signs of new life and growth that harkens of greener life to come.

In our spiritual life, March is always the month of Lent. It is a transitory time for us also, as we move from the dark days of Christmas, Epiphany, and our own penitent self-flagellation to the celebration of Easter and the eternal promise of Christ.

I have observed that as much as March can seem to be a month of hope and promise, it is an upsetting time. Things are changing all around us and within us. We are or will see the earth transition from cold to warmth, darkness to light, and dormant to life. All of these changes mean we change with it. We adopt new rituals after months of living with another set of rituals and actions. Changes, as you know, are often hard to deal with.

Compounding all the changes this month is the ongoing COVID crisis. I really had hoped this crisis would have ended sometime last spring. The light at the end of the tunnel seems to be appearing on the horizon and many of us are getting or already had our vaccine shots. It is good. Yet, the uncertainty is still very frustrating.

I can't help but connect all of this with yet another transition you are going through. The departure of your pastor was rather unexpected, yet it happened. It was upsetting for some and now, the congregation has to go through a process of transition to another pastor (me) and then another pastor (your soon-to-be called pastor).

When we look back over the expanse of our lives, we see that we are going through transitions all the time. It seems to me that I am constantly in a transitory mode; whether that is at a congregation I am serving, at home with my family, or in my social circle. Life seems to always be in transition.

Yet, I find great comfort that even in the Bible, transition is a common event. God moves from one group of people to another. (Just read the Book of Genesis and you'll see what I mean). God moves with the people from Egypt to Israel, from Judges to Kings; from prophets to Christ. God evolves, himself, from a God who sits on high demanding absolute perfection from His Humanity to a God that accepts the frailty of people and engages with them regularly.

In our liturgy, we go through various transitions. We move from the Old Testament readings to the Psalms to the New Testament readings. We move from being our sinful selves to forgiven Children of God. We end our worship with a renewed commitment to be great and faithful servants going out into the world to serve God's people.

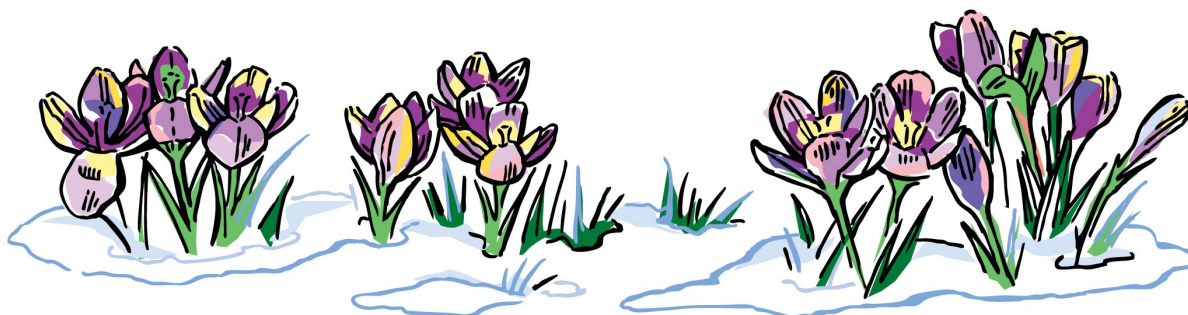
Transition is very much part of our every day lives and spiritual walks. In some ways, it defines us as faithful servants of God and in other ways, it provides us opportunities for fresh starts and new ideas.

Transition is a critical part of our existence and our relationship with God because without it, we lose sight of what is important in life and our purposes. I embrace all the transitions of my life because it has brought me more joy and frustrations. It has allowed me to do more for God in my life as a pastor.

I ask that you will embrace this season of transition and grow deeper in your walk with Christ. Allow the uncertainties of life to be a springboard to new opportunities and service. Pray that St. Timothy will grow deeper and more faithful as we transition to another called Pastor. I pray that this time of transition for the congregation will allow the congregation to get closer to God and to each other. I pray that this will bind the members of the congregation together in a common purpose and become a greater beacon of hope, love, and mission for Grand Island and beyond.

God bless you all in this time of spiritual reflection.

In Christ Always,
Pastor Tom Glasoe



WE NEED YOU!
THE PASTORAL CALL PROCESS INCLUDES ALL OF US.

The pastoral call process can feel exhausting, overwhelming, and scary. However, it's also an incredible opportunity to see God move among our congregation, call committee, and church staff in new ways.

Keeping a spiritual focus is vital to a successful call process. The process is important, but don't forget that the purpose of the process is to seek who God is already raising up to be our pastor.

When we keep the Holy Spirit as our guide throughout the process, we'll be able to see God's hand through each step.

Even though we have a call committee, the congregation still needs you! We need your faithfulness, intentional prayers, and attention to the process to help guarantee the search is successful. Here are a few ways that you can keep our call process focused on discerning whom God is calling to fill the role of Pastor.

1. Pray Expectantly

Pray regularly and expectantly. The power of prayer is clear every time we go through the discernment process to find whom God is calling to serve at our church. Here are a couple of verses to guide your prayers.

Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

James 4:3 "When you ask, you do not receive..."

2. Pray Intentionally

Jesus used an intentional order in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 where His primary focus is God and His glory. Using this model, set up an intentional prayer schedule for your life. Pray at the beginning of each day in order to set the heart, mind, and tone for where we are headed. Pray for the Pastor we and the congregation need. Remember, what we want is not necessarily what we need. Pray for what we need and what God wants for us. If you don't know how to start, start with the Lord's Prayer.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

3. Keep a Humble Heart

One of the biggest stumbling blocks are members of the congregation and the call committee who are naysayers or place their personal agenda above what is best for the congregation. These members of the call committee and congregation are toxic to the search process and can make it very difficult for the entire faithful community to discern whom God is calling to the church. Don't be one of the negative congregation members by remembering this verse in Philippians.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

4. Fellowship Together

Building trust is absolutely critical now. It is the glue that will make or break the congregation and call committee. Ideally, we should spend quality time together as a congregation now and as a call committee where we don't talk about the search and solely focus on getting to know each other better. Have meals together. Ask each other how you first came to St. Timothy, how your faith has evolved over time, your family, work life, and hobbies. When we understand each other well, we'll have less conflict and be able to focus on Christ during our search process.

5. Fast Together

Seek the Lord through fasting. Whether it's fasting from one meal a week together or for a whole day or more, spend that time in prayer, seeking the Lord about our pastoral search process. Pray for our future pastor and his/her family. Pray for our congregation. Share what we learned from our time of fasting during our meetings.

6. Remember Christ's Promises

Be intentional about the scripture you personally and the team collectively are ingesting during your pastoral search process. Focus on Scripture where God highlights His vast goodness and greatness. Here are just a few to get you started.

Isaiah 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Jeremiah 32:17 "Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You."

Ephesians 3:20 "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us."

Matthew 10:11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

Jesus is our good shepherd, and He promises to lead us if we are His. We can trust that He's leading all of us in this call process.



Christ is Really Present Virtually: A Proposal for Virtual Communion

On Ash Wednesday, a lady asked me whether it is proper to do communion over Zoom. I told her it was okay, and that prompted me to share with you an article my college professor wrote regarding this same concern.

This blog post of the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community is written by Director Dr. Deanna A. Thompson. She is the author of five books, including *The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World* (Abingdon, 2016), and in this post weighs in on an issue facing churches across the globe during the pandemic: whether and how to do virtual communion.

“I used to be a digital skeptic, dubious that virtual connectedness could foster any meaningful relating among us. Getting diagnosed with incurable cancer, however, provided all sorts of opportunities to reconsider my assumptions about how the world works, including my certainty that virtual connectivity is incapable of enriching our lives.

Cancer broke my back and treatment landed me in the hospital, sidelining me from in-person interaction except with doctors and nurses, family and a few close friends. Life as a university professor, involved parent, active churchgoer and participant in community events — all of it came to a halt.

These virtual connections were not simply poor substitutes for real interaction; they filled my soul at a time of despair.

But amid so much loss, I was introduced to the life-giving possibilities of virtual connectedness. Relatives and friends got in touch through a website focused on caring for those who are sick. Friends created a virtual calendar of food and cleaning needs. As news of my cancer spread virtually, others living with incurable cancer got in touch to offer resources and support. These virtual connections were not simply poor substitutes for real interaction; they filled my soul at a time of despair. I wouldn't have survived my cancer quarantine without them.

As a theologian I had never given the invisible church much thought in life before cancer. But when cancer prevented me from being physically present at church, I was introduced to how the body of Christ exists virtually in profound, healing ways. And when I came across Pastor Jason Byassee's insight that the body of Christ has always been a virtual body, I set to writing and speaking about the important role the virtual body of Christ has always played in ministering to those who suffer, and how we might employ our digital tools to enhance our ability to live out this calling in the world.

These days it's not just the very sick or the very frail who are connecting with the virtual body of Christ; it's most every churchgoer. Christian communities are scrambling to offer online worship, virtual youth group, Bible studies and more in response to the call to avoid physical contact with one another.

With the mass migration to virtual worship, churches face a host of questions about how and whether key elements of worship can be carried out in virtual spaces. And perhaps most prominent among them is the question of virtual communion.

As we consider what it might mean to do communion virtually, it is important to reflect more deeply on what being present to one another in virtual spaces actually means. While conventional wisdom tends to view virtual spaces as disembodied and therefore inferior to embodied, in-person presence, theologian Kathryn Reklis insists that our theology must move beyond “seeing the real versus virtual divide in terms of embodied versus disembodied,” and we must think more creatively about “the new permutations of digital and virtual technology informing our lives as particular ways we are embodied.”

Virtual gatherings for worship over the past few weeks, for many of us, have been real experiences of gathering, connection and worship.

Just as it’s possible to be in close physical proximity with others while simultaneously being absent mentally or spiritually, it’s also possible to be virtually present to one another in profound, meaningful and real ways even when we’re physically distant. The tears running down my cheeks as I participated in my church’s virtual worship service this past Sunday illustrate the embodied impact that gathering together virtually with the body of Christ had on at least my physical body. Virtual gatherings for worship over the past few weeks, for many of us, have been real experiences of gathering, connection and worship.

The denominational guidelines from the ELCA for communion for those who are ill, homebound, or in prison provide insight into how the church has thought about the issue of communion apart from those physically gathered for worship. They recommend either a pastor administering communion separately to those who are prevented from worshipping corporately, or lay persons bringing bread and wine that have been blessed and shared as part of congregational worship as faithful ways to include those physically separated from congregational gathering for Word and sacrament.

The question we face amid the pandemic is: what happens when congregations cannot physically gather and pastors are not able to administer the sacrament in person?

Lutheran theology affirms that the Word is a gift from God that comes to the congregation through public reading of Scripture and proclamation of the gospel; that the liturgy and hymns are means for the community to proclaim and respond to God’s Word. Lutheran theology also affirms that in response to our confession of sins, God works through words of absolution to bestow forgiveness (the part of worship Luther himself deemed most important). In writing about a renewed focus on the Word in this time of coronavirus, ELCA leaders claim that “[t]he Word of God comes to us in all these ways and is really present.” Yes, and Amen.

I encourage the church to consider the potential power of real presence in virtual spaces to nourish and heal.

And if God is *really present* through the Word in all these ways — even through virtual forms of worship — it is worth reflecting on the theological possibility of the real presence of the Word incarnate in, with and through the experience of virtual communion. Despite the recommendation to fast from communion at this time, many churches are nevertheless experimenting with how they might celebrate the Lord's Supper virtually. And while fasting in all sorts of ways is a common Lenten practice, in a few weeks Lent gives way to Easter. In anticipation of getting to that great feast of victory in the church year, I encourage the church to consider the potential power of real presence in virtual spaces to nourish and heal.

In his theology of the cross, Martin Luther insisted that God is present precisely where we least expect God to be. Luther called on Christians to pay attention to God's hidden presence in the pain and suffering of the cross, witnessing how God is at work in such unexpected places to bring redemption and healing. Rather than discouraging practicing communion virtually, perhaps we're being called to more reflection on how God is really present even where many least expect God to be: in, with and through virtual spaces.

At a time when physical contact is so limited, communing together virtually with our faith communities can affirm the reality that our bodies are engaged in worship even when we're participating from our living room, that we're still connected to the other bodies gathered virtually for worship.

We in the ELCA believe that the sacrament of Holy Communion is a means of grace that “creates and strengthens faith for our daily work and ministry in the world,” a rite that “draws us to long for the day of God's justice” and “provides sure and certain hope of the coming resurrection and eternal life” (from the ELCA's Use of the Means of Grace). At a time when physical contact is so limited, communing together virtually with our faith communities can affirm the reality that our bodies are engaged in worship even when we're participating from our living room, that we're still connected to the other bodies gathered virtually for worship even when we can only see photos of them online, and that Christ comes to us in the gifts of bread and wine even when our pastors' Words of Institution are mediated by a screen.

As I learned during my cancer quarantine, virtual connections can mediate the body of Christ to those who suffer. This time of mass quarantine invites creative theological reflection on how we might faithfully gather, worship, and be nourished in spirit and body at a time when we need such nourishment more than ever.

Dr. Deanna Lagerquist
Professor of Religion, St. Olaf College



Altar Guild Notes: March, 2021



Lent started 2 weeks ago in February. The month of March has just begun. It is still Lent. Nothing has changed in the sanctuary. It is still draped in purple. It is a 40-day penitential season. Some (many?) have made time in their day to pause for God. Personal prayers are said. Written devotions are found. Scripture is read. The mind and body sit in quiet to listen for God.

Lent is a great liturgical season to repent and turn to God and “renew a right spirit within me”! But anytime is a good time to begin a new habit that cracks our hearts open to let God in! Sunday starts the week. Morning starts the day. Calendars and clocks mark human time.

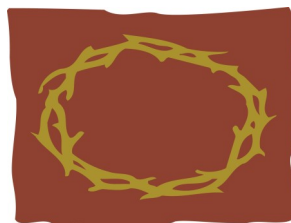
Kairos marks God’s time, the appointed time in the purpose of God. Our liturgical cycle uses colors and symbols to continually orient our human selves to the divine Word.

You will see scarlet (Not red!) on the last Sunday in March. That startling change in the sanctuary marks another beginning; Holy Week. It is Palm Sunday. We will begin with waving palms, loud songs, noisy Hosannas. The week ends quite differently. April will tell that story.



May God’s light find you & His love fill you. Amen.

Your sister in Christ,
Deborah



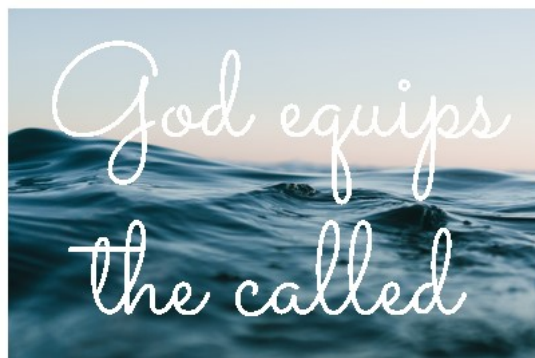
A Message From the President

Last month, I had the middle and high school youth write this down..... “God doesn’t just call the equipped, He equips the called.” We dug deep into the story of Moses and learned how God equipped Moses in spite of Moses’s reluctance to do what God wanted. I, like Moses, said “no” to being the board president the first time around. I now know that when God calls, He will equip us with everything we need to do His work. Now I ask you, “How has God equipped you? How has God equipped us? How has God equipped St. Timothy’s?” As we move forward in our ministry, these are questions for all of us to answer.

This past month, the call committee met for the first time. They reviewed the call process with Pastor Tom and will begin working on our Ministry Site Profile mid-March. As they move forward, we will need your input. It’s imperative that we work together to find our “why” and our purpose. By doing so, we can clarify our vision, our mission, and what it is we are looking for in a new pastor. This will not be an easy task, so please continue to keep all of St. Timothy’s in prayer.

In closing, I am so thankful for St. Timothy’s. I am thankful for our amazing childcare director, Joelle, and her awesome teachers who love on the children in our community. I am thankful for Pastor Tom and all those who work behind the scenes to keep our church, church services, and ministries up and running. I am thankful for everyone who is keeping up on their pledges so our church can continue to grow in big and small ways. I am thankful to our youth who continue to make our time together fun every week, and to their parents who encourage them to zoom or come in person when able. And....I am thankful to God for blessing me with a wonderful St. Timothy’s family. May God continue to bless, guide, and protect St. Timothy’s. Don’t worry about a thing. If we’re called, the only answer God will accept is “yes,” and He will equip us with everything we need.

In peace,
Karen Rose



News and updates from the Child Care Center

The Child Care Center is working on a gift card fundraiser. We will be raffling off ten \$100.00 gift cards the week of St. Patrick's Day. Tickets are \$20.00 each and can be purchased at the Child Care Office or from one of our students. We are raising money to purchase new sensory tables that accommodate social distancing. Join us live that week, each day, to see the tickets pulled by the children! Tickets can be purchased until March 10, 2021.



Our center is nearly full. We have just 2 full time spots available, and a few part-time spots. Please call the Child Care Center if you are interested!

Joelle Waters

News

Lutheran Charities will be having a Virtual Beer Tasting fundraiser on Thursday, March 11th at 7:30 PM. For \$49, you will receive 6 beers (3 flagship and 3 seasonal), house-made chips from Community Beer Works, and beer cheese. Registration can be found at wnylutherancharities.org.



The National Lutheran Choir and Keith Hampton Singers are inviting you to a free virtual program blending spoken reflections, songs and familiar hymns of joy and hope, and new music that speaks to our present time. This will take place on Sunday, March 14th at 3 PM. Visit NLCA.com to watch.



The Niagara Falls Habitat for Humanity is preparing to open for volunteers again, so we'll be partnering with them in the next few months to serve the community. Details will follow as warmer weather approaches.



We are starting to collect Easter Lily orders to decorate our sanctuary on Easter Day. If you would like to contribute a lily in memory or honor of a loved one, please submit their name and your own to the office. The cost is \$15 per plant, and you are welcome to take it home afterward. Please have orders in by March 14th.

Don't forget to leap ahead one hour on March 14th for Daylight Savings!

Worship Information and Special Services

Sunday Worship Services

Our worship services will remain online on Sundays at 8 and 10:30 AM until Easter. We'd love you to join us on Zoom on Sunday mornings by visiting sttimothygrandisland.com for links, or by calling 1-929-205-6099 and using the following meeting details:

- ⇒ For the 8 AM service, use Meeting ID# 831 9564 0799 and passcode 376109.
- ⇒ For the 10:30 AM service, use Meeting ID# 872 8069 0309 and passcode 793463.

We are so grateful to have you join with us in worship!

Mid-Week Lenten Meditation Series

Our Wednesday night Meditation Series will continue for the duration of Lent, focusing on our covenantal promises with God. Join us at 7 PM either in-person or on our live stream, which you can access from our website or by searching us on YouTube. If you plan to attend in-person worship, please register with us so we can observe social distancing protocols.

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Our Maundy Thursday Service will be held in-person and live streamed at 7 PM on April 1st, and our Good Friday Service will be held on Zoom on April 2nd, also at 7 PM.

Easter Sunday

On Easter, April 4th, we are planning to have our worship service at 9 AM, both in-person and online. Details will follow as we get closer.



Missions

In partnership with the Rotary Club of Grand Island, St. Timothy's is a collection location for Undie Sunday through March 7th. These are the items they are most in need of (unused items only, please):

- Warm socks of all sizes
- Men's underwear, sizes Large, Extra Large, and XX Large
- Women's undergarments of all kinds
- Children's underwear

Donations will be distributed to less fortunate and homeless men, women, and children through the Community Missions of Niagara Falls and St. Luke's Mission of Mercy in Buffalo. Items can be placed in the hamper at our church. Thank you for providing personal dignity, comfort, and warmth to neighbors in need.



Missions Spotlight

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response helped La Phat stay in her home. She is a community leader in a village in Cambodia which is experiencing drought. The rice paddies have dried up, and there is not enough rain to support the corn, green bean, and sesame seed crops. Many left the village for cities to find work to support their families, but she had a better idea.

Working with longtime ELCA partner Life With Dignity, La Phat and members of the community designed training programs in risk mitigation, advocacy, alternative livelihood opportunities, and more. They dug ponds and obtained 20 plastic tanks to capture the little rain they do get. Five new wells are being constructed, and two old ones repaired. "We now have hope in this new venture."

Lutheran Disaster Response works all over the world to assist people after hurricanes and earthquakes, and during chronic problems such as drought and health crises. 100% of donations go to the response effort, because overhead is paid for by the ELCA. Thank you!

We are church together for the sake of the world. God's Work. Our Hands.

Prayer Chain

Here at St. Timothy, we believe that prayer is powerful and can be incredibly helpful in our lives and in the lives of others. Our prayer chain allows you to ask those in our church community to pray for your friends and loved ones in their times of need.

If you would like to add someone to the prayer chain, you can call us at 773-4400, email us at communications@sttimothygrandisland.com, or contact Pastor Tom. Please also include an address where we can send cards.



We hold the following people in our prayers: Ray Romaleski, Murray Chesbro, Theresa Cook, Danny Penque, Janet W., Margaret Miller, Phil LeFevre, Mel Zimmerman, Joyce Zimmerman, Jennifer Buchanan, Beverly and Jim Penman, Dan Kramer, Brian Volo, Mike, Olivia Williams and family, Cathy Niccola, Jeanne Stein, Matt Stzaba, Ben Richard, Joanne M., Robert Miller, Louis Volo Jr, Dottie Roehrig, Karen Geng, Sylvia and Joe Smith, Lorraine Pfohl, Jerry Peete, Cheryl Rosati, Rosaria Phillippone, Robin Bengalio Richard, and Charlene Faleski.

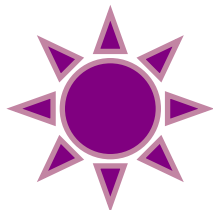
Birthdays and Anniversaries

This month, we'll be celebrating Eilene Gebrian's birthday on March 6th, Herb Westfall's birthday on March 20th, and Mark and Lauren Steck's anniversary on March 27th. Please let us know if you'd like a directory to contact these members, or if you'd like to add your birthday and anniversary to our celebration list!



Pastoral Care

Please reach out to Pastor Tom Glasoe for your pastoral care needs. You can contact him on his cell phone by calling or texting 814-460-5066, by calling the office on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 716-773-4400, or by email at pastor@sttimothygrandisland.com or glasoe@me.com.



March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 <i>Lenten Service, 7 PM</i>	4 <i>Music and Worship Meeting, 7 PM</i>	5 	6
7 <i>Worship, 8 & 10:30 over Zoom</i>	8	9	10 <i>Lenten Service, 7 PM</i> <i>Call Committee, 5:30 PM</i>	11	12	13 
14 <i>Worship, 8 & 10:30 over Zoom</i>	15	16	17 <i>Lenten Service, 7 PM</i> <i>Board Meeting, 5:30 PM</i>	18	19	20
21 <i>Worship, 8 & 10:30 over Zoom</i>	22	23	24 <i>Lenten Service, 7 PM</i>	25	26	27
28 <i>Worship, 8 & 10:30 over Zoom</i> <i>Palm Sunday</i>	29 	30	31			