

Linden Letter
March 2022
Linden Heights UMC

Joel 2:12-13 (NRSV) Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Wednesday, March 2, marks the beginning of our Lenten season. Historically, Lent has been a time of confession and repentance. It is a time where individuals and communities fast, pray, and lament the ways in which they have grieved God's heart. In the early church, Lent was also a time of restoration. Those who had been put out of the worshiping community because of their sin could make amends, show that they had changed, and be welcomed back into the faith community. For the early church, Lent was also a time when those who were new to the faith completed their three years of study and examination and prepared to be baptized and welcomed into the church during the Easter Vigil service.

In more recent history, we have focused mainly on individual confession and repentance. We "give up" something for Lent as a way of identifying with the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Sometimes we "add" something, a spiritual discipline or act of service, as a way of drawing closer to God.

This Lent, I invite us all to not only consider our individual sins, but also our communal sins. Let us ask ourselves "how have we, as the church, failed to be the church that God calls us to be?" I also invite each of us to embrace this season as a time of restoration and reaffirmation of our faith. How do we need to be restored personally and communally? How do we, individually and as a church, need to reaffirm our faith? How can each of us study this season so that we enter into Holy Week and Easter renewed and recommitted to doing the work of God as individuals and as a church?

There will be different opportunities throughout the season of Lent for you to engage in study, worship, prayer, and conversation. I hope and I pray that each of us has a Holy and restorative Lenten season.

May God's blessing of peace be with us all,

Pastor Alicia

***** Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday. I will be imposing ashes and offering prayer in the church parking lot from 7 am- 9 am for those who wish to drive through. We will join Arnolia UMC at their church at 7 pm for worship, ashes, and communion.**

Mission & Outreach

During February we collected food for the Victor's Vittles food pantry. We filled a trunk with food for our hungry neighbors!

We also wrote notes of encouragement and put together Valentine gift bags for the teachers and staff at Pine Grove Elementary School. They were very appreciative!



For March we will be supporting our unhoused neighbors at the Eastern Family Resource Center. They have an urgent need for diapers of all sizes. They especially need toddler sizes 5 and 6 and adult diapers in XL and 1X.

Children & Youth

Kids Group

Children in elementary school are now gathering once a month for games, crafts, Bible study, and time with each other. In February we learned about the armor of God and made superhero masks to remind us that we are strong in the Lord.

Our next Kids group is March 20th, 3-4 pm. All children in elementary school are welcome to join us and friends are welcome too!

Youth Group

Our youth group now meets on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month and will be completing some sort of service work at each gathering. In February we made crafts for residents in an assisted living facility, and we made pinecone bird feeders to help care for the birds in God's creation.

In March we will be making cat and dog toys for BARCS and will put together some brown bag lunches for those who are hungry.

We meet 6:30-8 pm. All middle school and high school youth and their friends are welcome!

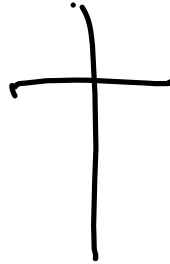
Youth Lock In

Friday, March 25th at 7 pm. Pick up is Saturday March 26th at 8 am. Contact Pastor Alicia or Connie Simmons to register!

Worship

Our worship theme for Lent is “Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent.” We will be using some resources from the creative people at *A Sanctified Art*. Throughout Lent we will look at ways to empty ourselves of what is harmful or broken so that we can be filled by God’s love and grace.

Lenten Devotionals from *A Sanctified Art* are available at the church. If you would like one mailed to you, please let Pastor Alicia know.



Art for Lent

We are asking that each person, or family if you prefer, create a wooden cross of some sort. In the sanctuary we are using sticks, but you can use anything you have. You will also want to gather some different colored yarn if you have some. If you need help making a cross or you need yarn, please let Pastor Alicia know and we will get a cross and yarn to you!

Soup and Salad Lunch

After the April 3rd worship service in the fellowship hall. Everyone is invited to bring a soup in a crock pot, or a salad, or a dessert. Everyone is invited to share this simple meal together!

We continue to offer a Family Service at 9:30 am in the Fellowship hall. (Except for the 1st Sunday of each month when we worship together at 10:30.) Everyone is welcome to attend this service that is designed to help our children learn about God and worship God together. Our second service takes place at 10:30 am in the sanctuary and on zoom. The zoom link is below! Now that covid metrics are low once again, everyone who is fully vaccinated is invited to go without a mask inside the building if they choose to do so. We ask that everyone continue to respect one another’s choices with regards to masking!

Sunday Worship zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83148539664?pwd=ZHhtNGpzNVZ6QjVBb08zeHBONW9EUT09>

Meeting ID: 831 4853 9664 Passcode: 599815

One tap mobile +13017158592,,83148539664#,,, *599815# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location: 1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC) 1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

An Easter Flower Order form is attached! Orders are due March 22nd.

We have **combined worship** at 10:30 am on March 6th and April 3rd. You can attend in person or virtually!

Information about this year's Stations of the Cross will be available soon!

Study

During Lent we will engage in a Bible Study that utilizes the poetry of our Bishop, Rev. LaTrelle Easterling. In "Speak a Word," she offers to us a poem that reflects the theme of the scripture. Classes will meet via zoom. (The link is below.)

- Week 1: Seek truth
- Week 2: Trust in Provision
- Week 3: Anticipate Healing
- Week 4: Have Hope
- Week 5: Love Abundantly
- Week 6: Humbly Serve
- Holy Week: Journey to the Cross and Beyond

Class Schedule:

- Thursdays March 3rd and March 10th at 7:15 pm
- Wednesdays March 16th, 23rd, 30th, April 6th, and 13th at 7 pm.

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89503983105?pwd=cEZHbDVLTE5vMEtFUmpGTWhBYzdQUT09>

Meeting ID: 895 0398 3105 Passcode: 683095

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,89503983105#,,,,*683095# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location: 1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC), 929 205 6099 US (New York)

American Sign Language Classes

13 of us just completed a 3-session class learning some basics of American sign language. We will be using what we have learned in worship! There has been an expressed desire to continue learning, so we are applying for a grant so that we can hire someone to teach us more. If you would like to help with the grant application, please call Pastor Alicia!

New Group for Young Adults!

We have had two meetings of our newly formed young adult group! This group for those ages 18-29 is meeting once a week for Bible study, service, and conversation. We meet in the Preschool room on Sundays 4:30 pm-5:30 pm. During Lent we will use the "Speak a Word" study and will plan for spring service and outreach projects.

With Our Community



Invite your friends and neighbors to our annual Easter Egg Hunt!!

Sunday, April 10th at 3 pm at the church!

Eggs, Candy, Crafts.... And it's free!!

Serving at Church

Church Clean Up Days

We have TWO clean up days scheduled before Easter!!

March 19th starting at 9 am, we will clean up the inside of our building.

Help is needed with:

- * Taking stuff to the dump
- * Cleaning the statue in the garden
- * Touching up some paint
- * Cleaning windows
- * Repairing the cove molding in the kitchen
- * Cutting a drain pipe in the kitchen to meet health department code

April 9th starting at 9 am, we will clean up the outside of our facility.

Help is needed with:

- * Picking up sticks
- * Weeding the playground
- * Painting some handrails
- * Weeding the flower beds
- * Mulching

Help is needed in the garden!!

If you love to garden, we have a way for you to serve! We need people to plant, mulch, weed, water, and tend to our beautiful prayer garden! If you are interested in serving, contact Pastor Alicia or Debbie Gorsche.

Trustee Maintenance List

The trustees have a list of jobs around the church that we need help taking care of. If you can change light bulbs, do minor repair work, are comfortable on a ladder, talk with Pastor Alicia or Frank Barilla. Any help that we get keeps us from having to pay for work to be done.

Ministry Team Reports

Courageous Conversations Classes were held on three Wednesday evenings in February. Participants learned skills for deep listening, reflective listening, and listening/responding to stories of trauma.

We will host another set of classes after Easter. The next set of classes will talk about definitions and some history around the “hot button” topics of our time. We hope that you will join us for listening, learning, and conversation. We play games too!

Trustee Ministry Team

The trustees have been hard at work. The following has been done over the past few months:

- * Church was rekeyed.
- * A panic bar was installed on the outside fellowship door.
- * New doors were installed in the boiler room
- * New (working) coffee pos were purchased
- * We discovered that our stoves can be repaired and will be using the money given by church members to do this work.

We could use some more people on this ministry team! We need some help with

- * Calling companies to get bids for various services
- * Meeting contractors at the church for work that gets done
- * Reviewing our insurance policy
- * Making decisions about what work needs to be done.

If you can serve, talk to Pastor Alicia or Frank Barilla

The Finance Ministry Team will have a full report in the next Linden Letter.

**** Daylight Savings Time Begins on March 13th!!
Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour****

Church Leadership

Pastor: Alicia Vanisko
Pianist: Jin Lee
Community Outreach/
Handbell Director: Deirdre Duda
Leadership Chair/
Children's Ministries: Barb Yingling

SPRC Chair: Dave Conrad
Missions Chair: Debbie Gorshe &
Connie Simmons
Worship Technology: Greg Singer & Brian
Vanisko
Trustee Chair: Frank Barilla

Calendar

March

2 nd	7 am- 9am 7 pm	Ashes and Prayer Ash Wednesday Service	Parking lot Arnolia UMC
3 rd	6 pm 7:15 pm	Bell practice Lent Bible Study	Loft Zoom
6 th	10:30 am 4:30 pm 6:30 pm	Combined Worship Young Adult Bible Study Youth Group	Sanctuary/zoom Preschool room Preschool room
7 th	7 pm	Trustee meeting	Preschool room
10 th	6 pm 7:15 pm	Bell practice Lent Bible Study	Loft Zoom
13 th	9:30 am 10:30 am 4:30 pm	Family Worship Worship Young Adult Bible Study	Fellowship Hall Sanctuary/zoom Preschool room
14 th	7 pm	Leadership Team meeting	Preschool room
16 th	7 pm	Lent Bible Study	Zoom
17 th	6 pm	Bell Practice	Loft
19 th	9 am	Indoor Clean Up	Church
20 th	9:30 am 10:30 am 3 pm- 4 pm 4:30 pm 6:30 pm	Family Worship Worship Kids Group Young Adult Bible Study Youth Group	Fellowship Hall Sanctuary/zoom Fellowship Hall Preschool room Preschool room
23 rd	7 pm	Lent Bible Study	Zoom
24 th	6 pm	Bell Practice	Loft
25 th	7 pm (ends at 7 am on Saturday)	Youth Group Lock in	church
27 th	9:30 am 10:30 am 4:30 pm	Family Worship Worship Young Adult Bible Study	Fellowship Hall Sanctuary/zoom Preschool room

30 th	7 pm	Lent Bible Study	Zoom
31 st	6 pm	Bell Practice	Loft
April			
3 rd	10:30 am	Combined Worship	Sanctuary
	11:30	Soup & Salad Lunch	Fellowship Hall
	4:30 pm	Young Adult Bible Study	Preschool room
	6:30 pm	Youth Group	Preschool room
4 th	7 pm	Trustee Meeting	Preschool room
6 th	7 pm	Lent Bible Study	Zoom
7 th	6 pm	Bell Practice	Loft
9 th	9 am	Outside Clean up	Church
10 th	9:30 am	Family Worship Service	Fellowship Hall
	10:30 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary/zoom
	3 pm	Easter Egg Hunt	Church
	4:30 pm	Young Adult Bible Study	Preschool room
	6:30 pm	Youth Group	Preschool room
11 th	7 pm	Leadership team meeting	Preschool room
13 th	7 pm	Lent Bible Study	Zoom
14 th	7 pm	Holy Thursday Service	Sanctuary
15 th	7 pm	Good Friday Service	Sanctuary
17 th	6 am	Sunrise Worship Service	Front Lawn
	9:30 am	Family Worship Service	Sanctuary
	10:30 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary/zoom
24 th	3 pm	Kids Group	Fellowship Hall
30 th		Manna House (details to follow)	