

# *Linden Letter*

## *February/March 2023*

Isaiah 58:6-10 *“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? <sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator<sup>[u]</sup> shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.” If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”*

The passage above from the book of Isaiah brings us a compelling word from God, one that is especially appropriate as we enter into the season of Lent. (I encourage you to read the entire chapter!) The people had been complaining that God did not seem to care that they had fasted and sacrificed. God was not answering their prayers the way that they wanted God to answer. God answered them, basically saying that they fasted for themselves and were motivated by their own desires. They did not fast the way that God wanted them to fast. The above passage detailed what God expected the people to do as a fast. Let the oppressed go free and break the cycles of poverty and oppression. End hunger and homelessness. Make sure that people have what they need to survive. Stop pointing fingers at others and own up to one's own sins. Stop saying evil things.

On Sunday I will be introducing the concept of fasting in worship and inviting everyone to participate in this spiritual discipline in one way or another. Some will fast from food, as is traditional. Others, especially those with health issues that make fasting unsafe or unhealthy, may choose to fast in other ways. More information about fasting can be found under the worship section of this newsletter. However you choose to fast, I hope that you will keep the above passage in mind. Use the time to feed hungry people. Do something to help end systems that perpetuate oppression and poverty. Help meet someone's basic needs.

I pray that we all may have a holy and meaningful lent that honors God and draws us ever closer to our Creator, Savior, Sustainer.

Blessings of peace to you all!

Pastor Alicia

## Mission

### Medical supplies



Most of the medical equipment we have at our church has been moved into what used to be the nursery. (Thank you to the youth group for doing this work!) We are looking for some people to help organize a system for lending out equipment and keeping track of what goes where. If you would be interested in serving on this ministry team, please let Pastor Alicia know. (Or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter)

If you, or someone you know, has any of our equipment, please let us know so that we can create an accurate inventory list!

### Thank you!!

**From World Vision:** “Thank you for your generosity and for showing God’s love to vulnerable children and families. In a year that brought new and ongoing challenges for much of our world, your faithful support equipped people to create lasting change for themselves and their communities, building resilience for the future.”

**From Pine Grove Elementary School to the men’s Bible study group:** “I cannot thank you enough for your continued support for families in need at Pine Grove Elementary. Your contributions make an enormous difference to so many people in our community. We are so grateful for your generosity and wish you peace and joy this holiday season.” (This was received in December)

**From Victor’s Vittles:** “On behalf of Victor’s Vittles Food Pantry I want to thank you for your generous donation. Our pantry now serves 30-35 families each week and your contribution enables us to continue this important service to our community. This past year showed a large increase in the number of those who needed our help to feed their families, and because of help like yours, we have been able to keep the pantry shelves stocked. We appreciate your support.”

### Mission report from December

In December we supported three families with gifts for their children and food. All three families were very grateful and amazed by our generosity. Thank you for sharing the love of God with these families by making their Christmas celebrations special.

### Mission report from January

In January we collected items for birthday bags for children in need in our community. Each bag contained cake mix, icing, sprinkles, and candles. The children decorated and assembled the bags during Kids Group and the Family Worship Service. Together we created 36 Birthday Bags so that children in need can have a special way to celebrate their birthdays!

## Upcoming Mission & Outreach Opportunities



We are looking into doing a bike drive with Bikes for the World in late April. Information about this organization can be found at [bikesfortheworld.org](http://bikesfortheworld.org). We would collect gently used bikes in good condition to be sent to places in the US and across the world. Bikes allow children to get to school and adults to get to work when other options of transportation are not available. If you are interested in helping to coordinate this effort or would be willing to volunteer on collection day, please let Pastor Alicia know. You can also speak to a member of our Missions Ministry Team. (Or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter)

### Day of Service

We are planning a day in late spring where we can come together as a congregation to serve others in our community. We are talking about making and distributing lunches for homeless people, making Project Linus blankets, making cards for people living in an assisted living facility, making treats for pets at a shelter, and much more! If you have an idea for a service project, or would like to help plan the event, please contact Pastor Alicia, a member of the Missions Ministry Team, or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter.

### Card Ministry

Do you have the gift of sending cards to people? We are looking for a team of people who are willing to send cards to those who could use a message of healing, encouragement, or support. Cards and stamps will be provided! If you are interested, let Pastor Alicia know, or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter.

## Children & Youth

### Youth Group

\*Thanks to the youth for carrying all of the medical equipment from a closet in the basement to the room upstairs and for organizing the equipment!

\*We will meet February 19<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>, and March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm for games, Bible study, and snacks. Some of our meetings will include art, meditation time, or service projects as well.

### Kids Group

\* We will meet February 26<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm for games, socializing, prayer, a Bible story, crafts, and service projects.

### Summer camp for kids

The Baltimore-Washington Conference runs an amazing summer camp program for kids and youth. We have two camps, one on the water and one in the mountains. For more information, please visit: <https://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/>

### Vacation Bible School

We are beginning to make plans for this summer's VBS. If you would like to help with the planning, please reach out to Pastor Alicia or Becky Danso. (Or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter)

### Play Group

We have a play group for home school and virtual school children at lunch time every other week. The next gathering is Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. Talk to Becky Danso for more information.

## Fellowship



Calling all members 50 and older of Linden Heights to start a once a month get together for games and fellowship. If you are interested, our first gathering will be February 21<sup>st</sup> at 10am. We will be playing BINGO, and all you need to do to attend is to bring a White Elephant or a "Re-Gift" (as long as it is in good condition) as these will be the prizes for this month. Bring a sandwich and dessert and drinks will be provided.

Let either Esther Shock-Seibert, or Margaret Helfrich know so we will know how to prepare.

Hoping this is something that might interest you!

[Estshock1051@gmail.com](mailto:Estshock1051@gmail.com) Margaret 410.668.1808

## Worship

Lent begins on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and we have a lot planned for this special season of the church!

### Ash Wednesday Services & Supper

"Ashes to Go" will be given out on the 22<sup>nd</sup> 8-9 am. Pastor Alicia will offer ashes and prayer in the parking lot for anyone who wishes to receive them early in the day.

A Soup and Salad Dinner will be served prior to our Ash Wednesday service. Please join us in the fellowship hall at 5:30 pm for a simple meal. We could use a few more people to bring salad and bread. If you would like to bring a soup, we could use one more soup as well. If you can bring food or help set up, please email Pastor Alicia or use the "bring food" link below. We would like to know how many people plan to attend so that we can better prepare. To sign up to attend the dinner, please use the "attending" link below, sign up on the sheet outside of the sanctuary on Sunday morning, or email Pastor Alicia.

Attending: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4EACA62E5-soup1>

Bring food: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4EACA62E5-bring>

A Traditional Ash Wednesday service with the imposition of ashes and communion will be held at 7 pm at Linden Heights. The people from Arnolia UMC will be joining us for worship.

### **Fasting**

Every lent we are urged to give something up, add a new spiritual discipline, or both. Several members of our church Leadership Team have discussed the spiritual discipline of fasting and would like to invite you to join us in this ancient spiritual discipline.

The bible is full of examples of people fasting.

Joel 2:12-13 says “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.

Jesus fasted as we hear in Matthew 4:1-2. “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished.”

You are invited to join us in fasting on Wednesdays during lent. Detailed information will be given during worship on Sunday. Here are the basics of what you need to know:

- \* On Wednesday, engage in the spiritual discipline of a fast. Traditionally this means giving up a meal (or more than one.) This mealtime can be used for prayer or serving others. For those who cannot or should not skip meals, we encourage you to fast from something else that you like or desire, like social media, sweets, watching TV, etc.
- \* Prayer cards will be available that you can read when temptation strikes!
- \* When temptation happens, and it will, pray to God for strength.
- \* Gather with others for support and encouragement after worship. Those on zoom can talk after the service. Those in the sanctuary can gather in the parlor or the preschool room depending on the number of people gathered.

**Easter Flower Orders** are due no later than February 26<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to order flowers for the sanctuary on Easter and have not placed your order, please do so now! An order sheet is attached at the end of the newsletter.



**Our Lenten worship series is entitled “Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith.”** *(Logo by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, used with permission by A Sanctified Art)*

Each week we will ask ourselves questions and seek some answers from God as we dive into the Lenten scriptures. We will journey with Nicodemus and ask “How do we begin again?” We will listen to the blind man hear people arguing about his sin and ask “Who has sinned?” We will stand outside of Lazarus’s tomb and ask “Can these bones still live?” Together we will explore these scriptures, and several more, as we ask questions to seek a deeper understanding of God and a deeper faith in the one who created us, saves us, and sustains us.

**Lent Bible Study:** We will meet on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm on zoom. We will take a deeper dive into the scripture studied the previous Sunday. We will also look at art and read poetry designed by the artists at A Sanctified Art, and will create some art ourselves. No experience in art is needed! If you miss worship on Sunday, you are still welcome to join the study!

Lent Bible Study Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87454086018?pwd=UmtiMkltTkhhNEU5WW5rSFhmU2R6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 874 5408 6018

Passcode: 926455

One tap mobile +13017158592,,87454086018#,,, \*926455# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 (Washington DC), +1 312 626 6799 (Chicago), +1 929 205 6099 (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87454086018?pwd=UmtiMkltTkhhNEU5WW5rSFhmU2R6Zz09>



### **Stations of the Cross**

We will once again be offering an art based, interactive Stations of the Cross during holy week. Each station will offer a scripture reading that tells a part of the story of Jesus' last week, a prayer, art or tableaux, and something for participants to do. We are looking for people to create art or set up a tableaux for a station. If you would like to participate, please let Alicia or Deirdre know! Children and youth are welcome to participate as well!

### **Blankets in Worship**

You may have noticed blankets on some of the pews in the sanctuary. They are for you to use if you are cold, or if you are praying and want the comfort of a "prayer blanket." If you have a blanket to donate, just bring it to church!

### **Serving in Worship**

There are many ways for you to participate in worship. Please pray about each opportunity and listen for how God may be calling you to serve!

- \* welcome people at the front door
- \* bring the greeting to in person and online worshipers as part of the service
- \* read scripture
- \* serve communion
- \* bring the bread for communion
- \* light the Christ candle

You can offer to serve by talking to Pastor Alicia or use the opportunity to serve sheet at the end of the newsletter.

## Ministry Team Information

**Offering Envelopes** are coming! We will let you know when they come in so that you can pick them up at the church. If you no longer wish to receive envelopes, please let Gail Discher or Pastor Alicia know.

**New handrails** have been installed outside of the preschool doors. We have also installed a railing in the sanctuary leading to the chancel. These railings were paid for by the many generous memorial donations that we have received.

**Family Support** is a confidential small group that provides support to those who have family members struggling with addictions. The group meets every other week at 6:30 pm in the parlor. The next meetings are: Feb 28, March 14, March 28. For information contact JoAnn Eisner or Pastor Alicia.

**Electronic Sign Update:** Thank you for all of your contributions toward our electronic sign! We are very close to reaching our final goal of \$36,000. In 2022 you donated \$7284. With these donations, the money raised at the flea markets, money from the improvement fund, and money from some of our memorial donations, we now have a total of \$32,841!!!

The sign is in production, and we expect it to be delivered to the installers by early April. We do not yet have an installation date but will let you know as soon as we know!

## Community Outreach

**Our Easter Egg Hunt** has been scheduled for Sunday, April 2nd.

**The Flea Market** has been set for Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Details will come out later.

## Opportunities to Serve

If you would like to serve in any of these ways, please print this sheet and give it to Pastor Alicia, or fill it out electronically and email it to [alicialhumc@verizon.net](mailto:alicialhumc@verizon.net).

Your Name:

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to help plan our Day of Service

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in helping organize a bike drive with Bikes for the World

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be a part of the team coordinating the lending of our medical supplies

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be a part of the card ministry

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to help plan VBS/ volunteer at VBS this summer

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to serve in worship by:

\_\_\_\_\_ welcoming people at the front door

\_\_\_\_\_ giving the greeting during the worship service

\_\_\_\_\_ read scripture

\_\_\_\_\_ serve communion

\_\_\_\_\_ bring bread for communion

\_\_\_\_\_ light the Christ candle

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to attend the soup and supper dinner on Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30

\_\_\_\_\_ I can bring a salad or bread to the soup and salad dinner



## 2023 Easter Flower Order Form

### Orders are Due by Feb. 26

Name:

Phone Number:

In honor of:

In Memory of:

**Lilies** are \$13.95 each and have 4-6 blooms each

#### **Hyacinths:**

4" pot of Hyacinth is \$5.50 and only comes in purple

6" pot of Hyacinths are \$10.95 and are in purple, pink, and white

**Tulips** 6" pot and are \$10.95. They come in yellow, red, and pink

**Daffodils** 6" pot is \$10.95

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Easter Lily pots

\_\_\_\_\_ of 6" Hyacinth- Purple

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Tulips- Red

\_\_\_\_\_ of 6" Hyacinth- Pink

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Tulips- Pink

\_\_\_\_\_ of 6" Hyacinth- White

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Tulips- Yellow

\_\_\_\_\_ of 4" purple Hyacinth

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Daffodils

Total cost @ \$13.95 Each\_\_\_\_\_

Total cost @ \$10.95 Each\_\_\_\_\_

Total cost @ \$5.50 Each\_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost: \_\_\_\_\_