

# Ripples

## Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors”

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F E B R U A R Y

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2024

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

Dear Stillwater Family,

During the month of February, we typically focus on Love and Valentines Day and hearts and flowers and such.

While none of that is wrong or even bad, I think that Valentines Day should be practiced every day – even though I am probably the worst when it comes to getting flowers for Sherri!

This Month, instead of looking at Valentines Day, I want to look at something completely different. I want to look at the Season of Lent that actually begins on Valentines Day this year.

Lent is a season of reflection, spiritual growth, sacrifice, and generosity. It traditionally lasts forty days, modeled after Christ's forty-day fast in the desert, and ends on Good Friday.

In the Western Church, Lent officially begins with a reminder of our mortality on Ash Wednesday. It is meant as a time of repentance, prayer and fasting to honor and remember the suffering of Jesus in the weeks before His death and resurrection.

Lent was initially established for new Christians. They were to spend 40 days and 40 nights preparing for their baptism. If, in the end, they still wanted to follow Jesus, then on Easter Eve, they would be baptized as the sun was rising in the east, signaling the new day, the new era, inaugurated because of the Resurrection. The powerful significance for them was to prepare for their vocation as Christians the same way Jesus prepared for His vocation as the Messiah: 40 days of introspection and self-examination.

Later the church used the 40 days of Lent as a time of renewal for those who were already Christians because, at a certain point, everyone in the empire...was baptized as infants. So, the time of Lent was used as a time of renewal and recommitment to the Christian life, examining our lives in light of the One we are supposed to follow.

Today, Lent is observed during the 40-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. It is a time to set aside our wants and needs to come humbly and meek before God, recognizing our need for a Savior above all. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, reminds us that we are from dust and return to dust (see Genesis 3:17-19).

Ash Wednesday serves as a reminder that we will die and face the consequences of sin. The meaning and purpose of Lent are to reflect on our sinful nature and praise God for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to serve, live, and die for our sins. Lent ends on Easter when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. We are no longer cursed to the grave, but our sins are forgiven.

The word Lent comes from the old English word for "spring." As I once heard it put, Lent is "spring training" for the Christian as we are tutored in repentance, faith, and holy living. The season has been kept as a time for devotion and self-denial that comes forth from a faithful heart that dwells on God's Word and draws life and hope from it. Beginning in the 4th century the observance of Lent originally became connected with a forty day fast prior to Easter. This tradition continues today as some Christians give up meat during Lent or surrender a vice like chocolate, coffee, or television. While a fast of any kind is not necessary, it is certainly a helpful way to discipline the body and the mind upon the things of God and the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. Should you decide to fast in some way, it may be helpful to consider Jesus' words about fasting in his Sermon on the Mount, "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward" (Mt 6:16).

Lent is 40 days long - ending on the Saturday before Easter. You may wonder how Lent can be 40 days if Ash Wednesday is 46 days before Easter. That is because the Lenten fast does not include Sundays, which are considered feast days (a celebration of the resurrection)—so the six Sundays before Easter are omitted from the 40-day observance of fasting.

The Sundays in Lent usually focus on the themes of temptation, God's mercy, the life of a disciple, the refreshment that God gives to his disciples, and the lordship of Jesus.

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. It includes Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Friday, and Holy Saturday or Black Saturday.

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. Maundy Thursday commemorates the day Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples, washed their feet, instituted Communion to remember His Sacrifice and retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane for prayer.

Good Friday is the day Jesus was crucified. It is called "good" because of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. Without this "good" day, we would not have the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life in heaven.

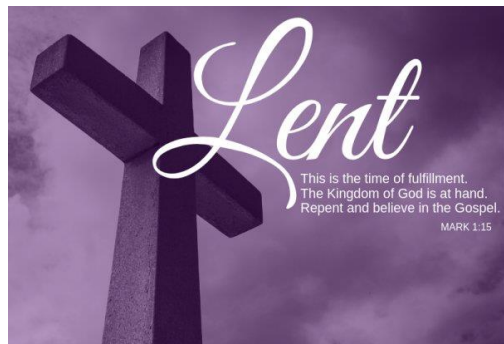
Unlike Advent, which is a time of celebration and excitement looking forward to an arrival, Lent is observed more solemnly, preparing for, and reflecting on Jesus' sacrificial death. But at the end of Lent is Easter Sunday, the most joyous celebration of Jesus Christ's Resurrection. Because of His death and resurrection, we are offered new life to live as covenant children in the Kingdom of God forever.

Paul tells us in Philippians 3:10-20: I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

May our Lord richly bless your contemplation during this Lenten season even while you reflect on God's great love for you through the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Craig



# Stillwater Youth Groupies

*The Youth are committed to serve the community through our strength in Jesus Christ.*

Welcome to February all, and though it may be confusing that's what month it is considering it's nicer now than it is in June, I am legally not allowed to forget Lilly's first birthday and I'm pretty sure that's on February 1<sup>st</sup>, so that's what we're going to go with. The super bowl is also coming up which is always a helpful reminder as well. Unfortunately, it is the Kansas City Chiefs vs the San Francisco 49er's, and the last time that matchup happened (Feb. 2020), the whole world got shut down right after for like six months. I can't quite remember why, it started with a "C" I think, cooties maybe? Thankfully though, no matter what happens this month, the rest of the year, or any of the foreseeable future, we truly do not have to worry. Why do we not have to worry? As believer's all our answers and should most likely would be, "because we have Jesus". This is most certainly true, but how do we know that? What if someone were to come up to you right now with no forewarning and ask, "How do you know Jesus will never forsake you?" or more commonly "How do you know Jesus loves you and is real?". Would our answers just be "cause the Bible says" or would we be able to quote scripture and take somebody right where their questions would be answered. Knowing that certain information comes from the Bible and is God-breathed is good to know, but think about if you were in the other person's shoes. When somebody tells you information, do you tend to believe them the more specific and well-versed on a subject they are, or if they are broader and vaguer? A hot topic I hear in the community and all around me is the election, and when I hear people talking about "facts" concerning it, I always tend to lean towards the source who's at least getting information from a certain source and is able to quote articles versus someone who just says something with nothing backing it up. Now the election and the Bible are not the same thing at all, but it's just an example of how we think when it comes to hearing things. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Timothy writes, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." The Word of God is profitable for so many things! We can teach people from the words we read, and we can learn ourselves. Knowing Christ is such an awesome, undeserved gift, but for Him to be faithful to us, we have to be faithful to Him. The best place to learn how to do this and learn more about what we believe is the Bible. I encourage us all to dig into His Word for all the reasons listed in 2 Timothy 3, because if we are not growing, we are shrinking!

Unlike Stillwater youth group's youth leader, the month of January was pretty chill. One Wednesday night meeting unfortunately had to be cancelled due to nature's dandruff (snow), and the mature Timmerman, my beautiful wife, led another one of the youth groups due to, as professional doctors would diagnose it, my icky bad tum-tum. The two youth groups I did hold

however were a great time as always, and we averaged about 11ish per group. We are still studying leadership and different leaders in the Bible who are great inspirations and examples still to this day! The youth have been very involved asking questions, and at some points, teaching me it seems like. We had one major event in the month of January, being our annual night ski at Big Mountain! Eleven students followed us up the mountain, they did a great job pushing the bus up there, and a few new faces tagged along as well! There were no serious injuries or need to call ski patrol, always a gold star effort in my mind, and we had a wonderful time of fellowship and continued to get know each other better as a Christian family! There are two more major events coming up for the youth group as well! Our annual Valentines dinner fundraiser is on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm in the activity center and our menu this year is American! No, we will not be serving bald eagle, but I'm sure some of you remember a time back in the day when you could just sit down and get a good burger, fries, and a shake for a reasonable price, so we'll take you back to those days. The reasonable price we charge is actually zero dollars, which I've always found pretty affordable, because there's no admission charge, just a free-will offering and a silent and live auction! Everyone is invited, the more the better, and if you have something you would like to donate to either of our auctions, please let me know, I'd be open arms! The next event we have coming up is our lock-in which tentatively will be Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> to the wee hours of Saturday March 9<sup>th</sup>. I have just physically recovered from the last one, so I suppose it's time to get at it again, especially since the youth ask to do one like once a week. Every year we invite our sister church Faith's youth group as well and we have really developed a special connection with them through all the things we've been able to do together! The other facet of youth ministry that has been going swimmingly here at Stillwater is our confirmation class. Four faithful students meet every Sunday after church and we discuss different Biblical doctrines, such as the ten commandments, which we just finished, law and gospel, and all sorts of Biblical teachings. We will go until May, and they will then start year two this September!

Prayer, prayer, prayer. There's lots of things wrong and hard to stomach honestly in the sinful world around us, but we will never fix these things on our own. How do we go about making changes as a follower of Jesus? Not to go into a whole other sermon here, but this is always the spot in the newsletter where I encourage different aspects of prayer. I would say the most important thing when praying is to always let it be your first choice. Like when thinking about the difficulties of our world and country, I don't have an answer to fix it in ten minutes, but just praying about these things we're feeling and struggling with is the best place to start! Praise God for His faithfulness and what He does in our lives! Have a blessed February and feel free to take our significant other out to a fancy date on the 10<sup>th</sup>!

God Bless,

Bryce Timmerman

# You Are Invited!



You are invited to a FUN evening out to support our Youth Group in their first fundraiser of the year. Join them in the Activity Center on Saturday, February 10, starting at 6 pm for a retro "Diner Foods" themed menu.

Before dinner, you will have to opportunity to perouse the Silent Auction items and make a bid or two. Or three, or four. After dinner, Bryce will kick-off the Oral Auction that is always a fun time for all in attendance!



They are still looking for items, services, or outings for both the silent and oral auction. Call or text Bryce at (701)319-8295 to let him know that you have something for them!



The Women's Missionary Federation met on January 25th after a one week weather delay. Sherri, our new president, opened the meeting with prayer. Rachel, our new vice president, gave the devotion. She encouraged us to look back and thank God for all the things he has done for us.

We started our new Bible study series, Exuberant Joy! The study is on the book of Philippians. Elaine led us through our first lesson, which led to thoughtful discussion.

Since we did not meet in December, there wasn't a secretary's report. However, Elaine wrote a final report that can be found in last month's Ripples newsletter. She retired after 20 years as WMF secretary! We are so appreciative of Elaine's years of dedication.

In Judy's absence Sherri and Gayle gave the Treasurers report. A \$212 birthday gift will be given to Alexis Olson, who is a Bible translator serving in Tanzania. We currently have \$145.88 in our account. Money this month will go toward AFLC Christian Education. At the end of the year we had just over \$850, and our goal is not to keep a surplus of money. Since we did not meet in December, the four officers collectively decided it would be nice gesture to show our appreciation to Pastor Craig and others who have gone above and beyond at Stillwater. These staff have not had raises in a few years, and it was a small way to show them they are indeed appreciated. Gifts were given to Pastor Craig, Bryce (youth pastor), Karen (secretary), Ashley (after school director), Judy (bookkeeper) and Karla (organist).

Julie Brubaker wanted us to know there are various opportunities for seniors in the community. One is Join the Strong People, an exercise program Mondays and Thursdays at 1:30 at the Westgate Mall.

Ambassador Publications, AFLC Parish Education has published author Leslie Hall's book Jesus A-Z. It is thoughtfully written and beautifully illustrated and would make a lovely baptismal or other gift for a young child. The books are \$15, and you may see Lavonne if you are interested in making a purchase.



Our next potluck will be Sunday, February 4th. Suzanne's group will set up, Sherri's group will serve, and Lori's group will clean up. Thank you, ladies, for helping to ensure our potlucks continue. Plan to join us the first Sundays of each month following the service for good food and fellowship.

The WMF Rally will take place in Ferndale, WA April 13th. Lavonne and Karen B will attend again this year, and anyone who is interested is welcome to join this inspiring event.

Classes in the activity center have been going over very well, including cupcake decorating, knitting, crocheting and tincture making. Still in the works are beginning weaving and cribbage. Further ideas will be posted to inspire what you may be willing to teach or desire to learn. It is a great way to learn a new skill or hobby and build relationships.

We will be having our annual Women's Luncheon the Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. This event continues to grow in popularity. This year's theme is Aprons—the tie that binds. Mark your calendars...women, girls and friends are welcome!

The bulletin board at the top of the stairs in the church entryway will have a new purpose. Half will be designated for needs and wants—for example, I need a high chair, queen mattress, set of dishes for 8. The second half will be for sale or free—for example, oak dresser—\$25, men's ice skates size 11—free, etc. You may post a photo of the item if you wish. Your post must be legible and include your name and contact information. DO NOT leave the item(s) at the church, rather arrange a pick up with the person whose name is listed. This will be great exchange and way for one's junk to become another's treasure!

The youth annual Valentine's Day dinner will be held Saturday, February 10th at 6:00 pm. The theme will be retro diner—be prepared, should this also mean Bryce waiting tables on roller skates! All are welcome to attend this fun event. Donated items are needed for an auction. You may bring items or make up a basket. Baked goods tend to go over very well.

Suggestions for future events include: progressive dinner, ladies night out, scavenger hunt, men's breakfast and men's game feed. Keep the ideas coming!

Sherri closed our meeting with prayer. There were several prayers of thanks for answered prayers as well as requests for prayers for peace and healing.

Sherri provided a delicious lunch of sloppy joes, chips and a salad and Rachel Texas sheet cake. Thank you, ladies, for jumping in at the last minute in our original hostesses absences.

Submitted by Gayle Lantto, WMF secretary

Check Out This Great Resource



**Direct 2023 Choice Dollars Today** - Are you or someone you know a **Thrivent** member? If you haven't already done so, you can still direct 2023 Choice Dollars to **Stillwater Free Lutheran Church!** Don't miss the opportunity to recommend where Thrivent gives back!

 **Valentines Month** 

Let us love one another, for love comes from God. 1 John 4: 7-8.

Mark your calendar! The next **Primetimers Luncheon** is scheduled for Saturday, February 24 in the Activity Center. Lunch will be served at noon with musical entertainment to follow at 1 PM. A freewill offering is requested! The menu will be BBQ pork sandwiches, baked beans, chips, and dessert. Music provided by one of our own Gary Byrer on guitar.

Please RSVP so we know how many to plan for food. If you need transportation, or have questions please contact me. Invite your family and friends to enjoy the fellowship.

This invitation is also open to the congregation.

Ed Van Scoten  
(503) 351-8523    edvs@juno.com

# After-School Program



We are finally ready to start putting on the armor of God!! This month the kids are memorizing Ephesians 6:14 so we're putting on the belt of Truth and the breastplate of Righteousness!! I'm sensing some fun craft projects this month!!! January was very much a "let's just make it through the month" month!! Sickness hit the kids hard with Covid, influenza and pinkeye (to name a few) running rampant so we prayed a little extra hard through January.

Again, I want to thank our volunteers (Judy, Vicki, Elaine, Karen H, Karen B and Meri) for faithfully helping Debbie and me each week! We could not run our program without you!! And a big thank you to all you snack givers!! The kids really love you!!

As in past months I humbly ask you to continue to pray the word of God is planted and will grow in little hearts and also to please continue to cover us all in prayer for good health!!!

God's Blessings ~ Ashley

## Special Music during Worship in January



## Prayer

Those of us who attended the final service of 2023 were blessed with a number of prayer requests. I wrote on my bulletin and added nine. It is a joy to be a part of a praying congregation. We have “the list” and some of us are also on a text message. There are needs that aren’t mentioned, I’m sure. I encourage you to speak up.

We can trust in our mediator, Jesus who brings our requests to the throne. Hebrews 7:25 ESV says, “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

The women have “secret prayer sisters.” I have had the privilege to be a part of this special yearly drawing for many years. This year I unknowingly recruited my secret prayer sister to help with our baby shower. Work and worship can be intertwined. So very grateful for every prayer.

In the early days as our boys were tiny, we needed your prayers for them. As they grew your prayers grew with them. Then for us as we navigate an “empty” nest and now as grandparents. God is faithful. He answers prayer. We lost our prayer cover when we lost Bonnie, but we appreciate you dear Stillwater family so very much.

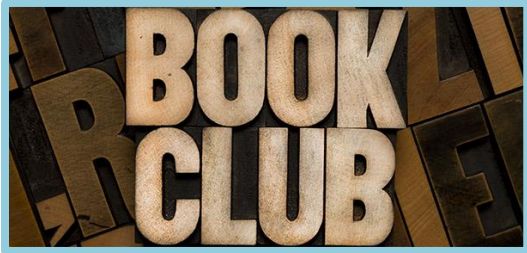
Prayer changes things.

Lavonne West



# Stillwater Book Club

Our next book discussion on Feb. 2, at 10:30 a.m. will be *One More River to Cross* by Jane Kirkpatrick. In 1844, two years before the Donner Party, the Stevens-Murphy party company left Missouri to be the first wagons into California through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Mostly Irish Catholics, the party sought religious freedom and



education in the mission-dominated land and enjoyed a safe journey until October, when a heavy snowstorm forced them to make difficult decisions. (Amazon overview) Jane Kirkpatrick does a tremendous amount of research for all of her books and brings them to life in the book. Please join us to find out

what happened to this party and participate in our discussion!

I have extra copies of the schedule of books for the rest of the year if you would like a hard copy.

The schedule of books for the rest of the year is as follows:

Mar. 1	<b>The Heart's Choice bk.1 of Chronicles of Kalispell</b> , by Tracie Peterson
Apr. 5	<b>The Prayer Box</b> by Lisa Wingate
May 3	<b>Leota's Garden</b> by Francine Rivers
June 7	<b>I'll Push You</b> by Patrick Gray and Justin Skeesuck
July 12	<b>Corelli's Mandollin</b> by Louis De Bernieres
Aug. 2	<b>Nothing to Lose</b> by J.A. Jance
Sept. 6	<b>The Sound of Light</b> by Sarah Sundin
Oct. 4	<b>American Massacre</b> by Sally Denton
Nov. 1	<b>The Winter Garden</b> by Kristin Hannah
Dec. 6	<b>Radar Girls</b> by Sara Ackerman

Happy reading, and God's Blessings,  
Meri Putzler

# Stillwater Library News

Books are a wonderful source of knowledge, faith-building, escape, imagination, adventure, among other things. The greatest of course being the Bible. We have a wonderful selection of Bibles in a box on the desk in the library just waiting for you to pick up for yourself, someone you know, or to give to an acquaintance. Please check it out and take as many as you can use.

We have a wonderful selection of books in our library at Stillwater. Thanks to all who have donated books and shared them with us. If you haven't stopped by and visited our library, please find a little time to come down to the basement and peruse our shelves. You just might find something that interests you and fits your needs. It's free!! No time limits! No cost! What a wonderful resource God has provided!

Below are some of our new donations. Again, many thanks to you, our donors!

**The Family of Jesus by Karen Kingsbury** contains stories that changed history. This will be the first of a four book series by an inspirational storyteller. I hope we receive the next 3 books to complete this wonderful series. The family of Jesus will transport you back to the time of early Jerusalem. A time when all of Israel was waiting for the remarkable change...the promised Messiah. (Howard Books, a Division of Simon and Schuster)

**Why Me by Jacob Damkani** is a story of a native Israeli, who struggled with his identity as a Jew and with the lack of deep personal intimacy in the traditions and rituals of his religion. His fear of betraying not only the god of Israel, but also his heritage and his family, caused him to reject the claims of Christianity. A war raged in his heart and mind, of sorrow and happiness, anguish and joy, shame and honor, failures and victory. This is a story of the remarkable transformation of a heart that was once callous and tired of religion, but that is now rejoicing in the love of God. (Whitaker House)

**The Chance by Karen Kingsbury** is a moving tale of heart wrenching loss, the power of faith, and the wounds that only a forever kind of love can heal. She delves deeply into a theme that resonates within us all: Hope lives for those willing to take a chance.

God's Blessings and Happy Reading!!

Susan Shea and Meri Putzler

## Friday Fellowship

Fellowship has been defined as a friendly association, especially with people who share one's interest. It has also been defined as a community of people who share common beliefs or interests. We are not sure how closely our Friday Coffee Fellowship Group meets these definitions, but we think for those that have attended there would be agreement that God's love, as well as laughter along with hearty conversation can attest, we come close. We have been meeting now for more than a year. So, if you have not attended before, please join us at 9 AM each Friday in the activity center. Invite your family and friends also.



## Darryls Buildin' a Bonfire



Come on out on Saturday night, February 17 from 6p-8 pm for a time of fellowship and fun.

Bring a chair, bring your friends, and bring a treat to share. We'll have **hot** cocoa and coffee.

I hear that a piano is making an appearance, so bring your sing voices, right?!



- Our General Contractor Matt Lee has a list of unfinished projects in the activity center. Rest assured he will get to them as he has time. If you notice something that needs attention, please contact a member of the trustees, or Ed Van Scoten Sr.

## Join Us for Our Midweek Programs

Wednesday evening, we offer a midweek program for ages Kinder - 105!

- 5:30p - 5:55p Dinner is served
- 6p - 7p\* Kids Club!
  - K - 2<sup>nd</sup> grader will meet with Miss Mary
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders will meet with Miss Lenka
- 6p - 7:30p Adult Bible Study
- 6p - 7:30p Youth Group

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***"Matthew, Mark and Luke, see me after class.  
Your book reports are surprisingly similar."***

# Prayers for February

*"Whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matt 21:22*

## Church Ministries

Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors  
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Team  
After School Program  
Stillwater Youth Group  
Kids Club  
Stillwater & National WMF  
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship  
Orality Institute  
The Gideons  
CarePortal

## General Prayers

Marriages and Families

- Brester family

Our Country and Leaders

Caregivers

Missionaries

Military and First Responders

- Mace Breamer
- David Bruyer (Askvig)
- Arron Burns
- James Gelormino
- Jonathan Gelormino
- Gage Triplett

## Health Concerns

Eric (Elgin)

John Hutchins (Christenson)

Jane (Putzler)

Darryl Askvig

Carol Hogan

Bill Voerman (Burns)

Cara (McWhorter)

John Kruger

Steve & Debbie Beck (Van Scoten/Scavo)

Sylvan Herset

Justin Gronley (Joel & Cody Bartholomew's son)

