

# T I L C O U R I E R

*Sharing Christ's Love by Welcoming, Worshiping, Learning, and Serving*



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Evangelical Lutheran  
 Church in America  
 God's work. Our hands.

*"In this is love; not that we love God, but that God loves us and sent his Son to save us."  
 (1 John 4:10)*

It's happening for the very first time since 1945. But it's going to happen two more times in the next ten years. So, while this is the first time it's happened during my lifetime, I guess I'd better get used to it.

Ash Wednesday is February 14. The solemn season of Lent begins on Valentine's Day.

Saint Valentine of Terni is honored as a third-century martyr, but little else is known about him. Some of the legends say that he was a priest who secretly married couples. Another legend says that he healed the daughter of his jailer and left her a note signed "Your Valentine."

Geoffrey Chaucer may have been the first person to make a link between this legendary martyr and a day to celebrate romantic love. He wrote a poem that refers to birds choosing their mates on St. Valentine's Day.

Whatever the cause, Valentine's Day is now big business, especially for the florists and the chocolate companies.

But what does Valentine's Day have to do with Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent?

Lent, the six weeks before Easter, has always been a season associated with penitence and fasting—giving up luxuries and treats like chocolate for a while, and focusing on our faith.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a day to ponder the fragility of life and to confess the power that sin still has over us. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return."

How do we connect that with pink ribbons and chubby cupids?

This year will be a good year to focus on the idea of love during Lent—how much we are loved, and how much we can offer love in return.

Jesus reminds us that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as our self. Ask God to show you new ways that you can demonstrate your love during Lent.

You might need some new opportunities to love God and neighbor. Then again, you might need to think about how much or how little you love yourself. Do you take care of your health and give yourself enough opportunity to rest? Do you know that you are deserving of value and respect? Do you take

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### Trinity Lutheran Church

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Lynne Tallon—Deacon  
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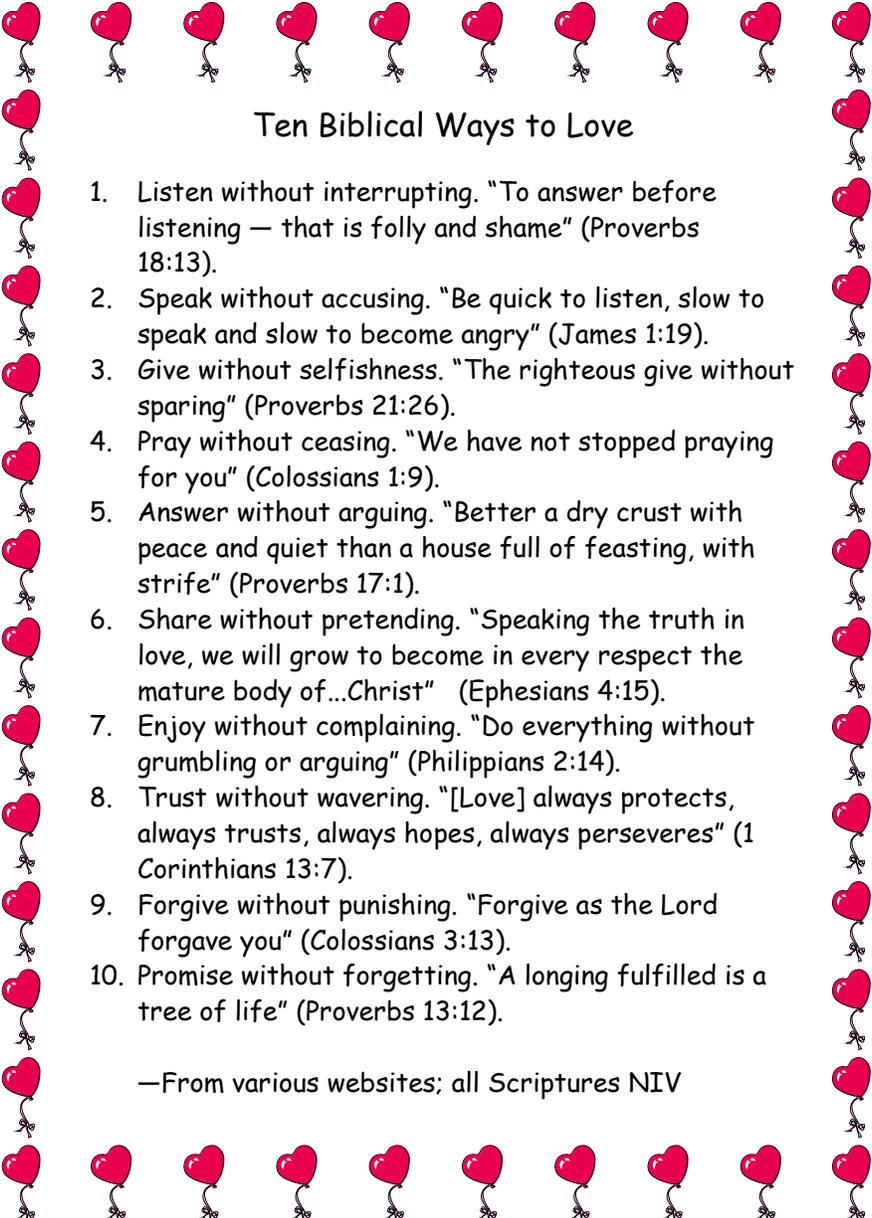
*Pastor Paul continued from page 1:*

advantage of the support and encouragement that your congregation is trying to give you?

Remind yourself how much God loves you, how much God has been and always will be willing to do for you, and how much you are loved by the members of your church. Allow your gratitude for all that love to transform you and your attitude toward life.

I can think of no better way to make use of the forty days of the holy season of Lent.

Your brother in Christ,  
*Pastor Paul*



### Ten Biblical Ways to Love

1. Listen without interrupting. "To answer before listening — that is folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).
2. Speak without accusing. "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19).
3. Give without selfishness. "The righteous give without sparing" (Proverbs 21:26).
4. Pray without ceasing. "We have not stopped praying for you" (Colossians 1:9).
5. Answer without arguing. "Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" (Proverbs 17:1).
6. Share without pretending. "Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of...Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).
7. Enjoy without complaining. "Do everything without grumbling or arguing" (Philippians 2:14).
8. Trust without wavering. "[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:7).
9. Forgive without punishing. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).
10. Promise without forgetting. "A longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12).

—From various websites; all Scriptures NIV



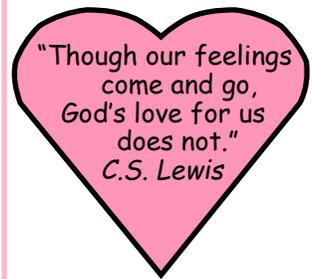
John Robinson performs "The Gospel of Mark"

# JANUARY EVENTS



No matter whether Phil sees his shadow or not, remember: "No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."

—Hal Borland



Family and friends gather to celebrate Bert Bertoluzzi's big day



The church office will be closed on Monday, February 19, in honor of President's Day.

## *A message from our Missionary to Japan, Gayle Nelson*



Writing articles for newsletters would be a whole lot easier if there was already a beginning – you know, someone else who started it for me. It's not that I don't know what I want to write about – *normally* I do. It's more the getting started part that gives me trouble. One of my colleagues suggested I open the Bible to a random verse, quote it, explain that it really has nothing to do with what I'm going to write about, and then get on with writing my news article. Since now, by explaining the suggestion of my colleague, I've written a beginning, be on the lookout for random (not to be confused with meaningless) verses in the next article. 😊

I've been privileged to work, off and on, with a group of people here in Kumamoto who try to find homes for homeless men and women. They help get people off the streets and then continue to support them until they become self-sufficient. Once the people are set up in apartments, this group continues to support them by welcoming them to attend huge Saturday meals which are communally prepared. This is

intended to help supplement their nutrition. We start early in the morning and continue cooking and preparing until about noon when everyone finally sits down for food and fellowship. When everyone leaves, they are offered doggie bags to take home with them to help see them through the week.

The organizers of this worthy organization are not affiliated with a government agency nor religious organization. They are simply a group of people who saw a need and did something about it. One of the organizers is a Christian. I had a chance to talk to him for a bit when I was last there. When I asked him how this idea came to him and why he has continued with it these many years his reply was simple (I've paraphrased since I didn't have pen and paper to record our conversation). "No one," he said, "should feel as though they have nowhere to turn, no hope of ever improving their lives, and nowhere to turn when they are in need. I became a Christian not too long ago [about 3 years ago]. I've been reading the Bible as much as I can since then," he said. "Everything I've read says that not one of us is more important to God than the next and that we should ALL take care of each other. Jesus said, 'Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me.' Not many remember those words when it's too much trouble, or costs too much money. So, I decided to do whatever I could do and it

works." And works it does! No one is excluded from the Saturday meals – in need or not. All are welcome! We all paid 500 yen for our meal which helps him pay for the food for the next meal and to help get help for those forgotten people.

Talking with this man made me think about the callings in our lives. What a wonderful calling this man has accepted! Many people think that the only people God calls are the clergy types and it is certainly true that pastors are called by God. But are they the only ones called? Martin Luther didn't think so. According to Luther, clergy did not have higher callings than laypersons. He said that all Christians have callings or vocations and that all callings are equal differing only in function. What we do with that call from God is what truly matters. Will we be like Andrew, and Philip and drop everything to follow Jesus without question? How about James and John who left their father, Zebedee, standing among workers as they left their family business to follow Jesus? No clergy among them yet all called. Or will we be like Jonah who ran in the exact opposite direction of his call and had to be told not once but twice what God called him to do?

I guess what's bouncing around in my head is how do we see ourselves? Do we see that our calling or vocation is from God and therefore go about working

*(Continued on next page)*

(Gayle Nelson, continued from page 4)

in that vocation with dedication towards God? For Martin Luther, vocation was nothing less than the primary focus of the Christian life. God works in and through vocation, but God does so by calling human beings to work in their vocations. In Jesus Christ, **God saves us for eternal life. But in the meantime**, God places us in our temporal life where we grow in faith and holiness. In our various callings — as spouse, parent, church member, citizen, and worker — we are to live out our faith. According to Luther's doctrine of vocation, the purpose of every vocation is to love and serve our neighbors.

That's it then, isn't it – love and serve our neighbors. “...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40, NRSV) This man with whom I spoke who takes care of the poor and hungry – his neighbors - got it! He has dedicated his life to serving his neighbor. And to him, everyone is his neighbor. All are welcome. And, in reality, all are our neighbors as well. It doesn't matter who they are – all of God's family is our neighbor and as such, to be loved and served - not only when we think it's fair to do so, or when they reach a certain ranking within any given organization, or when their skin color or religious beliefs are to our liking, or whether or not they believe the same as we do concerning LGBTQI – *all* are our neighbors and members of the same family of God to which we belong. With such a large family, what a fantastic opportunity we have, to love and serve and to share the good news of God's love, grace, and forgiveness!  
**AMEN!!**

So, those are the thoughts with which I have been preoccupied. I'm not finished pondering them but know that I look forward to Saturdays with a new and excited anticipation now!

God's Peace,  
*Gayle*



## Transfiguration SUNDAY

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, we celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

After telling his shocked, uncomprehending disciples that he would die and rise again, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain. Suddenly Jesus appeared to be glowing! "He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matthew 17:2, ESV).

Moses and Elijah appeared, and a voice said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (verse 5). Jesus' disciples fell to the ground, overcome by fear. But Jesus touched them, told them not to be afraid and led them down the mountain.

The disciples witnessed firsthand the glory and Godhood of Jesus, who would soon die for the sins of the world and rise again to give us life.

# A Warm Welcome

## TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

On January 21, 2018, fifteen people joined the Trinity family. Here are the names and faces of some of them. Janetta Heinicke and Larry & Sharon Lutz weren't able to be with us that day. Larry & Ginni Truglio must have left before we got their picture.



Chris Burtless  
and son, Danny



Doug & Kim Forcino



Chuck Lechner & Gina  
Brockmann, with Sophia



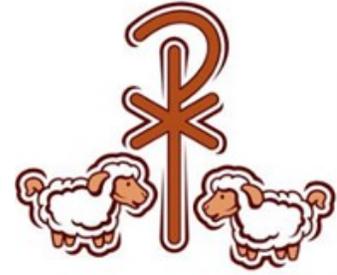
Sr. Michelle Collins



Charlie & Ursula Hahn  
and extended family



## Feed My Sheep Update



334 friends received help at the pantry this month.

Each month I try to update you on the progress in the food pantry - how we are being funded, the donations of items from friends and families, the many volunteers who faithfully staff the pantry, and our partnership with Paradise Lutheran Church in Treasure Island, the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, St. Vincent DePaul and Celebrate Outreach. We have been blessed to continue this service to our community.



and then came out to the narthex. He thanked me as we went back downstairs to the pantry. I asked if he needed food or clothing. He responded "no thanks, I just needed to pray in the sanctuary" and he

This month I want to share an experience I had with one of our clients. The doors had not opened yet, the delivery from St. Petersburg Free Clinic had just arrived and I was running about sorting and displaying the foods we received when a man, probably in his 30's, came in and asked if he could use our

sanctuary to pray. I called to the other volunteers to take over and led the man



upstairs to the sanctuary. He stated he needed to talk to God about good news he had received. I waited in the narthex while he went in and sat in a back pew to pray. The next thing I heard was the gentleman crying loudly and praising God for his good news. He stayed a short time, got himself calmed

left. My thoughts reverted to the work at hand but I realized that the Trinity food pantry feeds both body and spirit of our clients. May God continue to guide us as we serve our community.

God's blessings,  
*Alan Due  
and Lynne Tallon*

## Ash Wednesday stewardship

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

–*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 254

With these ancient words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into the season of Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of the riches that God entrusts to us.

The essential teaching of Ash Wednesday – that we are just mortals, after all – crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions and drives us deep into God’s mysteries. Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What’s *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

**We are dust.** Yes, but we are God’s dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each one a speck of “dust” created by of God, billions of years ago. God put us together from the very stuff of the universe.

- ⇒ Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. Part of creation, not separate from it, we work to preserve and sustain the health of God’s creation for all people and future generations.
- ⇒ Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living – eating right, exercising, and avoiding illegal drugs and other poisons.

**We are breath.** We are “dust,” certainly, but not *only* dust. Genesis 2:7 describes us as “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life.” Our life is the breath of God in our dust.

- ⇒ Therefore, every breath we take is holy. Every breath is a prayer that whispers God’s praise and reminds us of God’s life force in us.

- ⇒ Therefore, we look to God to align our lives and ourselves with God’s holy reality that arcs towards God’s purposes of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

**Our time is brief.** Between the time that the “dust” of our lives comes together to form us and when it returns to the earth, we have a finite number of minutes on earth.

- ⇒ Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. There is not a single moment one to waste. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
- ⇒ Therefore, we do not cling to our possessions, knowing that we don’t really “own” anything, but only hold onto it for a little while.
- ⇒ Therefore, we nourish our lives with world treasures of real and lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.



This Lent spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

–*Rob Blezard*

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I believe that appreciation is a holy thing — that when we look for what’s best in a person we happen to be with at the moment, we’re doing what God does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbor, we’re participating in something sacred.

—Fred Rogers



# FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2/5 Arthur Pass
- 2/5 Curt Schuenke
- 2/5 Martha Snapp
- 2/13 Craig Mowrer
- 2/18 David Amann
- 2/23 Sean Reynolds
- 2/26 Alan Due



## FEBRUARY SERVERS

(Note openings for flowers and fellowship)

	February 4	February 11	Ash Wed - Feb 14 12:30 pm	Ash Wed - Feb 14 6:00 pm	February 18	February 25
<b>Acolyte</b>	Danny Burtless	Alan Due	Lynne Tallon	Doug Forcino	Phil Rearick	Band of Angels
<b>Assisting Ministers</b>	Karen Toth	Lynne Tallon	Lynne Tallon	Doug Forcino	Karen Toth Phil Rearick	Band of Angels
<b>Lector</b>	Daryl Stewart	Alan Due	Pastor Tom Snapp	Doug Forcino	Mishelle Richards	Sister Michelle Collins
<b>Greeters</b>	Carol Bertoluzzi Mishelle Richards	Karen Toth Bill Diefel	Rebecca Reitz	Matthew Reitz Rebecca Reitz	Jan Dorr Carol Bertoluzzi	Barbara Macomb Lisa Johnson
<b>Ushers</b>	Jan Dorr Barbara Macomb Matthew Reitz Rebecca Reitz Mishelle Richards	Bill Diefel Charlene Diefel Helen Mowrer Rebecca Reitz Karen Toth	Rebecca Reitz	Matthew Reitz Rebecca Reitz	Jan Dorr Lisa Johnson Amanda Moffitt Rebecca Reitz Michelle Richards	Bill Diefel Charlene Diefel Lisa Johnson Barbara Macomb Rebecca Reitz
<b>Flowers</b>		Ann Gibson				
<b>Fellowship</b>						

# Trinity Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 10 am Food Pantry	3 8 am Loaves & Fishes breakfast
4 8:30 am Choir 9 am Bible study 10 am Worship	5	6 10 am Food Pantry	7 8:15 am Men's breakfast 6 pm Supper Study	8	9 10 am Food Pantry	10 8 am Loaves & Fishes breakfast 9 am Congregation breakfast
11 <b>Transfiguration Sunday</b> 8:30 am Choir 9 am Bible study 10 am Worship	12	13 10 am Food Pantry	14 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>Valentine's Day</b> 8:15 am Men's breakfast 12:30 pm Worship 6 pm Worship	15	16 10 am Food Pantry	17 8 am Loaves & Fishes breakfast
18 8:30 am Choir 9 am Bible study 10 am Worship	19 <b>Presidents' Day</b> Office closed 6 pm Council	20 10 am Food Pantry	21 8:15 am Men's breakfast 6 pm Supper Study	22	23 10 am Food Pantry	24 8 am Loaves & Fishes breakfast 9 am Leaders' planning session
25 8:30 am Choir 9 am Bible study 10 am Worship	26	27 10 am Food Pantry	28 8:15 am Men's breakfast 6 pm Supper Study			<b>Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9 am - 3 pm</b>