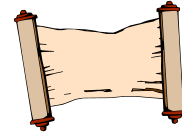


# Parish Parchment



The Mountain Grove Lutheran Parish  
The Reverend Christine Kirchner, Pastor  
1558 Rock Glen Road  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815-9207  
February 2024

Return Service Requested



This newsletter is sent with a prayer for...

## The Mountain Grove Lutheran Parish Newsletter

News and Information About Emanuel, Saint Peter's,  
and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Churches

**Rev. Christine Kirchner, Pastor**

**February 2024**

Phone: 570-384-4125

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### MISSION STATEMENT OF MOUNTAIN GROVE LUTHERAN PARISH

*"To spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a ministry of worship*



O Lord, we pray that the visitation of your grace may so cleanse our thoughts and minds that your Son Jesus, when he shall come, may find in us a fit dwelling place; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## PASTORS PAGE

Dear siblings in Christ,

Ash Wednesday and the liturgical season of Lent begin on February 14<sup>th</sup>. This means it is time to begin our Lenten journey. Once again, this journey will include the imposition of ashes, hosting our Lenten Soup Suppers on Wednesday nights, observing Holy Week, and we will culminate the 40 days of Lent with the celebration of Easter. It is a tradition that is ancient in the Christian faith. But does this tradition still hold meaning and relevance for us today?

I find it amazing that we are already moving into the Lenten season. It seems as if we just finished putting up the Christmas decorations and now, we are talking about Easter. Life has a way of picking up its routine and pace. The “to-do” lists continue to get longer and the days seem shorter. In the business of our lives, it is easy to lose our focus on God. Our faith in Christ can be reduced to the background of our lives while center stage is filled with all the expectations of others and ourselves. The power of Lent is that it gives us a conscious time to refocus and see the nearness of God in our midst. It is a time to realize our need to have our faith at the center of our busy lives, not in the background. It is a time to rebalance when things seem topsy-turvy.

When I was little, my dad would take my sister and me outside to play catch. His words of encouragement were always the same: Keep your eye on the ball. Dad knew that if I failed at that one task, nothing else would matter, no matter how fast of foot, or graceful or skillful, the objective—to catch the ball— would be lost.

In the same way, Lent is the season of the church year when we remind each other to keep our eyes on Christ. Without Christ’s love as the center of our lives, nothing else we do or accomplish will really matter. It will not matter how successful or blessed our lives may seem to be, the central objective—to know and share the love of Christ— will be lost.

So, it is important that we celebrate Lent once again. It is important not because it is ancient, nor because we will learn something new, but because we need to keep Christ at the center of our lives in all things.

As we begin our Lenten journey together, find time to read and study the Bible, to reflect on the Spirit of life God has given you, and how we will keep the love of Christ central in our lives and in the life of our parish. Then we will know a faithful Lenten journey.

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor Christine

### Prayer List

**The family & friends of: Doris Longenberger 1/21**

**Also: Loretta Baldwin** (Friend of Karen Henry), **Jane Troy, Sheri Eley** (Charlotte Thomas’ niece), **Taylor Thomas** (Charlotte Thomas’ granddaughter), **Diane Derr, Susan Brior** (Kathy & Bill Brior’s cousin), **Mary Corcoran** (friend of Karen & Chuck Henry), **Donald Cool Jr.** (Janet Cool’s grandson), **Dylan Newman** (Gail Horne), **Jayme Keller** (Jordan Keller’s daughter), **Pearl Spudes, Albert Bellum** (Susan Spudes), **Elsie Buehler, Pastor Stan & Carole Bower, Dale Schoepf, Jen Beaver** (Dale Michael), **Judy Petrewicz** (Janet Cool), **Roberta Pepe** (Lois Levan’s daughter), **George Lynn** (Susan Spudes), **Norman & Gloria Fritz, Lori Yutko** (Susan Spudes), **Jean Bankes, Robert Fritz, Russ Ebright** (friend of Dale Michael), **Paige Thomas, Tyson Neal** (Emily Sutherland’s son), **Patsy Millard, Don Davis, Shirley Omalia** (Mark Hartzell’s mother), **young people of our congregation.**

**Please pray for all the people of MGLP**, especially those in need of healing; suffering from chronic health issues; & members confined to their homes or long-term care facilities.

**UPDATES:** Sharon Hartzell at 384-4107 or [shartzell@ptd.net](mailto:shartzell@ptd.net)

-----PLEASE REVIEW PRAYER LIST AND UPDATE AS NECESSARY-----

## Prayer Ventures for February 2024

- 1** Pray for synod hunger team chairs and other key ELCA World Hunger leaders participating in the ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering in Houston. Ask the Spirit to guide their work of energizing congregations and synods to end hunger and poverty in the world, bringing relief and hope to our neighbors.
- 2** Remember in prayer those who suffer from heart disease, heart failure and congenital heart defects. Pray for the doctors, nurses, surgeons, care providers, researchers and chaplains who provide treatment, care and encouragement to patients of all ages and their families.
- 3** Pray for your synod's leaders, congregations and special ministries. Ask the Spirit to sustain them and stir their creative wisdom in carrying out the mission of the church in a changing and challenging world.
- 4** Give thanks for Jesus, our Savior, who changed the world not by force or coercion but by demonstrating God's lifesaving love, mercy, care for those who suffer and welcome for those who are excluded. Pray that the example of Jesus and the word of God will guide us in living for one another and sharing the gospel.
- 5** Pray for peace, healing and justice in places of conflict and violence, especially Ukraine, the Holy Land, Myanmar, Haiti, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 6** "The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary" (Isaiah 40:28). Who better to have at our side during every twist and turn in life than God, who is mighty, merciful and concerned for our well-being? Give praise and thanks to God!
- 7** Remember in prayer our neighbors and siblings in Christ who experience domestic abuse — physical, sexual or emotional. Pray that they will find refuge, community support and care for their injury and trauma. Give thanks for the work of ELCA Justice for Women, Women of the ELCA and community organizations that serve victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- 8** Praise God for the 50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger and the ways God continues to use our collective assets to impact the world and serve our neighbors in need.
- 9** Promise to follow in the footsteps of Paul, who was mindful of the responsibility God had entrusted him with to share the gospel with people of various cultures, beliefs and life circumstances.
- 10** Pray that the Spirit will strengthen and sustain Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, stir her wisdom and renew her vision for our church and its mission.
- 11** Like Jesus' disciples, we are often confused, fearful and full of questions, longing to understand what God is doing through Jesus and what we must do as followers. Pray for God's patience as our faith matures and we learn how to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.
- 12** Give thanks for our global companions whose daily realities, faith traditions, culture and language may differ from ours yet complement and enrich our lives and faith.
- 13** Pray that everything we do and say as people of faith will light the world, direct attention to our Creator and reflect God's love for humanity and all creation.
- 14** *Ash Wednesday* "Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them" (Matthew 6:1). Reflect on who we are to God — fragile, imperfect beings *and* loved children who stand before God with humility and gratitude.
- 15** Joy and sorrow are both intrinsic to being human. Pray that we might feel each of them as deeply, in the world and in our lives.

- 16** Pray that, during Lent, we will lean into God's grace and mercy with humility, trusting the promise that the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ win us a place in the kingdom of God.
- 17** Pray that, as bold disciples of Christ, we will be unashamed of our faith, confident in God's promises, comfortable telling our faith story and quick to respect and serve those in need.
- 18** "God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth'" (Genesis 9:12-13). Give thanks and praise to God for this promise of love and forgiveness.
- 19** *Martin Luther, renewer of the church (1483-1546)* Give thanks that we continue to learn from and be inspired by the sermons, hymns and writings of Martin Luther, who studied and wrestled with Scripture and the church to better understand God's saving grace and how it impacts every aspect of daily life.
- 20** Ask God to bless the work of the ELCA Organizing for Mission Network, a community of leaders and resource providers who use the principles of community organizing to develop, redevelop and renew gospel-centered communities that act for the sake of the world and the well-being of our neighbor.
- 21** The cross has become widespread in art, jewelry, clothing and popular culture around the world. Reflect on the symbol and the true meaning of the cross for those who find salvation and identity in Christ.
- 22** Remember in prayer those who helped you become the child of God you are today — siblings in Christ, parents and family, church leaders, teachers, friends, strangers, mentors and influential people who have gone before us.
- 23** Promise to learn God's ways and truth and to integrate them into your daily life, that we might operate from a firm foundation of love, wisdom and justice when struggling to discern right from wrong and to relate to one another.
- 24** Pray for the work of the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign, which seeks a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and connects ELCA members with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the Lutheran World Federation and ecumenical companions across the Middle East.
- 25** Do you know someone celebrating a momentous occasion — a birth, an anniversary, recovery from illness or injury? Let their joy be your joy, and lift up prayers of thanksgiving to God.
- 26** Pray that we will not grow weary of serving our neighbors in need, both nearby and around the world. Ask the Spirit to renew us when we feel overwhelmed by human needs.
- 27** Remember in prayer the bishops of our church gathering for the Conference of Bishops in Itasca, Ill. Give thanks for their faith, gifts, wisdom and diverse perspectives, which God uses to benefit the church and help us do God's work in the world.
- 28** "In my trials, Lord, walk with me; when my heart is almost breaking, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me" (*ELW* 325). Lent reminds us of our frailty, suffering and loneliness and of God's love and forgiveness, found in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Breathe a sigh of relief and thank God.
- 29** Be mindful of those in your community who lack safe shelter and adequate food. Pray that their needs will be met, and that God will use you and your congregation to meet them.



## Sunday School

While having joint services, we have a unique opportunity for joint Sunday School as well. Pastor Christine will be leading an adult Sunday School starting Feb. 4 after worship. Rosey Tretter will lead a children's Sunday School every other Sunday after the children's sermon. Those dates are: Feb 18 (Mt. Grove), March 3 (St. Peter), March 17 (Mainville).

**Trinity UCC, Rock Glen is holding their annual Chicken Pot Pie Sale.**

**The cost is \$11.50 for a 10 inch pie and \$6.00 for a 6 inch deep dish pie.**

**Orders are due by February 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**Place your order by calling Bonnie Adams at 570-384-3300 or Kay Riotto at 570-384-4441.**

**Let's get out and support this worthwhile project.**

## Winter Worship Schedule

We will continue to worship jointly throughout the season of Lent. Individual worship services will resume Easter Sunday (March 31)

2/11 Worship 9:30am St. Peter

2/14 Ash Wed Worship 7:00pm St. Peter

2/18 Worship 9:30am Trinity

2/21 Soup/Sandwiches 6pm, Worship 7pm Trinity

2/25 Worship 9:30am Emanuel

2/28 Soup/Sandwiches 6pm, Worship 7pm Emanuel

Thank you to everyone who attended and brought food for the 3 F's Luncheon. We will meet again after Lent in April.

**Ash Wednesday is Feb 14. You are welcome to begin your Lenten journey with Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes. Worship will be at St. Peter at 7:00pm. If you have any questions, please ask Pastor Christine.**



## February Birthdays

- 02/01 Don Kelchner, Jr.
- 02/10 Peggy Pickin
- 02/14 Summer Thomas
- 02/15 Pastor Christine Kirchner
- 02/17 Deborah Barton  
Michael Longenberger  
Betty Tretter
- 02/21 Susan Spudes
- 02/23 Angela Temple  
Denise Hartranft  
Jennifer Lightner
- 02/25 Jay Diehl  
Domenic Giorgio  
Hunter Yurick
- 02/26 Jean Bankes  
Dale F. Michael
- 02/28 Lisa (Halye) Caulder  
Austin Colosimo



## February Anniversaries

- 02/13 Jeff & Jill Bankes
- 02/14 Dave & Lucille Ruckle

### Joint services Sundays 9:30am

#### March

- 3 – St Peter
- 10 – Trinity
- 17 – Emanuel
- 24 – St Peter
- 31 – Easter Sunday
  - 8:30am Trinity
  - 9:30am St. Peter
  - 10:45am Emanuel



## Happy Valentine's Day

### St. Peter Worship Service Schedule for February

9:30 am on February 11

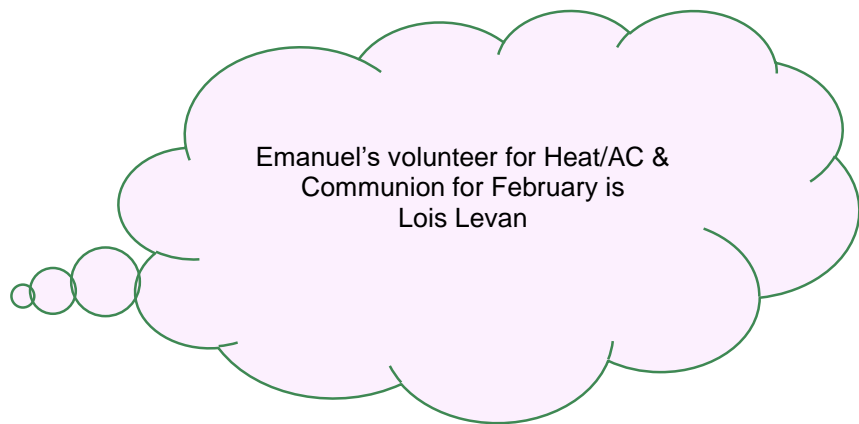
### Emanuel Worship Service Schedule for February

9:30 on February 4 & 25

Pastor contact info:

The Rev. Christine Kirchner  
pastorkirchner@gmail.com

808-652-6740 or 570-384-4125



Emanuel's volunteer for Heat/AC &  
Communion for February is  
Lois Levan