

**Mission: We are called to be Christ's Light...in all things we are committed to seeking & following God's will and not our own. Believe It! Live It! Come to it!**

## Lent

The middle of this month we begin Lent; a time for repentance and renewal, and a time of transition. We are called to turn from our self-serving ways and live into our calling as baptized children of God.

This season lasts for forty days (not counting Sundays) and is reminiscent of Jesus' time of temptation/testing in the wilderness immediately following his baptism. In fact, our Gospel reading for the first Sunday in Lent recounts this period of Jesus' life: **"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him."** (Mark 1:12-13)

After living through nearly a year of social distancing in a time of pandemic many of us can relate to life in "the wilderness." COVID has definitely tested our collective patience; for some it has been a test of faith. For Jesus, the wilderness marks the transition between his baptism and public ministry: his call to heal, forgive, and redeem people, his journey to the cross, and ultimately God's victory of life over death through his resurrection.

The Old Testament reading for the first Sunday in Lent is from Genesis; God makes a covenant with Noah and his family after a forty-day flood (notice a forty-day theme?). Remember, the flood was God's response to the wickedness of humankind. People had been following their own will over/against God's will ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment in the Garden of Eden. The next generation, beginning with Adam and Eve's firstborn son Cain, God's people continued in their sin. Cain murdered his brother Abel, his consequence was to wander the earth, but God also promised to protect Cain: **"And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him."** (Genesis 4:15) Cain goes against God's will by killing his brother, but God graciously shows mercy

to Cain by protecting him from anyone who might murder him. The cross of ashes marked on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday is similar to the mark on Cain. It is a visible reminder of our sinful status and mortality, but it is also a reminder that God's response to our destructive ways is one of grace. The cross is God's way of creating new life out of death.

We are also marked with a cross in baptism; the act in which our old selves are drowned out, in which we are buried with Christ into death, and raised with Christ to new life. While we are only marked once a year with the cross of Ash Wednesday; we are marked with our baptismal crosses for life. Like God's promise to Noah and his family, God promises us grace forever. And so during Lent, a time of transition, a time of wandering and testing in the wilderness, we return to the Lord through repentance and the renewal of our baptismal promises, promises to: **"proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace."** (ELW p. 228)

In this time of transition, we can remember God's promises to Noah, and Cain, and so many of our biblical ancestors, ancestors in the faith. We can take comfort in God's words to Joshua as he assumed leadership of the Israelites after Moses, as he prepared to lead God's people beyond the Jordan into the Promised Land. **"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."** (Joshua 1:9) And even more importantly we can remember that we've been promised the gift of new life, we've **"been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."** (ELW 231)

God's blessings to you as you journey through Lent,  
Pr. Erich

## Covid Response Team Update

Returning to in-person worship...what a wonderful sound. Unfortunately, the environment isn't quite right yet, but we are getting closer.

The COVID response team has begun meeting again and talking about how we can safely return to in-person worship. There are a few things that you should know so it doesn't surprise you when the time does come.

**There is a SURVEY in this newsletter about returning to worship. The more responses we get, the better we can prepare to meet everyone's needs.**

We will likely be encouraging mask wearing even if you have received the vaccine. We don't know if once you have the vaccine if you can still transmit the disease and it is only 95% effective.

There will be a specific plan on how to enter the church and where to sit.

You will be asked to sign-up online or call the church office to save a space for you. We need to set the attendance to ensure social distancing.

We will also leave the sanctuary by row and ask that you don't congregate inside or immediately outside the church.

Unfortunately, we won't be having coffee and donuts afterwards. You may still bring in your own coffee and snacks for your family if needed.

The service will probably look much like it does now online. The readings and announcements will be put on the screen, we may have 1 singer and someone playing the piano. We will not be singing as a congregation when we first return.

That is a lot of things that you can't do when we first return to in-person worship. It will take some time for things to become our new "normal." We have the potential to make that even better than it was and look forward to the time when we can say, "Let's do it!"

You will be able to experience the safety and security that you feel when inside the church. Although we won't be able to do our traditional "peace", you will be able to see that people are okay.

The plans are always evolving and with a high response rate from the survey, we will be able to ensure that we can make the plan right for BLC and all the congregation. We appreciate all our church members and we want all of you to stay healthy so we can be church together after COVID.

**To complete the survey online, please go to**

<https://forms.gle/CABvdKaj7wg99jGg7>



### ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17th

### DRIVE thru Ashes

and Communion

**11am - 1pm and 4pm - 6pm**

Pastor Erich will be offering Ashes and Communion in Drive thru fashion at the West end entrance of the BLC building. Pastor will be administering the ashes with a Q-tip and Communion will be individually packaged elements

This is an opportunity to receive ashes and communion by our pastor.



Our Sympathy to the family of **HARLAND K. RUE**, lifelong member of BLC who passed away on January 21, 2021. If you would like to send a card to Joann Rue her address is:

Joann Rue  
Ingleside Communities RCAC  
405 N 8th Street  
Appt #111  
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572

## Lenten Theme "Open my Life Lord"

The theme for this Lent is **"Open my Life, Lord."** The subtheme for the second week is "Open my Hands, Lord" and the fourth week is "Open my Heart, Lord."

**For week 2**, you are encouraged to trace your hand on a piece of paper and personalize it. Feel free to color it, add words, and detail it in



ways that reflect how God works through the work you do with your hands. Don't forget to put your name on it somewhere and if you want you can add this verse from Deuteronomy: **"Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.'" (Deut. 15:11)**

**For week 4**, consider making a heart: draw it on a piece of paper, cut out a heart shape, make something out of cloth, clay, wood, or some other medium. Personalize it anyway you'd like. Don't forget to put your name on it somewhere and if you want you can add this verse from the Psalter: **"If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor."** (Psalm 28:7)



Greetings members of BLC,

We are in a period of transition from one settled pastor (Pastor Jim) to your next called, settled pastor (we don't know who God has in store for us yet)! During this interim, a Transition Team made up of members can help discern Barneveld Lutheran's unique mission and create a congregational profile for the call committee to use when the time comes to call our next pastor.



One reason for forming a Transition Team is: **"A Transition Team allows other congregational leaders to continue their important leadership work on congregational life and ministry at a level that maintains the health of the congregation and it's various ministries and involvements, both internally and externally."** (Rev. Alan Mead-Transition Teams: Part 2)

For BLC, 6-9 members on the team would probably work well. But in order to get these members we need as much participation from the whole congregation as possible.

Please take the next few weeks to prayerfully consider 3-4 names and submit these to the church office. **Email, call-in, or mail your names to the church office by Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>** or use the link below to register your choice on line.

<https://barneveldlutheran.wufoo.com/forms/slavasacjlypfryq/>

### Who should you consider for this team?

People who meet the following criteria: **"Trusted, Respected, Prayerful, Spiritually wise, Regular attendee, Able to speak for others, and willingness to listen to all perspectives."** (Rev. Alan Mead-Transitions Teams: Part 2)

Also, please do not include names of current Council members or staff; in part, this allows them to continue working on duties in their respective roles.

If you have any questions about transition teams feel free to contact me.

God's blessings on your discernment process!  
Pr. Erich

## Transition Team Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_