

The light shines in the darkness... John 1:5



HARBOR BEACON

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OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Their hearts
are firm,
secure in
the LORD.

Psalms 112:7, NRSV

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**Click on these links
for the February newsletter inserts:**

The ELCA's monthly *Prayer Ventures*:
<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>

The Northwest Washington Synod's insert, *The Spirit*:
<https://dq5pwpq1q8ru0.cloudfront.net/2023/01/17/21/31/43/b14edeb9-667b-42ff-82e6-bede5b8bd2a4/February%202023%20Spirit.pdf>

OHLC's website:
www.oakharborlutheran.org

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Pastor's Page: A Deeper Love

"Love is patient; love is kind...It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." 1 Corinthians 13:4, 7

"God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:9-10

Among the most beautiful examples of love I have ever witnessed was in the relationship of a pastor and his wife I met while on my pastoral internship in North Dakota. The pastor's wife had multiple sclerosis, which came out of nowhere and advanced quickly. By the time I met them she was confined to a wheelchair. The body which had borne them four children now cruelly betrayed them both as it was racked with spasms. The way the pastor cared for his bride was so tender, with such devotion. It came in simple gestures, like him tucking her hair behind her ears like she liked it, or holding her trembling hand, or kissing her forehead. She could no longer return his affections, but it didn't seem to matter to this husband. He had made a promise to love and cherish her, and he did so with peace and contentedness. It was so moving to witness him faithfully at her side. My eyes get watery just thinking about it more than two decades later.

It is February, and with Valentine's Day coming smack dab in the middle of the month, the stores are teeming with symbols of love, from garish heart-shaped boxes of waxy chocolate to refrigerated shelves overstocked with red roses to innuendo-filled cards to be shared between lovers. The first weeks of the month leading up to the Holy Day of Romantic Obligation on February 14 are a blur of pink and red, of winks and nods, of discounted jewelry and titillating marketing campaigns.

There is a version of love being celebrated here, and it isn't inherently wrong. The Greeks, whose language was used to compose the New Testament, have four different words for love. *Eros* is one of them. You probably recognize this word as the root for the English word "erotic," so I don't need to flesh out (pun intended) the type of love this word signifies. Valentine's Day tends to celebrate this kind of love, and while the way it is celebrated can verge on the tawdry, in its proper context it is something Christians can celebrate too. There is an entire

book in the Bible – the Song of Songs – which celebrates this kind of love with shocking frankness. St. Paul acknowledges the importance of this kind of love in marriage when he encourages husbands and wives to "not deprive each other" of sexual intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

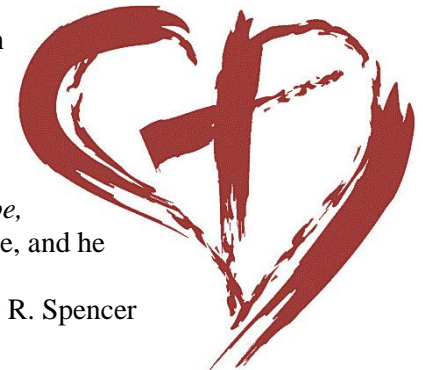
But there is a deeper form of love. The Greeks called it *agape*, and the Spirit-led writers of the New Testament used this word often. This kind of love is sacrificial. It is steadfast. It is marked by utter devotion to the beloved. St. Paul, in one of the Bible's best-known passages, wrote an extended reflection on *agape* in 1 Corinthians 13, describing this form of love as patient and kind, bearing all things, enduring all things. This is the highest form of love, and it is not limited to husbands and wives. The Apostle encourages and exhorts all Christians to strive for this kind of love in our relationships with one another within the Body of Christ, the Church.

We are called to this kind of love because this is precisely how God loves us. In another reflection on *agape* love, St. John describes God's love for us as steadfast and sacrificial. It is not based on what we can do for God, or whether we adequately return God's love. God's love for us is revealed in Jesus, who gave himself in utter devotion to us, the beloved. God made a promise, and through Jesus, he kept it.

I am grateful to have known Pastor John Estrem and his dear wife Marilyn. I am grateful for the picture Pastor Estrem gave me of *agape* love. He not only modeled the kind of husband I want to be, he also gave me a glimpse of *agape*, of God's great love for us. For even when we are weak, bound, unable to adequately reciprocate, God is there, tenderly caring for us. God's love is not rooted in emotions but promises.

Eros, in its proper context, can be fun and enriching, even holy. But no matter what your love life or your relationship status might be this Valentine's Day, know that God is right beside you, loving you with *agape*, a deeper love. God made you a promise, and he is keeping it.

- Pastor Jeffrey R. Spencer



Growing & Learning

Confirmation class meets February 5

Confirmation class will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on Sunday, February 5. At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend with their student. Mark your calendars and be sure and complete sessions 4-6 in your workbooks before we gather.

Adult Education opportunities in February

This is a bit of an odd month for adult education as we finish one study and begin another, moving out of one season and into the next with a short break in between.

First up, we are finishing our Bible Study on 1 Peter this month, meeting on Sunday mornings in the church library from 9:15-10:15, with the same class being offered again on Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM. Remaining sessions for this study include:

Jan. 29/Feb. 1	1 Peter 3	<i>Marriage, Discipleship, Baptism</i>
Feb. 5/8	1 Peter 4-5	<i>Stewards of God's Grace</i>

We will not have class again until Sunday, February 26, when we will begin our study of the Apostles Creed. This study will continue on Sunday mornings throughout the month of March, with the themes of this study being revisited in a worship setting as we gather for midweek worship services on Wednesday nights at 6:00 PM.



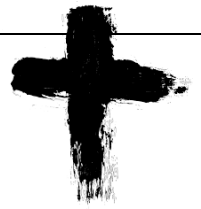
2nd annual

Youth Indoor Snowball Fight Sunday, Feb. 19, 6:00 PM

All OHLC youth, middle school and above, are invited to compete in an indoor snowball fight, with the coveted Snow Globe Award at stake! "Snowballs" are provided; (real) pizza is served for competitors and spectators.

If you plan to attend, contact Beth Stephens, bethasteph@gmail.com, or make a note on a Connection Card in your Sunday bulletin.

The season of Lent



Ash Wednesday, February 22

We mark the beginning of Lent on February 22 with Ash Wednesday services at 12:00 noon and 7:00 PM. Services include the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. *Please note there will be no soup meal following Ash Wednesday worship.*

COMING IN MARCH:

Midweek Lenten worship & fellowship meals

After Ash Wednesday, we will continue with Wednesday gatherings for worship, followed by simple meals of soup and bread. Services will be held at noon and 6:00 PM beginning March 1 and continuing through March 29, with meals at 12:30 and 6:30.

Sign-up sheets for bringing soup or bread and/or helping with set up and/or clean-up will be in the narthex beginning in the middle of February.

Our theme for our Lenten services this year will be:

WE BELIEVE

Exploring the Apostles Creed

March 1: God Created Us
March 8: God Became One of Us
March 15: God Saved Us
March 22: God is With Us
March 29: God Will Raise Us



This will also be our topic of study on Sunday mornings during Lent, beginning February 26.

Youth & Family Night, Sunday, February 26:

PRETZELS & PRAYER

Join us from 6:00 to 7:30 PM as we enjoy warm, soft pretzels and all kinds of delicious dipping sauces. We'll also explore the relationship between pretzels, prayer, and the season of Lent. All are welcome! Join us for a fun night of faith and family!



OHLC News

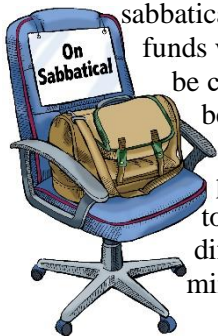
Details announced for Pastor's sabbatical

The OHLC council recently approved a sabbatical plan for Pastor Spencer this year. He will attend Doxology, a pastoral and congregational renewal program at a Lutheran retreat center in Dayton, Ohio. The program has three parts. First, Pastor attends alone the first week of June for a time of learning, worship, and fellowship with other pastors. Next, Pastor goes back on November 3-5 with a lay leader from OHLC (to be determined) to learn together and bring insights back to our congregation. Finally, Pastor and Amy attend together in August of 2024 for the "Grand Reunion" event, which includes special marriage enrichment sessions for pastors and spouses.

In addition to the time away to participate in the Doxology program, the council agreed to give Pastor two additional weeks, including two Sundays, off this year, in addition to his regular vacation time. This time will be taken at various points throughout the year. By spreading out his time away, we hope to avoid losing some of the post-pandemic momentum we've seen recently at OHLC.

While this is not a traditional sabbatical with an extended period of consecutive Sundays off, both Pastor and the council believe this plan will facilitate both rest and renewal for ministry, which is the aim of a sabbatical. It will largely be paid for with sabbatical designated funds we already have on hand. Pastor's Sunday absences will be covered by guest pastors, many of whom we've enjoyed before.

Your support for and patience with the sabbatical plan are appreciated as Pastor takes this important time to hone his skills and get some additional rest after a difficult few years of ministry. It is an investment in our ministry together.



Welcome, new members!

Last month we were blessed to receive several new members at OHLC: Gay & Carter Smith, Christa Nagel and her husband Chris (who has renewed his membership), and Barbara Heussmann. Larry and Trisha Romel attended the new member class as well, but will only be in Oak Harbor for a short time. We celebrate their time with us as unofficial and temporary "members." Please make a point of welcoming these new friends to OHLC!



Consider signing up for chancel or organ flowers!

The flower chart in the hall outside Pastor Spencer's office door still has Sunday openings for March 5, two dates in April, and others in July, August, September and beyond. If you'd like to celebrate an anniversary or birthday (your own or someone else's) commemorate an event or give thanks for God's blessings, you're invited to add your name to the list.



Chancel flowers are \$45; those placed on the organ are \$35. Peg Fosnaugh will contact you regarding your preferences for color and type of arrangement, and will make the order through our local Greenhouse Florist & Nursery. Peg will also check with you about wording you'd like placed in the Sunday bulletin.

Here's what's brewing with the church coffee makers

If you've been in the fellowship hall, you may have noticed the 2 large-capacity coffee makers near the kitchen – one for regular coffee and the other for decaf. We know it can be hard for Lutherans to change (especially where coffee is concerned), but these are both just this side of ancient. One has an intermittent leak and the other isn't shutting off properly and has become a fire hazard. (Since we can't just assume that a timely leak could put out a possible fire, they need to be replaced!)



The Lydia Circle ladies have agreed to donate funds so that two new coffee makers can be purchased. They've been ordered and will be installed upon arrival.

Lydia Circle is happy to be able to help provide big-ticket items like the coffee makers because of **your** support, and the reason is Bazaar, not bizarre! Your donations of handcrafted items and baked goods, and gently-used Christmas items for Granny's Attic, and the purchases you make yourself when you come to the annual bazaar, is what helps make the proceeds add up. Your funds are coming back to benefit Oak Harbor Lutheran Church.

Thank you to all for your support! We hope you'll stop by as soon as this project is completed to enjoy a great cup of coffee (or tea, if that's your preference; there will still be a hot water feature). And we encourage you to sign up on the white board in the fellowship hall to sponsor a Sunday of coffee hour fellowship!

Peg Fosnaugh, Lydia Circle

Financial Matters

We are grateful for your giving!

The final numbers are in on our 2022 budget, and we had a spectacular finish! We came into November with a \$10,000 budget deficit and ended the year with offerings exceeding expenses by almost \$12,000! Your weekly and/or monthly giving and your year-end gifts have been received with gratitude as a vote of confidence in our ministry together and are so appreciated.

What happens to that “surplus?” It remains in our checking account as a cushion for those months when our offerings don’t cover our expenses, which typically happens from time to time during the fiscal year. It ensures that we can meet our financial obligations throughout the year.

Thank you so very much for your continued faithfulness and generosity in funding the ministry we share.



Endowment Committee report & upcoming Will Seminar

At our meeting on November 16, 2022, the committee voted to distribute \$10,000 from our Endowment Fund. This is less than previous years due to the poor performance of the stock market in the past fiscal year. Allocations are to be designated as follows, in keeping with the proportions outlined in the endowment bylaws:

ELCA Scholarship for Military Chaplain	\$ 1,000
SPiN Café	\$ 2,000
ELCA World Hunger Appeal	\$ 1,000
Lutherwood	\$ 1,000
Krafts (Go Missions)	\$ 1,000
OHLC Building and Property	\$ 2,000
<u>CARE (Refugee Support Team)</u>	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Total	\$10,000

We would also like the congregation to know that the Endowment Committee will host a **free Will & Estate Seminar on Sunday, Feb. 19**, with our friend from Sedro Woolley, (Lutheran) attorney Brock Stiles, **noon to 3:00 PM in the church library**. Lunch will be provided.

Bob Wall, president, Endowment Committee



Library Notes

- From Karen, Kathy & Colleen

The busyness of the holidays is over now. Some of our days and evenings are rainy and chilly. These times invite us to enjoy indoor activities, such as reading good books while sipping a favorite warm beverage.

Come to your church library! See the new materials we have on display. Many of these books were requested at last fall’s Open House and we listened! We also have new *Guideposts* series books on labeled shelves.

Please follow the check-out procedure and fill out the identification card, if you have not done so before. And help yourself to a bookmark, some made by our own Carol Reafs (*see below*).



Happy Reading!

Kathy Holroyd, Karen Pasewark, Colleen Pedlar



The Bookmark Project: an update from Carol

Thank you to everyone who has contributed used greeting cards, especially Christmas cards, to my bookmark project. Because of your generosity, I am able to set our bookmarks both in our own church library as well as the Sno-Isle Library in Coupeville. This project is ongoing, so if you have cards from other occasions, I’d be delighted to have them. The kind women in the church office graciously allow the collection basket to rest on the bookcase in Rekann’s office. Thanks again for your help! Blessings!

Carol Reafs

Looking for a few good cookbooks

OHLC’s archivist Barbara Wilson has put out a call for **OHLC cookbooks, especially the issue from 1982!** As you’re spring cleaning or going through your family collection of books and find you have a copy to spare, please consider donating to the church archives. Used copies are fine; spatters often mark the pages of the best recipes! Questions? Talk to Barb or call the church office, 360-679-1561.

His Kids Preschool

A ministry of Oak Harbor Lutheran Church

In January, we introduced the **Student of the Week** program. This is where we focus on a preschooler in our classroom, and they bring a decorated poster with pictures of themselves and their family members and share their likes and activities that they participate in. It's a fun activity that we implement during the second part of the school year, and it helps us learn more about our preschoolers outside the classroom! **Our students in January were Dean and Lona.** The posters are displayed on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the classroom. Be on the lookout for this ever-changing display!

During the month, our letter focus was **S**, so the kids made stars decorated with torn bits of yellow paper, and we hung them up on the bulletin board in the hallway leading to the education wing.

We talked about how snowflakes are all different, but they all have six sides. We then decorated our classroom with snowflakes made from paper, Q-tips, and glitter. Along with the snowflakes, we made cute snowmen out of paper plates, felt and pipe cleaners.

We talked about the South Pole, and shared with them that this is where penguins live. The kids crafted a project using paper towel rolls and made them into penguins. We showed the children how the penguins protect, carry and hold their eggs, and *they* tried their best to carry pretend eggs with their feet around the classroom. We also talked about the North Pole, where polar bears live. We did a craft project of paper polar bears wearing hats, mittens and scarves, because they get cold too!

In the month of January, we learned about community, and the area where we live. We learned about community helpers, including fire fighters, police officers, doctors and dentists, among others. The children got to make their own pretend doctor's bags, and fire fighter and police officer puppets. We talked about calling 911 when we have an emergency, and learned about fire safety. We had a visit from our local police department to learn about safety, their "tool" belt and their squad car, and we took a field trip to the fire station. As always the fire fighters are wonderful hosts and put on a great demonstration for the children.



During the month we learned about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and how he wanted everyone to be treated equally and kindly. We shared his story with our students, about how he was influential in bringing about change and that he is still an important person with an important story to this day!

Here's how our students finished the sentence, **"If I were a snowflake floating in the sky, I would like to land....."**

Steven: on my robot and my dinosaur

Julian: on a snowman

Victoria: on a Christmas tree

Dean: on my house

Reid: on a car and a tree and grass

Celia: on mud

Lona: on a snowman

Asher: on a snowman

Samara: on a tree

It's almost time to begin registration for the 2023-24 school year!

Registration opens on March 1 for

returning students and siblings, then will

open to members and friends of the

congregation the following week, March 8

(Note: siblings of students from earlier

years count as 'friends'!). We'll be open to

registrations from the community starting

March 15. Watch for updates, because we have some exciting changes in the planning stages for the coming school year!

preschool registration



Please keep Ms. Elva in your prayers; she will be starting a new journey of chemotherapy over these next few weeks. She has spent the last couple of months healing from surgery, regaining strength and preparing for this next chapter of hers. It is her hope to return to the classroom and be once again with the children, and that is certainly our hope as well.

God's Peace,

Ms. Michelle, Ms. Gaye, Ms. Sara and Ms. Elva



OHLC Women



Opportunities for fellowship, study & service

OHLC's women's Circles offer Bible study and fellowship

Deborah Circle meets Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 PM, in the library. All are welcome! Contact Gaye Rodriguey for more information, gaye@tobysuds.com.

- 2/ 2 January/February 2023 *Gather* magazine, "The Ten Commandments: Reviving the Soul", Session 2, "Rhythms and respect", pages 36-37
- 2/ 9 January/February 2023 *Gather*, pages 38-39
- 2/16 January/February 2023 *Gather*, pages 40-41
- 2/23 January/February 2023 *Gather*, page 5, "Worthy, grateful, healing"; pages 44-46, "Warming up to Leviticus"

Lydia Circle meets on the 1st & 3rd Mondays at 6:00 PM in the prayer room, so you're invited to join us on Feb. 6 & 20. Our study picks up again in ***Resurrection: Living as People of the Risen Lord***, by Kristie Berglund, a part of the LifeGuide Bible Studies. Newcomers are always welcome, and books are available.

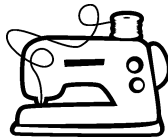
Questions? Contact Peg Fosnaugh, 360-929-9127, or talk to Martha or Rekann in the church office.

Blanket Workshop

Blanket Workshop meets Tuesday and Wednesday, February 7 & 8, beginning at 9:30 AM in the fellow-ship hall to work on tied quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Newcomers are always welcome, and you don't have sewing experience to help out. The materials are provided, and the conversation is friendly!

Drop by to see what we're working on, or contact Leona McKee for more information, bcmac68@comcast.net, 360-675-5712. Contact her, too, if you're interested in machine sewing quilt tops at home.

Have you been sorting through your stash of fabrics? **Blanket Workshop is always on the lookout for yardage!** Cottons or cotton blends, please; bright colors are especially welcome but we take all kinds of patterns. *Note that LWR specifications prohibit us sending quilts with national, religious or military motifs.*



Checking in

Pastor Spencer received an e-mail from Will McNae, son of Marj McNae, with an update on his mom. Here's an excerpt:

- Jan. 13, 2023

Hello and happy new year! I was chatting with my mom, Marjorie, this past weekend and realized I have not provided an update in quite a while. Apologies first off.



Mom wanted you to know she misses you, her church community, and joining the music program with her cello. She's living in Kirkland at one of the Aegis assisted living facilities so that she can be closer to her family and in a safer environment. She has a beautiful view of Lake Washington and sunsets over the Olympic mountains. The beauty of Dugwalla Bay cannot be replaced but we are pleased to not worry about falls, maintaining the huge yard, and living alone.

Mom is living in the moment with humor and tenderness, still playing the piano for friends, but her Alzheimer's is gradually getting worse.

Last summer we embarked on the enormous job of preparing our family home for sale. The Haida House was sold to a family who had an amazing interest in northwest Haida art and culture. Bill would be so pleased to know his dream home and yard were being cared for.



During her many years with us at OHLC, Marj was a participant of Deborah Circle and – as Will mentioned – active in our congregation's music ministry in our choirs, bell choir, and as solo cellist.

Her mailing address in Kirkland is available in the church office.

Ed. Note: Marj, if you're reading this, know that we miss you, too!

Compassion Ministry

Roadside clean-up makes a difference in the community: Come lend a hand on February 11!

Those *Adopt A Highway* signs along State Route 20 north of Oak Harbor show that OHLC cares about our local community *and* the environment! Jeff Margraf, our coordinator, has scheduled Saturday, Feb. 11, as our next litter pick-up day. Meet at church at 8:30 AM to carpool to our 2-mile stretch near Dugualla Bay. Bring your gloves! Trash bags, reflective vests and hard hats are provided.

Volunteers need to be at least 15 years old. Volunteer credit is available for those who need it. Questions? Contact Jeff, 719-258-0055 or jeffmargraf@aol.com.

Support groups help those *Living With Loss*

Laurie Johnson, Bereavement Coordinator at WhidbeyHealth (retired pastor and OHLC member) announces another series of “Living with Loss” grief support group meetings: Mondays, Feb. 6 through March 13, 2:00-3:30 PM, and Thursdays, Feb. 9 through March 16, 6:00 -7:30 PM. Both groups will meet at OHLC. Sign-up in advance is required; if you are interested in participating, please contact Laurie, 360-914-5635, or johnla@whidbeyhealth.org.



Josephine makes the national news (in a good way!)

- Kathy Holroyd & Laurie Johnson, OHLC's Josephine delegates

OHLC-supported Josephine Caring Community has recently been in national ELCA news! *Living Lutheran* magazine featured Josephine's *Wisdom and Stories Initiative* in their December 2022 issue.

Eileen Burdick, Josephine's Spiritual Care Director enlists volunteer writers to interview each of their 43 residents with memory impairment. These efforts result in an autobiographical sketch of each resident in hardcover book form.

A grant for our NW WA Synod is funding the project. The initiative has the purpose “to capture the truth of their lives and their wisdom,” says Burdick. These publications are blessings to residents, their families and to staff.

Kudos to Josephine and to our Synod for this life-affirming project!

February's focus is *Go Missions International*, the Kraft family

CORE,
2022



Nick &
Shannon



Nick & Shannon Kraft have been proclaiming the Good News as missionaries in Peru (and Bolivia, Chile, and beyond) since their commissioning service at OHLC in 1998. With a strong emphasis on discipleship, marriage and family, and children's ministry, they offer retreats, annual multi-week faith training events for youth (CORE), English language camps, and much more, all in the joyful context of God's amazing grace and love.

Their home base in Chiclayo, Peru, is The Potter's House. Shannon noted this past summer that the construction is nearly complete (including approximately a zillion adobe bricks, many made by the Krafts' own hands). Located in a farming area 20 minutes outside the city, it's an oasis of fresh air and relative peace.

The pandemic and Peru's continuing political unrest have brought massive challenges. 2023's CORE series had to be postponed due to closed borders and other difficulties for travel.

We are delighted to be able to continue OHLC's partnership with the Kraft family and GO Missions. Take a look at the narthex bulletin board for more information and more pictures!

Help House sends thanks for OHLC's ongoing support

Dear Friends,

In 2022, Help House distributed 4,991 food baskets that fed 10,445 people and provided 30,127 people with bakery and produce items on northern Whidbey Island. We were also able to help 39 people with their medical/dental costs through our North Whidbey Medical Help fund. It is only because of the generosity of people like you that we were able to provide those services.

With over 90% of our operating budget coming from private donations, yours will go a long way in helping us continue providing food to our neighbors in need. From the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers at Help House, please accept our sincerest thanks for your continued support. Happy New Year to all!

Most sincerely,
Jean T. Wieman, Executive Director

OHLC's Help House donation bin is located in the narthex near the white board, and you're invited to bring an item or two of nonperishable food every week. We check regularly with Help House to keep up on their current needs and list those on the Sunday bulletin info sheet inserts.

February's requests are the same as January's: ☒oatmeal or other cereal (any kind), ☒ large or regular cans of pork & beans, ☒ large (family-size) cans of chili, ravioli, stew, or fruit, and ☒ packages of individually-wrapped crackers & cheese or crackers & peanut butter, etc. ☒ The usual staples (such as mac & cheese, canned vegetables, rice, canned vegetables) are always welcome. Thank you!

Fair Trade Winds sends thanks following December's Fair Trade event in December *e-mail received January 5, 2023*

Hi, Pastor Jeff and Carol [Wall],

I'm late with my report, but grateful all the same! Sales were almost \$2500, so we will send \$250 to Lutheran World relief. A success, I would say! I look forward to my visits to OHLC every year. Thanks so much for inviting me!

Blessings in the new year!
Emily P. Lynn, Fair Trade Winds

Sharing Tree gifts gladly received by Josephine residents

Oak Harbor Lutheran Church,

My heartfelt thanks for the amazing gifts, which made Christmas very special for our residents here at Josephine Caring Community. Everyone does such a wonderful job and finds beautiful presents. I am always amazed at how each item perfectly matches the resident who receives it.

We truly do thank you and the congregation for your kindness!

Shannon Terpak, Activity Director
Josephine Caring Community
Stanwood



Included in this newsletter are *Prayer Ventures* and *The Spirit* for February.

The deadline for articles for the March newsletter is Friday, Feb. 17. (*Yes, that's early, but the month is short.*)

OHLC's men's group, The Brotherhood of St. Bernard, meets regularly for Bible study, lunch and fellowship. This month's gatherings are Tuesdays, February 14 & 28, at noon in the fellowship hall.

Stephen Ministry meets Thursday, February 9, at 4:00 PM in the library to discuss *Module T-4, Distinctively Christian Caring*, "Christian Caregiving," chapters 9-14, and "Speaking the Truth in Love," introduction through Chapter 3.

Lutherwood Camp & Retreat Center's annual meeting is Saturday, Feb. 4, 10 AM at the camp, 1185 Roy Rd., Bellingham. For more info on Lutherwood, contact OHLC's own Mike Dilley, mikedilley@comcast.net, 425-641-2295.

Loving our Neighbors - with Gaye Rodriguey

“Love one another deeply, from the heart”

1 Peter 1: 22

This verse revolves around one central command. We have been redeemed from our old way of living by the precious blood of Christ. We have begun a new life, and loving one another is right at the heart of it.

Peter writes of a new obedience, which leads to a new purity, which leads to a new love.

This is a description of the beginning of the Christian life. Obedience is the right response to hearing the truth about the Lord Jesus. We have been purified by his blood, born again spiritually. Now we are called to a new life of purity, living as obedient, loving children of God.

We leave behind our old ways and begin a new life together with all of God’s creation.

Peter now calls on us to *keep* loving. We must love one another ‘deeply from the heart’ whatever happens.

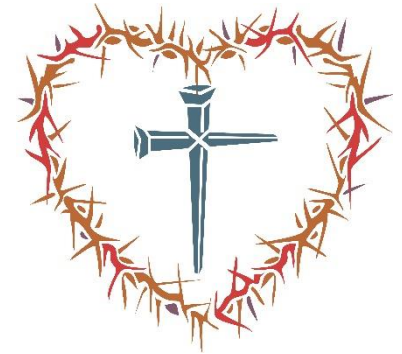
Shalom, Gaye

This article was adapted from the YouVersion Bible plan
“1 Peter, Following Jesus” by J. Marsden



Our Lenten focus

Lent, the church-year season that begins on Ash Wednesday, is a time of penitence and spiritual renewal. Some people give up a luxury or vice during Lent as a form of self-denial; others undertake a project that benefits others.



The point isn’t to denigrate ourselves or to see how much we can do without. Instead, Lent helps us reflect on Jesus’ death. As Timothy Keller writes in *The Reason for God*: “The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.”

It’s still winter ... but spring is near.
It’s Lent ... but we’re pointed toward Easter.
Keep us hopeful, Lord.



Church Art Online, 2020, 2023

Worship assistants



February 5

8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Tom Piper Communion Asst: Wendy Wilson Healing Prayer: M. Stroud, G. Rodriguey	Computer: Donna Aspery Organ/Piano: Sue Stroud
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Carol Fitzgerald Communion Asst: Rita Carter Healing Prayer: T. Piper, B. or C. Wall	Computer: Ted Smith Organ/Piano: Sue Stroud

February 12

8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Paul Senness Communion Asst: Stone family	Computer: Norman family Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Carol Reafs Communion Asst: Janet Smith	Computer: Kale Totten Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan

February 19

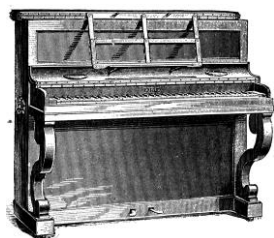
8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Jeff Margraf Communion Asst: Tracey Tomlin	Computer: Lisa Margraf Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Carol Wall Communion Asst: Gisela Hawley	Computer: John Totten Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan

Ash Wednesday, February 22

12:00 PM	Assisting Minister: Communion Asst:	Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
7:00 PM	Assisting Minister: Carol Fitzgerald Communion Asst:	Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan

February 26

8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Sheila Ryan Communion Asst:	Computer: Maddox Ackerman Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Carol Fitzgerald Communion Asst: Laurie Johnson	Computer: Bruce Holroyd Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan



FREE TO A GOOD HOME:

1904 upright piano ("with lots of decorative carving") that belonged to Ken Grigsby's mom. You'll need to make your own arrangements to pick it up. Contact Ken for info, island66@comcast.net.

Financial Report

December

	December	Year to date
Income	\$ 59,350	\$ 450,787
Outgo	<u>37,546</u>	<u>439,977</u>
	\$ <u>21,803</u>	\$ <u>11,778</u>

Worship Attendance

January

Date	8:00 AM	10:30 AM
Jan. 1	<i>no service</i>	94
Jan. 8	56	78
Jan. 15	50	85
Jan. 22	54	97
Avg. Att.	53	89

Epiphany service, Friday, January 6: 64

January 29 will be included in next month's statistics.

Average Sunday attendance: 142

Lesser Festivals & Commemorations


February

2 The Presentation of our Lord	18 Martin Luther, renewer of the Church, 1546
3 Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark & Sweden, 865	23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156
5 The Martyrs of Japan, 1597	25 Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, 1921
14 Cyril, monk, 869; Methodius, bishop 855; missionaries to the Slavs	

Little Lutheran bags in February: Donna Aspery

This month's decorative font is **Hole-Hearted**; drop caps and other headings are Arial.

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 11:30 OHLC Staff 12:30 W.W. set-up 1:30 Welcome Wednesday 4:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Adult Ed/1 <i>Peter</i>	2 1:00 Deborah Circle 7:00 NA, fellowship hall	3 3:00 QUEST CLUB	4 10:00 Camp Lutherwood annual meeting, Bellingham
5 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed/1 <i>Peter</i> 9:15 Worship 10:30 <i>Livestreamed on Facebook</i> Confirmation 6:00 CA 7:30	6 2:00 Grief Support Group 6:00 Lydia Circle 7:00 North Whidbey NA/library	7 9:30 Blanket Workshop 5:30 Al Anon 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Boy Scouts	8 9:30 Blanket Workshop 11:30 OHLC Staff 12:30 W.W. set-up 1:30 Welcome Wednesday 4:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Adult Ed/1 <i>Peter</i>	9 1:00 Deborah Circle 4:00 Stephen Ministry 6:00 Grief Support Group 7:00 Council 7:00 NA, fellowship hall	10 1:00 Library Team	11 8:30 Roadside clean-up; meet at OHLC to carpool
12 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 <i>Livestreamed on Facebook</i> CA 7:30	13 2:00 Grief Support Group 5:30 SPiN Board 6:30 Refugee Team 7:00 North Whidbey NA/library	14 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 5:30 Al Anon 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Boy Scouts	15 11:30 OHLC Staff 12:30 W.W. set-up 1:30 Welcome Wednesday 4:00 Chancel Choir	16 1:00 Deborah Circle 6:00 Grief Support Group 7:00 NA, fellowship hall	17 Newsletter Deadline 3:00 QUEST CLUB	18
19 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 <i>Livestreamed on Facebook</i> Will seminar 12:00 2 nd Annual Youth Indoor Snowball Fight 6:00 CA 7:30	20 Presidents Day <i>Church office closed</i> 2:00 Grief Support Group 6:00 Lydia Circle 7:00 North Whidbey NA/library	21 12:30 W.I.G.S 5:30 Al Anon 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Boy Scouts	22 Ash Wednesday 12:00 Worship 12:30 W.W. set-up 1:30 Welcome Wednesday 4:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Worship	23 1:00 Deborah Circle 6:00 Grief Support Group 7:00 NA, fellowship hall	24	25
26 1 Lent Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed/We Believe 9:15 Worship 10:30 <i>Livestreamed on Facebook</i> Youth & Family Night 6:00 CA 7:30	27 2:00 Grief Support Group 6:00 North Whidbey NA/fellowship hall 6:30 Refugee Team	28 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 5:30 Al Anon 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 CADA Parenting 7:00 Boy Scouts	Lent is an occasion for us to journey with Christ ... into tomorrow. For you never walk with Christ long but what the dawn breaks, the sun shines and hope breaks through. - C. Neil Strait 			HIS KIDS PRESCHOOL M,T,W 8:45-11:45 AM No school on 2/20 Registration for 2023-24 begins in March!