

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



HARBOR BEACON

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OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

A friendly, Christ-centered congregation with a place for you!

OHLC is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

1253 NW 2nd Avenue

360-679-1561

Oak Harbor, WA 98277

www.oakharborlutheran.org

Office hours: Mon.-Fri., 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

office@oakharborlutheran.org

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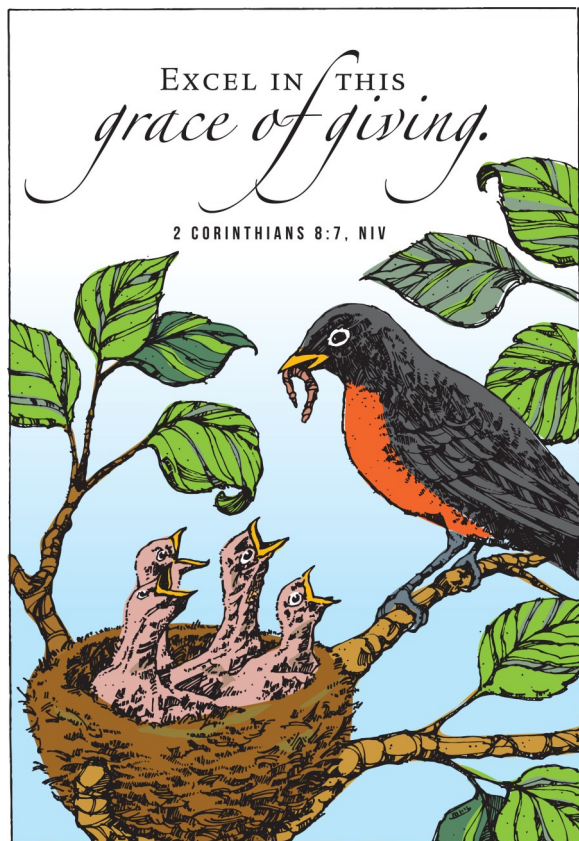
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OHLC Staff Home Phone

Pastor:

Jeffrey Spencer 360-320-4041

Preschool Director:

Jasmine Hendricks 360-929-1760

Office Administrator/Youth & Family Ministry

Beth Stephens 619-729-3031

Custodian:

Salvador Carvallo 360-675-3957

Church Phone 360-679-1561

Click on these links

for the newsletter inserts:

The ELCA's monthly *Prayer Ventures*:

<https://resources.elca.org/?categories=prayer-ventures>

The Northwest Washington Synod's insert, *The Spirit*

<https://www.lutheransnw.org/news/the-spirit>

OHLC's website:

www.oakharborlutheran.org

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Giving to the Church-Our Duty, Our Delight

This is a touchy topic, but please bear with me; it is an important one. Giving regularly and generously to support the mission and ministry of the church is every Christian's duty and delight. This can have the ring of self-interest coming from someone who makes their living in service to the church, and it has certainly been abused by those who claim things like that Jesus wants them to have a private plane, but abuse of this teaching does not negate its proper use. The principle itself is sound, and biblical, and it is my job as your pastor to teach it from time to time.

Giving to the church is every Christian's duty. This principle can be found as early in scripture as Genesis 4, when Abel brought God the best of his flock as an offering. It continues as Abraham voluntarily gave one-tenth of everything to God, a practice which is noted approvingly in the New Testament (Hebrews 7). In the parable of the talents, Jesus makes it clear that everything we have is to be used in service of God's purposes, which would certainly include the ministry of the church. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also teaches that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," which frames our giving as a spiritual discipline which trains our hearts to trust in God. In his letters, the Apostle Paul regularly included a call to support the church with monetary gifts (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Galatians 6:6, etc.).

While it is clear that giving regularly and generously to the church is every Christian's duty, we cannot stop our lesson here. To describe our giving only as a duty is to turn it into a requirement, something likely to be undertaken begrudgingly. Even worse, it can turn our offerings into an opportunity either for self-righteousness, which is among the most potent of spiritual poisons, or guilt, which is not a fruit of the Spirit. To be sure, God speaks to us through his word of law, using the language of duty, but we must also consider our giving in light of the gospel. This is what makes it a delight!

We must always keep in front of us the Good News that we are not saved by what we do, but by what Christ has done. "For by grace you have been saved through faith," St. Paul writes, "...it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our standing with God does not rise or fall with the size or frequency of our offerings. Jesus has

already secured our forgiveness, our future, and our place in God's family through his cross and resurrection. This is what makes giving to the church such a delight. When we remember how much God has already done for us, giving stops being just an obligation and starts becoming a response of gratitude.

And so scripture speaks of giving not only through the lens of the law, but also the gospel. Jesus reminds us that we have received freely, and so we can freely give (Matthew 10:8). The Apostle John reminds us that we love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). St. Paul encourages us to give joyfully rather than begrudgingly, because "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). All our giving, Paul goes on to say, is a response of thanks to God "for his indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

When my three boys were young, my wife and I forced them to write thank-you cards. To be honest, most of the time, they did it begrudgingly. But there were moments when the gift was so thoughtful, so generous, so appreciated, that those thank-yous came spontaneously and with great joy. I'm pleased to report that as they are getting older, those sincere thank-yous are becoming more frequent. Similarly, the old sinner who still dwells within us needs to hear the law about giving. We need to be reminded that it is our duty. But the new person Christ is calling out of us is a creature of the gospel, and when this new creation rises in us, our giving becomes a thank-you note to God given with great joy. It is no longer merely a duty; it is a delight.

Giving is one of the traditional disciplines of Lent. If you have gotten out of the habit of regular, generous giving, this is a good time to get back into it. Doing so supports the preaching of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments, the teaching of the faith, and the care of those in need. But let your duty be carried out in joy. Let your obedience be motivated by God's gracious gift. Let your generosity be rooted not in obligation, but in gratitude to the God who has already given us everything in Christ.

Pastor Jeffrey R. Spencer



LENT



YFG: PRETZELS & PRAYER! MARCH 1ST!

Join us from 4pm-6pm as we make fresh, homemade pretzels and explore the relationship between pretzels, prayer, and the season of Lent. We will also be serving chili for dinner.

All are welcome! Join us for an evening of faith,

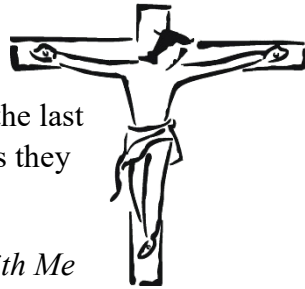


MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP & SOUP SUPPERS

Midweek Lenten services and soup suppers continue on Wednesdays at Noon and 6pm throughout the month of March. Sign-up sheets for soup, bread, set-up, and clean-up are posted in the narthex.

Your help is appreciated!

The theme for our midweek services is “Blessings from the Cross.” We are looking at the last words of Christ from the cross and the blessings they bestow upon us.



March 4: MERCY “*Today You Will Be with Me in Paradise*”

March 11: COMMUNITY “*Woman, Behold Your Son*”

March 18: PRESENCE AMIDST SUFFERING “*My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?*”

March 25: SALVATION “*It is Finished*”

Make your attendance at each of these midweek Lenten services one of our Lenten disciplines, that you might come to a deeper understanding and appreciation for the blessings Christ bestows upon you from his Holy Cross.

Growing and Learning

NEW ADULT BIBLE STUDY!

TRIUMPH OF THE LAMB

Readings in Revelation



On Sunday, March 1, we will begin a new adult Bible study on the book of Revelation. Often misunderstood, this complex book ultimately offers hope by showing us a vision of Christ’s victory over every enemy of the gospel and the new kingdom he has in store for us. Join us in the library on Sunday mornings from 9:15 to 10:15 as we read select passages from the book of Revelation.

March 1: John’s Vision of the Heavenly Christ (Rev. 1:1-20)

March 8: Letters to the Churches (Rev. 2:1-29)

March 15: More Letters to the Churches (Rev. 3:1-22)

March 22: John’s Vision of God and the Lamb (Rev. 4:1-5:14)

March 29: Opening the Seven Seals of God’s Scroll (Rev. 6:1-8:2)

AFTERMATH OF THE “SNOWFALL”

The 5th Annual Youth Indoor Snowball Fight was held Sunday, Feb 1. Congratulations to all our competitors, our winning team, the voted MVP, and to that sneaky individual who added to the chaos from the sidelines. Fun, fellowship, and pizza were enjoyed by all. Our “snowballs” – hand-crafted from trimmings from Blanket Workshop quilt batting – have gone back to storage for now.



OHLC News

OHLC TO CELEBRATE PI(E) DAY ON MARCH 15!



Join us after our 10:30 service on Sunday, March 15 as we celebrate Pi(e) Day! What is Pi(e) Day? Pi is a mathematical term which refers to the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter: 3.1415. When March 14 rolls around each year (3/14), people use it as an excuse to eat pie.

We'll be celebrating Pi(e) Day a day late this year, on the 15th, but as we do so we'll be giving thanks to God our Creator, who brought into existence both pi and pie!

Pie bakers are encouraged to sign up via the Connection Card to bring pie; we'll also need some help with serving and clean up. All are welcome to join us. Thanks to Rita Cline for keeping this tasty OHLC tradition going!

DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS!



Oak Harbor Lutheran Church's Theresa Ferguson Memorial Scholarship offers **\$1,000-per-year renewable scholarships** for any type of post-secondary education.

The **deadline for applications** for the 2026-27 school year is **Friday, May 1**. Application forms are available in the church office, or contact Roshel Donwen, 360-929-0136, roshel@3sistersbeef.com.

CARDS OF CARE FOR COLLEEN LURA

Given Colleen Lura's specific medical situation, in-person visits must be approved and arranged ahead of time through her nephew and the staff at Regency. If you would like to visit Colleen, please talk to Pastor Jeff about the possibility of making these arrangements. In lieu of in-person visits, cards of care are encouraged.

Colleen Lura
C/O Regency Memory Care
1040 Kimball Drive
Oak Harbor



OHLC SINGLE ADULTS FELLOWSHIP – MARCH 14, 2026

If you're a single adult, we invite you to join us for the March gathering on Saturday, March 14, from noon to 3 pm in the OHLC Fellowship Hall.

Of course, there will be food, so feel free to bring whatever you would like to contribute to our potluck lunch—perhaps a pie, an Irish dish of some sort, or whatever else strikes your fancy.. (Just a reminder that whatever you bring does NOT need to be homemade!) And don't forget to bring containers to take home someone else's leftovers!

We enjoy getting to know each other better, sharing stories, articles we've read, and activities we enjoy participating in or watching. Since our March gathering will be on actual Pi Day as well as 3 days before St. Patrick's Day, perhaps we can celebrate both events by sharing information about Ireland, St. Patrick's Day, mathematics, and π. It's always fun to see where our conversations lead us.

If you have questions or would like further info, please call Aloha Hart (360-672-5502) or David Allen (360-720-3174). We're hoping to see many of you at our March gathering!

SPRING CLEAN-UP! SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH

We will be holding our Annual Church Cleanup Day on **Saturday, March 28, from 9 AM - 1PM.**

We invite everyone to come help make His house shine! Every helping hand makes a difference. **A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex**, and we encourage all who are able to participate to take a look, including our youth! We would especially love their energy and enthusiasm— they are a huge blessing!

Contact Mary Brock for more information.



Holy Week & Easter at OHLC

Save the dates!

APRIL 2: 7:00 PM: Maundy Thursday worship

APRIL 3: Noon & 7:00 PM: Good Friday worship

APRIL 5: 8:00 & 10:30 AM: Easter Sunday worship

Easter Sunday Breakfast & Egg Hunt

Plan on joining us for a delicious breakfast on Easter Sunday, served in Herrigstad Hall from **9:00 to 10:00 AM**. There will be an **Easter egg hunt** at **9:15** for children age 10 and younger. Older children can sign up to hide eggs!



In Loving Memory

We offer prayers for our Lord's comforting presence with those in our church family who have recently suffered the loss of loved ones, including...

...the friends and family of **Shirley Baeth**, who died on Thursday, February 12, she died peacefully while surrounded by family and with Christ's promises ringing in her ears. Her memorial service will be at her home congregation, Christ Lutheran Church in Libby, Montana. Blessed be her memory.

...the friends and family of **Marilyn Wall**, mother of Rita Carter, who died peacefully at the age of 89 on Wednesday, February 4, at her home. Marilyn first joined the OHLC family in 1960.

...we also remember our friends, **Gene and Dottie Gilbert**, at their joint memorial service this month, Thursday, March 19, at 11 AM.

Peace be their memory

Stephen Ministry



God, our healer, guide our Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers as they begin their Stephen Ministry training. Bless their time together with learning, community, nurturing, and spiritual growth. Help them to recognize you as the source of the ministry they learn to provide care in your



- ☞ **Included in this newsletter** are *Prayer Ventures* and *The Spirit* for March.
- ☞ **The Brotherhood of St. Bernard**, OHLC's men's Bible study fellowship, meets Tuesdays, **March 10 & 24**, at noon in the fellowship hall.
- ☞ OHLC's card makers, the **Church Mice Stampers**, meet on Tuesdays, **March 10 & 24**, starting at 10:00 AM in the library.
- ☞ **The One Thing Book Group** will meet to consider *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. Location and time TBA
- ☞ **Stephen Ministry** will meet on Thurs. **March 12** at 4pm in the Library. The topic of the Continuing Education discussion will be Volume 2, Module 20, "Caring for People Experiencing a Major Medical Crisis", pages 531-562 with emphasis on pages 551-556
- ☞ **The deadline for articles** for the April newsletter is **Monday, March 16**.

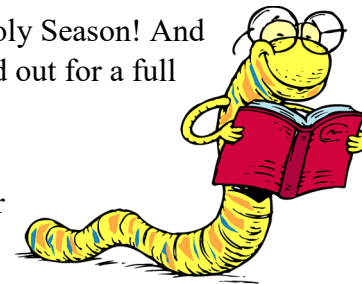
Library News

Lent and Easter books are available for checkout right in the Narthex! We have additional materials for adults and children on the display table in the library, as well. Do take a bookmark or two—we have plenty!

Have some inspirational reading during this Holy Season! And remember, all devotional books can be checked out for a full year!

Your Library Team

Kathy Holroyd, Carol Reafs, Colleen Pedlar



OHLC Women

Opportunities for Fellowship, Study & Service

JOIN BLANKET WORKSHOP

You're invited to join, **Tuesday & Wednesday, March 3 & 4, 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall.** We are always looking for new friends that enjoy sewing or would like to learn. Thank you!

BED SHEET DONATION REQUEST!

Blanket Workshop is asking for cotton or cotton/polyester blend sheets to be used as quilt backings. Twin size and up, old or new, any color or pattern, good condition sheets are welcome. A collection bin is in the Narthex. *Thank you!*

CIRCLES IN MARCH

Deborah Circle will meet Thursdays in March at 1PM in the Library. All are welcome! Questions? Contact Gaye Rodriguey at gaye@tobysuds.com

March 5 "Praying Along Rivers", January/February 2026 **Gather** magazine, page 42

March 12 "God's Name, God's Promise", March/April/May 2026 **Gather** magazine, Session one, page 12

March 19 *Grateful Gatherings*, "Make Space for Sacred Rest"

March 26 "God Who Abides: Bread, Light, and Vine", **Gather**

Lydia Circle meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30 PM in the Prayer Room. We continue the book: *Daniel: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (LifeGuide Bible Series) by Douglas Connelly. All are welcome! Contact Mary Brock at 360-672-8966 if you have any questions.

March 3 Chapter 7: On the Menu at the Lions' Club, Daniel 6

March 17 Chapter 8: A Prophetic Panorama, Daniel 7

Flowers for Service

Thank you to all our flower sponsors for signing up for Chancel/organ flowers! Please check the flower chart outside Pastor Jeff's office door and find a Sunday you'd be willing to sponsor. (March may be full but there are still openings through the rest of the year!) I'll contact you regarding your choice of colors and the wording you'd like listed in the bulletin.

Chancel flowers: \$50 Organ flowers: \$45

-Peg Fosnaugh

Easter 2026

On Easter morning, April 5, we would like to adorn our sanctuary with flowers in celebration of Jesus' resurrection. This year we will place a special order from the church office for **begonias**. We invite you to reserve one or more plants in memory or in honor of loved ones. **Although donations may be made in any amount, the suggested donation for one plant is \$25.**



The deadline for orders is Sunday, March 15. Order forms will be available as a bulletin insert during the early part of March, or contact Beth in the church office, 360-679-1561, or you may use this page from the newsletter.

A bulletin insert on Easter will list names of those being honored or remembered. Please include the following information:

My Name _____

(circle one) In Memory of / In Honor of _____

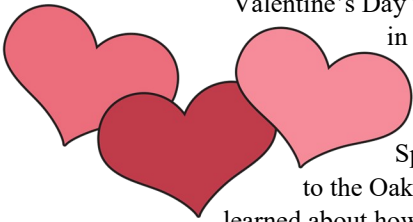
Please note: Make a check out to OHLC or place cash in a pew offering envelope along with this form. Thank you! You may take your plant(s) home after the 10:30 AM service on Easter Sunday, April 5. If you would prefer to donate your plant(s) please make a note on the order form.

His Kids Preschool

A Ministry of Oak Harbor Lutheran Church

This February, His Kids Preschool continues our learning with the 5 senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. At the end of the month, the class holds a “Tasting Party” to put those taste buds to use, and maybe even try something new.

Valentine’s Day was celebrated with special Valentines collected in hand-created mailboxes shaped like laced hearts and yummy snacks for this holiday party; plenty of red and pink hearts to go around.



Speaking of pink, our field trip this month took us to the Oak Harbor Water Treatment Facility, where students learned about how our water is treated, and how street water is taken care...students got to pick out hard hats, and it was a sea of pink hats and one yellow. The students and family members were treated to a presentation from these wonderful community helpers, and yes, it was a little bit about what happens to our poop. We are grateful for this service!

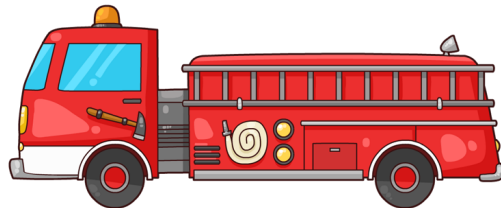
Our Special Students Week continues this month with Rylee, Brian, and Runa. The class enjoys learning more about our students and having special responsibilities.

We hope you are staying happy and healthy this month, and are looking forward to Spring.

Here’s how some of our students finished the sentence, *When I grow up, I want to be:*

Rylee: a police officer
Runa S.: a police officer
Brian: a teacher
Runa H.: a doctor
Maverick: a firefighter
Luci: a cook
Ember: a firefighter
Melodee: a firefighter

Colton: a baker
Fenway: a firefighter who drives a big fire truck



Blessings,

Ms. Elva, Ms. Michelle, and Ms. Jasmine

Faith That Blooms Anew

“Why are you anxious?” asked our Lord. Then He said,

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”
(Matthew 6:28–29, NIV)

Jesus’ words remind us that just as God clothes the lilies of the field in beauty and splendor, he also provides faithfully for his people. The same Creator who tends to the flowers of spring cares for every detail of our lives.

People of faith come to see that truth unfold year after year — in the budding trees, the soft blossoms, and the steady return of color after winter’s gray. God’s reliability is woven into creation itself.

As poet Adeline Whitney once wrote:

*God does not send strange flowers every year,
When the Spring wind blows o’er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
The violet is here.*



Each spring, those familiar blooms whisper the same promise: God is faithful still.

ChurchArtPro, March 2026

Compassion Ministry

Ministry of the Month:



OHLC's ministry of the month for February and March, to coincide with Lent, is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) World Hunger Appeal. As always, our contributions throughout these two months will be donated to the organization. We appreciate any contribution you can make to this most important cause. Please make your contribution to OHLC, with ELCA Hunger on the memo line.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

– Matthew 25:35

God richly provides for daily bread — the earth can produce enough food for everyone. Yet, many of our sisters and brothers still go hungry.

By providing immediate relief to those who are hungry, we meet basic needs and recognize the universal human right to food. But ending hunger is about more than food. By connecting people with the resources they need to produce food and gain access to clean water, education, health care and sources of income, long-term, sustainable change can be accomplished.

JOSEPHINE CARING COMMUNITY: BIRDSEED FUND

Many Josephine residents relate to the sacred through nature, including bird-watching. About 33 residents have birdfeeders outside of their windows. They would greatly appreciate cash or check donations of any amount to help keep these feeders filled. **PLEASE NO BIRDSEED DONATIONS**

We now have a model "birdfeeder" for donation collection in the narthex. Make out any checks to OHLC with "Josephine birdseed" on the memo line.

The residents are deeply grateful for whatever we may provide!



OHLC Josephine Delegates
Kathy Holroyd
Karol Pulliam

LUTHERWOOD REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR SUMMER 2026!



Whether you love tubing on Lake Samish, sleeping under the stars, or have never been to camp before, they have something for everyone (including adults)!

Loving Your Neighbor



"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15: 5)

I have never been a terrific gardener. I get inspired for a weekend here and there, but then I get busy, or something else grabs my attention, and my garden suffers. The flowers droop. The leaves get parched. The bushes get overgrown and unruly, their branches choking each other out.

And so it is for us says Jesus, when we don't root ourselves in him. We get off track. We lose energy. Our best efforts come to nothing.

The way for us to bear fruit, says Jesus, is to abide in him. The Message translation puts it this way: "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you." Jesus lives in us, and he invites us to live in him. To root ourselves in his ways of love and forgiveness. To drink deeply of his love, so that everything we do flows from that love. Like the branches that grow and get their nourishment from the vine.

When we live in Jesus, we flourish. But we can't do it alone. We need a community of believers to remind us where we belong and where to get our true nourishment, to give each other strength and encouragement when we struggle. When we root ourselves together in the Vine, we bear fruit together. We are like a vibrant garden of flowers. We are like lush green leaves on a shrub. We are like the strong branches on a tree, all working together, bearing good fruit.

Thanks be to God for being such a faithful gardener, and for giving us such a loving, life-giving Vine to root in. It's good to live and grow among his branches.

Written by a staff member of the Lutheran Counseling Network

March



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Lent 2 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed. 9:15 Worship 10:30 YFG Pretzels & Prayer Confirmation 4:00 CA/library 7:30	2 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 6:30 WIYS 7:00 North Whidbey NA	3 9:30 Blanket Workshop 5:30 Lydia Circle 5:30 Al Anon	4 9:30 Blanket Workshop 12:00 Midweek Worship 12:30 Soup & bread 4:15 Chancel Choir 6:00 Midweek Worship 6:30 Soup & bread	5 1:00 Deborah Circle 7:00 NA	6 <div style="border: 1px solid purple; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> WA State Music Teachers' Association: MAPS </div>	7 SPiN Volunteer/Donor Gathering 12-4 pm 
8 Lent 3 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed. 9:15 Worship 10:30 CA/library 7:30	9 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 6:30 WIYS 7:00 North Whidbey NA	10 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 3:00 SPiN B.O.D. 5:30 Al Anon	11 12:00 Midweek Worship 12:30 Soup & bread 4:15 Chancel Choir 6:00 Midweek Worship 6:30 Soup & bread	12 1:00 Deborah Circle 4:00 Stephen Ministry 6:00 Council 7:00 NA	13 3:00 QUEST CLUB	14 9 AM -2 PM 4H public presentations education wing 12:00 Singles Fellowship
15 Lent 4 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed. 9:15 Worship 10:30 Pi(e) Day 11:45 CA/library 7:30	16 Newsletter Deadline No Munchy Monday 5:00 WIYS 7:00 North Whidbey NA	17 	18 12:00 Midweek Worship 12:30 Soup & bread 4:15 Chancel Choir 6:00 Midweek Worship 6:30 Soup & bread	19 11:00 Gilbert Memorial 1:00 Deborah Circle 4:00 NA PR 7:00 NA	20 First Day of Spring	21 Wildcats Robotics Spaghetti Dinner 3-8 PM
22 Lent 5 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed. 9:15 Worship 10:30 CA/library 7:30	23 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 7:00 North Whidbey NA	24 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 5:00 Brass Ensemble Concert 5:30 Al Anon	25 12:00 Midweek Worship 12:30 Soup & bread 1:00 Living with Loss 4:15 Chancel Choir 6:00 Midweek Worship 6:30 Soup & bread	26 1:00 Deborah Circle 7:00 NA	27 7:30 Cultural Homestay Int'l, lib./ed wing, to noon 9:00 newsletter assembly, Fellowship hall 3:00 QUEST CLUB	28  SPRING CLEANUP 9 AM-1 PM
29 Palm Sunday Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed. 9:15 Worship 10:30 CA/library 7:30	30 7:30 Cultural Homestay Int'l, lib./ed wing, to noon	31	First Day of Spring Spring is here! Creation sings of new beginnings, fresh growth, and God's renewing power. <i>"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth..."</i> —Song of Solomon 2:11–12 (NIV) May this new season remind you of the hope that blossoms in Christ! 			