

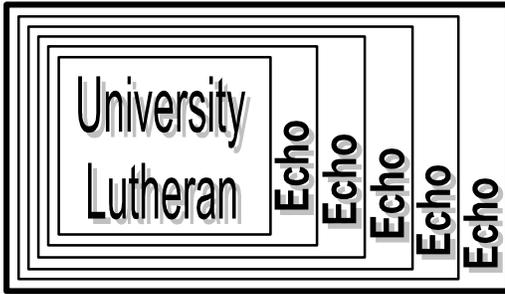
February 2026

The Echo

UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

2122 University Avenue

Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203



Are you tired of hearing me tell you that God loves you?

Occasionally, people have told me that I talk too much about the love of God and should instead talk more about repentance and living better, more Christlike lives. I really don't mind such conversations and often will offer two responses to their opinion. First, I am certain that we repent of our sins most every Sunday at ULC through confession and forgiveness at the beginning of worship. It's important to note that not everyone is just going through the motions. Second, what is more Christlike than receiving and giving love? Jesus did in fact say, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

I think it is assumed that when pastors emphasize the presence and love of God in peoples' lives that they are trying to make faith easy. Well, from where I sit there is nothing further from the truth. Being loved and loving is not easy when we are talking about real, genuine love. Bruce Bohlman once confided in me that loving his wife, Eunie, was both the best and hardest part of his life. It was the best because she had been the love of his life since he was in the seventh grade. It was the hardest because he had to watch his beloved Eunie lose so much of herself in her struggle with Alzheimer's.

One afternoon, Bruce and I were talking at Valley Senior Living on 42nd, with Eunie sitting between us staring into space. I decided to pull up a website of hymn accompaniments and sang "Softly and Tenderly" to her. Out of the blue she started smiling and mouthing the words. When we were done, Bruce said, "You sure made that look easy, Pastor Tom. She isn't smiling so much these days." I told Bruce that her smile had little to do with me and was mostly due to the song that we sang to her and a little help from the Holy Spirit. Bruce was teary eyed as he looked lovingly at his ailing, beloved, Eunie.

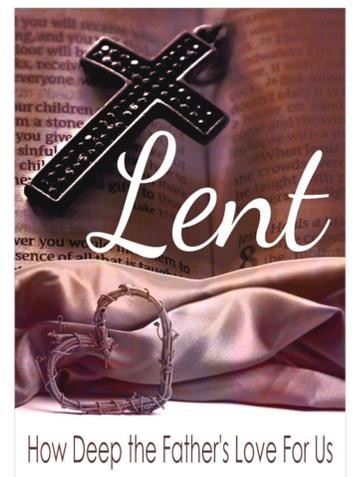
Real love is never easy. Almighty God loved the world so much that he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for this planet full of sinners. Even so, just think about how hard it must have been for God to let Jesus go into this sinful world for such a difficult mission. Then think about Jesus, who because of God's love went through the suffering, the pain, and even death itself on our behalf. As you can see, there is nothing easy about love. Instead, when you reflect on everything that God, the Father, and Jesus, the Son, have done for us, you can see the breadth and depth of God's love for us.

This Lent we are taking up the theme, "How Deep the Father's Love for Us". You are invited to join us on this 40-day baptismal adventure, to explore what Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 18, calls the breadth and length, height and depth of God's love for you. Hopefully along the way, you will discover that pastors or people in general can never talk too much about the love of God. The truth is that God's love is so huge, so deep, and so wide, that we can never fully understand it, nor can we ever really come close to exhausting it. So, it's best just to receive God's love and share it with others.

Some of the things we will talk about are as follows: Jesus walks with you every day; God gave the gift of Jesus to help and save you; Jesus lives in your very heart; Jesus is a gentle and kind king; Jesus waits to hear from you; and Jesus and his cross not only save you but show you how to live in this world. If you feel like you already know these things – that's amazing. But I still invite you to join us and rediscover these timeless truths about God and his love. Better yet, bring someone with you who either has never heard these truths about God and his love, or who perhaps needs to hear them again.

A final thought: One starry night in Montana, my friend Rod Reamy and I were staring at the bright handiwork of Almighty God in the nighttime sky. We were talking about many things including the death of his son, Tucker, at the age of 10, due to a heartless illness. Rod said something like this, "Tom, if I didn't think Tucker were out there somewhere beyond those stars, I might go crazy." Is it not right to say that love is anything but easy? But when it comes to a father loving his 10-year-old son or our Heavenly Father loving us, love is the most important thing both on earth and in heaven.

You are in my prayers,





ULC Annual Meeting

February 1, 2026

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of University Lutheran Church, Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 11:30am. We will hear ministry reports, consider old and new business, have Church Council and other important elections, and together consider our 2026 budget for ministry. Will you please take part in this important congregational event?

Because of God's Mercy Our Stewardship Emphasis for 2026

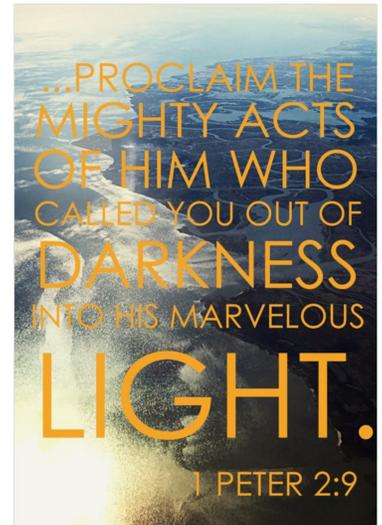
"Because of God's Great Mercy" is the title of our stewardship emphasis this year. The scriptural basis of this for this emphasis is First Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light."

This will be a 3-week program with the following themes:

- Week 1: Daring to proclaim all that God has done for us
January 28 and February 2
- Week 2: Generous giving is important to Christian faith and life
February 4 and 8
- Week 3: Imagining all the ministry we might do together
February 11 and 15

It is intriguing to imagine how our combined generosity might lead to greater ministry at ULC. Maybe the right question is: How might our giving time, talents, and resources carry out God's work within our congregation's walls, in our community, and around the world. Of course, all things are possible for us and for ULC because of God's mercy.

There will be opportunity for you to pledge your support for our shared ministry on the final dates of this series – February 11 and 15.



ULC Lenten Devotion Book

The Faithful Tradition Continues



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18, and the January ECHO began our invitation for people to write for our Lenten Devotion Book. We are looking for ULC members and friends to share faith insights which might be helpful to others. It could be something which happened in the past, a reflection on a favorite hymn or Bible verse, an answered prayer, or a God sighting in your life. Whatever it is, we would love it if you would share it with us.

We are asking for around 250 words (including a Bible verse and a short prayer). After you write it, then you may email it to church, or drop it off at the church office. We need about 48 of these writings to complete Lent. If you need help with writing, please call the church office, and we will connect you with someone who is willing to help you share your experience. We need your devotion no later than Wednesday, February 11, but earlier is better.

ULC Adult Education in February

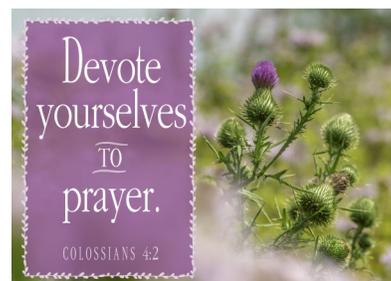


Sunday Morning Adult Class

As this edition of the ECHO is being written we do not have a set Sunday Morning Adult Class topic for Bible Study. Our apologies, and please stay tuned for details!

WELCA Bible Study – February 13 “Embodied Prayer”

Prayer is an important part of our relationship with God, and one of the ways we respond to God speaking in our lives. In this second and final session of this study by the Pastor Liv Larson Andrews our theme is, “Praying with the Body of the Earth”. This session explores ways we can pray not only *for* creation but *with* creation as our sacred neighbors. As we pray, even the trees and rivers are our prayer partners. The session concludes with the glorious vision in Revelation 22 of a restored world and the river of life. Please join us on Friday, February 13, at 10:00am, in the Fellowship Hall for this Bible study.



Calling All Men – February 21 “First Peter at a Glance”

Calling All Men is studying First Peter. Since so many letters in the New Testament are attributed to the Apostle Paul (13!), we sometimes set aside and even forget the beautiful letters written by one of Jesus’ first disciples, the Apostle Peter. Over the next months, we will seek to overcome this tendency by studying portions of First Peter.

The remaining themes are – Living Stones, Living Godly Lives, and Living for God. During the month of February our topic is Living Stones. Come see how Peter “the rock” calls us to be “living stones”. Please join us on Saturday, February 21, at 8:30am in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast pizza, prayer, conversation, and Bible study.

Thursday Morning Study – February 5, 12, 19, and 26 “The Apostle Peter”

We have all read stories about Peter’s highs and lows in the Gospels. Now in this 8-week course, we will meet the Apostle Peter through his writings. First and Second Peter show a more mature Peter who has a wonderful sense for the Gospel and who really brings to life what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Join us each week at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall.



Weather Announcements



The winter months are upon us and if the weather causes us to change or cancel events, the best place to look is our University Lutheran Church Facebook Page. However, we will also try to have our information on both KNOX 1310AM radio, as well as on WDAY Channel 8 TV.

Wednesdays in Lent

Wednesday Lenten theme *"How Deep the Father's Love for Us"*

This Lenten season, Wednesday midweek worship will center around the theme, "How Deep the Father's Love for Us". In this series, we hope to explore the depth and breadth of God's love for us. To this end, you are invited to journey with us through the forty days of Lent and remember who the Lord is for you, and how very much the Lord loves you.

Each Wednesday worship in Lent will also include the very popular Marty Haugen's Holden Evening Prayer liturgy, **fun take homes for everyone in attendance**, as well as a suggestion of food items for you to bring for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Sermons will be dialogues between Pastor Tom and other ULC members and friends.

Week 1 – Ash Wednesday: February 18 - "Forty Days with the Lord"

Your Adventurous Baptismal Journey
Bring canned fruit for the Food Pantry
Shell

Week 2: February 25 - "The Gift of Jesus"

God Gave Jesus for You
Bring canned vegetables for the Food Pantry
Tiny Jesus

Week 3: March 4 - "Jesus Lives in Your Heart"

The Lord Is Near You
Bring canned soup for the Food Pantry
Heart

Week 4: March 11 - "Jesus As Kind King"

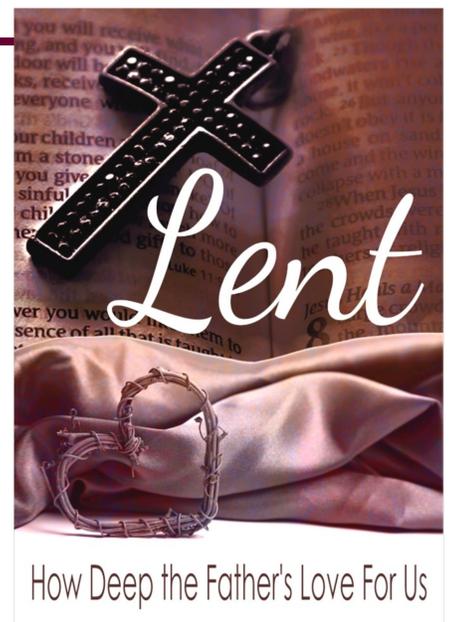
Your God is an Awesome, Gentle God
Bring spaghetti sauce and noodles and/or
macaroni and cheese for the Food Pantry
Purple Cloth

Week 5: March 18 - "Jesus Has Big Ears"

Jesus Hopes to Hear from You
Bring boxed cereals for the Food Pantry
Praying Hands

Week 6: March 25 - "The Suffering and Sacrifice of Jesus"

The Cross Saves and Shows How to Live
Bring boxed desserts for the Food Pantry
Cross



How Deep the Father's Love For Us

Ash Wednesday - February 18, 2026 The Lenten Season Begins This Night



Ash Wednesday is the start of the Lenten Season. It is one of those most significant days of the Church year. On this day, we begin by repenting, confessing our sin, and turning back to the Lord our God. We receive ash crosses on our foreheads. These crosses are a reminder of our sin and mortality. We also receive Holy Communion. Through this sacrament we experience the presence and love of Christ, who forgives our sin and gives us new and eternal life.

Lenten Suppers

Each week of Lent we gather for supper at 5:00pm for a delicious meal served by a group from our congregation. Here are the meals we will serve this year and who will prepare them:



- February 18: Taco-in-a Bag by ULC Youth
- February 25: Baked Potatoes and Toppings by Church Council
- March 4: Chicken Casserole by Seanne and Friends
- March 11: Hamburgers by Men's Group
- March 18: Tater Tot Hotdish by WELCA
- March 25: Meatball subs and Cheesy potatoes by ULC Youth

Sundays in Lent

Sunday Lenten Theme - "*Drama for Lent*"

The Bible is one long drama with many, many small dramas throughout its pages. This year, we enjoy 5 different dramatic stories from the New Testament – four of them from the Gospel of John. Listed below are the dramas and the Bible verses these dramas come from. Also included are the items we are collecting for our Lutheran World Relief Baskets of Promise:

Week 1: February 22 - "*The Temptation of Christ*"

Jesus and Satan – Matthew 4:1-11
Bring a bar of soap for LWR Baskets of Promise

Week 2: March 1 - "*Born Again*"

Jesus and Nicodemus – John 3:1-17
Bring a bath towel (max 52" x 27") for LWR Baskets of Promise

Week 3: March 8 - "*The Fountain of Forgiveness*"

Jesus and the Woman at the Well – John 4:5-42
Bring a toothbrush for LWR Baskets of Promise

Week 4: March 15 - "*Seeing in the Dark*"

Jesus and the Man Born Blind – John 9:1-41
Bring a comb for LWR Baskets of Promise

Week 5: March 22 - "*CPR*"

Jesus and Lazarus – John 11:1-45
Bring metal fingernail clippers for LWR Baskets of Promise



Resources for Lent 2026

We will have a number of resources for you to take with you through the season of Lent. There will be:

- **Wooden neck crosses** to wear or hang in your car
- **Shells, Tiny Jesus', Hearts, Purple Cloths, Praying Hands, Crosses**
- Lenten **coin folders** for you to set aside one quarter a day to support ELCA World Hunger
- Lenten **devotion book for children** to use with their families at home
- Our **ULC Lenten Devotion Book** to read throughout the season.

This is our 13th devotion book in 13 years! We are excited for both our first time writers and our longtime writers. It will be a great resource for you this Lenten season.

A Call to Love



Love Your Neighbor in Lent

Here are several ways for you to serve and love your neighbors this Lenten season. Yes, there are a number of choices for you. There is no pressure for you to do everything!

- On Wednesdays, we will collect food for the Salvation Army Food Pantry (canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned soup, spaghetti sauce and noodles, macaroni and cheese, boxed cereal, and boxed desserts).
- On Sundays, we will collect items for Lutheran World Relief (bars of soap, 52x27 bath towels, toothbrushes, combs, and fingernail clippers).
- On both Sundays and Wednesdays, we have our Noisy Offerings which will help fund our local Feed My Starving Children packing event in April.
- Lenten coin folders are available, and all the money collected through them, a quarter a day, will go to fund ELCA World Hunger.

Feed My Starving Children Mission of the Month



During January, February, and March, ULC is raising funds for our community's FMSC MobilePack event on April 23-25. Our Mission Endowment has already set aside \$3,000, and we will designate our Noisy Offerings in January through March for our FMSC packing event as well.

It is our goal as a community to pack 400,000 meals, and we have already raised \$59,860 of the \$117,500 that we need to pay for the event. Each 29 cents raised provides a meal for a hungry child. That means a gift of \$30 pays for 103 meals, a gift of \$50 pays for 172 meals, and a gift of \$100 pays for 344 meals. What a wonderful way to serve hungry children!

Fun fact: Did you know that Feed My Starving Children has provided 4,986,714,250 meals to date to hungry and starving children throughout the world.

Youth News



Sundaes on Wednesday

Grades 7-12, join us Wednesday evenings in February at 8:15pm for "Sundaes on Wednesday". Of course, we serve ice cream sundaes for starters, and then discuss a topic or play a game, only to close with our flashlight devotions. We try to be done by 9:30pm.

Bowling Party and Pizza

Middle school and high school youth, please join us at Red Ray Lanes for bowling and pizza. Please keep an eye out for a time and date, as we are searching for the best date and time to do this. All you have to bring is \$10. Yes, you may bring your friends.



Confirmation in February

This February is a little tricky when it comes to confirmation, so please take a careful look at all we have coming this month. Call Pastor Tom if you have questions.

REGULAR CLASSES will meet on February 1, 8, and 15 for Sunday students, and on February 4 and 11 for Wednesday students.

ASH WEDNESDAY is February 18. All ULC confirmation students, Sunday and Wednesday, are to attend worship at 6pm on Ash Wednesday, as well as all Wednesdays in Lent (February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, and March 25), and fill out their Lent packs.

CONFIRMATION LENT PACKS are to be completed each Wednesday in Lent at our 6:00pm worship service. This begins Ash Wednesday, February 18, and continues through Wednesday, March 25. Both Wednesday and Sunday students should attend Wednesday Lenten services and fill out their Lent Packs. Please let Pastor Tom know if you have a conflict.

OUR MENTOR PROGRAM begins Wednesday, February 25. Students in grades 7-9 should pick out a faith mentor and bring them and at least one parent to our faith mentor orientation meeting that evening at 7:15pm in the fellowship hall. Yes, 8th and 9th grade students, you may use the same mentor as before. That is actually perfect!

With the Lent packs and mentor program, **there are no regular confirmation classes during Lent.** After Easter, Wednesday classes resume on April 8, and Sunday classes on April 12.



First Communion Class



It's time for First Communion instruction! Here are the dates of this year's 5th grade instruction for their first Holy Communion.

Sunday, March 8, 6:30pm, Session 1 (Parents and Students)

Thursday, March 12, 3:45pm, Session 2 (Students)

Thursday, March 19, 3:45pm, Session 3 (Students)

Thursday, March 26, 3:45pm, Session 4 (Students)

Sunday, March 29, 6:30pm, Session 5 (Parents and Students)

Thursday, April 2, 7:00pm, is First Communion on Maundy Thursday

If your student missed this class in the last couple of years and you want them to attend, older students are certainly welcome!

February 4th: Chicken Nuggets

February 11th: Turkey and cheese croissant

February 18th (Ash Wednesday): Taco in a Bag

February 25th: Baked Potatoes and Toppings



WELCA NEWS FEBRUARY 2026

Happy New Year! The WELCA Leadership Team or Board is excited for the new year to start because we have some exciting news and events to share with you. First, we must report that Lara Dando has agreed to be co-president along side Debbie Watts, pending a formal election. Next, mark your calendar so that you can plan to attend and help with the following events:

- Spring Salad Luncheon – April 18th
- Rhubarb Festival – June 13th
- Fall Festival – November 21st
- Christmas Brunch – December 5th

Coming soon will be a Volunteer Survey designed to help the Leadership Team plan and execute these events, and new ones. And finally, stay tuned for more information about the kitchen upgrades the Kitchen Committee has been working on this year. To learn more about these events, we encourage you to attend our next Board meeting, February 2nd at 5:30 pm!

A big THANK YOU! to all who participated in our 2025 events. We look forward to working with you in 2026!

Peace be with you all,
Lara Dando and Debbie Watts, acting Co-Presidents

WOMEN OF THE ELCA Purpose Statement



As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit,

We commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the Church, the society, and the world.

Stewardship 2026 - "Because of God's Great Mercy"

With a grateful heart for God's boundless generosity and as an expression of my Christian stewardship, I make this commitment to Christ's church and the ministry of University Lutheran Church.

My/our commitment is: \$ _____ per week, or
 \$ _____ per month, or
 \$ _____ per year.

I understand that I may adjust this estimate of giving at any time by contacting the church office.

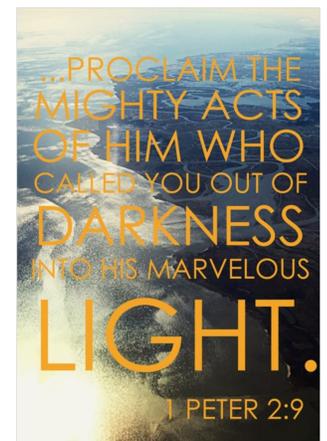
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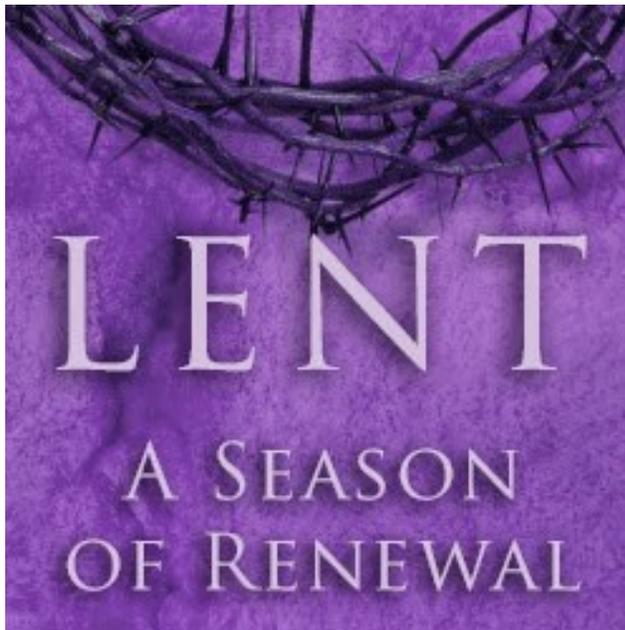
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Holy Thursday
 Ash Wednesday
 Washing Feet
 Crucifixion
 Last Supper
 Good Friday
 Palm Sunday
 forgiveness
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 Rejection
 Disciples
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 Holy Week
 Betrayal
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 Arrest
 Denial
 Garden
 desert
 prayer
 Cross
 Peter
 Ashes
 Jesus



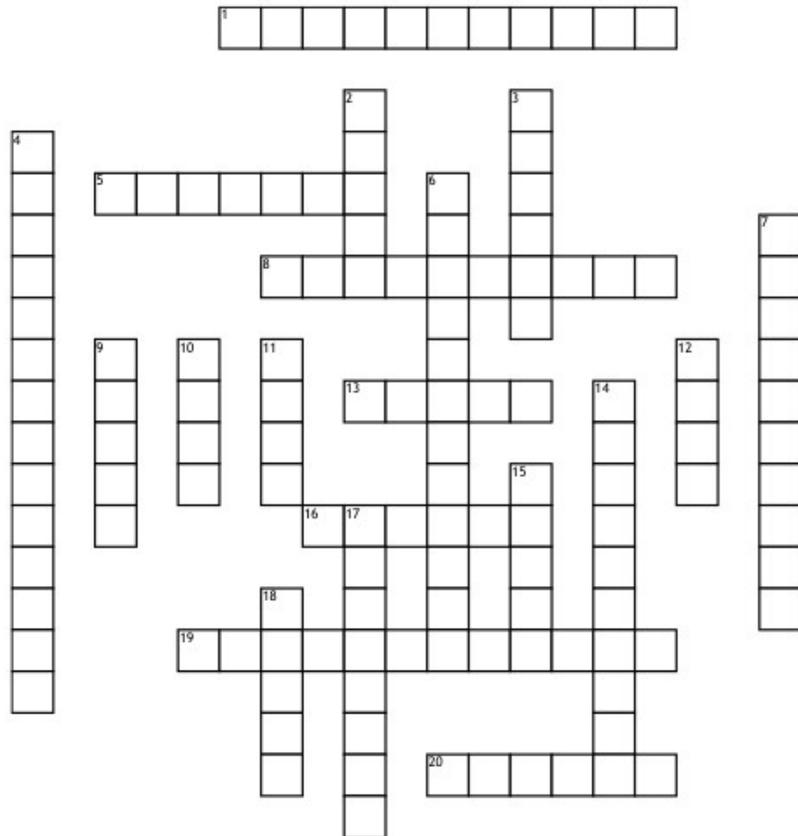
Lenten Season

Across

1. What comes after Lent (2 words no space)
5. What is often practiced by individuals during the Lenten Season?
8. Holy week begins with? (2 words no space)
13. How many Days are observed in Lent? (Not including Sundays)
16. Lent is "a time to reflect upon baptism, a time for rebirth and renewal in preparation for the celebration of _____."
19. What is the first day of Lent? (2 words no spaces)
20. What is the "Color" of the Lent Season?

Down

2. The day before Easter is called Easter _____
3. The word Lent means _____.
4. On this night Jesus instituted "a memorial" of his Passion in the Lord's Supper. (2 words no space)
6. Easter is the day acknowledging Christ's _____ (2 words no space)
7. The day of Christ's Crucifixion. (2 words no space)
9. The color representing Good Friday is?
10. "Remember: You are _____ and to _____ you shall return" (one word)



11. Ashes come from _____(s) that were blessed on _____ Sunday the year before
12. Sundays are "in" Lent but not "of" it. How many are there?
14. Lent is the season of _____
15. What is Drawn on your forehead by Pastor on Ash Wednesday?
17. What word is not said during the Lenten Season?
18. The Triduum consists on _____ days.



February 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Church School Confirmation WORSHIP Holy Communion 11:00 Fellowship 11:30 Annual Meeting 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	2 6:00 WELCA Board Mtg. 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 AI-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	3 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:30 Quilters	4 10:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Chicken nuggets 6:00 WORSHIP & WWJ 7:00 Choir Practice 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	5 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting 5:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 MOMCO	6 10:00 Prayer Group 1:00 Visitation Team	7
8 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Church School Confirmation WORSHIP Holy Communion 11:00 Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	9 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 AI-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	10 5:30 Quilters	11 Stewardship Response Day 10:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Turkey Croissant 6:00 WORSHIP & WWJ 7:00 Choir Practice 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	12 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting	13 9:00 Prayer Group 10:00 WELCA Bible Study	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>
15 Stewardship Response Day 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Church School Confirmation WORSHIP Holy Communion 11:00 Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	16 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 AI-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	17 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:30 Quilters 5:30 Worship Ministry 7:00 Church Council	18 Ash Wednesday 10:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Taco in a bag (ULC Youth) 6:00 WORSHIP & WWJ 7:00 Choir Practice 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	19 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting 5:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Franklin Club	20 10:00 Prayer Group	21 8:30 Calling All Men 10:00-12:00 MOMCO 1:00-4:00pm Scott Birthday Party
22 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Church School WORSHIP Holy Communion Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	23 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 AI-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	24 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:30 Quilters	25 Lent 2 10:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Baked Potatoes (Church Council) 6:00 WORSHIP & WWJ 7:00 Choir Practice 7:15 Confirmation Mentor Mtg. 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	26 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting 1:30 Edgewood Worship	27 10:00 Prayer Group Quilter's Jem Retreat 9:00am-10:00pm (Fellowship Hall)	28 Quilter's Jem Retreat 9:00am-10:00pm (Fellowship Hall)

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WORSHIP & EVENT SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP & EDUCATION

8:45am Adult Class
9:00am Church School
Confirmation (February 1, 8, 15)
10:00am WORSHIP
11:00am Fellowship

WEDNESDAY WITH JESUS

5:00pm Supper
6:00pm WORSHIP & WWJ
7:00pm Chapel Choir
7:15pm Confirmation (February 4 and 11)

LENTEN WORSHIP

Ash Wednesday - February 18

5:00 Supper: Taco in a Bag
6:00 Worship/WWJ
8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday

Lent 2 - February 25

5:00 Supper: Baked Potatoes/Toppings
6:00 Worship/WWJ
8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday

WELCA Board Meeting

Monday, February 2 5:30pm

Sundaes on Wednesdays

February 4, 11, 18 and 25 8:15pm

Thursday Morning Bible Study

February 5, 12, 19 and 26 9:30am

WELCA Bible Study

Friday, February 13 10:00am

Calling All Men

Saturday, February 21 8:30am

Confirmation Mentor Meeting

Wednesday, February 25 7:15pm

See inside for much more!

ULC STAFF

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation
Missionaries: Willie and Anne Langdji
Pastor: Thomas W. Colenso
Education Coordinator: Jen Cummings
Youth Minister: Phoebe Burke

Administrative Assistant: Seanne Voracek
Choir Director: Mary Splichal
Organists: Lauri Shimpa
Jane Traub

**UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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