

March, 2019

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Reaching Out with the Unconditional Love of God!

Worship Sundays at 9:30 am

605 Spruce St, Madison, WI 53715



This Lent, Just Unplug

Pastor Lisa Nelson

Lent starts on the day we call Ash Wednesday: Because it's a Wednesday and because we draw crosses on our foreheads with ash and oil on that day. Not everyone does ashes, but many do. It's a symbol of repentance or a time of turning away from what separates us from God. In the Bible people would pour ashes on their heads and tear their clothing as a sign of repentance.

Lent lasts 40 days, not counting Sundays, and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Sundays are like little Easters, so they aren't part of Lent. They're celebrations. Lent is not a celebration. It's a quiet time--a time to get real with God. A time to take a hard look at what separates us from God. It's like a spiritual detox or a computer reboot. It's a season of falling apart instead of keeping it together. It's a time to come clean with God.

Anne Lamott says, "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." So we take time to unplug. You don't have to give anything up or take any-



Pastor Lisa Nelson

thing on unless you want to. Just unplug. God is with you whether you realize it or not. Sit or stand or walk with God. Breathe with God.

I want to offer you a meditation you can use during Lent if you'd like. Sit quietly or walk slowly and say, "Be still and know that I am God." Then, take a breath and say, "Be still and know that I am." Another breath, "Be still and know that I." Again, "Be still and know." And, "Be still." Last time. "Be."

Gracious God, guide our steps this Lent. Breathe with us and show us you are here with us now and with the world. Amen.

Peace, Pastor Lisa

Pastoral Call

On February 17, 2019 at a Special Congregational Meeting, our Congregation passed the revised 2019 Budget and voted to Call Rev. Lisa Nelson as Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, ELCA!





Ash Wednesday Meal & Worship

Wednesday, March 6
Soup Supper at 6:15 pm
Worship at 7:00 pm

6:15 pm Meal: Join us for a meal of soup and bread. There is no charge for the meal. There is not obligation to bring anything. However, if you would like to contribute, you are welcome to bring a salad or dessert to share.



Lent Theme: What Does God Want From Us, Anyway?

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6, and continues for 6 weeks. In Lent, God calls us to reflect on the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. Our Lenten Theme in worship will be "What does God want from us anyway?" and we will focus on Prayer, Trust, Service and Social Justice.

Lent Worship

Join us for Lent worship on Sundays at 9:30 am:
March 10—Rev. Lisa Nelson
March 17—Rev. Anne Andert
March 24—Rev. George Carlson
March 31—Rev. David Kessey-Berg
April 7—Pastor Lisa Nelson's First Sunday!
April 14—Pastor Lisa Nelson; Palm Sunday

Attention Neighbors

South Madison is likely to lose its supermarket in 2019, possibly for years to come. It's time to organize and raise our voices together to make sure this does not happen.

Dean/SSM hopes to:

- Purchase the Pick 'n Save lot and tear down the supermarket on South Park Street this year.
- Construct its new clinic on the former supermarket site.

Meanwhile the City is talking about plans to:

- Reopen its Request for Proposals to develop the Truman Olson site (next door to Pick 'n Save).
- Thereby delay development of Truman Olson and possible construction of a new supermarket on that site.

What you can do keep healthy food access on Park Street:

- Write to friendsofparkstreet@gmail.com to say you want to receive updates from us.
- Attend a soon-to-be-posted multi-neighborhood action group meeting to Save South Madison's Supermarket.
- Forward this email. Get the word out ASAP to all your South Madison friends.
- Attend two important meetings hosted by the City & Dean/SSM to support South Madison's only supermarket.

March 6: 6:00 pm at the Madison Municipal Building, room 215, to discuss the Truman Olson site development.

March 28th: 5:30PM at TBD, the Dean/SSM Redevelopment Committee will discuss its plans for the Pick 'n Save site.

Join Friends of Park Street to Save South Madison's Supermarket & Support Local Access to Healthy Food!

From Our President

Lisa Manion

Congregational President

So much has changed in the last seven months. We have come so far, and now we are on the brink of a new, exciting time for St. Mark's. On February 17 the congregation voted to extend a call to Rev. Lisa Nelson. We have a \$12000 grant that was applied for by the Bishop coming our way soon. Our food pantry and Friday meal continue.

We were encouraged to participate in a program called Faithful Innovation being sponsored by the Milwaukee synod. This program will be a first step to help us reach out to our community. It will provide a framework and training to those attending. We'll keep you updated on what we learn through this program. This is open to any congregation members, so if you are interested in attending, please let me know. The sessions are in Milwaukee one Sunday in May and another in October.

Lent is coming and we are waiting for spring to come as well. I'm just hoping that there still won't be snow on the ground when Easter comes. Think warm thoughts!

If there is anything you would want me to share with you, please reach out to me. I want to make sure the congregation knows anything they wish to know.

Lisa



Betty Smith

Betty is always on the lookout for decorations for any holiday. If you have decorations to donate, they will be greatly appreciated by all!



Thanks, Betty!

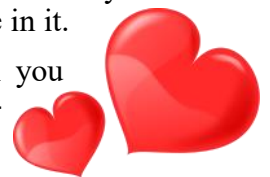
Bringing Beauty & Dignity to the Friday Meal

Betty Smith was instrumental in starting the Free Friday Community Meal some 30 years ago and has remained an integral part of it every since!

Besides being involved with the nutritional and hospitality side of the meal, she has also taken it upon herself to make sure the room is attractive and festive. Her efforts bring not only beauty but also the respect and dignity everyone deserves.

Perhaps it is fitting that the pictures we have are from Valentine's Day because Betty's lovely decorations reflect the love she has for this ministry and the people who participate in it.

Thanks, Betty, for all you do to make this ministry a true act of love!



What Happens to Sunday Worship When We Can't Get a Supply Pastor??

... Uh, Oh ...

Somebody asked that question when we first began this journey seven months ago. I promised you it would not be a problem. I boldly held up a two page list of supply pastors in our synod to illustrate the number of pastors there are just waiting their turn to preach at St. Mark's! And the truth is, we've had the pleasure of some really great preachers who have brought us very insightful and meaningful messages.

But, it has happened three times in these seven months that I have not been able to secure an ordained minister who could both preach and preside at communion. However, we were able to gather for worship, anyway! Perhaps not the quality of worship you might expect, but we haven't missed a Sunday!

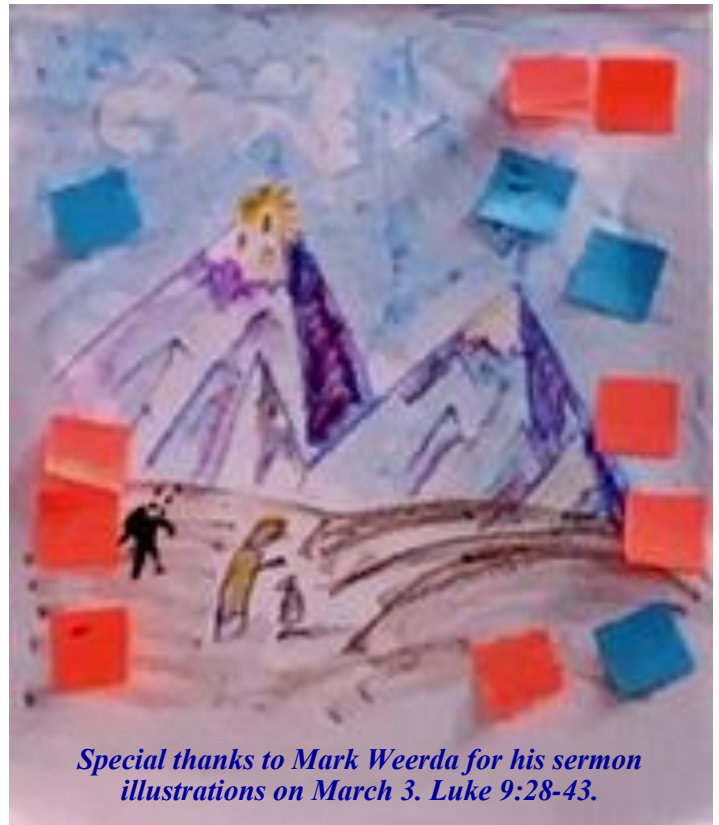
March 3rd was the most recent pastor-less Sunday, and hopefully the last for a long time to come. And perhaps the message on that Sunday is a clear indication of how really good it is that Pastor Lisa will be joining us soon!



Mark Weerda & his drawing of SpongeBob SquarePants

perfect analogy. SpongeBob SquarePants' **Best Day Ever!** (Oh, for heaven's sake!)

It was a fun way to start things off, and actually did tie in pretty well. But, we did eventually find our way back to Jesus and the disciples on the mountain top and thought about what that experience must have been like. I imagine for the disciples that must have been The Best Day Ever!



Special thanks to Mark Weerda for his sermon illustrations on March 3. Luke 9:28-43.

The coolest part was watching Mark Weerda illustrate the story for us as we thought about the disciples' mountain top experience, and what it meant to come back down the mountain. We took some time to ponder our own mountain top experiences, to listen to what God is saying to us, and to consider how to put that into action for the good of others. We wrote some of those things down and brought them to the mountain. (i.e. the sticky notes all over the picture)

And, I realized what a mountain top experience this last seven months has been as we have journeyed together. What a privilege it has been and continues to be to serve with all of you. We have grown in faith and hope. We have tackled some pretty big hurtles. Now, we are ready for the next phase. As we welcome Pastor Lisa, we welcome in a new day for St. Mark's. We are ready to head back down into the valley where we can live the good news of mercy, love, grace and compassion.

Each day will be **The Best Day Ever!**

God's Blessings,
Chris Anderson