

# Redeemer's Reflections

*Discovering Christ's community through building relationships*

FEBRUARY~MARCH 2024

This is a monthly newsletter  
Of Redeemer's Lutheran  
Church, Oak Forest, IL  
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#### STAFF

**Supply Pstr Soren Flessen**  
Office Admin. Deb Frawley  
Music Coord. – Jan Strojny  
Pianist/Organ– Amy Ogarek  
President- Steve Nowlan  
Vice President- Art James

*After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'* (John 13:12-14,34-35)

On February 14, we will enter the season of Lent with the important rituals of repentance and renewal on Ash Wednesday. It is a wonderful feature of the calendar this year that Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. Jesus' sacrificial love is our grounding on Valentines' Day, setting the tone of our Lenten journey on loving God and one another.

As noted in the passage from John 13 above, the primary calling of discipleship is loving God and loving one another. Every Sunday of Lent this year, starting February 18, we will host Faith and Life forums after worship to consider Marks of Discipleship: Worship, Study, Service, Prayer, Encouragement, Giving and Invitation. Lent is a beautiful time to reflect deeply on our life-long calling to follow Jesus. To assist your meditation throughout the week, crosses with the Marks of Discipleship will be created for you to take home.

I pray this Lenten Journey will connect us more deeply to the Spirit of Jesus, lead us to a meaningful Holy Week and Joyous Easter.

Thank you all for walking with me by faith,

*Pastor Soren Flessen*



**"MAY YOUR BLESSINGS  
OUTNUMBER THE SHAMROCKS THAT GROW.  
AND MAY TROUBLE AVOID YOU WHEREVER  
YOU GO."**

**–IRISH  
BLESSING**



Redeemer's Family,

I trust everyone had a wonderful Christmas season and safe New Years celebration. January has brought us some true Winter weather and cold temperatures. Please stay safe and warm as we begin the Lenten season. February 14<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday, begins our Lenten journey this year. We look forward as our congregation prepares for Palm Sunday, Meal in the fellowship hall on Holy Thursday with Good Friday services to follow and then Easter Sunday! Please plan on these events so we may all be together as a congregation. Remember what the Lent season is really about: peace, forgiveness and the gift of Jesus. May the miracle of Easter bring us all peace and joy!

Other happenings around the congregation: financially we are stable and holding our own~ meeting all our obligations. Marilyn and the pantry are preparing to distribute Easter dinners again this year. If you are able to donate to this annual event, please talk with her to see how you can help. Building operations are running smoothly and working. Parking lot snow removal have been taken care of in a timely manner. Let's hope that we have seen the worst of the winter weather this winter! Debby and I are doing well, very grateful to be in kinder temperatures and more sun. We are truly blessed in our lives. Loving, healthy family, wonderful friends, and many great memories.

**FROM OUR**  
*President*



May God continue to bless us all during this Lenten season. May He always surround us with His loving and healing arms. May we never forget that Jesus died on the cross to forgive us all for our sins.

May the miracle of Easter fill your hearts and homes with happiness and hope!

In His service,  
Steve

**Join us on Wednesday, February 14 at 7pm for Ash Wednesday worship**



**Palm Sunday, March 24 9:30am**

*Thursday, March 28:*

*Combined Meal in the Upper Room /  
Good Friday Worship 7pm*

There will be NO worship on Friday, the 29th

***Sunday, March 31: 9:30am***

***The Resurrection of Our Lord!***



Dolores Sheputis, Shirley Aggen & family, Fern Schara, Pat Kropack, Mary O'Malley, Gus Scott, Joanne, Eddie McDermott, John, Ryder Conrad, Pete & Debbie Animagi, Tom Stormer, Carole, Bridgett Arista, Dave Murphy, Lottie White, Tom DeLeeuw, Noah Coyle, Tammy & John, Kevin, Nick, Kevin H, Percy, Tommie, Steve S, Debbie & Harvey Hunt. Jessica, Theresa Bentley, Ralph, Richard Coyle, Trisha Williams, Nancy Byrom, Robert Ogarek, Virginia Drogula, Carol Burge, Bev, Audrey, Keith Buhs, Brian Lemennes, Silvia Magana, Guy Tennicott, Howard Doyle, Linda McDonald, Chris McAuliff, Bill Lomax, Harold Carver, Mike

*Please inform the office for any name removals or additions. Thank you*



## WOMAN TO WOMAN:

So, it seems like it was only yesterday and we were singing "Away in a Manger". The church was decorated with garlands, wreaths and candles, lots of candles. The paraments were bright white and everyone came in with a smile on their faces. Four weeks of Advent led to this finale of sorts. The Sunday after Christmas we had a program called "Caroling, Caroling". We had different characters come and witness to us about how they found Christ. These little monologues then led to a Christmas carol that tied in with what the speaker had to say. Our angel brought us to sing about Herald angels for example. It was still festive. We followed that with weeks of Epiphany and following the light.

Yes, it really was just yesterday and now we'll be entering the season of Lent. Quite the opposite in feeling. The songs enter a minor key. We even drop the word "Alleluia" for those five weeks. But like Advent, we are once again in a state of preparation. But there are no decorations this time, no festive lights and candles. Rather symbols of wooden crosses and crowns of thorns. We'll sing "Go to Dark Gethsemane". It might sound a little off but I actually like this period of music. I like the somberness of it and if we could have the sanctuary a little darker instead I would be in seventh heaven.

Oh sure, I like the Carols and the gifts and the cookies, etc. of Christmas but Lent brings a whole different gift. You have to experience the pain to realize the gain. The gift this time is much greater. And shouting "Alleluia" when we've reached Easter is so special.

Reflect on things you can change in your life rather than giving up sweets or soda or whatever. Pastor said in his sermon on 1/7 to look back over the year and count your blessings. Redeemers is a true blessing to me. And my list was pretty long when I got done with it.

Make Lenten services one of your blessings for this year. We will learn how to be better disciples for Christ. We'll work with each other each Sunday. Talking and sharing with each other to be better Christians. I for one am truly looking forward to the whole Lenten season.

Til next month-----nice chatting with you

Jan Strojny



Free Little  
Pantry

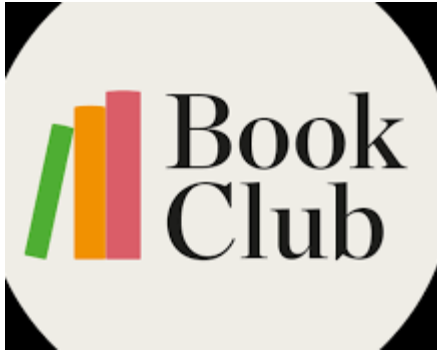
I'm excited to write this because I will be talking about Spring while I'm sitting here on a cold windy day. Easter falls on the last weekend of March and once again I will be doing ham dinners and family Easter baskets. The Easter baskets are always a fun project. I'll be looking for donations for the baskets and the dinners. Also, if anyone is a Thrivent member, I would love you to sponsor an Action Team to help pay for the bulk of the hams, if you are unsure how to do one, I would be happy to walk you through it. It is really quite easy and the \$250 would go a long way with purchasing the hams.

I want to thank everyone for putting all your pocket change into the noisy offering. The church collected \$172 and that money will go towards Valentines Day treat bags for a couple of organizations. Thank you!

If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one,

Marilyn





In **FEBRUARY** we will be reading:  
“**The Heart Mender**” by Andy Andrew  
This will be on Monday, Feb. 26 at 7pm  
at the home of Deb Nowlan

Saddened and unable to abandon her resentment toward the Nazi war machine that took her husband's life, the young and attractive Helen Mason is living a bitter, lonely existence. Betrayed and left for dead, German U-Boot officer Lt. Josef Landermann washes ashore in a sleepy town along the northern gulf coast, looking to Helen for survival.

**MARCH ~ still to be determined**



**Yes sir, yes sir 6 bags full!!**

This year our giving tree theme changed a little. Instead of a tree of warmth, we had a tree of toys! Lots of toys! Our recipients were the children that utilize Together We Cope services. Jan brought 6 large bags full of toys for all ages to this organization. They were thrilled to see and receive these donations. They thank the people of Redeemer's and all who contributed to this urgent need. We certainly are:

*Redeemer's~ a small church with a great heart!*



- To the Martins for hosting our Christmas Party.
- To all those making generous donations of time, talent and treasures this Christmas Season.
- To Gary Rickert for maintaining the boiler and other things, but mainly for keeping us nice and warm during this harsh January.

**THRIVENT MEMBERS** Please contact Deb Frawley or Marilyn Fisher to find out how you can help the Pantry and/ or church out financially!



**Before going to bed on Saturday March 9!!**

# FEBRUARY

## BIRTHDAYS

10, Dan Frawley  
11, Marilyn Fisher  
14, Dolores Sheputis  
18, Jim Mueller  
20, Pam Walsh  
28, Connie Martin  
28, Sue Hecht

## ANNIVERSARIES

21, Bonnie & Wayne Trella

### Readers

**4** Art James  
**11** Gary Rickert  
**18** Steve Nowlan  
**25** Deb Nowlan

## Altar Flowers for February:

**4 still available**

**11** Jan & Connie in celebration of Dolores' birthday!

**18** Deb & Steve for blessings received.

**25** In celebration of Nola's 8<sup>th</sup>, and Ryder's 11<sup>th</sup> birthdays!



# MARCH

## BIRTHDAYS

11, Joan Coyle  
12, Diane Hein  
14, Joshua Carver  
17, Pat Kropack/ Dorothy Kropack  
22, Tyler Pellegrino  
23, Patti Schoenbeck/ Tony Ogarek  
27, Jim Thrun  
31, Ray White

## ANNIVERSARIES

18, Jim & Sophie Mueller

19, Ray & Deb Majewski

### Readers

**3** Linda McHugh  
**10** Bob Hecht  
**17** Alec Ogarek  
**24** Jan Strojny  
**31** Drew Ogarek

## Altar Flowers for March:

**3 still available**

**10 still available**

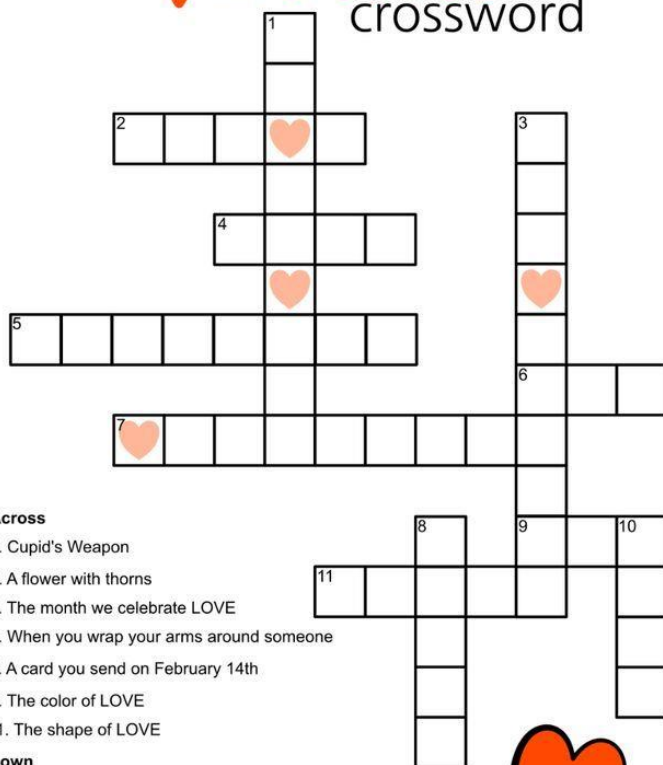
**17** Jim & Sophie Mueller who are thankful for 64 years of anniversary blessings!

**24 still available**

**31 Easter Lilies**



# Valentine crossword



## Across

2. Cupid's Weapon
4. A flower with thorns
5. The month we celebrate LOVE
6. When you wrap your arms around someone
7. A card you send on February 14th
9. The color of LOVE
11. The shape of LOVE

## Down

1. A Sweet Treat
3. His honey, baby, \_\_\_\_\_
8. Full of Joy
10. When two people go out



## A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.



A branch that was waved

How Jesus was put to death

A stick attached to the vine

People shouted this to Jesus

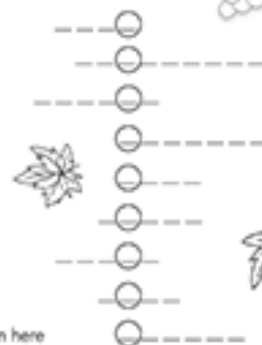
Jesus washed these

This was broken and eaten

The Messiah

A drink from grapes

Jesus drove the money changers from here



"I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear \_\_\_\_\_  
apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5, NIV

Answer: path, crucifix, branch, house, leaf, bread, Jesus, wine, temple, much fruit