

LENT 2021

LENT — a time in the church year when we emphasize the preparation of our hearts and lives to receive our crucified and risen Lord.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday — February 17th this year. In the early Christian church, the Lenten season was a time of examination for those candidates who were preparing for their baptisms at the Easter Vigil. The season

is forty days in length (not counting Sundays). Those forty days came to be associated with Jesus' forty days in the desert prior to his temptation and with the forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness. Thus, it became a time for every Christian to deepen his/her relationship with their Lord. It is in some ways a solemn time, but also a time of growth in faith and in response to one's baptismal relationship and how that affects how we live our lives in relationship to God, to one another, and to the world around us.

It was early in the Lenten season last year that worship in our church buildings stopped and our experience of the world around us changed drastically. In a sense we, like Jesus and the children of Israel, were suddenly in a desert—a wilderness—as we searched for and found ways to continue our journey to be the body of Christ here in this place. Over the time between then and now we have experienced feelings of chaos and wondering as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and all that caused in our lives along with the unrest in our nation. Although our church buildings were closed out of concern for the health and well-being of our people, opportunity for worship continued virtually on Sundays with more than 75 households attending, along with educational opportunities and conversation on Wednesdays. Other ministries of outreach through food pantry, Rowdy Seniors, book discussions, angel trees, and various other social ministries continued.

As part of our weekly worship, we now are offering Holy Communion on the second Sunday of the month, and we invite and encourage you to join us for sharing together in God's holy meal on those Sundays. We also invite you to make it a part of your Lenten journey and growth this year to look understanding how God is calling us all to be witnesses of God's good news of grace and love through Jesus Christ. You can do that via Zoom or on your phone each time we gather. (There are persons in each of our congregations that can assist you with doing that.)

Make this Lent a time to join together with one another as we journey through the sometimes wilderness of this life — a life redeemed through Jesus Christ. God's blessings to you.

Pastors Rob, Burl, Michael, Sonja, and Bill

Ash Wednesday, February 17

Worship will be held on Zoom at **7:00 pm**. Please use the same meeting ID and passcode as used on Sunday mornings. Paper copies of the worship bulletin and Zoom connection instructions are included in this mailing.



Midweek Lenten Series 2021

The Gospel according to Peanuts

during our Midweek Check-In from 7:30 to 8:30 PM

Wednesday, February 24 - Interpreting the Signs of the Times

Wednesday, March 3 - Blanket Security

Wednesday, March 10 - The Broken Heart

Wednesday, March 17 - Slip-ups and Doghouses

Wednesday, March 24 - Jesus – The Dog God

Our travel companions through Lent this year will be Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, and, of course, Snoopy, Charles Schulz's beloved Peanuts characters. By pairing Peanuts cartoons with scripture readings, we invite you to a fun and engaging, yet insightful and thought-provoking Lenten journey on Zoom.

Song and Prayer will frame our conversations, center us on Christ, connect us in difficult times, and remind us of God's faithful presence.

LENT 2021, a calendar of **DAILY SCRIPTURE AND REFLECTIONS**, is included in this mailing. The thought-provoking meditation is followed by a scripture which you can read from your Bible and then reflect on both readings.

VARIOUS LENTEN DEVOTIONALS, are available at the church, please call if you would like to pick up a copy or have one delivered. If there is interest, we can put some on a table outside for your convenience. Please call the church office for details at 610-856-7242.

A **LENTEN ENVELOPE** is included in this mailing. Please return it to the church anytime during the Lenten/Easter season as part of your Lenten gifts. Your gift may be designated to a specific ministry if you'd like. We are emphasizing the food pantry, Café Hope (a small restaurant in Reading benefiting the poor through local churches), our new air conditioning which is being paid monthly, or you may designate where needed most. All gifts are equally appreciated!

THE LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES are always in need of food; since we are not open at this time, a check for the local pantries will be equally acceptable. Please be sure to mark your donation "Food Pantry" and make your **check payable to Robeson Lutheran Church**. The donations will be divided among the local pantries which serve our community. Thank you for helping us to help others in need.



NO SHOW GALA:

Enclosed you will find an invitation to a NO-SHOW GALA to benefit Robeson Lutheran Church's Air Conditioning fund. We hope you will participate in this creative fundraiser. In order to add to the fun, we are applying for a Thrivent Action Team to be partially used for gift card prizes for the best dressed non-attending guest. Get out those old photo albums and pick your best dressed photo and submit it by email, snail mail, or drop it off at the church prior to March 31 and you will be entered into the contest. All ages are welcome. Let the fun begin!!



2020 Thrivent Choice Dollars must be designated before the end of March. Please consider designating your dollars to Robeson Lutheran Church. Thank you!

Another ongoing fundraiser: **Redners receipts**; you can mail them to the church or drop them safely in a container outdoors next to the church office. This month we received a check for \$135.93. **Don't forget to use your Redner's card or put in your phone number linked to the card or we will not receive credit for your receipt.** Thank you to everyone who continues to save their tapes and to Diane Morlock for processing and submitting them!

Angel Tree Project Update:

Bonnie Lauer wanted to send you the following message regarding the sign up "Christmas Angel Gifts":

Hello friends! I want to send you a short update on our service project to help the Owens family and I apologize for the delay. Everything went extremely well. All gifts were dropped off on time and Debbie DeMarco contacted the children's aunt for a pick up. The pick up at the church went well and the aunt was very appreciative and overwhelmed at the gifts. Thank you for your part in doing this and may the new year be filled with comfort and joy.

Because of your generosity and that of the preschool parents, we were able to help two families this year with gifts as well as cash and gift cards totaling over \$1,000. We hope you have been blessed by the blessings you provided.

Please feel free to email me if you have the interest to participate in other acts of service or a Thrivent Action Team. It is a challenge during these times but certainly not impossible, as we have shown. Maybe you have an idea you would like to develop or have an Action Team to offer I would be happy to work with you to set something up.

Peace - Bonnie Lauer for the Social Justice Ministry



VIRTUAL / REMOTE WORSHIP

We continue to have the opportunity to join together with several other of our area Lutheran congregations for a remote worship service. If you would like to participate in these online services via computer or phone, please see the information on the back of the attached Ash Wednesday bulletin.

Worship Service Link:

Did you know that our Sunday worship services are available as a recording on YouTube? They are!

You can find links to our worship services on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RobesonLutheranChurchAndPreschool/>

Or, if you do not use Facebook, you can follow this link below to see last week's worship service: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QxsQoMcoyg&feature=youtu.be>

Following are other updates which are mailed out weekly to our email list and those requesting to receive the mailing through the USPS. Please let Debbie know if you would like to be added to the list. Those who are receiving the printed service including Pastor Michael's sermon and other weekly announcements seem to very much appreciate it. We would like to give you every opportunity possible to stay in touch during this pandemic. We miss all of you!

Weekly Update –

As Congress and the incoming administration work towards the possibility of further stimulus checks to help American families and businesses and need, please pray for our political representatives and administration to thoughtfully consider the various medical and economic challenges presented by the current pandemic. That said, I continue to offer thanks to all of you for your faithful and generous stewardship towards the ministries of our congregation at Robeson in these very difficult and trying times.

If you are one of the many millions who shop on Amazon Smile (which makes a donation to your favorite charity for every purchase that you make), you can make Robeson Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mohnton PA your charity of choice and have an extra opportunity to support the ministry of our church as you do your online shopping. Charity Link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-2029412>

Speaking of Giving!

Since Covid-19 has turned our lives and plans upside down, we at Robeson have decided to postpone our Official 250th Anniversary Celebration until Reformation Sunday of 2021. And while the lockdown has made fundraising a bit of a challenge, we are rolling with the changes and will endeavor to continue with our “Keep the Light Shining” Capital Campaign into 2021. Thus, our two-year Campaign is now a three-year Campaign. This will give us more time for preparations and offers more opportunity to support the campaign. That said, if you, like me, are giving to the Capital Campaign (endowment) through the MyEOffering e-giving website, I encourage you to join together with me in extending your special endowment offering for another year.

Likewise, for those who do regular giving through the mail or drop off envelopes at the church, I invite you too to consider continuing your support of our Capital Campaign through October 2021.

ROBESON EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH, A 250 year walk through the history, people and their faith by Linell McCormick: This book containing over 200 pages of history, stories and photos is receiving outstanding reviews so if you'd like to have a copy please call the church office and arrange for purchase. Cost is \$15. Congratulations to Linell McCormick, as this book was awarded the **2020 Anniversary Award First Place at the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania**. Thank you and our heartfelt congratulations, Linell!

Clarification regarding our 250th Anniversary Book

Lucille Freeman who works with Reick's Printing, is the person in charge of the 250th Anniversary book containing your personal pages and those of area businesses in addition to a brief history of our church. Work continues on this book and the deadline has been extended until sometime in 2021. She is still working with members who would like to purchase and create their own page / advertisement with pictures or a caption for the anniversary book. Please contact Lucille if interested: **610-856-7349 or 484-219-0596; Email: lfreeman@riecksprinting.com**

All active members will receive a copy of this book free of charge as part of our anniversary celebration next year.

Update regarding services at Robeson:

Following much discussion regarding the worsening Covid-19 situation in our country, state, and county, our five-church Joint Discernment Team made a recommendation to the Church Councils to encourage our congregations to remain online through the end of April. This recommendation was discussed at our most recent church council meeting, and we will look to follow the recommendation. There may be an opportunity to try an outdoor (parking-lot) style worship service sometime in the early Spring, if there is a turn-around in our numbers of infections, until then, we remain committed to the safety and health of our congregation and community and will maintain our online (and at-home) ministry.

Worship Flexibility for Participation:

Throughout the new year (2021) we will be seeking to offer communion at least once a month (typically on the second Sunday). As we discuss the logistics of providing communion with such frequency, please keep in mind that we do allow and encourage the use of your own personal supplies so that you may participate with us.

Note: Since some struggle with food allergies or lack easy access to grocery shopping, know that any variety of fruit juices or bread types are welcomed to be used for the sake of participation as we believe that such items still reflect the spirit of the common earthly elements that Jesus used with his disciples at the Last Supper.

A monthly Zoom family faith night to begin in March. Plans are underway to include families with children age 3 through Grade 5. If you have a child in this age range and would like to participate please contact Debbie in our church office. Children do not have to be church members. Kathy Yenser, who is in charge of the program, will be gathering these contacts from the participating churches. Or if you are interested in being part of our faith nights, have some ideas to share, or simply want more information, you may also directly contact Kathy Yenser at 610-301-2191 (cell) or stjohnrdg@verizon.net.

The Joint Worship and Music Committee met last week and discussed plans for the season of Lent including Ash Wednesday and the weekly Lenten services. The committee will meet again via Zoom on March 5th (6pm) to discuss Holy Week and Easter.

The Joint Discernment Team will meet again via Zoom on March 9th (6:00pm) to discuss future planning in light of Covid-19.

Robeson Church Council will meet again via Zoom on February 11th (7pm).

The West Berks Mission District Pastors met via Zoom on January 20th to discuss various mission district issues including the experience of Covid-19's effect on our mission district congregations. Of the 22 participating pastors, almost half have had to do at least one funeral for parishioners who died from Covid-19 complications, and nearly every pastor was able to count multiple families in their own congregations who had been exposed to and infected with Covid-19 (including some of the pastors). The pastors were prayerfully encouraged to remind all parishioners to please continue following the recommendations of the CDC and public health officials – wear a mask, social distance, avoid large indoor gatherings, and maintain good hygiene with lots of hand washing.

Youth and Young Adults Zoom Bible study on the Gospel of Mark.

(For 6th grade through College Level)

Meetings will be held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 6-7pm.

Note: Since February 17th is Ash Wednesday, the next meetings will be held on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays in March. Youth can join in anytime!

If you are interested, please email revmikeware@gmail.com for the Zoom meeting information.

Your church is here for you. If you are in need of anything during this pandemic, please call us and we will do whatever we can to help you. We have free masks available, and people who are willing to help you arrange for food orders and other supplies that you may need. If you need someone to talk to please call. Debbie is in the office Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Her home number is 610-856-7386. Pastor Michael is at the parsonage when he's not in the office. The number there is 610-875-0015. You are not alone during this time. Please continue to pray for each other.

BIRTHDAYS:

Jeanene Hill—Feb. 2
Scott Eshelman—Feb. 28

Coming up:

Louise Styer—March 13
Joe Smith—March 19
Lois Beam—March 20
Mim Spence—March 30
Charlotte O'Neill—April 5
Dale Creed—April 30



Did we miss anyone? If you are a “Senior” Member over age 55 and wish to be included on the birthday list, please call the church office at 610-856-7242.

*With deepest
sympathy*

In hope of eternal life,
which God, that cannot lie,
promised before the
world began.

Titus 1:2



Our sincere condolences and continued prayers for the families of the following recently deceased members:

Mary E. Althouse, 83. Mary passed away on December 10, 2020. Graveside service was held on December 15, 2020 at Robeson Cemetery.

William C. Wilson, Sr., 80, passed away on January 11, 2021. Bill’s funeral was held on January 30 at Honey Brook United Methodist Cemetery. Pastor Michael officiated.

Keith G. Gehman, 24, passed away on January 29, 2021. A memorial service will be held at the Twin Valley Fire Department on February 13, 2021. Visitation hours are 1 to 3 p.m. followed by a Firefighter Last Call ceremony.

PRAYER LIST: Please pray for **Marie Brooks, Ben Crowell, Lindsay Eshelman, Kay Good, Elaine Gordon, Bob and Eileen Lorah, Alyce McEwen, Bob and Barbara Rivers, Jessica Smith, Claire Sniegowski, Fred Sowa, David and Mary Ann Trout, Sara Wagner, Jan Westendorf, Zachary Williams, Mike Wilson,** those on our visitation list requesting prayer, **Mary Muhlenberg, Gina Noss, Charlotte O’Neill, Pete Onushko, Janice Roulston, Louise Styer, and Elsie Trout, Louise Wilson** and family, **Charlotte and Greg Gehman** and family, our missionaries **Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson,** missionary **Veronica Gerace,** those in our military service **Shawn and Dusty Lawrey.**

If you would like to be added to our prayer list or would like to add someone, please contact Pastor Michael or Debbie at the church office.