



The Mountain Top Messenger

March 2026

I am going to share a little secret with you today; I was looking at some of my newsletter covers from previous years with the thought of being a bit lazy and perhaps plagiarizing some of my previous work. I was looking at the cover letter from March of 2013 and in it I am thank all of you for calling me to go to the seminary and become your pastor. I had to do a double take, thirteen years! Where has the time gone. All I can say at this point is, that I have truly been blessed by the Lord. For he has enabled me to serve all of you as well as help out at some of the other churches in our circuit. It has been and continues to be an amazing run. And as I said I am truly blessed and pray he allows me to continue to serve you for many more years to come. I am here for as long as He and all of you will allow.

Now for the topic of the month, last month I wrote to you about our seasonal colors, what they meant and why the changes. This month, I wanted to talk to you about our lectionaries, or pericopes. These are the scripture readings that are assigned for each Sunday of the Church year. In the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, we have three options; first there is the one year lectionary. With the one-year lectionary there are the standard three readings per Sunday from the Old Testament, Epistles, and Gospel. At the end of the year, the same reading order is used again for the next year. Some pastors alternate their messages based on the reading used by year, i.e., this year they would use the O.T. reading, next year the Epistle, and the next year the Gospel. Others stick more frequently to just New Testament readings. The second option is the 3-year lectionary, this is the one we use here at Zion. There are years A, B, and C. With these series, Year A focuses primarily on the Gospel of Matthew, Year B focuses on readings from Mark, and Year C focuses on Luke. What about John you might ask, John is intermixed in all three years at important times of the year. The Epistles are also broken up a bit with more Romans in A, 1 & 2 Corinthians in B and Acts, Galatians, 1 & 2 Timothy in C. Old Testament readings are a little harder to nail down. The Old Testament readings are generally selected to pair up with the Gospel reading in a supporting fashion. The Epistle readings are more general and are read in a sequential fashion. The third option is not to follow the lectionary at all, and we do this on occasion when we are doing a specific sermon series or a special topic like Stewardship. Some larger churches with multiple pastors use this method more in my experience.

(Continued on the next page.)

One thing to note is that because the date of Easter changes from year to year, its place on the calendar during a particular year determines whether the number of Sundays during the season of Pentecost. The LCMS has used the current three-year lectionary since 1973, the one-year lectionary has a much older history. The LCMS 3-year lectionary is similar to the Revised Common Lectionary but has some of its own distinctions. The 3-year lectionary was originally created in the 1960's by the Roman Catholic Second Vatican Council. The protestant churches soon followed, including the LCMS. This is why some of your friends from other denominations may mention the same readings for the same Sunday.

Interesting fact, of the 31,000 verses in the Bible, the one-year lectionary selects just over 2,700 verses or 8.7%. Of that 8.7% with the New Testament getting 2 readings a week and the Old Testament but one, it actually works out to 23.1% of the New Testament and 3.7% of the Old Testament. In the 3-year lectionary we get to hear a much larger selection of the Word.

I hope you found that worth the read, still working on next months topic, in the meantime, thank you for your support, I hope to see you at the Lenten services on Wednesday, and remember soup and Sandwich on March 4, and March 18.

And in closing, my friend, the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

God Bless,
Pastor Rick

Kids in the Divine Service

Hey! What happened to the “a” word?

There's one word we often use in the Church that isn't used during Lent. Usually we use it after responsories, antiphons and other parts of our worship. Have you guessed what the word is yet? If you guessed “alleluia,” then you are right. We stop singing and saying “alleluia” during Lent and won't speak it again until Easter morning.

What does “alleluia” mean and why don't we say it during Lent?

“Alleluia” is a Hebrew word that means “Praise the Lord.” Since we focus on the sufferings and death of Jesus during Lent, we stop using this joyful word until we celebrate Jesus' glorious resurrection. On Easter morning the first words you hear will be: “The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”



Sunday Worship Service 9:00am live streamed
Wednesday Evening Service 6:00pm
Sunday School - 1st – 7th grade Sunday 8:45am (Sept.-May)
Bible Studies
 Sunday 10:15am Monday 10:00am (Sept.-May)

Pastor Rick Williams - 715-209-0479

Office Hours: M /T/Th 9-5 Wed. 1-8 Fri. off

Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor.

Office Secretary Lynn Ladd 715-682-6075 Office Hours M/T 8:30-2:30 Wed 10:00-4:00
 Days and times may change.

Church President: John Pruss 715-292-4825 **Head Elder:** Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

Little Friends of Jesus Child Care Center: 715-682-5185

LFOJ Administrator: Desiree Niemann 715-682-6075

LFOJ Director: Tressa Groom 715-682-6075

Website www.zionashland.org **E-mail** secretary@zionlutheranashland.com

PRAYERS for

Homebound, Assisted

Living, Nursing Home

Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them.

Arlene Zimmerman

Violet Basina

PRAYERS FOR

PROTECTION

For our full-time troops and public servants, for travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families.

David Wright

Jordan Thimm

Andrew Pruss

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for:

Brad Prill	Vi Basina	James Fletcher
Harold Larson	Linda Stenroos	Don Pocernich
Tim Erickson	Patty Hmielewski	Pam Ekholm
Don Pocernich	Jamie Klema	Keith Tveit
Rick Kallio	Cheryl Hildebrandt	Mary Dahl
Mike Trimble	Molly Colgrove	Linda Parrish
Chuck Sandor	Dwayne Lynch	Tom Anderson
Octavia Pearce	Kevin Heggie	Larry Hildebrandt
Cindy Lazorik	Tracy Thompson	Bonnie Jansehski
Judy Nevela	Camden & Brooks Balmer	
Wayne	Casey	David

And those in our hearts

If you know any of the above people can be taken off our extended list please let us know.

Dear Lord, "We come to You today with heavy hearts, as we lift up those who are in need of prayer. We ask that You would bring healing and restoration to their body, mind, and spirit" Amen.

The Book of Job: Blessed be the Name of the Lord

One of the Bible's greatest wisdom books is the book of Job. This Lent we are going to explore this magnificent composition that is numbered among some of the greatest literature of all time. **Nine sermons will help us dig deeply into Job's central message and supporting truths**, while six Sunday Morning Adult Bible Classes will further address the book's major topics and themes.

We all suffer—personally and privately. We also suffer in more public ways. A husband loses a job. A child gets divorced. A parent dies. And now, thanks to the media, we are able to see and experience more and more of the world's catastrophes and suffering. **We need the book of Job, now, more than ever.**

Martin Luther asserted that **“Job is magnificent and sublime as no book of Scripture.”** Others have called Job “the Shakespeare of the Bible.” Yet the early Christian scholar Jerome perhaps put it best when he called **the book of Job an “eel,”** since the more one tries to contain it, the slipperier it becomes! The purpose of our Lenten emphasis is to learn how to apply Job to our lives, so that the book becomes less like an eel and more like a loving companion through life's dark valleys. Preaching plans are as follows:

The Sunday Morning Bible Class will be exploring the Book of Job during Lent.

The Book of Job: Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

Lent 4, “Understanding How it all Works Together” (Job 23:1–17) March 11th

Lent 5, “God Speaks in the Storm” (Job 38:1–11) March 18th

Palm Sunday, “On Earth is not his Equal!” (Job 41:20–34) March 29th

Good Friday, “Tearing Down the Spite House” (Job 42:7–9) April 2nd

The Resurrection of Our Lord, “I Know that My Redeemer Lives!” (Job 19:23–26) April 5th

Spring is a season of renewal, marked by longer days, blooming flowers, animal awakenings, and dynamic weather changes.

Key Features of Spring

Vernal Equinox: Spring officially begins with the vernal equinox, usually around March 20 or 21 in the Northern Hemisphere. On this day, daylight and nighttime hours are nearly equal due to the Earth's tilt and orbit around the Sun, signaling the start of the season.

Meteorological Spring: Meteorologists define spring as running from March 1 to May 31 in the Northern Hemisphere, dividing the year into four equal seasons.

Weather Patterns: Spring is known for unpredictable weather, including sudden snowstorms, heavy rain, strong winds, and rapid temperature changes. This occurs as warm air from the south meets cold air from the north.

Nature and Wildlife

Animal Activity: Many animals give birth in spring to take advantage of abundant food and longer daylight. Deer, squirrels, foxes, lambs, and even whales often have their young during this season. Hibernating animals, such as bears and hedgehogs, awaken as temperatures rise.

Plant Life: Trees regain their leaves, and flowers like daffodils, crocuses, and tulips bloom, creating

vibrant landscapes. Bees become more active, collecting nectar, and butterflies emerge, adding color to gardens.

Migration: Birds return from their winter habitats, filling the skies with diverse species.

Human and Cultural Aspects

Mood and Health: Longer daylight hours increase sunlight exposure, boosting Vitamin D production and serotonin levels, which can improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression.

Traditions and Activities: Spring is associated with renewal and new beginnings. People enjoy picnics, gardening, flying kites, and attending festivals. Outdoor cafes and fairs become lively, and ice cream sales often rise.

Fun Facts: Balloons float higher in warmer air, and spring is a popular season for weddings. Interestingly, some studies suggest human breakups are more common in spring.

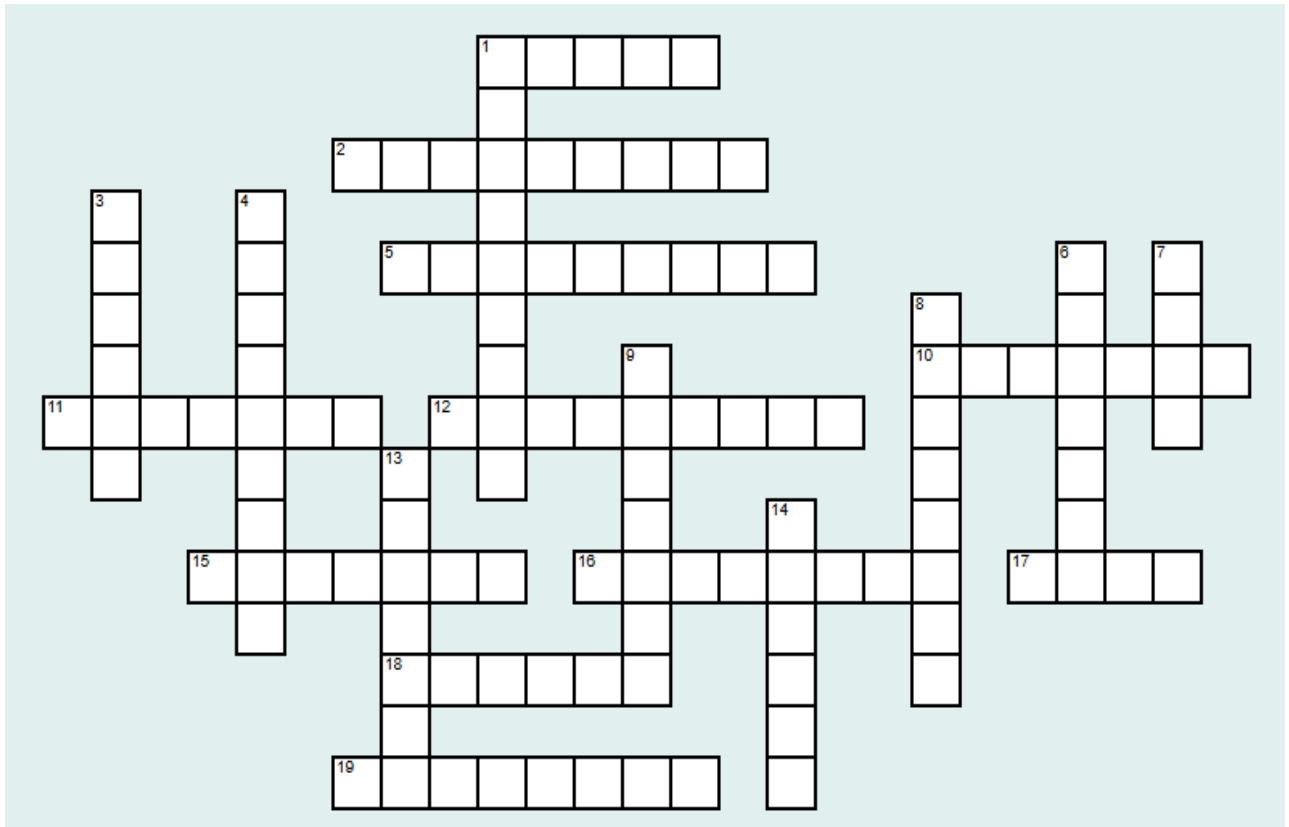
Spring is a season that combines natural beauty, dynamic weather, and cultural significance, making it a time of growth, renewal, and celebration across the world

The Triumphal Entry

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
Luke 19:38 (NIV)



BELIEVING
BETHANY
CHILDREN
DINNER
DISCIPLES
DONKEY
FOLLOW
GLORIFIED
HAIR
HIMSELF
HOSANNA
JERUSALEM
JUDAS
MESSIAH
PALM
PASSOVER
PERFUME



March/April Mission of the Month Baby Chicks Charity - Baby Chicks

BABY CHICKS HATCH with a special “tooth” on the tip of their beaks to crack their eggshell. A few days after they’ve broken free, the tooth falls off of the beak. God gives just what they need at the exact time that they need it—and our Heavenly Father promises to do the same for His children:

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

God is using Samaritan’s Purse to provide baby chicks for impoverished families worldwide in Jesus’ Name. For \$14, we can give a family a dozen chicks that will provide nutritious eggs to eat and sell for years to come.



The Wonders of Winter: An Inspirational Winter Story Diana Aydin

You never know when a cold winter day is going to turn into something warm and sunny.

Here is an inspirational winter story to cheer you up: All last week, I couldn't stop thinking about the beach. And talking about the beach.

My beach talk was inspired by the weather we'd been having in New York, which varied from don't-you-dare-leave-the-house cold to your-hair-will-never-forgive-you rain. Through it all, I couldn't help but dream of summers at Coney Island. Weekends spent relaxing in a beach chair, soaking up the sun and contemplating the next ice-cream cone.

Those days are a long way off. But on Wednesday of last week, when the weather finally cleared, I jumped at the chance to walk outside umbrella-free. I wasn't really sure where to walk during my hour-long lunch break until the South Street Seaport popped into my mind. It's just a short walk from the office and, although it was chilly out, it seemed to call out to me.

The more I walked, the better the weather got. By the time I made it to the seaport, the sun was really shining. I spotted a ramp by the water that appeared to lead to a sun deck. I walked up it and was floored by the view that greeted me. The Brooklyn Bridge in all its glory. There were Adirondack chairs strategically positioned all over the deck to take in the postcard-like scene.

I made myself comfortable in one of the chairs, then stretched out my legs and closed my eyes for a minute, soaking up the sun. That's when I realized I was doing exactly what I would've done if I were at the beach. Except, of course, I was wearing a big, puffy winter coat and there was no ice cream in sight!

Still, the thought filled me with happiness. You never know what wonder awaits you after a storm. Like a beach day in the middle of winter in the middle of a work day in the middle of New York City.

Bring the Hope of Jesus to People Who May Never Hear His Name Without You

Many local churches do incredible outreach—yet countless others simply lack the resources to reach beyond their own walls. That's where **Lutheran Hour Ministries** steps in. As a global mission organization serving in more than 60 countries, LHM carries the Gospel to individuals and communities who might otherwise never encounter the hope of Christ.

When you support LHM, you help share the Good News across continents, cultures, and generations.

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* **Topical booklets** that provide biblical answers to life's toughest questions

* **Gospel Adventures** that introduce children to God's love and the global church

When you give today, the \$300,000 Matching Grant will carry your gift **TWICE AS FAR!**

Your donation multiplies the mission—bringing Christ's light to the world and building up His people. Contact LHM

Phone 1-800-876-9880 Website www.lhm.org

How to Grow a Forgiving Heart - The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:12

- Sabra Ciancanelli

Want to be more loving toward others—and yourself?

Unlock a world of inspiration right in your inbox! Sign up for our newsletters today and get uplifting insights, powerful stories of faith and more delivered directly to your email.

In kindergarten, a classmate stole my favorite toy, a small cat figurine. I never forgot it. Even though decades had passed, that awful feeling of being wronged pulsed through me when I saw her at my twentieth high school reunion. Then I found myself on the buffet line beside her. “I remember you,” she said. “I almost didn’t come tonight. I hated school. Glad I’m here, though.” She smiled and I forgave her. Just like that, the resentment I’d harbored for years disappeared. Sometimes forgiveness just happens; other times it takes effort. Here are 12 tips I’ve learned since then to let go of anger and grow a more forgiving heart.

Decide to forgive.

As Dr. Fred Luskin, director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, says, “Forgiveness changes the present, not the past. It’s a choice you make to heal yourself.”

Be patient.

Sometimes a hurt you thought was healed might resurface. If that happens, look at the situation from where you are now. Recognize you have grown and will continue to grow.

Surrender the idea that you are right.

Instead of rehashing an offense, try to be kind, compassionate and understanding.

Breathe out past hurts.

When you feel stuck in anger, take a deep breath, let yourself relax and as you exhale say, “I’m ready to move forward. I forgive.”

Write your own apology.

If the person who hurt you is no longer in your life or

isn’t able to apologize, you can still have closure by writing down the words you long to hear. Consider it a gift to help you forgive.

Outside the box

Go outside with the intention of working through whatever is weighing on your heart. Sometimes physically moving forward can help you move on emotionally

Cultivate a forgiveness plant.

Use a plant that you have, or buy a peace lily or a purple hyacinth, which traditionally means, *I’m sorry*. Every time you water it, picture yourself releasing bitterness or regret and finding peace.

Forgive yourself.

Dwelling on something you wish you hadn’t done? Give yourself a hug and say, “I’m ready to let go of this guilt and begin anew.”

Look to animals for inspiration.

Often they are harmed by humans, yet they open their hearts again and again to love.

Turn to Scripture for healing.

If you keep a mental list of who harmed you and how, replace it with a list of Bible verses about forgiveness, such as Corinthians 13:4-5 “Love is patient and kind...and it keeps no record of wrongs.”

Don’t sweat the small stuff.

Did someone cut you off in traffic? Make a snarky comment on social media? Let it go.

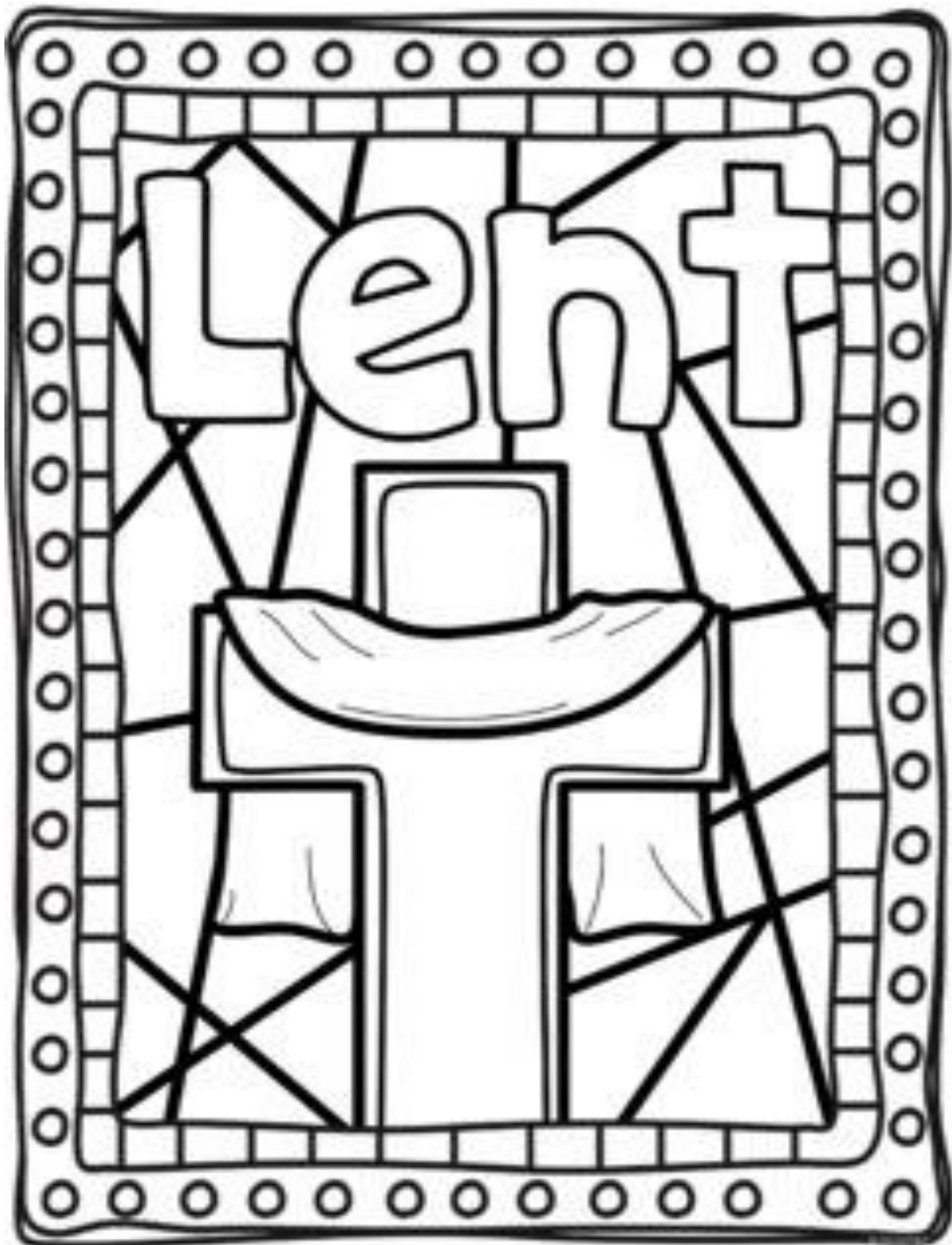
Envision a bright future.

Focus on feeling better by releasing the pain or guilt of wrongdoings. Every moment is a new opportunity to grow a more forgiving heart.



**Soup and Sandwich
Dinners at 5:00pm
4th Altar Guild
11th Trustees and
Elders**







Lent Word Search

E N S K F O R G I V E N E S S O O D F G
R O A W L Y K E R U S L O R Y I M B A I
P I S K R M E N O I X H E N A S H E S K
E X O E A Y K A R S S O R C D W A T T R
N B L E S A L N I K A L K E Y D E R I O
A S H W E D N E S D A Y O D T U D F N S
N E M Y O N P S R U M T A P R B E T G E
C R O L K U Y I E A S H P G O O D L A T
E R A O V S O R K C R U C I F I X I O N
D I S H I M K S L E M R E M B I P E R O
O S A M F L P A O D F S I L A E R N K I
C J E R O A S C G O O D F R I D A Y S T
R E Y A R P E R A M R A D E A W S I S C
U R S P E D R I L A T Y A J R E T S A E
C U S Y L E C F E L S O P E G O E Y C R
N S E A K S W I P R E K S S E L B V E R
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S L A Y A R T E B O S D I S C I P L E S
H E S A C T M O W S U R H O L P A N K E
A M B P E N R E I M E C N A T N E P E R

Word Bank

ASHES
ASH WEDNESDAY
BETRAYAL
BLESS
CROSS
CRUCIFIXION

DESERT
DISCIPLES
EASTER
FASTING
FORGIVENESS
FORTY DAYS

GOOD FRIDAY
HOLY THURSDAY
HOLY WEEK
JERUSALEM
JESUS
PALM SUNDAY

PENANCE
PRAYER
REPENTANCE
RESURRECTION
RISEN
SACRIFICE

He Was Inspired to Minister to Rodeo Cowboys Evan Miller

Journalist Scott Hilgendorff never expected to find his calling at a rodeo.

He recognized a spiritual need among the cowboys who ride on the rodeo circuit and was moved to create the Cowboys of the Cross ministry on their behalf. Photos by Wade Payne



Circuit Rider

Scott Hilgendorff was a journalist looking for spiritual direction when he attended his first rodeo in Tennessee 25 years ago. Amid the bull riders and steer ropers, he felt a peace and an urging to devote his life to cowboy ministry.

Centered

Cowboys often turn to the Bible for

reassurance. Scott counsels them to dig deeper in their relationship with God.

Faithful Opening with prayer is customary, as at this youth event. "I talk to kids about their identity in Christ vs. being cowboys," Scott says. "They listen better than the adults do."

Cowboy Church Before the bull riding, there's a short service. Scott preaches about God's faithfulness to people in all their struggles.

A Bull Rider's Prayer Bull rider Rusty, whose home got filled with mud in the July 2022 Kentucky floods, ruining most of his possessions.

American Tradition Scott thinks of himself as a modern version of the circuit riders from pioneer

days. "They went where the cowboys were," he says, a legacy he continues with his Cowboys of the Cross ministry.

Generation to Generation Rodeo riders have short careers. "I'm on my fourth generation," Scott, 52, says of his role as chaplain to Triple T Bucking Bulls and other rodeo associations. "This group and I will age out together."

Prayerful Reaching the younger generation of rodeo riders is important to Scott. He talks to them about their real world concerns, such as bullying at school and peer pressure.

Unexpected Calling

Scott never imagined a life ministering to cowboys. Still today

he's afraid of horses. But despite not being a cowboy himself he feels accepted in their world.

Tight Grip

A rider melts a bit of rosin onto his glove to help him stay atop the bull as long as possible.



Christina Rossetti, 'Spring'.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back
Along the trackless track –
God guides their wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing lack,
Before the daisy grows a common flower
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour...



MARCH

2026

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service  9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	2 10:00am Bible Study 5:30pm Council Mtg.	3	4 5:00pm Soup & Sandwich 6:00pm Worship Service	5	6	7
8 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service  9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study	9 10:00am Bible Study 6:00pm Altar Guild Mtg. 7:00pm Dartball	10 1:00pm Sewing Circle	11 6:00pm Worship Service	12 9:30am LFOJ Chappel	13	14
15 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service  9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	16 10:00am Bible Study 5:30pm Council Mg 7:00pm Dartball	17	18 1:00pm Hospice Group Gathering 5:00pm Soup & Sandwich 6:00pm Worship Service	19 9:00am Winkel	20	21
22 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service  9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study	23 10:00am Bible Study	24 1:00pm Sewing Circle	25 6:00pm Worship Service	26 1:30pm Northern Lights	27	28
29 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service  9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study! 2:00pm LGP	30  Choir Practice after the service on Sundays	31	Elders: March [1 Andy] [4 <u>JohnS</u>] [8 <u>JohnP</u>] [11 Darryl] [15 Scott] [18 Doug] [22 Andy] [25 <u>JohnS</u>] [29 <u>JohnP</u>] April [2 Andy Doug] [3 Darryl] [Sun. 7am <u>JohnP</u> 9am Scott <u>JohnS</u>] [8 Andy]			
			ALTAR GUILD: Becky Sapper 715-685-4232 MARCH Paula Pruss 715-292-1898			

