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# THE MESSENGER OF HOPE

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## HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

2174 Departure Bay Road Nanaimo, BC V9S 3V6

Phone: (250) 758-1232 ~ Email: hope2174@shaw.ca

Website: [www.hopelutherannanaimo.com/](http://www.hopelutherannanaimo.com/)



Lent 2- to Lent 5

March 2023



## WORDS OF HOPE

Reflections by Pastor Terry Richardson

*Your wagon tracks overflow with richness. Psalm 65:11*

### Pioneering

I really like that verse above. It tells me that following whoever is up ahead is really worth it. My grandmother told me that when she was a little girl, her family packed up all their stuff and they travelled by horse and wagon across the border in to Canada, settling in central Alberta. Her mom, my great grandmother, said a lot of people were travelling like that in those days. They followed a trail before any roads were paved. Weather, safety, family needs, hard work, and search for community were factors of survival.



As they followed other wagon tracks, they eventually found that there was a place for them to build a life and they did. Old family albums have fading pictures of my young grandfather standing with a pitchfork next to an old shack with a sign on the door, "Wife wanted." There is another of my grandmother and granddad when they met, and then later one with my dad and his brothers sitting in big tub having their bath on the porch of the house they built into the side of a hill. They made a life. Those wagon tracks overflowed with richness.

People found each other, formed communities, worked together, faced accidents, tragedy and storms. They were gifts to each other. Isn't that the richness that we still enjoy? The wagon tracks started long ago as Jesus called out "Follow me." He offered to show us how to get through whatever lay ahead. He built us as a community and gave us to one another. "You are blessed," he said. "There is a place for you, don't be afraid."

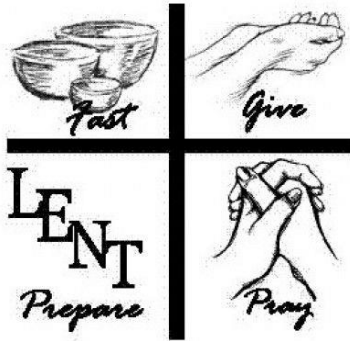


We are pioneering new ways of being God's people. We know we need each other and do what we can to reach out. There is a place for us and a place for others too. Hebrews 12:2 says that we look

“to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” Thanks Jesus, we will follow your wagon tracks that overflow with richness as we move down the trail.

## WORSHIP NOTES

Submitted by Carolyn Iles



So, what is this thing called Lent?

In Lent, we reconsider how we are doing as disciples. How much we are committed to the life of love and service, of risk and protest, of prayer and reflection that being a disciple calls us into. Lent is a time when we reckon and renew our commitment to a life of faith. The life and death and resurrection of Jesus teach us that God welcomes our longing for transformation as much as God hears our confessions and repentance.

History: As early as the Third Century, Christians devoted themselves to prepare for the celebration of Easter. During these early generations, the two days before Easter were days of fasting. Generations that followed increased the period of fasting to six days - the amount of time those preparing for Baptism would fast. Over the years the length of preparation for Easter increased from one week to three weeks to six weeks- excluding Sundays, which were considered 'mini-Easters'. By the Fourth Century, Christians were fasting forty days, five days a week for eight weeks.

These forty days symbolized the forty days that Moses dwelled on Mount Sinai; that Elijah journeyed to Mount Horeb; and the forty days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness.

Martin Luther, in the time of the Reformation, continued to observe this period of preparation for Easter, much like we do today. (six days a week for six weeks, plus the four days from Ash Wednesday until the Monday after the next Sunday.)



What does the word Lent mean you ask? It appears to come from an Old English word, lencten, or lengthen, meaning 'to lengthen'. The word applies to the time of year when the light is lengthening, the season known as Spring.

*Did you know? The prayer after communion for Lent summarizes the meaning of the season. Our compassionate God gives us the bread of heaven. We join together, pilgrims through Lent on our way to way to Easter. Our fasting is a hunger for justice, our alms a making of peace, and our prayer the song of grateful hearts. May it be so.*

## DEVOTIONAL FOR LENT

Submitted by Carolyn Iles

**Lutherans Connect: Before the Cross**



[Lutherans Connect](#) invites you to make space in the Lent and Holy Week journey for a new devotional series. Each daily devotional includes art, music scripture and commentary.

This Lent, we will reflect on the events in Jesus' life which can be thought of as 'stations' of his story, moments of teaching and ministry in which Jesus or others signal what lies ahead. In addition, we will visit the contemporary stories of individuals and communities around the world whose lives involve acts of resistance to empire or a permanent commitment to the wilderness.

If you would like to subscribe, please go to Hope's Facebook or send an email to [lutheransconnect@gmail.com](mailto:lutheransconnect@gmail.com).

## WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*(Excerpted from February issue)*

**Submitted by Continuous Learning cmte.**

On Valentine's Day, WCC shares message "Love Heals, Not Hurts"

As we celebrate Valentine's Day, the World Council of Churches (WCC) is sending a message about healthy relationships: "Love Heals, Not Hurts." The campaign, now in its fifth year, is part of the WCC Thursdays in Black global movement for a world free from rape and violence.



The special Valentine's message, is an annual tradition that's part of the WCC's work toward gender justice. WCC general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay, noted that the Bible tells us that love is the greatest of all spiritual gifts.

"It is a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person, or a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep care for a parent, child, family member, or friend," he said. "Love values and respects the other person, supports their wellbeing, and demands nothing in return. This is the love that many share and receive in familial, platonic, and romantic relationships. In this season of celebrating love, sharing symbols of love is natural and healthy," he said. "At its best, such sharing strengthens us as individuals, communities and society."



The WCC, in 1998, declared sexual and gender-based violence a sin, and reiterated condemnation of such acts in 2018. Yet, violence against women and girls, men, and boys continues daily, as tragic statistics show.

Approximately 81,000 women and girls were murdered across the globe in 2020, or one female every 11 minutes. Among them, 46,980 women and girls died as a result of intimate partner violence. One in three women face physical, sexual, or some other form of abuse in their lifetime.

"We may not realize that this translates to more than one billion women and girls being affected by abuse and other forms of violence, and 736 million girls and women being subject to intimate or non-partner physical or sexual violence. Love is not easily provoked and is not evil, concluded Pillay. "Love heals, love restores, love redeems," he said. "This Valentine's Day and always, the WCC stands against rape and violence." The ELCIC is a member of the WCC.

*"In the New Testament, Love is more a verb than a noun. It has more to do with acting than with feeling. The call to Love is not so much a call to a certain state of feeling as it is to a quality of action." R.C.Sproul*

Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
Sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

- [Alternate Lord's Prayer, found in A New Zealand Prayer Book](#)



**PRAY, READ, WORSHIP, LOVE**  
**Submitted by Continuous Learning cmte.**

Over the last four years, Hope as a member of the ELCIC has been sharing National Bishop Susan Johnson's vision for a four-year emphasis on *Living our Faith* - as together we pray, read, worship, and love.

As we continue the final year, our focus remains on love. As a whole church, we will continue to learn about love, grow in our experience of loving one another and deepen our daily interactions with one another, God, and here at Hope, those in our community who can use a little love. So from now until August, we will be featuring some of the many ways the people of Hope share Christ's love.

During a recent service, Gary Granke talked about one of the charities Hope supports - Loaves and Fishes. I thought others might be interested in learning a bit more about Gary's and Naomi's adventures at Loaves and Fishes.



*What specifically do you do?* We work at the Loaves and Fishes warehouse. This is where all the donated foodstuffs from grocery stores all around the area come. We work sorting through the vegetables and fruits, deciding what goes in which plastic bin, sorting by types - oranges and lemons in one bin, apples in another; potatoes in one bin, onions, peppers in another. These large flat bins are then stacked onto pallets. Often the same day, or the next day these pallets with the fruit and vegetable bins, are loaded onto trucks, and driven to "Free Food Markets" all around Nanaimo; and even to communities around the Island.

*What is the best part of your work?* The people! The Loaves and Fishes staff and other volunteers. It is such a positive environment. The staff are incredible. They are the kindest people ever. They are all just wonderful people.

*What is the least desirable part of your work?* There really isn't one. Well, except in the winter your fingertips can be freezing! The warehouse temperature is cool, to keep the food as fresh as possible,



and the doors to the warehouse are open all the time as they are constantly unloading and loading trucks; so it can be a little cold! Sometimes there might be some food that is 'off' and smells. Sometimes the bins become heavy too.

*Why do you do this work?* We've been very fortunate in our lives. We've not had to access food banks. Now we have time, and a willingness to help those who do need food. You just want to give back when you see the homeless around town.

The people we work with have such interesting stories, too. It feels good to be there, and it feels good when you are going home. You know you've made a difference.

Thank you, Gary and Naomi for telling us about your experiences at the Loaves and Fishes warehouse. Thank you for sharing God's love in our community.



**DONATIONS ACCEPTED** *(read below)*  
**Submitted by the Witness and Mission Committee**

*Do you Need a Place to Donate Clothing or Household Items?*



The Canadian Mental Health Association sponsors a social centre at 290 Bastion Street. In addition to many programs including recreation, affordable meals, and workshops; there is a room with clothing and household items such as dishes, pots and pans, cutlery, small appliances, and blankets for people to help themselves. Men's and women's clothing, winter coats, socks and gloves are welcome additions. More information is available at their website: [cmhamidland.ca](http://cmhamidland.ca) or from Ann Marie Elderkin 250-797-7530. Drop off is around the back and up the ramp.

**CLWR – EARTHQUAKE IN TURKIYE AND SYRIA**  
**Submitted by Joan Nolting**



On February 6<sup>th</sup>, during the early hours of the morning, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit the border region, with a second major earthquake hitting Turkiye again just hours later. Since then, over 500 aftershocks have been felt and this past Monday two earthquakes with a magnitude of 6.2 and 5.8 have hit the region.

The death toll from this tragedy has reached over 40,000 and is still climbing, and many thousands more are injured. Among those affected are millions of refugees and displaced people living near the border of Syria and Turkiye.



Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) are calling on Canadians to pray for those affected by the earthquakes in Turkiye and Syria, and to give generously to support their urgent humanitarian needs.

CLWR, along with other leading Canadian aid agencies in the Humanitarian Coalition, is appealing for funds to assist those in need and to support rescue efforts. Their focus right now is to provide blankets, shelter, life-saving clean water, food and healthcare. In the weeks ahead they hope to be able to rehabilitate apartments, schools and hospitals, help families with basic expenses, and more.

CLWR's partners in Syria through ACT Alliance are local organizations that are part of the affected communities, which means they were already delivering aid in some of the worst-hit neighbourhoods by the time the Western world was waking up to the news that an earthquake had happened. They report being the very first in some areas with medical care, safety and warmth as the immediate priorities.



Contributions can be made through your church offerings with cheques made payable to Hope Lutheran Church, or you can donate directly to CLWR at [clwr.org/earthquake](http://clwr.org/earthquake) or by calling 1-800-661-2597.

## **2023 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE**

**Submitted by Joan Roszmann  
Witness and Mission Committee**

The World Day of Prayer is traditionally celebrated on the first Friday of March and was hosted by Hope Lutheran in 2020.



This year the service has been planned by the women of Taiwan under the theme "I Have Heard About Your Faith" and can be enjoyed on your device at [wicc.org](http://wicc.org).

More information about the organization behind this annual event is also available at the website.

Should you wish to support their work, donations can be made online or via our church (cheque made out to Hope Lutheran with designation on your envelope). There is also a tab that leads to the grants that the donations support.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**This message comes from Ahmad Hussein, the father of the family our church sponsored from Syria a few years ago, through John and Susan Collett to members of Hope Lutheran Church:**

Ahmad Hussein and his family are very grateful for the generosity of the people at Hope Lutheran for the support for his family in Syria and Turkey in the earthquake region. It was a very powerful message of caring and love for Ahmad and he is amazed. He sends his thanks. The families are safe and living in tents and sorting out what they will do next. The financial help was greatly appreciated. Your continued prayers would also be appreciated.

## **HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL 2023**

Ray Schultz	Jan Nilsson
Gerry Owen	Randi Turner
Peter Clark	Doug Roszmann
Audrey Strauss	Cynthia Cantelon
Shirley Forwell	Bill Fehr (newly elected)



## We Celebrate Birthdays



For the month of **March 2023:**

**March 7** Kristianne Vosper

**March 17** Loraine Mather

**March 28** Kathy Disher

**March 11** Lorne Schwartz

**March 23** Simon Weber

**March 17** Jackie Pallard

**March 27** Hartmut Haase

## Special Prayer Requests:

O God, you so love when we call to you. Restore hope to those who are in the depths of depression or despair. Bring mercy and relief to those who are sick or suffering. We remember among us those who have asked for our prayers...

*Ken B; Dave C; Cheryl & baby; Dunsmore family; Michaela E; Anne G; Gary G; Rosie G; Kathleen H; Stephen H; Jean J; Gail L & family; Garth N; Katie Rose & Magnus family; Ruth N; Carole & Clyde O; Jack R; Audrey S; Karl S & family; Dan; Doris; Ingvar; Lil & Cal; Louise; Maya; Quinn; Zak & family...*  
**Merciful God, Receive our prayer.**



The  
Season  
of  
Lent

