

CASL

*Communicator*

# We Are *Gathered and Sent*



*Rend your heart  
and not your garments.  
Return to the LORD your God,  
for he is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love,  
and he relents from sending calamity.  
Who knows? He may turn and relent  
and leave behind a blessing—Joel 2:13-14*

I love to travel. I love visiting places I've never been, and I love visiting places I've been hundreds of times before. When we (Dee and I) travel, we get to see and do things we wouldn't normally do while at home. We aren't required to do those mundane chores that seem to fill our days when we are at home. We can just take it easy and do whatever we like.

But at some point, we need to go back home because that is where our life is; that is where our community is. As much fun as traveling is for us, we know that we have a life at home. People need us there; people expect us to participate in and contribute to the community we have joined. After travel, we must turn around and go home.

Lent is all about turning; more specifically, it is about RE-turning. No matter how far we may roam from God's intimate embrace, no matter how far we may travel from the love and care of our beloved community, the Holy Spirit calls us home. Home to the loving and forgiving arms of our Savior, Jesus, who will always be ready and waiting to "relent and leave behind a blessing" in his wake. Home is where our life is.

As we walk through this journey of Forty days that we call Lent, we start to realize that as we Re-turn to God, God turns to us with compassion, patience, forgiveness, and abounding, steadfast love. If you have found yourself in a place that doesn't feel like home, if you have found your heart broken or isolated or confused, return to the Lord, your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and the Lord WILL leave behind a blessing, the blessing of home. Home is where your life is.

Peace to you.

Pastor Paul.

## ELCA/NC SYNOD NEWS

- As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause uncertainty within the United States and across the globe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has decided to cancel sending Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) volunteers for its 2021-22 program year. The pandemic earlier forced the ELCA to cancel volunteer placement for the 2020-21 program year. Cancellation two years in a row has never before happened in the 20-year history of the program.
- ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has been joined by 21 U.S. religious leaders in a Jan. 19 statement to President-elect Biden's transition team calling for an extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) agreement. This is a nuclear arms reduction treaty, jointly agreed to by the United States and the Russian Federation 10 years ago, that will automatically expire on Feb. 5, 2021, unless the two parties agree to extend it.
- The synod's Re-Gathering Task Force met on February 28 to give attention to Governor Cooper's recent Executive Order #195, effective February 26 through March 26, 2021. Thankfully, North Carolina's COVID-19 numbers are trending in a more hopeful direction. Even as more people receive vaccinations, the 3 W's are still the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.
- Here is an interesting article in the "Living Lutheran" magazine about Rosa Young, the "Mother of Black Lutheranism." Check it out: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2021/02/the-mother-of-black-lutheranism-in-america/>



## *Thrivent Opportunities*



Our Thrivent Action Grants have done some amazing things in recent months. We have used them to buy coats, hats, and gloves for school children at C.C. Spaulding School; we have bought winter clothes for people at our Hispanic ELCA neighbors at Arbol De Vida; we have delivered food within our community; as well as serving meals at Urban Ministries of Durham and other projects in and around Abiding Savior. We continue to look for ministry opportunities to support.

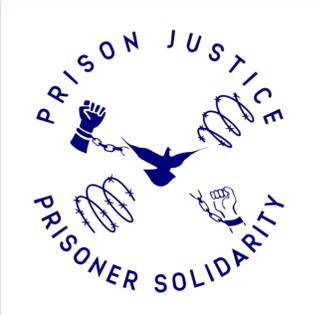
### **Thrivent Choice Dollars:**

Members of Thrivent Financial can recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go by directing Choice Dollars. If you are a member, please consider directing your Choice Dollars to Abiding Savior. These Dollars accumulate in your account and are not automatically allocated. Your Choice Dollars can be designated online. If you need help or have questions, please contact Veronica Johnson.

### **Thrivent Action Grants:**

Think about an unmet need in the community and how you can help. Each Thrivent member is eligible to receive up to two \$250 Thrivent Action Team Grants per year. As we begin a new year, we will have new opportunities to access this funding. If you need help writing these grants, or have questions regarding how these funds can be used, please contact Diana Haywood. Using these grants is just good stewardship.

***Please use your Grants and Choice dollars!!***



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For I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer saying, Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick in prison, and did not minister to you? Then He will answer them, saying, Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these you did not do it to me.

Post & SHARE Let GOD's Will be done

## Photos From February: People in Action!

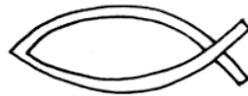
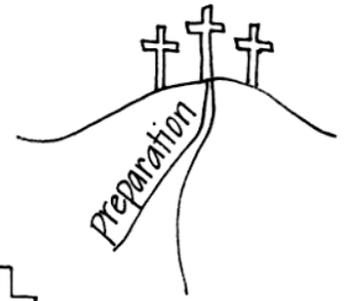
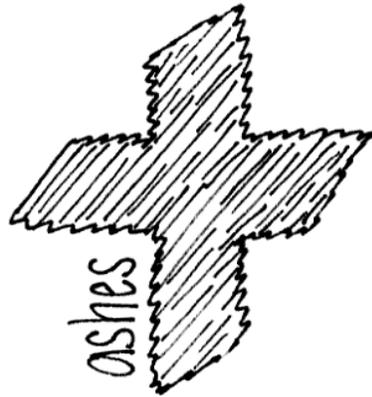


## Council Quick Notes

- **Property**—The Hispanic Church cancelled their contract with Abiding Savior as of February 1, 2021. Our new gate is up and will be painted as soon as the weather improves.
- **Finance**—We are still behind regarding balancing income and expenses, but we are encouraged by news that a grant has been applied for and approved that will help fund our outreach and staffing. Our personal giving is still important as we move into God's future for the church.
- **Outreach**—The garden has completed the “construction” phase, and will move into “growing.” Solidarity Beyond the Walls continues its work of advocacy and service to the incarcerated. 67 people were served at Urban Ministries of Durham.
- **Inreach/Stewardship**—Shrove Tuesday packet delivery went well, and the Bishop's study on the book of Isaiah continues on Thursday nights during Lent. We are looking forward to our work on a Generosity series with Mike Ward from Stewardship for all Seasons.
- **Youth and Family Formation**—The Mighty Disciples for Jesus met and celebrated MLK weekend, as well as meeting to learn the history of bl/ack leaders in America, as well as from Abiding Savior, for Black History Month.

Please contact your Council representatives regarding questions about these or any aspect of our life together.

As One Body, we can Proclaim, Serve and Share the love of Jesus.



# Lent



# 40

forty days

