



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE
(206) 935-6530 www.flcws.org March 2025

PASTOR'S PAGE — *Homecoming*

When Britt and I moved back to the Northwest about ten years ago, it felt like a homecoming. Having lived in the foothills of Northern California for several years, it was good to come back to familiar places. Britt grew up in Portland and I grew up in Puyallup. So, the move to Seattle was like returning to our hearts home.

I have a vivid memory of driving to Puyallup not long after we moved to Seattle. I had not been there in a long while. There was so much that was familiar and there was so much that had changed. The schools I attended, the church in which I was formed, the restaurants, and special sites like the downtown park and Meeker Mansion were still intact. Other things were missing. Some hangouts were no longer there or had received extreme makeovers like the bowling alley and cinema. Neighborhoods were different and had changed, and new neighborhoods were added. Naturally, the remarkable view of Mt. Rainier did not change.

Returning home may be filled with the delight of wonderful memories or the discontent of some bad memories. Much of the time it is both. Many would agree that “there’s no place like home.” For many, memories of growing up are laden with sadness or even scorn. Home, for many folks becomes a new and different place with new friends.

I often think about the season of Lent as a time of homecoming. Lent began in the early centuries of the church as a time to welcome people into a new home. Many were moved by the countercultural witness of the Christian community and many of them sought baptism. Easter was the time when these converts became part of their new home, the Body of Christ. In later years, Ash Wednesday was introduced as a time to receive back into the fold those who had left the church for a lengthy period of time. In a very real sense it was like going back home.

The scripture readings for Lent this year are filled with images of home: God promises the wandering Israelites a new home; Jesus laments because people did not find their home under the safe and protective wings of the Mother Hen; God promises to quench the thirst of those who seek him; a generous father welcomes his prodigal son back home; and with water flowing from a rock, God grants a home for his people, even in the wilderness.

Here at FLCWS, we have people preparing for baptism in Lent. They will be on a journey of discovering a new home in Christ. For those already baptized, it is a time to “return home” by stepping deeper into our relationship with Christ and his church.

This Lent, consider our journey to Easter as a time of homecoming. A time to welcome and journey alongside those new in our midst and a time to renew our baptism through prayer, fasting, and works of love.

Consider your own specific practices. What will Lent look like for you? What will it mean for you to go back home?



Peace,
Pastor Hansen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Now that we have completed the ratification of our constitution, revisions are underway to incorporate the changes from the two separate ratification processes. We will be distributing the revised copies of the constitution to the congregation soon.

We also want to remind everyone that all members of the congregation are welcome to join any of our committees. Below are the committees along with their respective chairs. I encourage you to reach out to the committee chairs to learn more about how you can get involved:

Budget, Finance & Facilities: Peter Douglass (Chair)

Parish Ministry & Education: Gina Allen (Chair)

Extended Ministry: Tyler Schorn (Chair)

Starting with May's council meeting, we will be returning to in-person meetings at church. Council meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM, with the exception of August when there will be no meeting. These in-person meetings will also be hybrid, meaning that equipment will be set up to allow both council members and guests to attend online. Below are the scheduled dates for this year's council meetings:

Council Meeting Calendar Dates:

Tuesday, March 11, 2025: Virtual

Tuesday, April 8, 2025: Virtual

Tuesday, May 13, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, June 10, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, July 8, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

No meeting in August

Tuesday, September 9, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, October 14, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, November 11, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, December 9, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, January 13, 2026: In-Person/Hybrid

In closing, I want to remind us of part of our mission statement of First Lutheran Church of West Seattle:

"Believe that church membership is not easy, but a high calling to live a life of sacrifice in our witness to Christ's Cross, by giving of our money to the church, by giving of our time to further the work of the church, and by being ever ready to witness anywhere to God's truth, justice, and righteous purity."

Thank you for your continued commitment to our church's mission.

-Steve Liang, President

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: Join us in the lounge every Sunday after the service.

ADULT FORMATION will take a hiatus during Lent. Instead, those new to FLCWS, along with their sponsors, will meet during the time after Coffee Fellowship.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggested donations for March are canned meats, chilies and stews. Any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery store gift cards are welcome. Your much needed donations are taken to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance, Mary's Place, and Westside Neighbors (American Legion Hall Shelter).

RIVERTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is still in need of help in housing the hundreds of immigrants that keep arriving. To help, go to: <https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate>. (*Also, the Kitchen Welcome Kits are nearly complete! Thank you!!*)

EXTENDED MINISTRY: Support the Food Bank with Your Thriftway Receipts! West Seattle Thriftway gives back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to benefit the WS Food Bank! Simply drop your receipts in the envelope at the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C—we'll take care of the rest. Every receipt counts and makes a difference to those in need in our community.

ST. JAMES DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE: The Spring 2025 issue has arrived. Copies are on the Narthex and Office counters.

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS



In Lent, the Sunday Liturgy will begin with Confession and Forgiveness. Lent is a good time for us to confess our sins together and by doing so, acknowledge our need for God. The emphasis in this rite is always on the Absolution: "... I therefore declare unto you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Besides the communal confession, Lent is also a good time to practice individual confession. Communal confession is an important practice, and it is general. We cannot get to specifics, so we confess in general the truth of how we distance ourselves from God. The words of forgiveness are spoken to the entire assembly in the sure confidence of God's mercy and love.

Individual Confession gives us the opportunity to get specific. I was heartened to learn that this practice has a long history at First Lutheran. It is often called the Sacrament of Penance or the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I prefer the designated title in our worship book, Individual Confession and Forgiveness. Even though Luther sometimes thought that confession ought to be a sacrament (like Baptism and Communion), Lutherans have not regarded it as such. However, I do believe that individual confession and forgiveness, like so many practices, is sacramental. God is at work in this practice, especially in the laying on of hands and the promise of forgiveness given to the person who comes for confession.

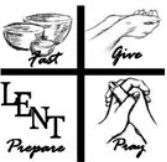
Lent is a good time for Individual Confession and Forgiveness. Instead of a set time, I prefer that you make an appointment. I'm available for individual confession at times during the week or on Sundays. Please just let me know and we can schedule a time. You can contact me through the church phone or my email: b.hansen@flcws.org As a pastor, I am obligated to respect at all times the confidential nature of a confession.

Lent includes time for examination of one's conscience. In admitting the ways we've failed to love in what we have done or have left undone and in receiving the good news of forgiveness in word and touch, we return to the identity given us in baptism. Our sinful self is drowned and dies, and through the gift of forgiveness God raises us up again and again to new life in Christ.

-Pastor Hansen

ANNOUNCEMENTS, *continued*

ASH WEDNESDAY: *Please join us Wednesday evening, March 2 at 7:00 pm as we begin the season of Lent, for holy Eucharist and imposition of ashes.*



LENTEN STUDY GUIDES: *Seeking Shalom* and *My Lenten Book* will be given to each family unit on March 2 and will be available throughout Lent. Prepared by Pastor Hansen, *My Lenten Book* includes suggestions and prayers for Lent.

LENTEN OFFERING: Watch for Lenten Envelopes in this *Messenger*, and *Lent Sunday Bulletins*. We have designated our Sister Parish, *El Camino de Emaus*, in Burlington WA, as the recipient of our 2025 Lenten Offering. (This Offering is over and above any annual giving pledge amounts.)



STEWARDSHIP

Shifting Our Thinking

There is a vulnerability to facing up to expectations versus the reality of stewardship and tithing. I consider myself a fiscally responsible adult, perhaps overzealous in my financial process. My tithe falls short of the literal expectation. However, this process of introspection has provided me with an opportunity. How could I shift my thinking to live up to these expectations?

1 Chronicles 29:14

But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?

Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Everything that has been given to me was given to me by God. We are allowed to use 90% of it to provide for our needs. Who could argue that isn't an outstanding gift?

Proverbs 11:25

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Giving generously will help provide me with peace. God wants us to be generous so that we will be refreshed. Who could argue that feeling refreshed isn't an outstanding outcome?

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Generosity should be cheerful. The positive vibe of giving from your heart will improve your mood. Who could argue that being cheerful isn't an outstanding mood enhancement?

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.

The final shift in thinking requires faith in Christ Jesus that God will provide for all our needs. Needless to say, this requires us to trust in God. Who could argue that God isn't an outstanding ally? What do we have to fear?

-Steve Liang, President

SUNDAY COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

We need to have a Host or team of Hosts each month to make our Coffee Fellowship happen. We also need people to provide treats. Don't worry—if you aren't able to be there on a Sunday during your month, just contact someone to make the coffee and fill in for you. You can sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board.

Host Duties:

Before Sunday's service:

Make sure there are cookies available. You can contact anyone that signed up to provide cookies.

Make coffee and hot water for tea. Plug in the coffee pot before the 10:30 service. Boil water and put it in the large thermal carafe for tea.

Set out teabags, sugar, creamer, spoons; set out cups and about 6 water glasses; set out the cookies.

After the Coffee Fellowship:

Designate someone to do a quick vacuum of the lounge. Check chairs and tables for crumbs.

Put any leftover coffee into a thermal carafe IF there is a class in room D. Take it in to room D, along with a few cookies, if available. If there isn't a class, dump the coffee out.

Rinse out the coffee pot.

Put the cookies away. They can be frozen for next week.

Load and start the dishwasher.

✠ PARISH PRAYERS ✠

Remember in prayer before God those whom He has made your brothers and sisters through baptism.

Pray for members and friends of our congregation that God will bless and strengthen them in these days: Peter and Dana Morrison, Shirley Graham, Nora Vanhala, Don Minter and children.

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Mona Ayer, Jeannine Lingle, Robert Schorn, Lou & Lori Landino, CJ Christian, and Melanie Johnson

Pray for our bishops Elizabeth Eaton & Shelley Bryan Wee, our pastor Bryon Hansen, our choirmaster Dean Hard, and all who faithfully assist with worship. May they be strengthened in faith, love and the holy office to which they have been called. Pray for our church council, that God will guide and strengthen them in their work.

Pray that God would give us hearts to find joy in service and faithful stewardship. Pray that God would work within us to become a good steward of our time, talents, and finances. Pray to strengthen our commitment to stewardship in our congregation.

Pray for the hungry, ignored, abused, unemployed, addicted, homeless, and unbelievers. Pray God will show mercy to these people, and for all in Christ's church to see and help those who are in distress. Pray for our country and those who lead us, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for people around the world who suffer from the effects of war, terrorism, natural disasters, disease, poverty, and abuse, especially the people of Ukraine, Israel, the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, all immigrants and asylum seekers, and all who live in fear.

Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Thomas Aquinas, Teacher (1274); George Herbert, Hymnwriter (1633); Harriet Tubman (1913) & Sojourner Truth (1883) Renewers of Society; Patrick, Bishop & Missionary to Ireland (461); Joseph, Guardian of Jesus; Oscar Romero, Bishop & Martyr (1980); John Donne, Priest & Poet (1631).

A Prayer Before Reading the News

(written by Rabbi Irwin Keller in early 2016)

Elohai neshamah shenatata bi tehorah hi

My God, the soul you have placed in me is pure and vulnerable. I am afraid that looking at today's news will be painful. Encircle me in a robe of light so that I can witness the wounds of the world without being wounded myself. Let me learn what I need to know

in order to be of my greatest use, without being overwhelmed by despair. I feel your protective light now as I open myself to the world's suffering and the world's joys. Amen



THE MESSENGER

MARCH 2025



First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
4105 California Avenue S.W.
Seattle, WA 98116-4101

**First Lutheran Church
And
Oasis Ministries Northwest Pre-
sent:**



*At Home with Jesus
A Quiet Day for Lent*

**Saturday, March 29,
9:00 – Noon**

You are invited to leave the busyness and burdens of everyday life and enter into a time of rest and refreshment.

There will be guided meditations on scripture, time for private prayer and corporate worship, supportive sharing, and hands-on activities.

(And there will be coffee and snacks as well)

There is no charge for this event but reservations are requested. (206-935-6530 or Casev@flcws.org)

Facilitated by Nancy Monelli, of Oasis Min-