

VIEW FROM THE LAKE

Abiding Peace Lutheran Church

For Lent this year Abiding Peace will offer two complementary series to aid in our 40-day preparation for Holy Week. On Sundays, our forums after worship will be exploring Wisdom traditions as a way to tap into the wisdom of our own community. On Thursday evenings, our midweek worship will be exploring different kinds of blessings.

Now, Wisdom and Blessings may not strike you as particularly Lenten themes. May people associate Lent with penitence and denial: the discipline of fasting and the practices of confession are common Lenten activities designed to make us confront our brokenness and our need for grace. Wisdom and Blessings may seem too positive for this season of the year. But Lent's purpose is not to make us feel bad, it is to cultivate in our lives and souls an openness to the grace of God that we find in the events of holy week. And anything that reminds us of our need for God can do this work of opening us.

The wisdom tradition of scripture has exactly this function. It calls us to ask the big questions and to take a deeper, more reflective look at our lives than we do when we are rushing through the busyness of everyday. Exploring wisdom themes together also calls us to listen to each other, which is an important way that God's grace is made real in our lives.

The practice of blessings is perhaps even more suited to opening our minds and hearts to the awareness of our need for grace.

In last summer's book club read, *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor makes the point that our act of offering blessing is most authentic when we intentionally separate the blessing from any claim that we have the right to judge worthiness with our words of blessings. This approach to blessing requires us to take ourselves down a few pegs and see that the most mundane things in our environment have something to teach us and that we can only speak blessing to them by focusing on them, rather than ourselves. It is subtle, but I think it is a reorientation that challenges the very essence of sin (defined by Luther as being *incurvatus in se* – curved in on oneself.). Near the end of the chapter on blessings, Taylor offers this quote:

"Pronouncing blessing puts you as close to God as you can get. To learn to look with compassion on everything that is; to see past the terrifying demons outside to the bawling hearts within; to make the first move toward the other, however many times it takes to get close; to open your arms to what is instead of waiting until it is what it should be; to surrender the justice of your own cause for mercy; to surrender the priority of your own safety for love -- this is to land in God's breast."

So, this year, our Lenten practices will call us into the humbling and connecting work of Wisdom and Blessings. I hope that we will all find in these practices a fitting and life-giving preparation for the expounding of God's grace in Holy Week.

Worship: 10:00 AM
Online/ In-person

April 2025 newsletter deadline: 3/27
Any news/ photos can be sent to Erin
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Our Mission and Purpose:

Abiding peace lutheran church makes christ known by welcoming all people to a supporting and accepting place to grow in faith and community and to serve the lord as people created by god, saved by christ and nurtured by the holy spirit. we are a reconciling in christ congregation, committed to the full inclusion and celebration of people of all sexualities, genders, and gender expressions, and to the work of racial equity.

Phone: 973-691-9393 Website: www.abidingpeacechurch.org

COUNCIL & MINISTRY

Food Pantry Needs for March

- Canned fruit
- Canned vegetables
- Soups
- Juice
- Hot dogs & buns
- Frozen meatballs
- Mashed Potato mix
- Crackers
- Gluten free pastas

Our Staff

Pastor:
Serena Rice
pastorserena@optimum.net
c: 908-458-3940

Music Director:
Ben Schroeder
benmschroeder@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:
Erin Porter
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

Officers

Presidents Shelli Skeels & Heather Nilsen
Vice President Aaron Hynddman
Secretary Jackie King-Palermo
Treasurer George Pawlo

Council Members

Cindy Pawlo Jackie King-Palermo
Ken Schwier Maria Jerez-Kearney
Shelli Skeels Charlie Palermo
Sibylle Schroeder Aaron Hyndman
Heather nilsen

Ministry Leaders

Arts & Crafts Sibylle Schroeder
Christian Ed. & Youth Heather Nilsen
Evangelism Aaron Hyndman
Fellowship Demetria Laird
Finance George Pawlo
Financial Secretary Nita Persson
Messengers Dancers Mary Kasakove
Mutal Ministry Heather Nilsen
Property Vacant
Social Ministry Sibylle Schroeder
Seniors Sibylle Schroeder
Stewardship Nick Senior
Worship & Music Mary Kasakove

Pastor's March Hours

Feb 24 – Mar 2

- Wedneay 2/26 10:00am-9:00pm
- Sunday, 3/2: 9:00am-12:00pm

Mar 3 – 9

- Wednesday 3/5: 10:00am-9:00pm
- Saturday, 3/9: District meeting off-site
9:30am-2:30pm
- Sunday, 3/9: 9:00am-1:00pm

Mar 10 – 16

- Wednesday, 3/12: Off-site meeting
10:00am-12:00pm
- Thursday 3/13: 12:00pm-9:00pm
- Sunday, 3/16: 9:00am-1:00pm

Mar 17 – 23

- Wednesday, 3/19: 10:00am-5:00pm
- Thursday 3/20: 6:00pm-9:00pm
- Sunday, 3/23: 9:00am-1:00pm

Mar 24 – 30

- Wednesday, 3/26: 10:00am-5:00pm
- Thursday 3/27: 6:00pm-9:00pm
- Sunday, 3/30: 9:00am-1:00pm

Mar 31 – Apr 6

- Thursday, 4/3: 10:00am-9:00pm
- Sunday, 4/6: 9:00am-1:00pm

March Office-Hours:

Pastor Serena will hold office hours on Wednesdays or Thursdays in March. As always, check weekly bulletins and Monday e-blast for updates on the times she is scheduled to be in the office and free for drop-ins. In addition to posted hours in the office, Pastor Serena is also available to the congregation by cell phone or e-mail during the week: (908) 458-3940; pastorserena@optimum.net. Her day off is Saturday, so please refrain from sending non-emergency messages or calls on Saturday.

March Readings

Mar. 2

Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99
2 Cor. 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-43a

Mar. 9

Deut. 26:1-11
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

Mar. 16

Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35

Mar. 23

Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-13
1 Cor. 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

Mar. 30

Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Cor. 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Council had just a brief meeting this month after the election of our Council leaders for 2025. Two discussions of note:

- We elected Council officers. This year's officers are:
 - Co-presidents: Heather Nilsen & Shelli Skeels
 - Vice-president: Aaron Hyndmann
 - Secretary: Jackie Palermo
 - Treasurer: George Pawlo
- We discussed winter-weather policies when we have substitute musicians / preachers.
 - In the event of cancelled in-person worship, we will ask the substitute preacher to lead zoom worship, with the livestream assistant acting as host to the zoom meeting.
 - In the event of cancelled in-person worship, our service will not include music. We will, however, still provide a payment of \$150 to the musicians to compensate for practice time and them holding the time on their schedules.
 - We will resume snow-clearing of one side of the stairs from the upper lots, since people are using that lot during services.

ADULT EDUCATION PLANNING

The Feb. 23 forum on Adult Education generated some great reflection about what we want from our faith-building learning opportunities at Abiding Peace and how best to make them accessible to the congregation as a whole. In that spirit of inclusion, we agreed to also elicit feedback from the larger congregation about these ideas. Please reach out to Pastor Serena with any responses or other ideas: pastorserena@optimum.net

- Generally, Sunday after worship is the best time for people to gather, since we are already here at the church and in-person learning is the most engaging.
- Planning to have forums/learning opportunities twice a month is preferred to give time for other activities while still being able to do series on a given topic
- If we gather mid-week in the evenings, it is helpful to have a dinner option (like Advent and Lent soup suppers)
- There's not a lot of energy for continuing the Summer Book Clubs - we can explore other options for Summer learning opportunities.
- We could still offer zoom learning options in the Winter, when darkness and weather making driving more difficult.

FLOWERS DURING LENT

As throughout the year, you may sponsor altar flowers during Lent. Please notify Church Secretary Erin Porter via church email and also put your name on the narthex sign-up sheet. Two people may sign up for the same Sunday. Arrangements are \$17.50 and may be paid for using your usual giving method. Specific colors can not be requested but Calico Country Florist always sends their best.



PRIDE PARTY PLANNING

As you may remember, the township passed an ordinance in December that prohibits the flying of pride flags on township properties. However, the Mayor and the Recreation Department have offered space at Turkey Brook Park for a Pride event in June. Accordingly, a family-friendly PRIDE PARTY is in the works for Sunday, June 8, from 2:00pm-6:00pm. We have the chance to help Pride Mt Olive make this event a great success and set a precedent for the coming years. Erin and Pastor Serena are already collaborating with Pride Mt Olive's organizer for music, programming, food trucks, etc. If you would like to be involved, either in the planning or on the day of the event, please let Pastor Serena know. Many hands makes light work.

PARTNERSHIP TEAM

As discussed at the Congregational Meeting, we are in need of some volunteers to help with moving our partnering efforts forward. We have a team for developing sample contract agreements, but we still need for folks for the other two teams. The descriptions are copied below. Please carefully consider helping:

Organizational Outreach team:

- Time commitment: 3-6 month effort with monthly meetings or tasks. Ad hoc follow-up, as needed.
- Task: focused effort to identify, outreach to, and meet with organizational allies to help spread the word about our new partnering ministry and identify potential partners in need of space. Potential outreach targets include: Local Chambers of Commerce, the Mayor, Morris County Arts, Professional Counseling organizations (NASW, etc.)

Partnership Ministry Team:

- Time commitment: less intense, but on-going.
- Task: Strategy and logistics team to support Pastor Serena in managing on-going partnership relationships. Support tasks will include providing feedback and problem-solving for emergent partnership issues, providing back-up coverage as partner contact when Pastor Serena is away or unavailable (by prior arrangement), assist with managing logistical tasks such as maintenance needs, partner communications, etc.

MARCH FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

March 4th Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper from 6 pm to 8 pm. Volunteers are needed for setup, preparation, and cleanup afterwards. Anyone interested in helping cook pancakes should be at church by 5 pm. Additional pancake griddles are welcome, A sign-up sheet will be available prior to this event. There will be a free will offering for Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Lent begins on March 5th with a community Ash Wednesday service at the Drakestown United Methodist Church.

March 15th Chili Cook-Off from 6 pm to 8 pm. Bring your favorite chili recipe. A sign-up sheet will be provided for drinks, chili toppings, chips, desserts, etc. March 22nd will be our snow date.

March 16th Saint Patrick's Day Celebration. Wear green and bring your favorite Saint Patrick's Day desserts.

Mid-week Lenten soup suppers at 6:15 pm followed by the Lenten service at 7 pm (Choir practice afterwards at 7:30 pm)
These services will be on **3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/3, 4/10, and 4/17.**



We celebrated a visit from the Bishop (and Quinn's flour baby), and the new opportunity for Ben & Robert in Thailand!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

3/07- SUDHAKAR KANDIKATLA

3/08 - SIBYLLE SCHROEDER

3/10 - ERIN PORTER

3/11 - TYLER RICE

3/11 - MARCO PONCE JR.

3/14 - SERENA RICE

3/15 - CHRISTINE BLACKBURN

3/19 - CAROLYN BLACKBURNE

3/28 - KAREN COATES



Did we miss a milestone? Please email Erin (aplcbuddlake@gmail.com) to keep us up to date!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
.	3/1 Zumba @ 9:00
3/2 Worship 10:00am Council - zoom @ 6:00	3/3 Worship & Music cmt. mtg @ 1PM	3/4 Faith Kitchen 9:00-12:30 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 6:00	3/5 AA @ 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 Drakestown Methodist	3/6 Soup Supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7:00	3/7	3/8 Zumba @ 9:00 District Meeting 9:30-2:00, St. John's Summit
3/9 Worship 10:00am Sunday School during worship	3/10 Worship & Music Committee 10:00, zoom	3/11	3/12 UFO Gathering, 2:00 AA @ 6:30pm	3/13 Soup Supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7:00 Choir 7:30	3/14	3/15 Zumba @ 9:00 Chili Cook-Off 6:00-8:00
3/16 Worship 10:00am	3/17	3/18	3/19 Senior's Ministry Tea Party, 2:00 AA @ 6:30pm	3/20 Soup Supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7:00 Choir 7:30	3/21	3/22 Zumba @ 9:00
3/23 Worship 10:00 AM Sunday School during worship	3/24	3/25	3/26 Mt. Olive Clergy Assoc. Meeting, APLC, 1:00 AA @ 6:30pm	3/27 Soup Supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7:00 Choir 7:30	3/28	3/29