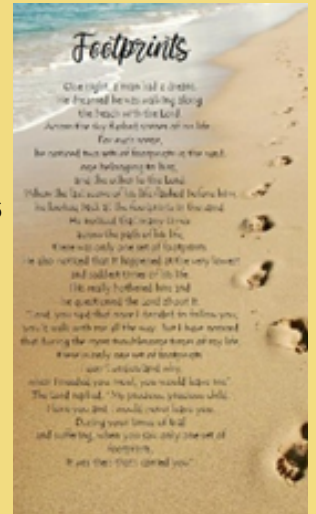




PASTOR'S ARTICLE – Footprints of faith

I'm assuming many of you have read or heard the poem "Footprints in the Sand." It imagines the author looking back on their life in a dream, as though their various life experiences line up beside footprints along a stretch of sand. The man notices that during the most difficult times in his life, there is only one set of footprints and asks Jesus why. Jesus answers that those times are when Jesus carried him. It's an invitation to shift perspective and not assume the worst. Where we might be tempted to see one set of prints as evidence that we have been abandoned, it might actually be evidence of how closely God holds us. It's a lovely sentiment. Tyler and I actually used this poem as part of our wedding favors along with chocolate seashells, since we got married by the beach.



But I am also aware that this poem presents a very individualistic view of the journey of faith. Faith is not just about trusting that Jesus shows up for us on our path. It's about following his path, about looking to his example and listening to his calling before we decide where to direct our feet. I love the sense of a close relationship with Jesus in the poem, but I worry about a subtle ego-centrism. An unspoken assumption that as we are living out our lives, we just need to recognize Jesus' presence with us and never question why we aren't automatically looking for him to show us the way. Not to mention that the "me and Jesus" narrative ignores the communal nature of walking the journey of faith. Even with Jesus carrying us, there would never be just one set of footprints in the sand. There is a "cloud of witnesses."

I think this is a helpful perspective for us to bring to our community's exploration of the "Palm Sunday Path" this Lent. One of the reasons to focus on this path is the particular crisis unfolding in our nation, and the clear calling on the church to engage in more active public witness on behalf of the poor and oppressed. But we are not only focusing on the Palm Sunday Path for the sake of others. It is a good and challenging practice for our own spiritual growth. In a season that calls for self-awareness, it is helpful for us to draw the distinction between following Jesus' path vs. inviting Jesus to join us on our path. It deepens our faith to deliberately ask what it looks like for Jesus to prepare for his confrontation with earthly authorities and what that means for us. It is illuminating and reorienting to ask first, "What is the path we are to follow?" rather than proceeding on our own path and then asking how to be faithful on it.

Lent is the most challenging of the church seasons, but the poem does assure us that in the hard times, Jesus will carry us. I just hope that we want to be carried on Jesus' path.

- Pastor Serena

Notes from Council

Our new 2026 Council met on February 22 via Zoom (due to the snowstorm) to elect new officers and review matters for discussion and action. Major discussion topics and decisions are below:

- **Council Officers:** We have elected the following officers for the 2026 Council year:
 - **President:** Aaron Hyndmann
 - **Vice President:** Heather Nilsen
 - **Secretary:** Howard Corneilson
 - **Treasurer:** George Pawlo (not a member of Council)
- **On-going Business:**
 - A number of building repair projects are ongoing, including plumbing & fan in some of the bathrooms, repairs in the Fellowship Hall & supply closet, and locks on the outdoor sign.
 - Constitutional updates cannot be resubmitted to Synod Council until additional changes from August 2025 General Assembly are approved by the Congregation, but we can check with the Synod secretary on conformity.
 - Thank you letters to all who contribute to the church's budget are in-process.
- **Budget update:** The year has started very slowly in giving and higher than expected in expenses. This is the same directional trend as prior years, but the gap is more substantial (around \$5,000). While we have funds in the bank to cover the shortfall for now, we will be keeping an eye on things and communicating with the congregation as the year proceeds.
- **Advocacy/Service:** With the commitment to the Palm Sunday Path in Lent, Council wants to ensure that we are considering all ways that we are called to advocate on behalf of our neighbors. Ideas include:
 - Organizing carpooling from the church on Sunday, March 29 for the Palm Sunday March and Vigil in Trenton.
 - Approach potential partner churches to hold a prayer service or similar event regarding the potential ICE detention center in Roxbury.
 - Exploring ways to improve the accessibility of our food pantry, given limited hours for staff at the building.

Worship: 10:00 AM Online/ In-person

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

Voices for Justice and Friends
Present

COMMUNITY PRAYER WALK

*"Where two or three are gathered
in my name, there am I in the
midst of them." - Matthew 18:20*

What to Expect:

- A short time of prayer before the walk
- Walking in small groups around nearby streets
- Speakers
- Refreshments and fellowship afterward

Join us as we
walk to show
our solidarity
and support
for our
immigrant
neighbors.

Sunday, March 29

1:00 pm

Gather at Centenary University

More Info: Chet Penza at cliftonchet@yahoo.com

March Readings

March 1
Gen 12:1-4a;
Mark 12:1-12

March 8
Ex. 17:1-7;
Matt. 24:1-14

March 15
Ruth 1:15-17;
John 13:1-9, 33-35

March 22
Ezekiel 37:1-14;
Luke 23:39-43



**March 15th
we'll celebrate
St. Patrick's Day coffee
hour.
Please bring your
favorite dessert.**



**Mid-week Lenten soup
suppers & services are
3/4, 3/11, 3/18 & 3/25.
Soup is served at 6:15
followed by a 7:00 pm
Lenten service & choir
practice afterwards at
7:30**



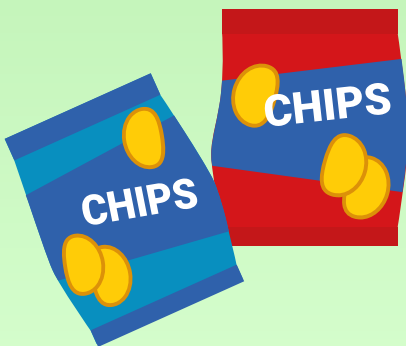


Remember to change
your clock for
Daylight Saving Time
March 8.



Thanks to all who have
contributed "snowflakes" - we
have raised \$150 to defray
plowing costs.

Enjoy good chili & good
fellowship at our annual
Chili cook-off on
Saturday, March 14th,
from 6:00-8:00 pm. Our
snow date will be March
21st. Make your favorite
chili. Don't forget side
dishes & desserts.
A sign-up sheet will be
available.



April 2026 newsletter deadline:
3/27

Any news/ photos can be sent to
Catherine
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com



Attention, UFO (unfinished
objects) will resume on
Wednesday March 18 at 2-4 p.m.



Senior's Tea
will be on
Wednesday,
March 25
at 2 - 4 p.m.



THANKS A BUNCH!!

Thanks to everyone who donates
food to Faith Kitchen, and
everyone who comes to help
prepare the food. We usually
serve over 100 meals!! - Sibylle

• Food Pantry Needs for March:

- Bread
- Canned fruit
- Canned tuna
- Parmalat milk
- Juice
- Hot dogs & buns
- Frozen meatballs
- Mashed Potato mix
- Crackers
- Gluten free pastas

Tullo's Ballroom

Latin Dance Month:
Tuesday's at 7:00

Mar. 3
Mar. 10
Mar. 17
Mar. 24
Mar. 31



March Office Hours:

Pastor Serena's office hours will vary a bit week-to-week in March, but will be held on Wednesdays every week and sometimes on Thursday mornings. As always, check weekly bulletins and Monday e-blast for weekly changes. In addition to posted hours in the office, she 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.

Mar 2 – Mar 8

- Wednesday, Mar 4: 3:30 pm – 9:00 pm
- Thursday, Mar 5: 9:00 am-1:00 pm
- Sunday, Mar. 8: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Mar 9 – Mar 15

- Wednesday, Mar 11: 12 pm – 8:00 pm
- Sunday, Mar. 15: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Mar 16 – Mar 22

- Wednesday, Mar 18: 2:00 pm– 9:00 pm
- Thursday, Mar 19: 9:00 am-1:00 pm
- Sunday, Mar. 22: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Mar 23 – Mar 29

- Wednesday, Mar 25: 3:30 pm – 9:00 pm
- Thursday, Mar 26: 9:00 am-1:00 pm
- Sunday, Mar. 29: 9:00 am-12:00 pm
- Palm Sunday Vigil in Trenton 2:00 pm-4:00 pm



COUNCIL & MINISTRY

Officers

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Aaron Hyndmann
Heather Nilsen
Howard Corneilson
George Pawlo

Council Members

Christine Resciniti
Ken Schwier
Shelli Skeels
Sibylle Schroeder

Howard Corneilson
Maria Jerez-Kearney
Heather Nilsen
Aaron Hyndman
Tyler Schiess

Ministry Leaders

Arts & Crafts
Christian Ed. & Youth
Evangelism
Fellowship
Finance
Financial Secretary
Messengers Dancers
Mutual Ministry
Property
Social Ministry
Seniors
Stewardship
Worship & Music

Sibylle Schroeder
Heather Nilsen
Aaron Hyndman
Demetria Laird
George Pawlo
Nita Persson
Mary Kasakove
Heather Nilsen
Vacant
Sibylle Schroeder
Sibylle Schroeder
Ken Schwier
Mary Kasakove

Our Staff

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

Music Director:
Ben Schroeder
benmschroeder@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:
Catherine Belfiore
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

April 2026 newsletter
deadline: 3/27
Any news/ photos can be
sent to Catherine
aplcbuddlake@gmail.com

March 2026

March Birthdays

Mar. 7 Sudhakar Kandikatla
 Mar. 8 Sibylle Schroeder
 Mar. 11 Marco Ponce Jr.
 Mar. 11 Tyler Rice
 Mar. 14 Serena Rice
 Mar. 15 Christine Blackburne
 Mar. 19 Carolyn Blackburne



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Sunday Worship @10:00am Sunday School Sermon Talk-back, 11:30 am	2 Worship & Music, 10:00am via Zoom	3 Faith Kitchen, 9:30am-12:30pm Tullo's Ballroom 7pm.	4 Soup Supper 6:15 pm AA @ 6:30pm Lenten Service, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm	5	6	7 Zumba , 9:00am Daylight Savings Time. 
8 Sunday Worship 10:00am Sermon Talk-back, 11:30 am Daylight Savings Time	9 Worship & Music committee, 10:00 am via Zoom	10 Tullo's Ballroom 7pm.	11 Red Cross Blood Drive 1:00-6:00 Soup Supper 6:15 pm AA @ 6:30pm Lenten Service, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm	12 Council Meeting, 7:30pm via Zoom	13	14 Zumba, 9:00am Chili Cook-off 6:00pm - 8:00 pm
15 Sunday Worship 10:00am Sunday School St. Patrick's Day coffee hour. Lament & Hope Gathering, 11:30 am	16	17 Tullo's Ballroom 7pm. <i>Saint Patrick's Day</i>	18 UFO at 2:00 pm. Soup Supper 6:15 pm AA @ 6:30pm Lenten Service, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm	19	20	21 Zumba, 9:00am
22 Sunday Worship 10:00am	23	24 Tullo's Ballroom 7pm.	25 Senior's Tea Party, 2:00pm Soup Supper, 6:15am AA @ 6:30pm Lenten Service, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm	26	27 Newsletter deadline	28 Zumba, 9:00am
29 Palm Sunday Worship 10:00 am Palm Sunday Vigil in Trenton, 2:00pm	30	31 Tullo's Ballroom 7pm.				

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