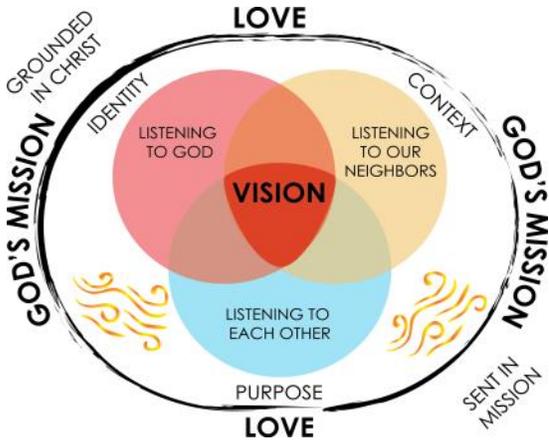


March 2018

## From Pastor Aleese



In January at our Semi Annual Meeting, we began a multi-year focus to discern God's mission at SOTC.

Together, we began

looking back at the some of the themes that came out of our "Share the Spirit. Share Your Story" gatherings from last fall and considered how those themes help shape our identity of who we are at SOTC. Based on those identity markers, we began to consider: how is SOTC called to be a part of God's mission of love? And/or what is God calling SOTC to be or to do, now and into the future? The conversation that began at our meeting was wonderful. It was thought-provoking, insightful, and allowed a space for us to consider these questions together.

But now what?

To help lead us forward in this process, PPC voted at their February meeting to create two task forces: a Visioning Task Force and a Constitutional Review Task Force. The purpose of these task forces is as follows:

Visioning:

- to get to know each other's stories of faith
- to plan and lead an event(s) for the congregation to share their stories of faith
- to provide oversight and analysis of a congregational feedback

Constitutional Review:

- to update our constitution to the current ELCA Model Constitution
- to consider the overall structure of our governance as it pertains to our mission

But why are we looking at our constitution right now? Is that really necessary? Though a conversation regarding our governance may seem to be contrary to our work of listening to God's voice and visioning into the future, the two are intimately related. We need a structure to support us to allow space for us to listen to each other and make decisions. Structure, on its own, does not need to be prescriptive. Rather, structure can help give us guidelines to work within so that we can be flexible and so we can heed the voices of everyone.

So, do we have to do all this? No. Who we are in Christ right now and what we do in the name of Christ right now reflects the promises of God in this community and beyond. But by intentionally listening for the Word of God in our midst, and later – by intentionally listening to our neighbors and listening to each other – I believe that the Spirit might push us to a deeper sense of faith as we join in God's mission to share the good news of Jesus Christ to all the world.

If you have any questions about where we are at as a congregation, and/or what it means to engage in this process, feel free to talk to Pastor Aleese or Heather Allen. Please continue to pray for this congregation, as the Spirit moves through us – molding us, shaping us, and transforming us to be Christ's hands and feet in the world today. And in the meantime, join us this Lent and Holy Week as we re-ground ourselves in the promises of God: the only promises that can define who we are and whose we are.

Peace, Pastor Aleese Baldwin

## OUR MISSION TOGETHER

Led by Christ, and transformed by his love and grace, we welcome all to join us as shepherds, in praise, worship and compassionate service to others.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

5th	Rory Lamb
9th	Madelyn Lamb
15th	Ares Jackson
20th	Konrad Wilke
	Alexia Graves
21st	Carlie Fusco
26th	Erin Jorgensen
29th	Violet LeGrand
31st	Jeff & Debby Morrison



## Board Meetings

- Lay Ministers  
March 6 @ 5:30
- Education  
No meeting in March
- Evangelism  
March 8 @ 5:30
- Property  
March 13 @ 5:30
- Stewardship  
March 15 @ 6:30
- PPC  
March 27 @ 6:30

## Want to Sing with Us?

All are welcome to sing with the choir in preparation for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Music is very accessible and will require minimal preparation. Rehearsals continue on **Sunday's immediately following worship through March 18.**

# Upcoming Events

## SOTC Monthly Faith Formation and Worship Schedule

### Worship and Music

Worship - Sunday, 9:00 a.m.  
The Way - Wednesday, 5:00 p.m.

### Education

Sunday School and Adult Education - Sunday, 10:20-11:30 a.m.  
FINK (more information below) Wednesday, 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Bible at the Brew (BATB): 1<sup>st</sup> Thurs. of the month, 5:30 p.m. at  
Missipi Brewing Company  
Women's Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. of the month, 8:30 a.m. at SOTC  
Christians Underground: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month,  
11:30-1 at Geo John's

## Seeking to Connect to God in a Different Way?

Join us for prayer at R(est) & R(eneval) with God on **Sunday evenings at 5p.m.** Each week we practice a different form of contemplative prayer. Schedule through March is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

But Pastor, this is beginning to sound a bit "New Age-y" to me, even a bit like other near eastern religions! Though it's true that other religions incorporate some of these same practices, these prayer practices also take us back to our Christian forefathers. But more importantly, we practice these forms of prayer to encounter Christ. Martin Luther, in his explanations of the mystery of the sacraments, often noted that Christ is "in, with and under the bread, wine and water." When we gather in prayer, we take time to dwell with the mystery of who God is "in, with and under" the various aspects of our lives.

## FINK Corner

During Lent, FINK youth are expected to partake in Lenten midweek worship services and the interactive learning that follows. If your youth would like to help with worship or lead a station, let Pastor Aleese know!

Youth are also expected to attend Holy Week services. Traveling? No problem. Bring back a worship bulletin from the congregation you visited. We'll gather on Sun., April 8 during the Education Hour to debrief what youth noticed, learned, and observed during Holy Week worship.

We continue with our regular schedule after Easter on Wed., April 4 at Grace (Theme Night).



# Upcoming Events

## Lenten Midweek Schedule

March 7-21

- 6:00 p.m. Meal
- 7:00 p.m. Worship – Evening Prayer
- 7:35 p.m. Interactive Learning for all ages!

Each Wed., we'll take the Old Testament lesson from the *previous* Sunday to dig deeper into the various covenants God has made with God's people. We'll hear the Scripture(s) during worship, along with a short reflection, and then will take the next step to apply it to our lives during the interactive learning time.

## Holy Week Schedule

March 25-April 1

Think of Holy Week as a song we get to sing only once a year. We anticipate it. We relearn familiar parts and discover new harmonies to add this year. In this song, are four distinct stanzas: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Yet the four stanzas form one song. One story. And without one verse, the story just doesn't make sense. Though it may seem crazy to come together for so much worship, this yearly gift of worship is a time to refocus, remember and return ourselves to the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Make a point to sing each "stanza" with us as we await God's final promise.

- Palm Sunday** Sunday, March 25 at 9:00 a.m.  
Including a procession of palms, special music
- Maundy Thursday** Thursday, March 29 at 6:00 p.m.  
Worship around the Table, with Communion
- Good Friday** Friday, March 30 at 7:00 p.m.  
Service of Darkness
- Easter Sunday** Sunday, April 1 at 9:00 a.m.  
No April Fools' joke here! Jesus is risen!

## Maundy Thursday Worship

### Worship around the Table

Can you imagine sitting around the table with Jesus the night before he was arrested? Can you imagine how the disciples must've felt as Jesus got down to wash their feet and gave them bread and wine, saying, "This is my body; this is my blood...given and shed for you?" Though we'll never know what Christ's last week was like, we'll immerse ourselves in the story of Christ's passion beginning on Maundy Thursday. For worship, we'll gather in *both* in the sanctuary and the fellowship space and will utilize elements from a traditional service and an Agape Feast.

Worship will begin at 6pm and will include a full meal. Those interested in attending will be asked to sign up so we can plan appropriately for food. Though we'll have a few extra place settings for those who may join us spontaneously, we hope to have a good estimate of the number of people attending. Questions? Talk to Marlys Grete, Patti Oestmann or Pastor Aleese.

## Ways to Listen to God this Month



Last month, we highlighted the various Bible studies, small groups, and children/youth opportunities as ways to listen to God. This month, we have a unique opportunity during the Lenten season to listen to God through the traditional Lenten disciplines:

- Prayer
- Almsgiving
- Fasting

Often, Lent has become a time for individuals to "give something up." Some give up chocolate. Others watching their favorite TV show. And others, that beloved cup of coffee so they can donate the money they would've used on that cup o' coffee toward clean water! But at the core, these Lenten practices are not about self-denial. We can never bring ourselves to the same self-denial as Christ. But what we can do is use these practices as a way embrace the promises of Christ's cross for ourselves and for the world.

Though we have already started the season of Lent, now is not "too late" to engage in one or more of these sacred disciplines. Prayerfully consider what God might be calling you to practice for the remainder of Lent. Unsure what it might look like? Talk to Pastor Aleese to get some ideas going.

# Ministry Connection

## Wartburg Seminary

### Food Pantry

Wait a minute! An ELCA seminary has a food pantry? Yes, they do. For many seminarians and their families, going to seminary is huge financial commitment. Costs for tuition, books, supplies and housing add up quickly, and that's all before including day-to-day living expenses.



In response to this need, Wartburg Seminary provides a food pantry open to all students on campus once a week. Food is donated from local restaurants (Panera days were the best!), local farmers (often a good

supply of eggs and cheese), and the local Dubuque food pantries. While Pastor Aleese and her husband, Dan, were students, they often supplemented their weekly grocery run with basics from the food pantry.

Beyond the standard granola bars, cereals, pastas and canned veggies, occasionally they were able to walk away with a small chicken to throw in the Crock-Pot or some fresh garden produce in the fall.

For those who've been attending midweek Lenten worship, you've noticed that we're using a different worship setting. The music was written by Pastor Dave Efflandt, a former music educator, who now pastors in northern MN. In seeking permission to use his music, we offered to compensate him accordingly. However, rather than accepting payment to use his music, he desired for SOTC to contribute toward the Wartburg food pantry, as his family utilized it greatly as his wife encountered several medical challenges during his last two years of study. In response, the Worship and Music Board decided to send \$150 from their budget. We give thanks for his gift of music that we are able to use this Lent, and we give thanks for your offerings which make gifts like these to the greater church possible! Thank you for your support of seminarians and future leaders of the church!



## The Water. The Witness

Together with other congregations in our synod, we've taken up the challenge to raise at least \$500 toward clean water efforts both domestically and abroad through ELCA World Hunger. This Lent, listen up during the children's sermons for more information about our connection to water and how water reminds us of God's promises given to us. Send up your offering to this initiative with the kids.



So how far will my money go?

### **\$10**

provides a clinic visit for a child suffering from water-borne illness

### **\$150**

develops 100 feet of an irrigation canal

### **\$1000**

could train a team of trainers to education their community about water, sanitation and hygiene

### **\$2,500 – 15,000**

constructs a water source for a community (from harnessing a local spring to drilling a deep borehole)

Alone, we could never raise enough money to provide clean water for people around the globe. But working together, we are stronger. And together, we can offer the promises of God to people near and far.

## Wonder Years Preschool

Fall registration is on-going. To register you can contact Michele Rogers at 563-260-5585 or register online through the Muscatine schools website.

In February we had fun talking and reading about the accuracy of the groundhog "Punxsutawney Phil's" prediction "How many weeks until spring?" We also discovered that many of our little students are amazing at demonstrating their knowledge of "writing to convey meaning" by drawing a picture, adding a couple stickers, and writing letter sounds that go with their creation.

We look forward to the magic and mayhem of that "legendary little leprechaun" in March.

# Parish Planning Council

**February 27, 2018**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Heather Allen, Amy Bakke, Pastor Aleese Baldwin, Kathy Dunham, Roger Luft, Al Oestmann and Barb Williams.

**Devotion:** Paul's letter from Colossians 2 read by Pastor Aleese

**Approval of Jan. 2018 Minutes:** A motion was made by Al, seconded by Amy. All in favor.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Aleese provided the board with a report on how her time has been spent over the past month at SOTC with her focus being on: Visioning-Listening Process - Grounded in Christ, Sent in Mission, Faith Formation and Worship for Lent, music for worship, and connecting with new and prospective members.

**Treasurer's Report:** Roger Luft reported that payroll and Porticol was paid with funds still in checking. This did not happen last year at this time and funds were taken from savings. Products of the Flock was moved in the reports from under Evangelism as they are self supporting.

### Board Reports:

- *Education:* Plans for summer camp, Spaghetti Dinner, VBS with Grace, and Easter Breakfast were discussed.
- *Evangelism:* Discussion was held on Shut-in visits, Game Night, Chocolate Fest, PPC updates, funeral service luncheons, and funeral services at SOTC.
- *Lay Ministers:* Follow-up on our wedding policy was tabled until after Easter. Confirmation and Baptism dates were discussed with the report for the Synod due. Bob Danner will be playing during worship on the third Sunday of the month. Anita Zahnister will play the fifth Sunday.
- *Property:* Continued discussion on the roof and heaters.
- *Stewardship:* Did not meet in January.

### Old Business:

**New Business:** With "Grounded in Christ, Sent in Mission" underway, responsibilities and expectation of PPC members were discussed. Two task forces are coming together to help guide us through Visioning and updating the SOTC Constitution. More to come on this as details are finalized.

Next meeting will be **March 27th @ 6:30 p.m.**

Motion to adjourn was made by Al Oestmann, seconded by Amy Bakke. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

## Spaghetti Supper Success!

Thanks to your help, \$704.10 was raised to go toward youth summer programming. This summer, we will be supporting youth going to Camp EWALU in Strawberry Point and will assist Carly Dunham, who is volunteering at the National Youth Gathering, with travel costs as is necessary. And who said that the Spaghetti Supper was all work and no play? As we were cleaning up, our FINK youth had a chance to have some fun and tried some gymnastics! Not only was money raised to support youth this summer, but an environment to continue nurturing relationships in this community of faith was created. Thank you, for continuing to be that family of God, and thank you for your continued dedication to our youth!



# Community Events

## Witness for Peace

**Sun., March 11, 3 p.m.**

Though it may seem that issues of violence and injustice are only in communities apart from our own, there are many who bear the effects of violence, abuse and pain right here in our community. On the second Sunday of each month at 3pm, members of the community gather at MCSA for a time of prayer and conversation surrounding issues of peace and justice. All are welcome as we share God's promises in our communities.

## Food Pantry Needs

Every time you do your grocery shopping, please consider purchasing an item or two that can be donated. Bring it to church and add it to the collection box in the narthex. We will be sure that donated items are taken to the Food Pantry on a consistent basis.

**For the month of March you are invited to bring spices, seasonings, and gravy mixes.**



## SOTC Hours

**Pastor Aleese:** Tues.: 8-10 a.m.  
Wed.: 2:30-5:30 p.m.  
Fri.: 3-5 p.m.

**Office Hours:** Mon.: 1-5 p.m.  
Tues. 4-6 p.m.  
Wed.: 4-6 p.m.

For clarification, we will be working throughout the week, these are the times that you can expect to find us in the office. Monday is Pastor Aleese's day off.

## Products of the



### Spring is in the air!

Check out some of the new items made by Mary Wellington. With the chilly mornings and warm afternoons, a poncho might be just what you are looking for. Have a new spring idea for the stitchers? Please share your thoughts with Becky DeBlaley.



## Weekly Giving

### January

January 7	\$2091.00
January 14	\$2143.51
January 21	\$1367.00
January 28	\$1205.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6806.51</b>

### February

February 4	\$3445.00
February 11	\$1157.00
February 18	\$1259.00
February 25	\$1640.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7501.00</b>

*Thank you for your continued support of the mission of Shepherd of the Cross! Because of your generosity, we continue to share the Spirit and share the story of Jesus! Thank you!*

## Prayers of the People

**Please remember the following people in your prayers this month:**

### Concerns

Members of SOTC who struggle with health concerns, including:

Sara Guhn, Ruth Reist, Thelma Pendleton, Judy Braun, and Margaret Hildebrandt

Colby DeBlaley, sister-in-law of Becky DeBlaley, diagnosed with breast cancer

Kenneth James, brother of Ruth Reist, recovering from hip surgery

Sharon Pugh, mother of Cathy Bermel, health concerns

Phyllis Martz, friend of the Grete's, diagnosed with breast cancer

Al Oestmann, recovering from blood clots

Those who mourn the death of Norma McConnaha

Macey Rogers, recovering from knee surgery

Mark Petersen, health issues

### Joys

In thanksgiving for food, fellowship, and community support for our youth at SOTC through the Spaghetti Supper

## Sunday Fellowship Teams

### March 4 ~ Team 3

Judy Bartling, Gladys Reif, Michele Rogers, & Barb Williams

### March 11 ~ Team 4

Shelly Corman, Melanie Drake, Kathy Dunham, & Roger Luft

### March 18 ~ Team 5

Joanne Drinkall, Marlys Grete, Elizabeth Hill, & Sandy Hill

### March 25 ~ Team 6

Amy & Dave Bakke, Margaret Hildebrandt, Glendola Reinier, and Ruth Reist



## Worship Assistants

	Greeters	Ushers	Readers	Children's Sermon	Communion Assistants	Communion Set-Up	Fellowship/ Mid Week Meal	Acolyte
<b>Sunday March 4 @ 9:00 a.m.</b>	Betty & Jim Burch	Betty & Jim Burch	Amy Bakke	Judy Bartling	2 needed Roger Luft & Amy Bakke	Patti Oestmann	Team 3	
<b>Wednesday March 7 @ 7:00 p.m.</b>	X		Joanne Drinkall	X	X	X	Stewardship	
<b>Sunday March 11 @ 9:00 a.m.</b>				Pastor Aleese	2 needed	Daryl Eichelberger	Team 4	
<b>Wednesday March 14 7:00 p.m.</b>	X	Roger Luft		X	X	X	Evangelism	
<b>Sunday March 18 @ 9:00 a.m.</b>			Roger Luft		2 needed	Patti Oestmann	Team 5	
<b>Wednesday March 21 7:00 p.m.</b>	X			X	X	X	Education	
<b>Palm Sunday March 25 @ 9:00 a.m.</b>			Marlys Grete	Pastor Aleese	2 needed Marlys & Gary	Daryl Eichelberger	Team 6	
<b>Maundy Thurs. March 29 @ 6:00 p.m.</b>	X		4 needed Marlys Grete	X	2 needed	Judy Bartling	X	
<b>Good Friday March 30 @ 7:00 p.m.</b>				X	X	X	X	

# March 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers 5:30 Bible @ the Brew 6:30 Stitching Group	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 7:30 Weight Watchers
<b>4</b> 9:00 Worship Service 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 5:00 R & R with God	<b>5</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers	<b>6</b>  5:30 Lay Ministers	<b>7</b>  5:00 The Way 6:00 Meal 7:00 Worship 7:45 Interactive Learning	<b>8</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers 6:00 Evangelism 6:30 Stitching Group	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 7:30 Weight Watchers 8:30 Women's Group  12:30-4 Building Reserved
<b>11</b> 9:00 Worship Service 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 3:00 Witness for Peace 5:00 R & R with God	<b>12</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers	<b>13</b>  5:30 Property	<b>14</b>  5:00 The Way 6:00 Meal 7:00 Worship 7:45 Interactive Learning	<b>15</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers 6:30 Stitching Group 6:30 Stewardship	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 7:30 Weight Watchers
<b>18</b> 9:00 Worship Service 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 5:00 R & R with God	<b>19</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers 5:39 Mutual Ministry Team	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 11:30 Christians Underground 5:00 The Way 6:00 Meal 7:00 Worship 7:45 Interactive Learning	<b>22</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers 6:30 Stitching Group	<b>23</b>  <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	<b>24</b> 7:30 Weight Watchers
<b>25</b> 9:00 Worship Service 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School 5:00 R & R with God	<b>26</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers	<b>27</b>  6:30 PPC	<b>28</b>  5:00 Weight Watchers	<b>29</b>  3:00 Maundy Thursday Set-Up 6:00 Maundy Thursday Service	<b>30</b>  7:00 Good Friday Service	<b>31</b> 7:30 Weight Watchers 10:00 Easter Set-Up
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><u>Upcoming Events</u></p> <p>April 1 Easter Sunday Breakfast and Worship</p> <p>April 2-5 Pastor Aleese Vacation</p> </div>				