

# The First Order

## St. Stephen's Parish

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MARCH 2017

We Welcome, Pastor Tim Weisman,  
as "Guest Columnist" to the front page!

## To Be "Called To Common Mission"

As we continue to keep vigil at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, you may hear Rev. Cricket, Rev. Joseph, or me refer to something named "Called to Common Mission" or even just "CCM." Adopted in 1999 by action of the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and in 2000 by action of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Called to Common Mission is the formal name of the full communion agreement that exists between our respective churches. Though far from a merger, CCM is a living document that identifies areas of Lutheran-Episcopal agreement and relationship.

Take, as examples: Lutherans and Episcopalians agree on the authority of the Scriptures, and both our churches read the Scriptures in worship through the course of the church's year. We agree on the ancient Nicene and Apostles' creeds, and that Jesus of Nazareth is truly God and truly human. We also agree on and recognize the authenticity of each others' baptisms, and we each affirm the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist or Holy Communion.

But there's more. While we find our source material in different places (Lutherans from the Augsburg Confession and Martin Luther's

Small Catechism and Episcopalians from the Book of Common Prayer), Lutherans and Episcopalians agree that God's people are made right (justified) by grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works of the law. We agree that all the baptized are called to ministry within their individual vocations, and that ordained ministers, in particular, fulfill their call within a community of faith and not apart from it. Since CCM, Lutherans and Episcopalians recognize the authenticity of each others' ordinations, meaning our church bodies can share ordained ministers.

Above all, CCM testifies that Lutherans and Episcopalians share a common responsibility to witness and service. Without a doubt, our respective churches are out in the world, proclaiming the Gospel, and we can be—we are—stronger together. As we await the completion of renovations at Zion Lutheran, and long after that work is done, we are stronger together. I am grateful to St. Stephen's, and to you, for this opportunity to live out CCM in these coming months.

- Pastor Timothy Weisman

Reflections

# Lent: A Season for Kindness

Craig Reynolds, Church School Director

*Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. — Colossians 3:12*

*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? — Micah 6:8*

*No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. — Aesop*

*My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness. — The Dalai Lama*

Traditionally, Lent has been viewed as a time of self-sacrifice. “What are you giving up for Lent?” has been a familiar refrain in churches (and at family dining tables) for generations.

In recent years, however, an alternative view has gained increasing attention: Lent as a time for a renewed focus on kindness and service.

## Lent and Kindness and Children

Lent is a wonderful time to help children pay closer attention to kindness – both the kindness they extend to others, and the kindness that’s offered to them on a daily basis.

Research shows that kids involved in service learning programs develop respect, responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and self-confidence. But children don’t need to be involved in formal service efforts to reap the benefits of kindness and service to others.

## One Family Kindness Project

This past Advent, one family designed their own Advent calendar based on doing 21 daily random acts of kindness. One example: taping a plastic bag with four quarters to a parking payment kiosk, along with a quick note announcing the small gift. This family found that planning their “secret missions”, carrying them out together, and reveling in their shared memories afterward was as much a gift to themselves as it was to the recipients of their kindness.

## Family Kindness for Lent

What if we tried something like this project for Lent? Forty days of kindness. Maybe you keep track as a family on a calendar or wall chart. Or

maybe you talk about your kindness efforts at dinnertime. Maybe you miss some days. Maybe you repeat the same act a few – or several – times during the season. It’s not a contest or a competition. It’s about being more mindful, more intentional about how we treat one another.

## Some Examples

Your “missions” don’t have to be complicated or expensive. Simple and quick can be powerful too. (And I suspect this is one of the more important lessons kids will learn here.)

- Compliment someone
- Smile at someone – see if they smile back. Smiles are contagious!
- Do an extra chore at home (always a popular option with parents)
- Send someone an unexpected thank you note/text/message (e.g., family member, friend, teacher, letter carrier, barber/hair dresser, police officer, firefighter, etc.)
- Be the first to say you’re sorry
- Make someone laugh!
- Let someone in line ahead of you
- Donate something you’re no longer using
- Buy an inexpensive gift card (\$5 is fine) and give it to someone anonymously
- At a drive-through, pay for the person behind you
- Search the Web for more ideas – there are hundreds of possibilities

The more we look for kindness, the more we see. Let’s look for kindness this Lent.



## from Joseph

A priest I worked with during an internship in Omaha, Nebraska with one of the forerunners of the “Episcopal Service Corps” for young adults developed a liturgy that he called, “The Authority of Generations.” This liturgy was meant to weave connections between elders, youth, and everyone in between as a way of honoring the wisdom of elders, the prophetic voice of youth, and building up the community.

As a Latino priest, Fr. Ernesto lamented that so often elders feel sidelined because our culture does not value getting older (and wiser!) in the way it values youthfulness, and that often youth feel left out because they are stereotyped as inexperienced, idealistic, and immature. The Church, he felt, should be one community that sees and values the gifts of all people, taking the contributions of each person, generation, nationality, and gender seriously. Fr. Ernesto helped develop this liturgy where each person would respond to the prompt (perhaps a problem facing a community, or a question or story), and, after each response, the community would sing a song out of the hymnal acapella. The songs would be chosen in response to what the person said as a way of showing that the person was heard and that the person is supported by the community assembled.

As a young(ish) person, it is very meaningful to me to have elders in many walks of life who can share the fruit of experience and wisdom with me and to support me with their love and prayers. It is also very meaningful in conversations I’ve had with our youth to hear about the challenges they face and their hopes for the future, as the world has changed significantly in the decade plus since I was a teenager, and to give them the gift of a heart that cares about them as a human being.

The Church is a gift of community where people can grow and change: children grow up in the faith, and through the years they are guided in the process of making the faith their own and deepening their own roots; youth become young adults and discover who they feel called to be; adults make the transitions of life; and adults become elders, embodying years of faithfulness and being supported by a community of love.

The hope for the intergenerational forum on Sundays at 9:00 for Lent is that it builds connections between elders, youth, and everyone in between to share faith experiences with one another. Everyone brings gifts to the community and needs the love and support of a community of many generations.

So for this Lent, consider the ways in which you can love and support people of different generations from you: not with advice, not with nostalgia, not with frustration or anger, not with demands, but instead with love, with passion for the Gospel, with a listening and compassionate heart.

# March

## Happy Birthday:

- 1 Sadie Watford
- 2 Henry Morris
- 3 Christopher Harrington, Nicole Marcil, Andrea Stasiowski, Brooke Thomas, Mia Thomas
- 5 Joshua Reynolds, Rebecca Smith
- 6 Ericka Hanger
- 7 George Mathes
- 8 Elizabeth Harrington
- 10 Zachary Senecal
- 11 Christine Reynolds
- 12 Brayden Billetter (8), Jacob Billetter (8), Grant Morin, Virginia Smith
- 13 Makailey Cookis
- 14 Wavelyn Hine
- 15 Tyarah Dowling-Black, Doreen Sosa
- 16 William Engle, Angela Moon
- 17 Grady Pederson
- 19 Mary Turner
- 20 Gary Curry
- 21 Ian Borosky, Jim Currie, Wendy Goodwin
- 22 Tommie Coles, Jaden Coscia, Patricia Moynahan
- 23 Joan Evans, Megan Pedersen
- 24 Joy Mullen, Debbie Stillman
- 30 Marianne Rud
- 31 Geraldine Crane

## Happy Anniversary:

- 13 Crystal and Jason Hassan
- 22 Harriet and Lewis Cuyler
- 25 Noreen and John Reynolds

# Light into Being

By Constance Bullard

*On*

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, I attended Jazz Vespers for the first time at St. Stephen's, thanks to Zion Lutheran's sharing our parish during their renovations. While I hope their building changes go smoothly for them, it is also my hope that the shared congregational events will continue for a long time to come.

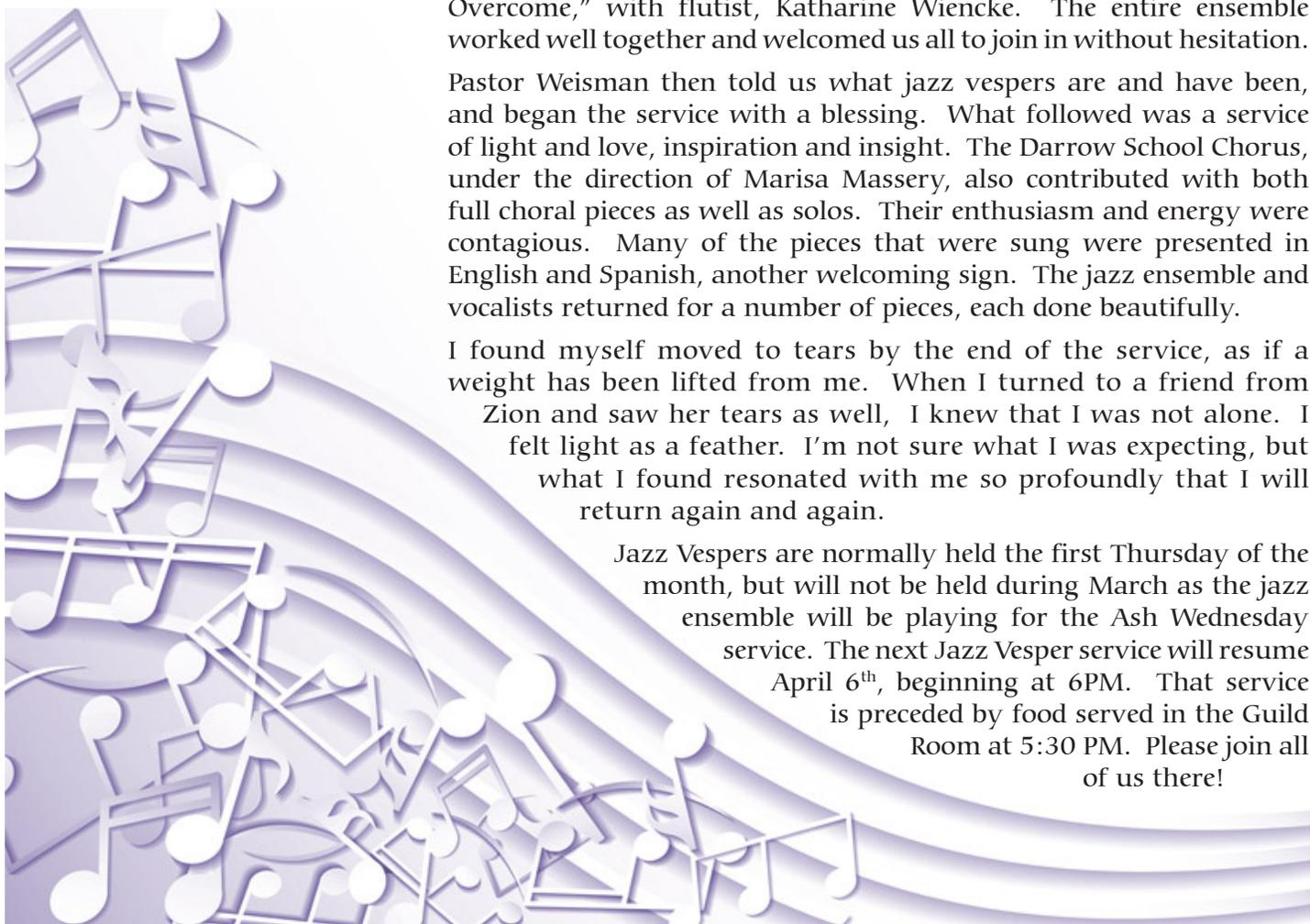
As stated on their website, "Jazz Vespers is a place to unwind: a place to be spiritual without being religious, if one chooses, to be present without participation if desired, and to be anonymous if that's what is needed." It was that and far more.

The service began with a rendition of "When I Fall In Love" by pianist, Ben Kohn; Andy Wrba, bass; and Sturgis Cunningham, drums. They set a high bar for musical expression, which was sustained throughout the service. Marisa Massery, vocalist, then led us in singing "We Shall Overcome," with flutist, Katharine Wiencke. The entire ensemble worked well together and welcomed us all to join in without hesitation.

Pastor Weisman then told us what jazz vespers are and have been, and began the service with a blessing. What followed was a service of light and love, inspiration and insight. The Darrow School Chorus, under the direction of Marisa Massery, also contributed with both full choral pieces as well as solos. Their enthusiasm and energy were contagious. Many of the pieces that were sung were presented in English and Spanish, another welcoming sign. The jazz ensemble and vocalists returned for a number of pieces, each done beautifully.

I found myself moved to tears by the end of the service, as if a weight has been lifted from me. When I turned to a friend from Zion and saw her tears as well, I knew that I was not alone. I felt light as a feather. I'm not sure what I was expecting, but what I found resonated with me so profoundly that I will return again and again.

Jazz Vespers are normally held the first Thursday of the month, but will not be held during March as the jazz ensemble will be playing for the Ash Wednesday service. The next Jazz Vesper service will resume April 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 6PM. That service is preceded by food served in the Guild Room at 5:30 PM. Please join all of us there!



# Lent Program: Lutherans & Episcopalians Together!

Join us Wednesday nights from 6 – 7:30 pm, in the Guild Room, as we look at the dynamic relationship between the Lutheran and Episcopal traditions from many different perspectives.

## **History, Theology, Music, Liturgy, and more!**

Five nights: March 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5th.

### **Everyone is welcome.**

Share your own thoughts and impressions, as we learn and grow together.

Coffee, tea, and simple desserts will be available.  
*(feel free to bring a plate of cookies to share!)*



### ***The Final Conflict: The Passion according to Matthew***

*a course taught by the Rev. Marc Britt*

**11:15 a.m. Sundays in the Sears Room,  
March 12 through April 2**

Spend time reading and reflecting on the Passion of Christ as told by the Gospel of Matthew, diving deep into the way it tells the story of Christ's arrest, trial, and crucifixion. You will need an annotated Bible, and there will be a packet to help guide your reading and reflections. Contact the Church office to sign up so we can have enough packets ready!

### **Intergenerational Sunday Forum**

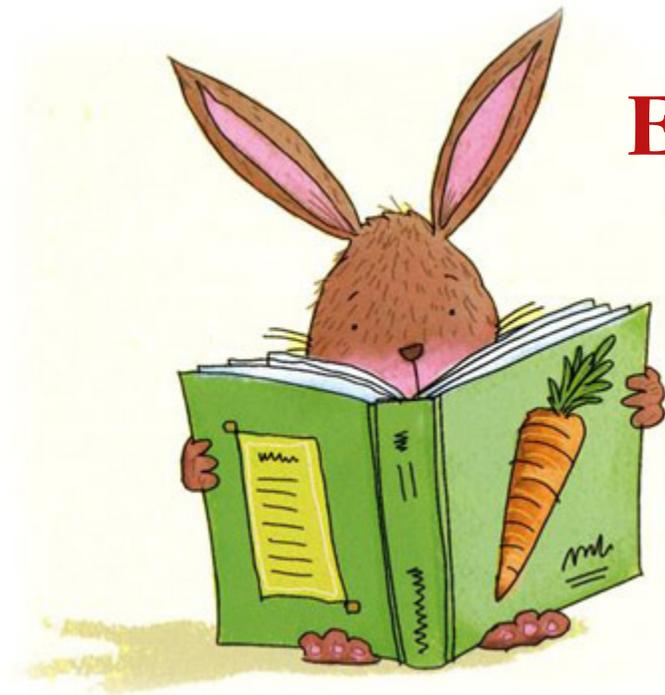
**Continuing Sundays, 9:00 a.m.  
in the Sears Room**

Youth, elders, families, and everyone in-between are invited to an Intergenerational Sunday Forum to share wisdom across the generations! We will use the Lenten program from the Society of St. John the Evangelist called "The Five Marks of Love" which explores how our faith guides us in everyday life. There is a workbook – if you want a copy, you may download and print it at <http://ssje.org/ssje/5marksoflove/#form> or purchase it from Amazon. There are also Youtube videos for each day of the week during Lent, which are perfect for family viewing and conversation!

St. Stephen's Parish  
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## Eclectic Book Club

The Book Club will meet in the Sears Room on March 3, and discuss *The Great Divorce*, by C.S. Lewis. Connie and Susan will be our co-hosts.

Appetizers and wine are at 5:30 P.M., with dinner, followed by discussion, at 6:00 P.M.

**The following months are:**

**April:** *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, by Neil Gaiman.

**May:** *The Visionist*, by Rachel Urquhart.

**June:** *Crossing to Safety*, by Wallace Stegner

Please join us for a lively discussion.

**FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT**

*"We must accept finite disappointment,  
but never lose infinite hope."*

— Martin Luther King Jr.