



February Atonement Newsletter 2021



Wednesday at 6:30pm & Sunday at 9:00am



Last year, about halfway through Lent, the pandemic forced us to suspend in-person worship. We worshipped online for about 3 months, before resuming in-person worship with dramatic changes to our usual practices. These changes were painful, but they provided an acceptable degree of safety. We are grateful to the Worship Committee and Council for partnering with us to chart a faithful and thoughtful course for the congregation. And we are convinced that God has been with us throughout the pandemic.

We begin Lent 2021 with many of those pandemic-safety practices still in place. Your pastors and musicians are more than a little tired of these measures, but we remain grateful and we are extremely hopeful. Our congregation has proven resilient and generous beyond any expectation and God is still with us.

As more people receive vaccines through the winter and into spring, we believe that our journey through Lent into Easter and eventually into Pentecost and the summer, will bring increasing opportunities to enrich and expand our worship and ministry. We have survived a tough year. We remain vigilant for the sake of our neighbors. But we are also in a position to begin to dream and plan for the future.

With the future in mind, your pastors ask that you consider two questions:

1) What milestones are necessary for you to feel comfortable returning to more active in-person engagement with your congregation and community?

There are many opportunities to serve now and there will be more soon - in person Sunday school, Spirit Trek or Bible Study; fellowship; choir; Church of the Week; etc - but it is not clear when it will be safe to do so. Your pastors do not feel comfortable or qualified to tell people when it is safe for them to resume their 'normal' pre-pandemic activities. This is a personal decision, best reached through prayer, reflection, and conversations with family, friends, and medical care providers. We don't know the right answer, but we would like you to think about your answer, so that you can make a thoughtful and faithful decision.



2) How can we keep Atonement on a secure financial footing moving into the future?



Atonement is a generous congregation, and our council is diligent in managing the congregation's finances. One of the things the council has considered in the past but tabled during the pandemic is whether and how we might eliminate or decrease our mortgage. We have no trouble staying current on this debt, but if we did not need to dedicate nearly \$50,000 each year to debt service, we could perhaps give more generously to our mission partners, grow our savings, or add staff or programming to our music and faith formation ministries. Maybe we could do all of those things? Your pastors are very curious about your ideas.





ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday Worship

In-Person 12 noon and 6:30 p.m.

A small kit with take home ashes and a short Ash Wednesday liturgy will be available at church on Sunday February 14th (Valentine's Day – a great way to say I LOVE you!). Pick up your Ash Wednesday kit along with our ALL NEW "Bless This Mess Lenten Calendar" full of ideas and thoughtful meditations to deepen your Lenten journey!

Lent 2021 Theme: Bless This Mess

Lent is a season of transformation - and transformation is messy. Lent is a time of facing the truth, taking responsibility, and making something beautiful together. "Bless This Mess" is our theme for Lent 2021 and we'll focus on the season's transformative potential, God's blessings, and the wonder of a simple cup of tea! Ordinary things can create extraordinary surprises - as when common types of tea bring beautiful colors to Easter eggs (and yes, you can try this at home!). And beginning February 14th (Valentine's Day), we'll have an all new "Bless this Mess Lenten Calendar" available at church for you to use for your 2021 Lenten Journey!

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: Dear God, here we are: beloved, flawed, beautiful, failing, and trying again to be your people in the world. Forgive the wrongs we have done, and the good we have left undone. Amen.



EXTINGUISH: 2 Tealights

READ: Mark 1:9-15

MEDITATE: Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Child, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you become who you truly are: God's beloved child, in whom God is well pleased. Amen.

Spirit Trek Community Projects

For the month of February the youth will be putting together sandwiches for the homeless. We are looking to do 100 sandwiches and a bag of chips per lunch bag. The cost for this project is about \$2.50 per lunch. If you would like to donate to help make lunches please make out a check to Atonement and put in memo line: homeless lunches.



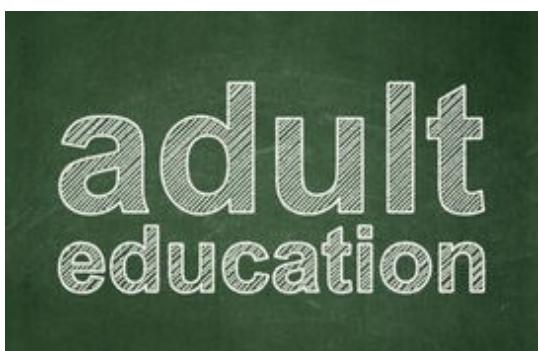
Thank you everyone that helped by donating the youth for the homeless kits. The youth Last Wednesday, Jan. 27th help put together 100 homeless kits for those in need. It was a big success. Thank you to all the youth that help put these kits together.



Faith Formation

Zoom meetings have resumed with youth 6-9th grade on Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m. We'll talk about expectations this year and what we'll be doing together. Plan to meet for about 30 minutes. Older youth and parents are welcome too!!

Sunday Morning Adult Education at 10:30 via Zoom



The Gospel of Mark Series continues in the Sunday Morning Adult Education hour that begins on Zoom at 10:30 a.m.. Led retired Pastor Jan Nairn this interesting study is walking us through the Gospel of Mark. All are welcome to join the Zoom meeting [click here!](#) Zoom Meeting ID: 889 9603 6906 Passcode: 420675

Following our study on the Gospel of Mark, beginning February 21st the pastors will be leading a study entitled "Making Sense of the Cross" for four weeks. At this study we'll listen in on a conversation between two people having an open and candid discussion about the cross. One assumes the role of teacher or coach, someone who has had the time and opportunity to study the faith in some depth. The other is curious, knows a little bit about the faith, and brings a lot of questions: So what's with the cross? What does the cross say about God? What's the big deal? Did Jesus have to die?

Register for Luther Crest Bible Camp Now for Next Summer!

Luther Crest Bible Camp is located just an hour away near Alexandria. It offers campers new ways to dive into the Bible, make crafts, play crazy games, hang out at the beach and praise God through meaningful worship and campfires. Youth from grade 2 through 12 can choose from a variety of classic camp programming: Leapers, Witnesses, Blazers, and Onsite Day Camp. In addition, Luther Crest will be offering summer camp safely in 2021 by regions. Surely there is something which will interest your child(ren)? Forms are available on-line at www.luthercrest.org. Early Bird discount of \$150 is offered for registration before Feb 14th and discount of \$75 if registered by April 25th. Assistance with camp fees is available through Luther Crest scholarships from Atonement and Luther Crest.



Seeking Blood Donors



This is a BIG request for Atonement members to donate blood to the Red Cross Bloodmobile on **April 6th from 1:00 - 8:00 pm** at Atonement. Just one generous gift of blood can help save several lives in this time of need. Call Red Cross at 1-800--RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) for an appointment. **No Walk-ins**



February Ministry Of The Month

Place of Hope shelters and feeds homeless persons in the St. Cloud area. This is a tremendous task, and Atonement Lutheran has helped in many ways in past years. In the Covid-19 pandemic, your monetary gifts are needed more than ever. We have a bin in the Donation Center for your contributions of toiletries and other items. You can contribute financially by using the MoM envelope sent to you, or by check with "MoM" in the memo line. Thank you for your contributions.



HOMELESS OUTREACH

A number of people who are homeless are finding themselves living in tents and in their cars. If you could donate any of these supplies to help with their survival, please bring them into the church. Items needed include; winter coats of all sizes, mittens, hats, warm socks, long underwear, snow pants, sleeping bags, tents, space heaters, empty propane tanks, \$10-\$20 gas cards (this is for people living in their cars to stay warm), new or slightly used bath towels. If you would like to donate financially to the outreach work that is assisting them you may send checks to Homeless Helping Homeless, P.O. Box 475, St. Cloud, MN 56302 For more information contact Harry Fleegel with Homeless Helping Homeless - hfleegel@aol.com or 612-868-0465 or Molly Weyrens with the Central MN Catholic Worker - centralmncw@gmail.com or 320-316-3290 . Thank you for your generosity!

Address Updates for Students and Service Members

We would like to encourage college and military members of Atonement monthly. We are looking for updated address for all our college and military members. This will help our card ministry as well as the church office to keep the database up to date. Please email or call the church office with their addresses: office@atonementlutheran.org or 320-252-6203.



Worship Technology Update

Thanks to the generosity of several families at Atonement, the sanctuary has completed a major technology upgrade! After months of waiting, weeks of installation and weeks of training, we now have the capacity to Live Stream Worship Online and use a projector and screen to enhance the worship experience! **Our goal is to Live Stream all of our Worship Services beginning with Ash Wednesday February 17th.**

Now all we need is YOU! The technology requires two people to run for each worship service. The training is easy and FUN! If you'd like to help enhance worship and provide Live Streaming to home-bound people, please contact Pastor Tim, or sign-up for the Worship Tech Team online.



Tech
Upgrades



E-giving

Our online church community offers new and easy ways to give financially to support our ministries. Whether you want to set up a recurring gift or split your donation among different funds. We invite you to browse through the guide located on the

Welcome Stand as you walk in to learn how to use giving in Realm. Below are instructions to download the Realm Connect App and manage your giving through the app. We hope you take advantage of this convenience. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

1. Download the Realm Connect app from your Android or iOS store
2. Sign in with your Realm login. Don't have an account? Contact the church office.
3. Tap Giving, and tap Make a Gift
4. Give any amount to the fund of your choosing

Text - To -Give Instructions

Text **Atonement (any amount you wish to donate, (Example Atonement50 to give \$50) to 73256** to give to General Fund using your text messaging. Standard text message rates do apply.



QR Code For E-giving:

Scan the QR code and it will bring you automatically to the e-giving form

News for Amazon Customers: Atonement is on AmazonSmile

Atonement has recently registered with the AmazonSmile program. When you designate Atonement as your charity of choice, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases at smile.amazon.com to Atonement. To select Atonement as your AmazonSmile Charitable Organization follow this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-6121873>. If you are already an Amazon customer, you can select Atonement, while logged in to your customer account at smile.amazon.com by searching for Atonement Lutheran Church in **Saint Cloud, MN**. Please note that there are many Atonement Lutheran Churches registered from other states.



Atonement Lutheran Church
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St. Cloud, Minnesota
Permit No. 382



Atonement Lutheran Executive Committee & Staff

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Church Office: (320)-252-6203

Office Hours Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

www.atonementlutheran.org

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Call the church office (320-252-6203) to reach the pastor on-call or (320-310-0822)