

From the Interim Associate Pastor

As I sit to write this message, our region has endured a week of ice and snow that forced us to stay inside and saw the shutdown of nearly everything around us. We are finally experiencing temperatures above freezing and the sun is rapidly melting the accumulated icy mess. While we have had plenty of experience with staying home in the last year thanks to the pandemic, we have had the ability to spend time outdoors and get around. There is something different about realizing that you are homebound and cannot go anywhere because it is physically impossible to do so.

The happiness felt at the arrival of this thaw is a reminder of the joy we experience as the cold of winter turns to the warming of spring. For us, spring brings with it the church season of Lent. In fact, the English word Lent comes from the Old English word *lencten*, meaning “spring season.” As Lent unfolds, leading us to the foot of the cross, so does the world around us. We notice the days growing longer, the weather getting warmer, and flowers and trees beginning to bloom.

During this Lenten season, many of our Saint Andrew family are participating in the 40-40-40 challenge from Bishop Strickland. We are committing to walk a mile a day for 40 days of Lent and donate \$40 to ELCA World Hunger. Saint Andrew has the most participating walkers of any congregation in our Southeastern Synod! In addition to the 40-40-40 challenge, the Companions in Christ group is going to be working through some study material provided by the ELCA that addresses the topic of hunger.

How will you notice spring around you? How are you experiencing Lent? How can you make a difference in the lives of people who are food insecure? This is a lot to think about on top of our weariness from the last year. But taking the time to think about these questions lifts our heads and minds out of our own self-centeredness and orients us to the needs and wonders of the world around us. May our Lenten journey be one that enriches us.

In peace,

Pastor Michelle Kuhlman