

The Link



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

February 2020

Pastor Page: **“Making Space for Christ”**

Be honest: who among you would say you have too much stuff in your house? Who would say you struggle to find time for sabbath (rest) in your life? Who sometimes eats food that you know is full of chemicals (frozen dinners, fast food, packaged or processed food) because it is just easier? Who is aware that decisions you make about your stuff – what you buy, what you eat, where it comes from, how you dispose of it – may be easy, cheap, and convenient for you, but someone somewhere is paying for it (like those whose land is taken over for production, those who breathe in the chemicals of production, or even your own body 20 years from now)?

The truth is, I'm sure everyone could answer yes to at least one of those questions. We in the Western world have worked hard to build a life in which ease, speed, and convenience are goals, but instead of these efforts allowing us more time to enjoy our loved ones, find time for rest, or relish in life's simple pleasures, we cram our lives full of even more stuff. What remains is a life that is so full of the stuff of this world, that we scarcely have room to notice the fullness of God.

That is why for Lent this year, we are focusing on “Making Space for Christ.” For six weeks, we will learn about what in our lives is clogging our opportunities for relationship with God. Perhaps that is too busy a schedule, too many piles, or not enough intentional prayer time. We will start with a self-assessment: where and how could you simplify your life? We will then explore some different practices that might help us clean some of the physical

and spiritual clutter of our lives. These include ways to simplify your diet, which is healthier for you and for the earth; ideas for incorporating Sabbath into your daily life; tips for eliminating some of the excess “stuff” in your life; ways to be conscious about where your “stuff” goes; and opportunities all along the way to deepen your relationship with God through gratitude, generosity, and prayer.

There are several ways you can participate in this exploration of “Making Space for Christ.” First of all, you could come to our Sunday gatherings to learn about the various topics (schedule included in bulletin and March newsletter). But if you are unavailable at that time, or leave town for these cold months, there are other ways to participate. You could put the Lenten Simplicity Calendar we have put together on your fridge and participate in the weekly and daily practices as a whole family. You could choose one of the resources listed in this newsletter, and learn on your own throughout Lent. You could engage with the resources that will be put on our Facebook page. You could read the devotional we are compiling and know that you are not alone in the struggle to live more simply.

I hope that you will participate in one or more of these ways. As we learn to “make space for Christ” together, we will become better stewards of the earth, our bodies, and the needs of our neighbors, and, I pray, grow closer to God in the process.

In Christ,
Pastor Johanna

SERVICE ATTENDANCE
“WE COUNT BECAUSE YOU COUNT”

	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Nursery</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dec. 1 st	58	5	63
8 th	89	3	92
15 th	92	7	99
22 nd	116	10	126
29 th	58	4	62
24 th (5:15)	205		
24 th (10:30)	68		

Average Sunday attendance through
 December 2019 – 88

Average Sunday attendance through
 December 2018 – 96

Average Sunday attendance through
 December 2017 – 112

PASTORAL ACTS

First Communion: Amelia Graser, Dec. 24th

St. Paul’s Vision

*To spread the Word, build a strong
 community, and make the world a better
 place.*

Our Mission Statement

*St. Paul’s is a welcoming Christian family.
 We are created by God, saved by Jesus
 Christ, God’s Son, and inspired by the
 Holy Spirit.*

*Through joyous worship and Mission
 Commitment, St. Paul’s furthers the word
 of God’s Saving Grace.*

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❖ February Calendar can be found online:
www.stpaulspittsford.org

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



*“Your day goes the way the corners of your
 mouth turn. So smile.”*

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
 Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane

St. Paul's Congregation Council Meeting

Church Council met on January 14th, 2020

Financial Report

Final income and spending numbers for 2019 are available. Giving and spending tracked closely with the amounts budgeted at the start of the year. The church is in strong financial position heading into 2020.

2020 Budget

A finalized 2020 budget was presented to council by the Finance Committee. After some discussion, council voted to accept the budget as proposed by the Finance Committee, and also voted to present it to the congregation for approval at the 2020 Annual Meeting.

St. Paul's 2020 Annual Meeting

Council finalized plans for the annual meeting to be held after worship on Sunday, January 26.

Committee Needs for 2020

Patty Cain, Anne Olivia Cincotta, Mike Serve and Sue Wyatt have all agreed to stand for election to council if nominated at the annual meeting. Council will seek out 4-5 people to help draft a budget narrative, telling a story about what St. Paul's does and how that happens. Council will also identify 3-4 people to be part of an ad hoc Constitution Committee to revise and update the church constitution.

Lent

Looking ahead, Pastor will be leading a Lenten series focusing on Simplicity after worship. Congregation members are encouraged to write brief submissions that will be included in a devotional (similar to what we did for Advent).

Synod Assembly

St. Paul's will send two representatives to the Synod Assembly meeting, June 7-9 at the Rochester Convention Center. This year is especially important because it will include elections for a Bishop for the Upstate Synod.

New Office Hours

Beginning the week of January 27, church office hours will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 11:00am - 6:00pm.

Next council meeting: February 11 at 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Jamie Foster, Council President

Annual Meeting Highlights

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26. Here are some key events from that meeting:

2020 Budget

Based on pledges of giving received in October, the Finance Committee projects \$300,000 income in 2020. Council presented a balanced budget, which was approved by the congregation. This year's budget includes substantial new resources for benevolence giving, our music program and Christian education activities.

Congregation Council

Patty Cain, Anne Olivia Cincotta, Mike Serve and Sue Wyatt have all been elected to Council. Anne Olivia and Mike will be continuing members; Patty and Sue will be new members this year. Thank you all for your willingness to serve!

2020 Synod Assembly

Devin Rosenbauer and Marcia Sheldon have been elected to represent St. Paul's at the 2020 Synod Assembly, which will take place June 7-9. This year's Assembly is especially important, as it will include a Bishop's election. If you have some priorities in mind for our next Bishop, please let Devin or Marcia know. Anyone is welcome to attend the Assembly as a visitor.

Social Ministry Action Committee

If you would like to be part of deepening St. Paul's relationships with local agencies that we already support financially, such as RAIHN and the Children's Agenda, contact Jen Canning.

Constitution Committee

St. Paul's is overdue for a church constitution update. This will involve four meetings over a period of several months; once the updated Constitution has been approved by the synod and the congregation, the work of this committee will be complete (for a few years anyway!) If you would like to be part of a group of 3-4 people to help with this project, contact Jamie Foster.

Narrative Budget Group

This year we will create a narrative budget, which will tell the story of how the church's money is spent, and the ways those choices help us fulfill our mission. If you would like to be part of this project, contact Pastor Johanna.

Notes News

From the Church Office

Articles for the **March issue of the "Link"** must be received by 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 18th.

We will continue to use Sign-up Genius for **Lay Ministry volunteering** here in the first part of 2020. It looks like everyone is getting the hang of it, but if you are having trouble accessing the sign-up page, please call the office for assistance. We are happy to help. February, March and April sign-ups are now available.

Michelle Josephson
Church Office Admin.

Bishop's Election Process:

Our 2020 Synod Assembly in June will include a bishop's election. Nominations for this position are open from now until March 15. Each conference may nominate up to seven people. If you would like to nominate someone, please let one of our Synod Assembly representatives, *Devin Rosenbauer* or *Marcia Sheldon*, know. Once the nomination is confirmed with the individual being nominated, their name will be submitted directly to our conference's lay representative on synod council, Mr. Gary Roller.

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

~*~

(Prayer provided by the ELCA.)

Planning Ahead

Sunday, February 2nd

LYO Souper Bowl Fundraiser after service

Monday, February 3rd

Confirmation Class at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 8th

Congregation Council Annual Retreat, 10-3

Sunday, February 9th

Family Faith Night, 4-7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 11th

RAIHN Volunteer Orientation, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 16th

LCLC Presentation by Lee Lindeman

RAIHN "Strike Out Hunger" Bowling

Monday, February 17th

Confirmation Class at 6:00 p.m.

(Link articles due Tues, Feb. 18th by 11a.m.)

Wednesday, February 26th

Ash Wednesday

Services at 12N and 7:00 p.m.

February 28th – March 1st

GFL-LYO Winter Weekend Retreat @

Rotary Sunshine Camp

Wednesday, March 4th

Lenten Bible Study at 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 7th

LYO Italian Café, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 11th

Lenten Bible Study at 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 15th

Family Faith Night, 4-7 p.m.

Lenten Jazz Vespers

Faith and Food: The New Sunday School



Our first family faith night was a wonderful success, “the funnest!” as one participant said! Some 40 people came for worship and program, and several more for the meal, adult forum and LYO. We hope you will consider coming again or for the first time, no matter your age. If you are planning to come, please let Pastor Johanna know, so we can plan set-up, food and materials accordingly.

February’s gathering:

Kids and youth will learn about the 10 Commandments in age groups. During the lessons, parents will have an opportunity to connect with one another, rather than joining the kids’ lesson. Adult forum will begin a study called “Animate: Bible,” designed to reinvigorate and deepen understanding of the Bible.

Here is what the schedule will look like:

Worship – 4:00-4:30

- Simple language, paperless music, very participatory for all ages. Introduces the theme for the night.

Children/Youth learning – 4:30-5:15

- Kids (PreK-12th) explore the theme of the month. This month, they will be in age groups.
- Parents will make a simple meal and build community/offer parental support, especially in the work of raising children to know and love Jesus.

Meal – 5:15-6:00

- During the meal, we will encourage/facilitate faith conversations (like, FAITH5).
- Clean up all together (kids too!)

Adult Ed/LYO – 6:00-7:30 (forum ends at 7)

- Any adults in the congregation may come for the meal and stay for this.

All ages are welcome for any part of this. One of the hopes of the Christian education committee is that this will be a time for building relationships across generations.

Friends are welcome. Since this is outside the normal Sunday morning time, we hope to draw people from outside of our usual realm. We hope to make this very fun, like a monthly mini-VBS, so the more the merrier!

Mark your calendars with the dates:

- Feb 9th
- March 15th
- April 19th
- May 17th

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class meets 1st and 3rd Mondays from 6-7:30pm. This year we are studying the Bible. Our goal this year is to help these young people – and their parents – grow in their understanding of the Bible, and see the ways God works in their lives, as well as give them tools for their personal prayer life that they can share with their families. Please keep these young people and their families in your prayers as we embark on our year together.

February 3	Overarching story of the Bible, cont’d (with parents)
Feb 17	Prophets and Psalms

The Season of Lent at St. Paul's



Ash Wednesday, February 26th

Noon

Simple Service with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion (no music)

7pm

Worship with Imposition of Ashes, Holy Communion, and music

*Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*

Simplicity Sundays

As we “make space for Christ” this Lent we will have opportunities on Sundays to learn together about how to do this. Join us each Sunday after worship (starting on March 1) for a light meal and conversation around different topics about how striving for simplicity can help us live into our Christian faith.

Sign up to provide food, and drop in – this is not a continuous series, so any time you can make it you are welcome! Watch the bulletin and March newsletter for a schedule of topics.

Wednesday Lenten Bible Study @ 12:30

Join Pastor Johanna for a lunchtime Bible study at 12:30 each Wednesday during Lent starting March 4th. These will be informal studies on the upcoming Sunday's texts, which we will view in light of our efforts to live simply. BYO lunch, and let's feast on the Word.

Lenten Jazz Vespers: Save the Date

As a part of March 15th Family Faith Night, we will be holding a jazz vespers service. Come for dinner and stay for jazz, or just come for jazz. Details in March newsletter.

Help us write our Lenten Devotional “Making Space for Christ”

We live in a society that is increasingly fast paced and full of stuff. It can be hard to carve out time for family, time for enjoying God's creation, time for rest, time for simply being alone with God. This is especially hard when we are surrounded by the chaos of piles and full schedules, in our lives and the lives of those close to us. The things and activities we think will bring us satisfaction sometimes only serve to distract us from God. How can we find ways to simplify the chaos of life to allow time and space for what is truly important?

Write a devotion based on one (or more) of the following questions:

- What is one thing you do (or would like to do!) to simplify your life, or to live simply with God?
→ e.g. a recipe for a simple meal, a prayer practice that helps center you, something you have given up that you don't need in your life (and how you did it!), a routine that helps focus your attention...
- What does it mean to you to live “simply”?
- What does simplicity have to do with your relationship with God?
- Choose one of the 10 commandments. What does this commandment tell us about living simply?

Include in your devotion a short prayer, either one you write or one that you find somewhere else, that helps you keep simplicity in mind.

We need 40 submissions, so write two! ☺
Thank you for helping us with this year's devotional!

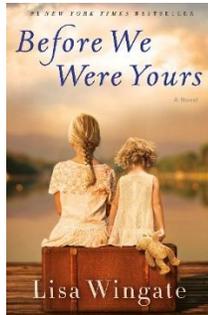
Find other Lenten Simplicity Resources in the back of this newsletter.

Dorcas Rachel Circle

May Book Review

"Before We Were Yours"

By: Lisa Wingate



We are happy to announce that Sandy Link will be facilitating our book discussion at our May meeting! Library books are available in the church office to sign out.

Thank you!

The Dorcas Rachel Circle would like to thank all who donated hats and mittens to Maggie's Kids this Christmas. Maggie was so appreciative for the gift. Thank you all!

Dorcas Rachel Circle Members

Are you interested?

There is an opportunity to learn about Senior Living Options in the Rochester Area. St. Paul's Dorcas Rachel Circle recently had Mike Kearney from Senior Care Authority, give a talk about Senior Living options in the Rochester area. Those who attended found it extremely informative. If you would be interested in learning more about this topic please let me know. Mike said that he'd love to come back to St. Paul's! **Please let me know by Sunday, February 16th!**

Feel free to contact me via phone, email, or in person.

Thank you,
Leisa North
585-749-9249
leisanorth@gmail.com

2019 Notre Dame Convention

Ingathering Report

(correction underlined)

St. Paul's Ingathering of "September Socks" collected **161 pairs** of socks for the Notre Dame Convention in October. Congratulations and Thank you!

Dorcas Rachel Circle Lutheran World Relief School Kits

*The Dorcas Rachel Circle will be supporting the Lutheran World Relief organization this year. We will be collecting items to make School Kits for LWR during Lent. As we did last year, we are offering the congregation an opportunity to help us with this project. You can purchase items for the kits or make a monetary donation to help us cover the cost of the back packs. Our goal for 2020 is to complete **25** School Kits for the LWR. Hope you will be able to help us meet our goal!*

Items needed to complete each kit:

FOUR- 70-sheet notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper, approximately 8"x 10 1/2"; no loose leaf paper

ONE- 30-centimeter ruler, or ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other

ONE- pencil sharpener

ONE- pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)

FIVE- unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; secure together with a rubber band

FIVE- Black or Blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink); secured together with a rubber band

ONE- box of 16 or 24 crayons

ONE- 2 1/2" eraser

There will be a collection box in the Fellowship Hall starting on Sunday, March 1st. Envelopes will be available in the pews if you choose to make a monetary donation.

Thank you

- The Dorcas Rachel Circle Members

Women of St. Paul's

Women of the ELCA

Upcoming Events:

2020 Spring Communion Brunch Saturday, April 25th

Registration opens at 10:30, \$3 each

Concordia Lutheran Church
1769 Kendall Rd.
Kendall, NY

Worship led by Vicar Mark Schlewitt

*Bring a dish to pass and a donation of
baby/toddler food.*

Leadership & Planning Meeting Wednesday, June 10th

Place: Our Saviour Lutheran Church
2415 Chili Ave, Rochester, NY 14624

Time: 12:30 Bring bag lunch
Beverate and Dessert provided
1:00 p.m. Meeting

~*~

2020 Joint Fall Conference Retreat Central Crossroads & Genesee Finger Lakes Conferences

Date and Location to be announced

2020 Advent Gathering

Date and Location to be announced

News from the Altar Guild



Our next Altar Guild meeting will be on Sunday, February 2nd at 10:45am in the Dorcas Room. Minutes from our November meeting along with an agenda will be emailed to you prior to the meeting.

Thank you,
Leisa North

LYO Lutheran Youth Organization

St. Paul's LYO is kicking off 2020 with a number of activities.

We enjoyed our first Family Faith Night with over 40 members of our Congregation before our Sunday, January 19th LYO Meeting. We enjoyed all the energy that was in the building that evening and sharing a meal with so many of you.

At our January meeting we confirmed the following upcoming events;

- **Souper Bowl Sunday Fundraiser - Sunday, February 2nd** following the worship service. Sign Up to bring your favorite soup/chili/stew to share with the rest of the congregation. Tastings are free, bowls of soup are \$5 each.
- A number of our LYO are hoping to attend the GLF-LYO Winter Weekend from February 28th - March 1st at the Rotary Sunshine Camp in RUSH.
- Mark Your Calendars - St. Paul's LYO will host their annual **Italian Night Cafe on Saturday, March 7th**. More details to follow!

St. Paul's LYO is a very active group and welcomes all youth grades 6th and up to join us for meetings, events and activities. Feel free to email me at lyost.pauls@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to get added to the LYO contact list.

In Faith,
Jori Cincotta
LYO Youth Coordinator



Learn about LCLC: Feb 16

Lee Lindeman, executive director of Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center (LCLC), will be with us on Feb 16. He will share briefly during Moments for Mission about the ministry they have at LCLC, where our youth have attended confirmation camp for many years, and will offer a 20 min presentation following worship about the other myriad opportunities available for all ages at LCLC throughout the year. Especially if you've got young people in your life, we hope you'll attend! Find LCLC online: <https://www.lclcenter.org/summer-programs/>

Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center, Inc. is a year-round center for outdoor ministry.

LCLC's Mission Statement

Sharing the gospel of Christ Jesus in ways that give life: through cultivating Christ-centered community for the growth and renewal of all God's people in the wonder of creation.



Photos from LCLC website (January 2020)

"Strike Out" Homelessness!



A fun bowling event for the whole family, including a 50/50 raffle, prizes and food!

DATE: Sunday, February 16, 2020

WHERE: Bowl-a-Roll Lanes,
1560 Jefferson Road,
Rochester

TIME: Registration 12:30-1:15pm,
Bowling 1:30-4pm,
Prizes Awarded 4 - 4:30pm

Registration opens January 1st, 2020. Recruit a team of 6 bowlers. Register your team at <https://www.raihn.org/strike-out-homelessness>.

\$50 minimum donation/fundraising goal per bowler to bowl (includes 2 games, shoe rental, pizza, and a drink). There are 3 options:

- Pay \$50 registration to bowl, OR
- Pay \$15 registration and raise a minimum of \$35 to bowl, OR
- Don't want to bowl? Pay \$15 at the door for pizza and drink

Everyone can raise money for RAIHN. Invite co-workers, friends and family to go to <https://www.raihn.org/strike-out-homelessness> to sponsor you or your team and donate!

THANK YOU!

VISIT www.raihn.org to register or make a donation!

TAKE ACTION – VOLUNTEER WITH RAIHN!!

RAIHN (the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network) is a not-for-profit organization that provides temporary shelter, meals & case management to help homeless families find housing & employment or education. The goal is to keep families together until they can find safe, sustainable permanent housing. Families also receive follow-up services for a year after housing is found.

WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS! It takes approximately 70 volunteers a week to make RAIHN run. St. Paul's is responsible for providing at least 10 volunteers for Friday evening and Saturday morning of RAIHN rotation week at First Presbyterian Church in Pittsford, four times per year.

If you can eat, sleep, wash dishes, sit, or hold a baby, you can be a RAIHN volunteer! RAIHN volunteers provide an evening meal and eat with the families, spend time playing games with and providing attention to the children, and sleeping overnight at First Presbyterian. Two hour shifts are available every evening and on Saturdays and Sundays. **Come be a part of this hands-on ministry that St. Paul's and 41 other Rochester-area congregations support.**

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION: Tuesday, February 11th, 6:30 pm, St. Paul's Dorcas Room

Want to learn more? St. Paul's will host a Volunteer Orientation for new RAIHN volunteers on **Tuesday, February 11 at 6:30 pm. *This is a great opportunity for families to volunteer together!*** If you'd like to attend the training to learn more about the organization, the families they serve, and the role of the volunteer, please RSVP to coordinator@raihn.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

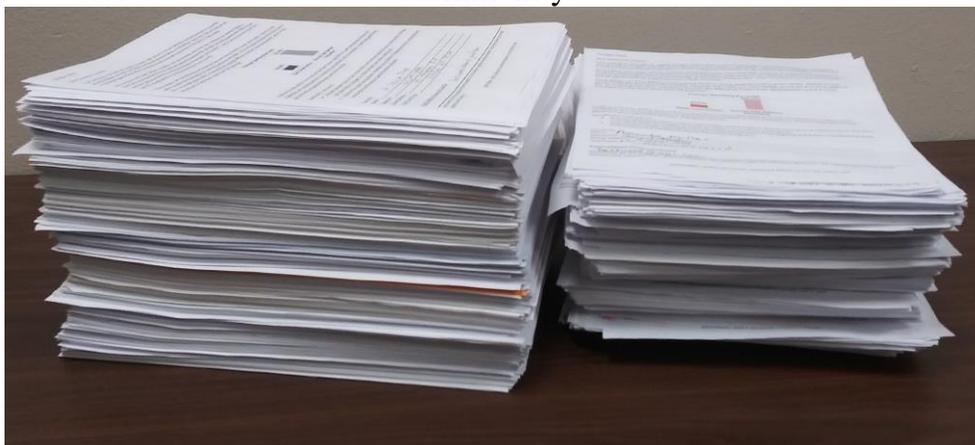
Our next RAIHN rotation will be the week of **March 15th, 2020**. St. Paul's is committed as a RAIHN support congregation to volunteering **Friday, March 20th beginning at 5 pm through Saturday, March 21st at 10 am**. Sign up sheets for dinner cooks and servers, evening and breakfast hospitality, and overnight volunteers will be in the Foyer. Contact Jen at Jennifer.canning@urgrad.rochester.edu with questions.

RAIHN SECOND LEVEL TRAINING : Tuesday, March 24th, 6:30 pm, Church of the Assumption, 20 East Ave., Fairport

Have you volunteered for RAIHN and attended our Volunteer Orientation? Would you like to learn more about issues our families are facing that shape their experiences, such as culture, trauma and poverty? Then please attend this interactive discussion with other volunteers as we increase our understanding about our guests' lives and share our own RAIHN stories and experiences.

ST. PAUL'S TOOK ACTION! CHILDREN'S INTERFAITH WEEKEND ADVOCACY LETTERS UPDATE

In October, as part of our Reformation Day and Children's Interfaith Weekend activities, member of St. Paul's signed advocacy letters to Governor Cuomo urging him to increase reimbursement rates for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education in the 2020-21 state budget. The Children's Agenda collected **4,096 letters** from participating congregations and organizations that were hand delivered to the Governor's office on Friday, December 20, 2019. Thank you for participating in supporting children in our community!



CREATE CHANGE – Be a Part of the Social Ministry Action Committee!

St. Paul's Social Ministry Action Committee is calling for members to help develop ways for our church to take an active role in "making the world a better place." Our goals for 2020 include:

- **Provide more education** to the congregation about current St. Paul's community partners.
- **Provide fellowship and outreach opportunities** with those partners that create deeper connections and more meaningful relationships.
- Offer concrete action steps for our congregation to **address economic, social, and racial injustice in our community.**

Please consider being a part of the planning process! Contact Jen Canning at 469-0912 or Jennifer.canning@urgrad.rochester.edu to get involved.

Resources to Help You Live More Simply:

WEBSITES/BLOGS:

Nourishing Minimalism

(<http://nourishingminimalism.com/>) - The goal of this Christian blog is to “help people clear the clutter, invite calmness into their homes and enjoy the time they spend together.”

The Story of Stuff Project (www.storyofstuff.org) - learn where your stuff comes from and where it goes in this series of clever, easy-to watch videos, and learn how to take action.

Project 333 (theproject333.com/about) - Could you live happily with only 33 items of clothing per season? Project 333 says yes, and you will feel freer than ever before. Tips on how to pare down your closet and live with fewer clothes.

Becoming Minimalist (www.becomingminimalist.com) - A family of four decided to live with fewer possessions and as a result found a better way to live a life centered on more important pursuits.

Giving it Away for Lent

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/234176396671993/>) - A Facebook group that offers resources and community in your effort to get rid of stuff you don't need.

My Plastic-Free Life (myplasticfreelife.com) - One plastic addict's effort to eliminate single-use plastic from her life. (See also *Plastic-Free* book below.)

Christian Minimalism (www.christianminimalism.com/) Lutheran pastor Becca Ehrlich reflects on minimalism (whatever that might mean for you) as a Christian practice.

BOOKS:

Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal by Anne Basye → Down-to-earth journal entries from someone trying to live more simply.

Simplifying the Soul: Lenten Practices to Renew Your Spirit by Paula Huston → A daily devotional inviting readers to de-clutter their minds, hearts, relationships and souls, through practices woven from the gospels, the Desert Fathers, and the author's own spiritual experience.

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing by Marie Kondo → A categorical method of decluttering – keep only what “sparks joy” in your life. Note: there is also a Netflix series based on this book called *Tidying Up*.

7: An Experimental Mutiny Against Excess by Jen Hatmaker → What's the payoff from living a deeply reduced life? It's the discovery of a greatly increased God - a call toward Christ-like simplicity and generosity that transcends social experiment to become a radically better existence.

Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity by Pastor Adam Hamilton → Includes keys to experiencing contentment, overcoming fear, and discovering joy through simplicity and generosity. This book could change your life, by changing your relationship with money.

Plastic-Free: How I Kicked the Plastic Habit and How You Can Too by Beth Terry → A guide to giving up plastic, and why you should do it.

Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy by Sarah Ban Breathnach → Daily essays on embodying an attitude of simplicity and abundance.

Satisfied: Discovering Contentment in a World of Consumption by Jeff Manion → A Christian look at seeking satisfaction.

Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the Culture of NOW by Walter Brueggemann → Sabbath isn't about keeping rules; it is about becoming a whole person.

Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives by Wayne Muller → We need not schedule an entire day each week. Sabbath time can be a Sabbath afternoon, a Sabbath hour, a Sabbath walk. (Poems, stories, and suggestions for practice)

Just a Little Bit More: The Culture of Excess and the Fate of the Common Good by (Lutheran pastor) T. Carlos Anderson → Is America's religion Christianity, or consumerism?

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver → A family of four vows for a year to eat only food they grow themselves or can buy from their neighbors. Complete with expository essays and recipes. You are what you eat.

Making Space for Christ Throughout Lent

Day 1 (Ash Wednesday): Pray for your enemies.

Day 2: Start a gratitude journal, writing down 5 things each day that you are thankful for.

Day 3: Don't turn on the car radio. In the quiet, pray for people who are hungry.

Day 4: Give \$20 to a non-profit of your choice.

[Sunday, February 22]

→ **This week, write in your gratitude journal each day.** Being grateful for what you already have is an important way to fend off wanting more. Actually write it down, so you can go back and look later! If you want, share what you wrote with a loved one.

Day 5: Reach out to someone who is sick or in need of companionship.

Day 6: Look out the window until you find something of beauty you had not noticed before.

Day 7: Give 5 items of clothing to the South Wedge Mission's Free Store.

Day 8: Notice your trash today and see how much you accumulate. Think of ways to reduce waste. (Could you have composted something? Used something reusable instead of single-use?)

Day 9: Stop saving items to "read later." Read it now or recycle it.

Day 10: Buy a few \$5 fast food gift cards to give to homeless people you encounter.

[Sunday, March 1]

→ **This week, take 5-minute showers, and/or have some no-shower days.** Many people in the world don't have access to clean water at all, yet we in the Western world tend to waste it.

Day 11: Call an old friend.

Day 12: "Pray the Paper" (pray for people and situations in today's news).

Day 13: Read Psalm 139. Memorize one verse that speaks to you.

Day 14: Pay a few sincere compliments.

Day 15: Think about the first thing you touch in the morning. How much value does it have compared to everything else (including people) you touch today?

Day 16: Spend 10 minutes looking at the sky, trees, and land, and give thanks for creation.

[Sunday, March 8]

→ **This week, incorporate rest into your daily routine,** even if it is just taking 2 minutes of quiet once every hour, or finding 15 minutes to sit quietly. Use this time to rejuvenate and be with God, whatever that looks like to you.

Day 17: Forgive someone. Or, apologize to someone.

Day 18: Write someone a hand-written letter.

Day 19: Change one light in your house to a compact florescent.

Day 20: Take a walk with someone you love, or a new friend.

Day 21: Schedule a more significant Sabbath in your day. It should be a 6-to-1 ratio, with one hour of rest to 6 hours of work. Use the time for meditation, retreat, Bible study, or volunteering.

Day 22: For two hours, turn off all devices (phone, computer, etc.). Use this time to play a game with your family, call an old friend, or have a conversation – in short, to connect with people you love.

[Sunday, March 15]

→ **This week, try having two meatless days.** Water used to raise livestock accounts for 40% of water consumption in the US (compared to 13% for domestic use like showers and toilets), and livestock are responsible for most of the methane gas and ammonia put into our atmosphere. If a four-person family skips steak just once a week, it has the same environmental impact as taking your car off the road for nearly three months. (Plus, it's good for you!)

Day 23: Introduce yourself to a neighbor.

Day 24: Read Psalm 121. Memorize a verse that is meaningful to you.

Day 25: Bring your own reusable mug/water bottle/takeout containers. Or, if you don't have these, acquire them.

Day 26: Make a meal completely from scratch.

Day 27: Don't buy anything today. Give thanks for what you already have.

Day 28: Light a candle and say a prayer for someone you have seen recently who is in need.

[Sunday, March 22]

→ **This week, set aside a chunk of time to tackle one category of "stuff" in your house (clothes, kitchen, hobby room...), and decide what to discard.** Ask yourself, "Does this item add value to my life? Does it spark joy in me?" If the answer is no, and it is in good shape, then donate it to the South Wedge Mission's "Free Store" (donations taken 4:30-6pm on Wednesdays). Otherwise, throw it out.

Day 29: Write a thank you note to your favorite teacher.

Day 30: Invest in (or make!) canvas shopping bags. Bring them not only to the grocery store, but into every store. Try not to acquire any bag you will later throw away/recycle.

Day 31: Use Freecycle to get rid of stuff you don't want. www.freecycle.org

Day 32: Donate art supplies to an elementary school, locally or in Rochester City.

Day 33: Read John 8:1-11. Memorize a verse that is meaningful to you.

Day 34: Smile at people today, because your glass is half *full*! It's a great practice, and it can make someone's day.

[Sunday, March 29]

→ **This week, try to shop local whenever possible.** Go to the public market or a local bakery, talk to the farmers who grow the food, buy products made in New York, support local business. One of the biggest environmental impacts on the earth is transportation of food and goods. Buying local takes out that middle step that is so expensive (financially and environmentally).

Day 35: Extend small kindnesses to people today: pay for someone's coffee, open or hold the door, give someone your place in line.

Day 36: Eat no sugar today, and reflect: where else is there sweetness in your life?

Day 37: Give \$20 to a local non-profit.

Day 38: Pray for peace.

Day 39: Educate yourself about a different religion. See how it is the same or different from your own.

Day 40: Pray for your enemies (maybe you have new ones by now) then decide which of these exercises you'll keep for good.