

Call Committee Report

NOW WE WAIT

Our Congregational Profile has been posted on the NALC website. The vacancy listing will soon be updated, distributed and made available to pastors around the world. Now we wait for responses to our profile. This is the process we use as we seek a pastor for New Covenant.

Wait can be defined as staying in place or remaining inactive until something expected happens. That is where we are right now. The process is out of our hands. Now we **wait** for someone else to act. That can be difficult for us. We tend to want what we want when we want, usually NOW. This call process is in God's hands. Psalm 27:14 tells us, **Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.** We have placed our trust in God that He will provide what we need when we need it. We **wait** for God's timing.

So, do we now just sit back and watch for what God will do? I think not! There is another definition for wait. That is to serve, such as the waitstaff at a restaurant. They **wait** by serving. We are called to do the same. While we **wait for** God to act on our behalf, we **wait on** Him by serving as His disciples. We define our mission and ministry. We seek His guidance through Bible study and worship. We pray as a community of faith, trusting that He will provide. Hasn't He always?

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, please give us the strength and patience to **wait for** You to act. Help us to trust in your plan for NCLC and **wait on** you with hope and faith and action. Grant us the positive attitude to keep our eyes fixed on you. May your love and grace sustain us as we **wait** for your perfect timing. In Jesus holy name, Amen.*

Psalm 37:7 *Rest in the Lord and **wait** patiently for Him.*

Lamentations 7:7 *Therefore, I will look to the Lord; I will **wait** for the God of my salvation.*

Romans 8:25 *But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly **wait** for it with perseverance.*

- Submitted by Dianne Hermanson, Call Committee Chair



Souper Bowl Of Caring

New Covenant will collect non-perishable food and monetary donations for a local food pantry on Sunday, February 11. There will be a soup pot available in which you can put your monetary donations. We will serve soup and chili after the worship service. We hope that you can stay and join in fellowship and enjoy some delicious food!



New Covenant News

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New Covenant Lutheran Church in Morganton, NC



MISSION STATEMENT: New Covenant Welcomes God's People
Founded in Faith, United by Love, and Gifted to Serve

From the Lenten NALC Devotional From Ashes to Easter, by Rev. Dr. David Wendel, 2021

As we approach Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season of Lent, it seems worthwhile to say a few words of introduction regarding this historic, often misunderstood observance.

Without presenting a detailed explanation of the development of Lent, it is enough to say that a time of repentance, reflection and renewal has been practiced by Christians as a 40-day season (excluding Sundays) from the fourth century to the present day. Lent had its roots in baptismal preparation, fasting before celebration of Easter, and renewed baptismal commitment for those who had fallen away from the faith.

Historically, Lent has been associated with the three spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving (see Matthew 6). Lutherans have often focused their observance on growing deeper in the Word of God, study of Luther's Small Catechism, and reflection on one's sinfulness, repentance and renewal through God's grace and forgiveness. What is important, for Lutherans, is that Lenten observance be seen as a gracious gift for renewal and spiritual refreshment, not a good work to please God or earn His favor.

Martin Luther, preaching on Matthew 4:1-11, wrote about the spiritual discipline of fasting, "But the worst of all is that we have adopted and practiced fasting as a good work: not to



bring our flesh into subjection; but, as a meritorious work before God, to atone for our sins and obtain grace.” (Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent, Luther’s Church Postil). Whether we share Lenten devotions, worship more frequently, give up things for Lent or engage in the biblical practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, it may never be understood as “a meritorious work before God, to atone for our sins and obtain grace.” Lent itself is a gift of God! So, with regard to Lenten devotions and all Lenten disciplines: use them in grace!

Ash Wednesday



New Covenant will hold Ash Wednesday worship service and the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, February 14 at 6 PM. We pray that you are able to attend this solemn, meaningful service.

Please read the following article on why we observe Ash Wednesday.

There are three reasons why Lutherans go to church to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. First, the ashes remind people of their sinfulness. Second, the ashes remind people of their mortality. Third, the ashes remind people that they have been redeemed.

Since ancient times, God’s people have used ashes as a sign of humble repentance (e.g. Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13). This tradition was carried on by the early church and remains an important tradition today. When one willingly goes up to a pastor and receives ashes on his/her forehead, they are admitting that they are sinners in desperate need of salvation. They are admitting that they have sinned not only against their neighbors, but against God Himself. The ashes demonstrate that without God, all people are spiritually dead. The ashes remind the wearer of their need to repent and confess in order to be turned back to God. The ashes demonstrate our pleading that the Lord would purify us. The ashes serve as a tangible and visible sign of our failure to love God as much as He loves us.

The receiving of ashes on Ash Wednesday also remind people of their mortality, which is the direct result of God’s condemnation of our sin. God said to Adam, “You are dust and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). Ashes serve as a solemn reminder that the price of sin is death. Man cannot escape death. Often, people today feel as if they are invincible. It’s easy to feel like we’re at the top of the world, capable of doing anything that we desire. We keep ourselves busy doing “good” things, but fail to recognize that in reality we are dead men walking. People don’t like to think about death. Our culture has seemingly sterilized death. We make every attempt to avoid death. Death is uncomfortable. And, that’s why ashes are so important. They are the physical reminder that God created man from the dust

of the earth and one day all men will return to the dust of the earth. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust. The ashes force us to remember that we are merely mortal and that God alone is sovereign and reigns for all eternity.

Ashes also tell us the good news of the Gospel! You see, ashes aren’t just smeared randomly or haphazardly across people’s foreheads. The ashes are given in the shape of the cross. In receiving the ashes, we remember that our Lord Jesus took on the fullness of our humanity. He who was sinless became our sin. Jesus the Christ was crucified on a cross. He was crucified for you. Then Jesus conquered death itself through His resurrection. He was resurrected for you. In doing so, He has taken the ashes of our past and created in us new life, allowing us to live forever in the holy presence of God! He has redeemed His children, making us clean and new. Through the cross of Christ, the power of death has been destroyed. Through the cross there is life. The cross-shaped ashes on our foreheads proclaim the good news that sin and death have been conquered through the cross of Christ.

From Life Through Lutheran Lenses (<https://lutheranlenses.com/2022/02/26/ashes-to-ashes-and-dust-to-dust-why-lutherans-receive-ashes-on-ash-wednesday/>)

Members in Need of Prayer

Rose Marie and Joe Starr, Sr. and Joe Starr, Jr., Donna Short, Beth Walborn, John Parker, Mary Dawn Stuenkel, Kamara Reade, Ed Williams

Prayer Concerns: If you have an urgent prayer concern, please contact Kamara Reade at 828-430-0760 or kay.29@netzero.net. She will send it out to New Covenant members.

Church Council Meeting

New Covenant’s Church Council will meet on Wednesday, February 3 at 6 PM this month. All are welcome to attend. If you have an item that you want the Church Council to discuss or consider, please contact Eric Stuenkel at westuenkel@bellsouth.net or Angela Williams at 3521awilliams@charter.net

Bible Study & Prayer Time

Weekly Bible Study and Prayer Time has returned! Come and join the Bible study on Thursday mornings at 10:30 AM at the church. Scripture for the upcoming Sunday will be studied each week. The sessions will be led by lay leaders Angela Williams and Kamara Reade. If you are interested in helping to lead the sessions, please contact Kamara Reade (at 828-430-0760 or kay.29@netzero.net). Prayer time occurs immediately after the Bible study.