



March 2026

Pastor's Letter – Lent

*“Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven
and whose sin is put away” (Psalm 32:1)*

Growing up in a Baptist church, I remember the emphasis was on sins (with an “s”). In other words, the focus was on individual transgressions such as smoking, drinking, lying, cheating, etc. The preachers and teachers reminded us that such actions would lead straight to hell. The only way to overcome the descent into the abyss was to avoid performing such “sins”.

When I became a Lutheran, I was taught our standing before God was less about sins (with an “s”) and more about Sin (singular, with a capital “S”). In other words, it wasn't just about individual transgressions but about our broken relationship with God. Sin separates us from God; and that sin is what condemns us before the Almighty. It is less about actions and more about our human condition. “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” the Scriptures tell us. Sin (with a capital “S”) identifies who we are before God apart from God's mercy and grace.

That is why, for we who believe, God's mercy and grace given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important. Jesus died and rose again to deliver us from Sin (capital “S”), death, and the devil. It's not about correcting individual actions but about restoring a right relationship between God and us. It's about the healing of the brokenness and making us whole before God. Only by God's grace are we made well.

That's why the psalmist can say, “Happy are they those whose transgressions (individual sins – small “s”) are forgiven and whose sin (capital “S”) are put away.” In other words, God's mercy and grace give through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ not only absolves us of our disobedient actions and inappropriate words but also restores us into a right and loving relationship with the Almighty. This is the gift of God, and for it we are eternally grateful.

Saved by God's grace, and reaching out in faith
With all the Saints of God at St. Luke's.
Pastor Dave

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MONTH

Join us for Worship weekly in the SANCTUARY at 10:15 am.

2nd Sunday in Lent ~ March 1 ~ Pastor Deb Monnin, presiding:

Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

3rd Sunday in Lent ~ March 8 ~ Pastor Mick Althaus, presiding:

Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42

In today's gospel the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for water, an image of our thirst for God. Jesus offers living water, a sign of God's grace flowing from the waters of baptism. The early church used this gospel and those of the next two Sundays to deepen baptismal reflection during the final days of preparation before baptism at Easter. As we journey to the resurrection feast, Christ comes among us in word, bath, and meal—offering us the life-giving water of God's mercy and forgiveness.

4th Sunday in Lent ~ March 15 ~ Pastor Dave Westphal, presiding:

1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

5th Sunday in Lent ~ March 22 ~ Pastor Dave Westphal, presiding:

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

Palm Sunday ~ March 29 ~ Pastor Dave Westphal, presiding:

Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 26:14—27:66

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

Daily Devotions



Each day, Monday through Saturday, Pastors Beth and Dave publish brief devotions based on the Sunday texts. If you are interested in receiving them by email, please contact Pastor Dave at pastordavedelc@gmail.com. You may also access them on the St. Luke's website: www.stlukeslima.org

Adult Bible Study

Each Sunday morning, 9 am, come and explore the Bible with your friends at St. Luke's. Meeting in the Pastor's Office, and led by Mila, the class discusses the Bible passages scheduled for that Sunday. Come, enjoy the conversation, and find renewal in the Word of the Lord.



Annual Spring Congregational Meeting



Sunday, March 15, we will gather in the New Life Center following worship for our Annual Spring Congregational Meeting. Part of that meeting will include reports from the various committees, teams, and organizations in the congregation. Please submit reports to the office by Monday, March 9 for inclusion in the bulletin for reports.

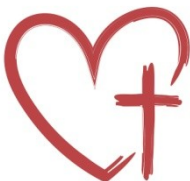
Also at the meeting, we will hear from the property committee about plans for the restoration of the bell tower. Please watch for more information on that project and accompanying proposal prior to the meeting.

Soup and Service on Wednesdays in Lent

Each of the Wednesdays in Lent, join us for supper and service at St. Luke's. A soup supper begins the evening at 6:00 pm. It is a time for fellowship, conversation, and sharing.

Join us at **7:00 pm**, for a service of music and study as we sing together "*Holden Evening Prayer*" and hear a message about God's love from Pastor Dave. The theme is "*To Love as God Loves*"

February 25	Perfect Love
March 4	Genuine Humility
March 11	Gracious Discipline
March 18	Hopeful Introspection
March 25	Faithful Prayer



Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion Sunday, March 29, 10:15 am



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The first day of Holy Week has traditionally been called Palm Sunday. Worship that day typically begins with a reading of the account of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem accompanied by a procession where people wave palm branches. This mirrors the events of Jesus' entry into the holy city to the shouts of "Hosanna to the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The crowd that day sought to make him king. However, the glory of that day is soon replaced by the Passion of our Lord as he is betrayed, arrested, abused, and crucified.

This Sunday, then, carried us through both the celebration of the palm procession to the pain of Jesus' death on the cross. During the service, we first process with palms and shouts of "Hosanna" and end the service by reading the Passion of Our Lord from Matthew's Gospel. From joy to sorrow, from palms to pain, from life to death. This is Palm Sunday, Sunday of the Passion.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m., worship with us at St. Luke's as we gather with our sisters and brothers from Zion and St. Matthew to celebrate Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper. Pastors Deb, Sam, and Dave will be leading the service. Come, hear the Word, sing the praises, and receive the body and blood of our Lord.



Hope to see you here!

Good Friday





Friday, April 3, is Good Friday, the day we remember Jesus' Passion upon the cross. Folks from St. Luke's and St. Matthew's will gather with our friends at Zion Lutheran for a traditional service of Tenebrae (Shadows) at **7:00 p.m.** Be sure to plan to attend. (Zion Church 1300 Edgewood Dr Lima)

Easter Sunday



Come, let us celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord on **Easter Sunday, April 5, 10:15 am**. Come, hear the Word, celebrate the music, receive the Sacrament, and gather with friends and family as we rejoice and give thanks for the new given us through Jesus Christ's resurrection.

MARCH 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1 9:00a Choir 9:00a Bible Classes 10:15a Liturgy of Holy Communion	2 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	3 6p Altar Guild 3p NLC Rental 7:00p NA (NLC)	4 6p Lenten Soup Suppers 7p Holden Evening Prayer 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	5 10a WELCA 5-7P BB-NLC
8 9:00a Choir 9:00a Bible Classes 10:15a Liturgy of Holy Communion 1p NLC Rental	9 10a Staff Meeting 11a Financial 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	10 6p Council Meeting 7:00p NA (NLC)	11 6p Lenten Soup Suppers 7p Holden Evening Prayer 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	12 5-7P BB-NLC
15 9:00a Choir 9:00a Bible Classes 10:15a Liturgy of Holy Communion 11:30a Congregational Meeting	16 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	17  7:00p NA (NLC)	18 6p Lenten Soup Suppers 7p Holden Evening Prayer 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	19 5-7P BB-NLC
22 9:00a Choir 9:00a Bible Classes 10:15a Liturgy of Holy Communion	23 12-3p CUP 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	24 11a Mary/Martha 7:00p NA (NLC)	25 10a Herald Assembly 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	26 5-7P BB-NLC
29 9:00a Choir 9:00a Bible Classes 10:15a Liturgy of Holy Communion	30 5:30-7:30 BB-NLC	31 7:00p NA (NLC)		



Find Us on Facebook!

To find us on Facebook, search for St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Lima, Ohio. "Like" us and you'll have access to pictures and announcements of ministry happening in the name of Jesus Christ here at St. Luke's.

Worship Assignments for March 2026

Altar Duties: Liz Ebbing

Friday	Saturday
6 5-7P BB-NLC	7 7:30p NA (NLC)
13 5-7P BB-NLC	14 11-1 Community Meal 7:30p NA (NLC)
20 5-7P BB-NLC	21 7:30p NA (NLC)
27 11-1 Our Daily Bread 5-7P BB-NLC	28 7:30p NA (NLC)

Mar 1 ~ 2nd Sunday in Lent

Worship:
 Leader: Pastor Deb Monnin
 Organist: Sandy Miller
 Acolyte: Adrian Lewis
 Child Mess: Kathy Luhn
 Lector: Rachael Lewis
 Comm Ser: Julianna Lewis
 Beth Arbeit McCarty
 Ushers: Lois Kennedy
 Dick Fisher

Mar 8 ~ 3rd Sunday in Lent

Worship:
 Leader: Pastor Mick Althausen
 Organist: Sandy Miller
 Acolyte: Julianna Lewis
 Child Mess: Noisy Offering
 Lector: Lonnie Collins
 Comm Ser: Sandy Gray
 Linda Mann
 Ushers: Mike Gray
 Dick McCarty

Mar 15 ~ 4th Sunday in Lent

Worship:
 Leader: Pastor Dave Westphal
 Organist: Sandy Miller
 Acolyte: Delaney Cardenas
 Child Mess: Dawn Arbeit
 Lector: Dale Laukhuf
 Comm Ser: Marcia Laukhuf
 Mary Stepleton
 Ushers: Jack Williams
 Dee Sherer

Mar 22 ~ 5th Sunday in Lent

Worship:
 Leader: Pastor Dave Westphal
 Organist: Sandy Miller
 Acolyte: Addi Cardenas
 Child Mess: Megan Mulcahy
 Lector: Ian Steinke
 Comm Ser: Lee Moritz
 Nancy Rudolph
 Ushers: Gus Steinke
 Ian Steinke

Mar 29 ~ Palm Sunday

Worship:
 Leader: Pastor Dave Westphal
 Organist: Sandy Miller
 Acolyte: Zoey Kennedy
 Child Mess: Marcy Reeves
 Lector: Sarah Oleson
 Comm Ser: Marcy Reeves
 TBA
 Ushers: Bill Oleson
 Lois Kennedy



* NLC = New Life Center

ALTAR FLOWERS



Mar 1 **Mary Stepleton**
open
Mar 8 **Mary Stepleton**
Susie Cornell
Mar 15 **Moritz & Williams Families**
Mary Stepleton
Mar 22 **Sandy Miller**
open
Mar 29 **open**
open

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

Join us in the New Life Center for a hot, delicious meal of chili, crackers, bread, fruit cup, cookies, lemonade and coffee. This is a free meal for everyone!

**Saturday, March 14, 2026
11:00 am - 1:00 pm**

St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, 209 W. North St. - Lima, OH 45801
ALL ARE WELCOME!!

St. Luke’s will once again be sponsoring free community meals.

We will be serving food from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. We need volunteers to serve the meals and to set up and clean up the space. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Gathering Area for you to indicate the time you will be helping.

Donations of desserts such as cookies, brownies, cupcakes, etc. are needed to make the meals successful! Two weeks prior to each meal a sign-up sheet will be in the Gathering Area. Please sign up and let us know you’ll be bringing desserts. Then please bring these dessert donations to the church the day of the meal (or the day before).

Thank you in advance for your help!

If you have any questions, please contact Alison Williams (419) 303-8583

MORE FREE COMMUNITY MEALS - April 11, 2026

EASTER FLOWER ORDER DEADLINE IS SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

Payment must accompany the order! Please make check payable to St. Luke’s Lutheran Church. If you have any questions, please call Beth Arheit-McCarty 419-221-1535 or Robin Hefner 419-227-1961. Orders should be turned in to the church office or placed in the offering plate on Sunday.

Number of Easter Lilies _____ @ \$15.00 each (price increase for these only)

Number of Mums (Spring) _____ @ \$13.00 each

Number of Tulips (Assorted Colors) _____ @ \$13.00 each

Your name: _____

Phone # _____ Amount enclosed: _____

DEDICATIONS

In loving memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

In celebration of: _____

Please check one of the following:

I will pick up my plant(s) after the 10:15 a.m. service Easter Sunday _____

Please use my plant(s) to beautify the church grounds. _____

**SUNDAY MORNING
WORSHIP ATTENDANCE
FOR FEBRUARY 2026**

2/1	47
2/8	57
2/15	52
2/22	41

NOISY OFFERING



The **February** offering was **\$102.39** and went to the usual recipient of this offering—Churches United Pantry (CUP). Your generosity helps our neighbors in need.

**A Glance at our 2026 Budget
as of 2/25/26**

Income: \$35,310.40
Expense: \$51,258.91
Net Income: -\$15,948.51

**SUNDAY MORNING
GENERAL OFFERING
FOR FEBRUARY 2026 Giving:**

2/1	\$3,754.05
2/8	\$14,687.01
2/15	\$2,522.00
2/22	\$1,105.00

All generously given to make known
the Gospel of Jesus Christ

WOMEN OF THE E.L.C.A. (WELCA)

YOUR WELCA BOARD

President: Sarah Oleson **Vice President:** Mary Trueblood
Secretary: Sandy Gray **Treasurer:** Alison Williams
Missions Director: Jane Williams

They will meet on the 1st Thursday of the month, at 10:30 am in the Gathering Area

Mary/Martha will be held on Tuesday, March 24th @ 11:00am

March WELCA Projects

From Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday WELCA is collecting donations to purchase a herd of animals for a Third World community through ELCA's "Gifts of Love". For \$715.00 we can purchase a "family farm" consisting of one cow, two piglets, two goats and several chicks. If you would like to donate, please make checks payable to St. Luke's and in the memo "Gifts of Love".

On March 18, WELCA is serving cheesy broccoli soup for our Wednesday, Lenten Soup Supper.

On May 17, 2026 WELCA is sponsoring a luncheon in the NLC to support Samaritan House our local mission project. The WELCA board will provide the sandwiches, drinks and chips with congregation signing up for salads, casseroles, and desserts. Rachael Lewis will be providing entertainment. We hope to see you there.



OUR DAILY BREAD

125 South Central 419-224-2086

Our Daily Bread serves hundreds of thousands of trays of food every year!

**The soup kitchen tray line needs six (6) volunteers from
St. Luke's to serve food on the 4th Friday of
every month from 11 am -1 pm.**

Reaching out in faith, St. Luke's helps with volunteers on the fourth Friday each month, 11 am – 1 pm. This month, our service date is **March 27, 2026**. You may volunteer to serve by contacting Linda Mann at 419-303-9793.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
209 W. North Street
Lima, OH 45801-4324

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Dated Material

Liturgy of Holy Communion
Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
www.stlukeslima.org

How to Reach Us:

By Phone:
419-227-1961

Church Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00a-2:00p

Via email:
Robin Hefner, *secretary* secretary@stlukeslima.org

Staff

Interim Pastor – Dave Westphal (Cell:419-455-0513)
Interim Hospital Visitation Pastor - Samuel Payne (Cell:419-371-9774)
Organist – Sandy Miller
Choir Director – Brian Reeves
Office Secretary – Robin Hefner

Congregational Leaders

President - Rich Moritz
Vice President - James Williams
Secretary - Lois Kennedy
Treasurer - Alison Williams
Marcy Reeves, Suzie Cornell,
Jane Williams, Perry Luhn, Tyler Arbeit



St. Luke's Renewed Website is up and running. Be sure to check it out.

www.StLukesLima.org