

The Petra Press

Newsletter of the Williamstown Lutheran Church
Graniteville, Vermont * * * 207-370-0355

Vacancy Pastor
Rev. Robert Fischer

www.wlcvermont.org

March 2021

(Vacancy) Pastor's Corner

Increasing Intimacy

Something I heard on a radio talk program was so striking that I had to stop the car and jot down the words: "My need for increased intimacy was driving my wife farther from me." I'm certain that there was a lot of background information which wasn't mentioned; but, as Martin Luther recommends, let's "put the best construction" on the situation; and assume that the caller was going about his need for increased intimacy in a loving and compassionate manner. Under such conditions, why would a spouse reject such an appeal for increased intimacy?

In considering intimacy in its several dimensions—physical, emotional, and spiritual; why would *anyone* reject such increased closeness? We all have our various boundaries regarding intimacy. Some people like to keep others at arm's length, some easily embrace those around them. Some will talk about the details of their life with only a select few friends, others will talk about almost everything in their lives with just about anyone. It's as if we live in a protective "bubble" and allow only certain people *inside* of that bubble. And, the "bubble" may range in size from *inches* around us, to perhaps the size of an entire building.

Regardless of the size of our various personal *physical* and *emotional* "boundaries" or "bubbles," we need to take a look at the *spiritual* "bubble" which is surrounding us. It's this *spiritual* bubble which keeps us from desiring or having increased intimacy with *our Lord*. It's certainly not *God's* fault if we don't have a close, intimate relationship with him. Believers are referred to again-and-again in the Scriptures as "the bride of Christ." Isaiah wrote, "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has*

covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (Isaiah 61:10).

What could be more intimate than the relationship between a bride and her bridegroom? This Lenten season we again remember that Jesus loved us enough to have His body tortured and crucified, to have His blood shed, all while carrying the burden of *our* sins, and the *sins of the world* upon Himself. Yet we, as Christ's beloved bride, frequently keep Him at arm's length, if not further. This seems to be especially true during the time of a pastoral vacancy. For some reason, in some people, the absence of a full-time pastor seems to justify decreased worship of their Lord and Savior. And, this attitude is heartbreaking, both to our fellow believers and to our Lord. Jesus said, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!*" (Luke 13:34).

And, it's not just unbelieving Jerusalem which rejected the Lord's call for intimacy. As the writer to the Hebrews put it, "*Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near*" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

If you don't *hunger* for intimacy with Christ through hearing Word, receiving His Body which was given for you and His Blood which was shed for you; if you don't *eagerly look forward* to giving him thanks and praise in worship; remember that you are dearly loved by Christ, and that He dearly desires and deserves your sincere and intimate *response* to that love.

Blessings,
Pastor Fischer



Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday Service at 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday at 10:15 a.m.

Robert Brown is not doing well and may be at Berlin Meadows Health & Rehab for the rest of his life. He has had a string of physical and emotional setbacks over the last year and half and has been in rehab since April. He can walk with a walker now but is unable to self-care. He would appreciate prayers and cards.

Robert Brown
Berlin Meadows "A" Wing
98 Hospitality Dr
Barre VT 05641



**February 2021
TREASURER'S UPDATE**

A brief summary of the financial position of the congregation at the end of February 2021 shows that our total congregational income for this year (2021) is higher compared to last year at this time. Since the parsonage is now rented and we are receiving rental income, the monthly income is higher by almost \$1,200 than when the parsonage will be occupied by a new pastor. Expenses are much lower than last year at this time since we currently are not paying a full-time pastor. Thank you for continuing to support our church family through your tithes and offerings despite the difficulties of this time.

	Year to Date Income	Year to Date Expenses
February 2020	\$6,680.09	\$13,265.76
February 2021	\$6,936.84	\$7,002.48

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." Malachi 3:10

To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Currier

Welcome New Baby



Troy and Emma Laughlin became parents on Friday March 12 with the birth of their daughter Madeleine Cecelia Laughlin on March 12 and weighs 8.8 pounds and 20 inches long.

Madeleine and parents are doing well. Maddie sleeps all day and keeps her parents up all night. Dixie, the corgi, has no interest in her but is worried that their parents are showing too much interest in the little human.



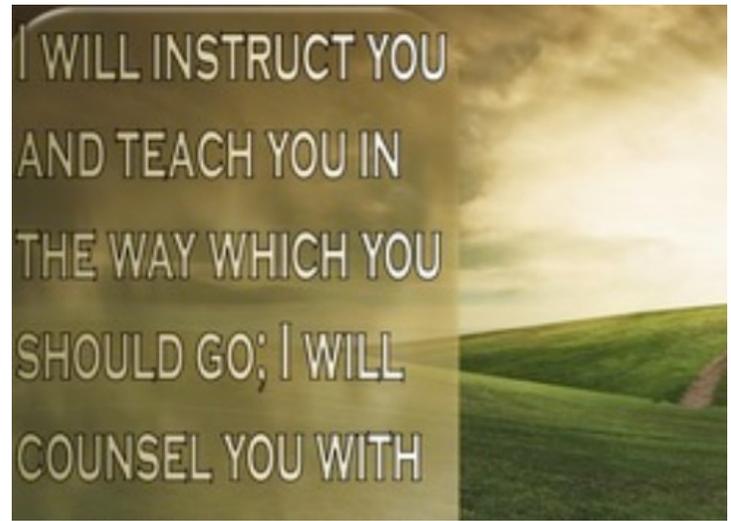
There is an Easter Lily sign up sheet by the mailboxes at church.

You can write a check made payable to Williamstown Lutheran Church and in the memo section write 'flowers'.

If you cannot attend church and would like to sign up, please send Jayne Hall an email. Her email is jhall.1978@gmail.com.

Let's flower the altar Easter morning!! God Bless You.

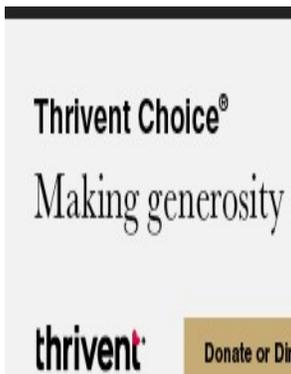
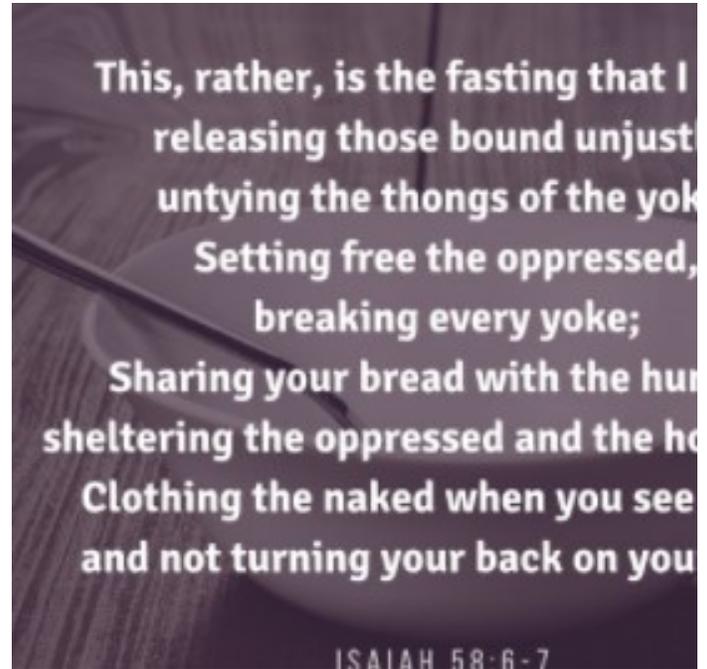
Jayne Hall



Operation Christmas Child

Let's keep Operation Christmas Child in our prayers and continue to gather items for 2021.

Ideas for March: Quality Crafts
Ideas for April: Stuffed animals



Williamstown Lutheran Church is proud to be a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization. The deadline to direct your Choice® Dollars for 2020 is March 31, 2021.



Submitted by Sheila Walther