



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR/RECTOR **The Rev. Mike Wernick**

I had told our newsletter editor that I'd finish this article before bedtime on February 24th. Between the end of church and going to sleep. I intended to but failed to follow through. The Academy Awards (which ended at 11:15) got in the way. In the scheme of things, it was a small thing, to "over promise and under deliver" this article, but I really value timeliness, and hold myself accountable when I fall short of my own self-imposed deadlines.

For the first time in thirty years, the Oscars had no host (Episcopalians: think Verger), but everyone seemed to know what to do. The musical interludes seemed to flow seamlessly, and the presenters seemed to know the right time to arrive on stage, and who (or what category) to present. They had parsed out who would say what, and this year everyone had the right envelopes. The presenters seemed to do just fine without someone called "host" introducing them (though Randy Thomas, who has been the announcer for the last ten years, provided some continuity).

But still, there were some deadlines, a set schedule to follow. They couldn't let acceptance speeches run too long, or they'd play that music when someone starts thanking first-grade homeroom teachers, as the presenters also try to usher them off stage. Deadlines, and a pre-determined

end-time. But when too many people speak for just a little bit too long, it all adds up. The scheduled time frame (from 8:00 pm - 11:00 pm) is a kind of boundary, and they exceeded it. But no one really seemed to mind (except that not all the dresses were that lovely).

The Oscars broke some other boundaries too. The ceremony itself celebrated diversity and inclusivity by beginning with a concert-like performance by openly-gay Adam Lambert and the remaining members of the band Queen. For the first time, awards for Best Costuming and Best Production went to African American nominees for Marvel's *Black Panther*. For the first time, a Mexican film (Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma*) won best foreign film. For the first time, Spike Lee was greeted with a standing ovation as the film industry veteran took the stage to claim his first Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay for his work on *BlacKkKlansman*, a story about an African American police officer from Colorado Springs who successfully manages to infiltrate the local Ku Klux Klan. And *Green Book*, a film about an African-American classical pianist on a tour of venues through the 1960s racist south, won Best Picture.

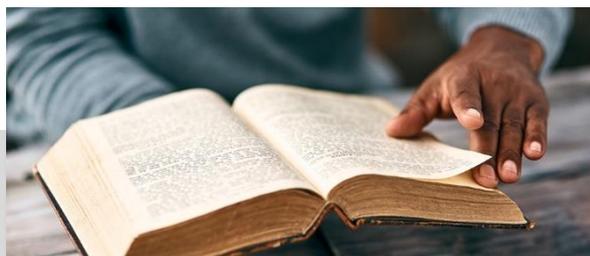
At a time when homosexuality and transgender issues, immigration, and racism remain powder kegs for much of this nation, many of the films nominated and those which

won, reflected some of these issues too. That's partly because Hollywood's movies hold up a mirror to culture to help it see itself.

I personally lament that Hollywood continues to produce movies which glorify senseless violence; warfare; and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; because there are some who take these storylines as license to do the same. But I thank God that some of Hollywood's other poignantly told stories can open us up to more boundlessness. Can open the mind to new ways of understanding. Can open the heart to new ways of loving. It's in these ways, that we can understand Hollywood's stories of diversity and inclusion as Gospel.

God never "over promises or under delivers." God's promises exceed our ability to comprehend, and what God delivers is more than our nets can hold. And as we increasingly realize that God is unconditional love, and as we are increasingly steeped in this loving God through our prayer, inner silence, and formation, we increasingly realize that we too are nothing but love. And we hold ourselves increasingly accountable to let this love determine how we behave towards God, towards ourselves, and especially towards everyone -- as Jesus did -- since we all have that same spark of divine love within us. Maybe someone will make an Academy Award winner about that.

The Rev. Mike Wernick



SCRIPTURE READINGS

March 3 - Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 34:29-35
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]
Psalm 99

March 6 - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2,12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6,16-21
Psalm 103 or 103:8-14 or Ps. 51:1-17

March 10 - First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

March 17 - Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12,17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35
Psalm 27

March 24 - Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 3:1-15 or Is. 55:1-9
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8

March 31 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12
2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
Psalm 32

UNITED THANK OFFERING

Lisbeth E.

The United Thank Offering offers everyone the opportunity to make a conscious effort to practice thankfulness. It is easy to get caught up in the demands of everyday living. UTO asks us to take time out to identify our blessings, be thankful for them and express our thanks in prayer, and then put a coin (or dollar bill) into our UTO boxes as a way to share our thanks with others. UTO lets us express our gratitude and think about what we have, rather than what we do not have.

"Today I am thankful for....."

COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Kim H. & Laura K.

Recent Events

At their recent meeting, **Warm Up America** volunteers brought in **42 afghans, 11 of which were made by Two Churches' talented and dedicated volunteers** Ruth B., Deb F., Agnes K., and Kay S. Many thanks to them for all the hours spent creating these works of love which go to children entering foster care, providing them with warmth, comfort, and something to call their own. If you're interested in participating, please see Kay S. Donations of washable yarn (no wool, please) are always much appreciated and can be placed in the basket on top of the collection bins in the Narthex. If you purchase more than one skein at a time, purchasing two or more of the same color is most helpful, as it takes at least four skeins of yarn to make one afghan. Thanks to all who have donated yarn to this special ministry!

The Souper Bowl of Caring collection of canned soups for **The Pantry** wrapped up on Super Bowl Sunday, February 3. Although we fell slightly short of our goal of 1,500 cans, Rev. Mike was a good sport and had one hand's nails painted in the New England Patriots' colors and the other in the Los Angeles Rams' colors -- the photographic proof is posted on the Community Ministry bulletin board! Thank you to everyone who helped us score a touchdown against food insecurity!

Current/Upcoming Events

Our next workday at **St. Mark's Breakfast Café** is **Sunday, March 31**. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Community Ministry bulletin board. Thanks to Liz R. for coordinating our efforts.

Community Ministry's next meeting will be Thurs., March 21, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Kim H.'s condo. Our meetings are open to everyone and include a potluck dinner. We are looking for new members, as well as a new chair or co-chair. If you'd like to see what we're all about, please come! Just let Kim know you'll be attending so the meal can be planned accordingly. If you can't make the meeting but would like more information, please see Kim or Laura K.

Ongoing Programs

Don't forget our "Noisy Offering" (loose change offering, although paper currency is also gladly accepted!) that we take in on the first Sunday of each month. This money is donated to **ACCESS of West Michigan**, a local ministry seeking to end poverty and food insecurity. The February offering brought in \$59.50. Thanks to Kay S. for counting the donations every month.



At long last, **The Pantry will have its grand re-opening this month** at its new location at 4301 Kalamazoo Avenue, S.E., Suite 25, the former site of Russo's Market! The date will be announced as soon as it is set. Thanks to all who helped with the move on February 23. **This month we are collecting boxed potatoes, gravy, and cereal.** We also continue to collect **personal care items for The Pantry's clients**, such as feminine hygiene products, toilet paper and other paper products, "ziplock" baggies, toothpaste, etc. These items cannot be purchased with Bridge Cards and can be costly, especially for someone already struggling with food insecurity. Watch for "BOGO" sales. Many thanks to all who support this vital ministry to our neighbors and to Kay S. for delivering our donations every month!

We continue to collect **SpartanNash store receipts to reach the Direct Your Dollars** goal of \$150,000 in qualifying receipts for the third time. Please remember that the entire receipt is needed, and that e-receipts do not qualify. Once the goal is reached, **Diaper Depot** will receive another check for \$1,000. Let's fill up that truck again -- we already have over \$29,000 in receipts!

The Samaritas collection of magazines (non-news-oriented preferred), greeting cards, artificial flowers, and fabric is on-going. Please place your donations in the far-right collection bin in the Narthex. Thanks to all who donate, and to Joel F. for delivering the donated items.

Volunteer Opportunities

The **Diaper Depot** can use your help! If you can assist at the scheduled distribution times, please sign up (on the bulletin board next to the Sacristy door) and lend a hand. Please note that, currently, help is no longer needed with re-packaging diapers on Sundays. Diapers are ordered online and delivered directly to the church, saving a lot of time in shopping and hauling. Due to the timing of deliveries, a dedicated person or persons repackage the diapers shortly after their arrival. Thanks to everyone who helps with or donates to this important ministry! For more information, see Shirley N. or Judy M.

Care Team Ministry

Help is available with rides, food, visits, communion, and calls. If you have a need, or know someone who does, please contact Laura K. or Rev. Mike.



DIAPER DEPOT **Judy M.**

Volunteers are needed at the following distribution times:

Thursday, **March 7th** from 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, **March 20th** from 10:00 a.m.- Noon

Please sign up on the bulletin board if you're able to help.

We've begun our third collection of Spartan Nash **Direct Your Dollar** receipts for Diaper Depot and already have over \$29,000. Please ask friends and family to contribute their receipts as well and we'll have this collection finished in record time!

Thanks for supporting Diaper Depot.

OUR NEW LEADERSHIP FOR 2019

Ascension Lutheran's Council

Kevin Barry – Council President

Dan Weller – Vice President

Jeff Stormoen - Secretary

Rich Walker - Treasurer

John Standley

Mike Wernick

Holy Cross' Vestry

Jon Getz - Sr. Warden

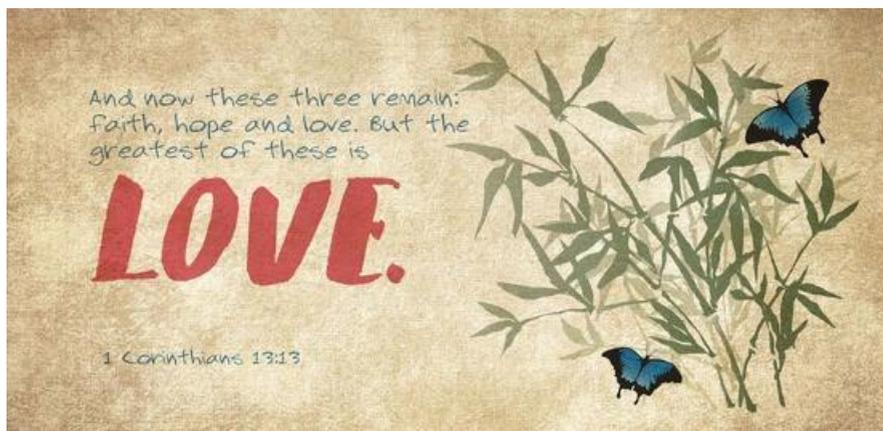
Chuck McKean – Jr. Warden

Tony Bowie – Christian Ed.

Hannah Mattson Temple - Hospitality

Mary Lyda Trasky - Secretary

Colleen Walter - Treasurer



SUNDAY COFFEE SERVERS

Please check the list on the bulletin board next to the Sacristy for possible changes/corrections.

Mar 3 Gwen H. & Lisbeth A.
Mar 10 Liz R & Ann A.
Mar 17 Mary A. & Hannah T.
Mar 24 Jan S. & Barb C.
Mar 31 Sue R. & Robin G.

Apr 7 Viv R. & Laura K.
Apr 14 Agnes K. & Esther Y.
Apr 21 Marjri W. & Sara H.
Apr 28 Connie E. & Jill B.



Coffee Procedures

1. Make sure coffee has been made following the 8:00 am worship service.
2. Set out cups, carafes, treats (doesn't have to be elaborate!), creamer and sugar.
3. Heat water for tea, make tea in designated carafe.
4. Stay at table to help serve.
5. Wash dishes after coffee.
6. Take trash to dumpster.

If you cannot make a scheduled day, please swap with someone else on the list. Also, if you would like to volunteer, but don't see your name please let me know and I will add you to the schedule. Thank you!

Questions? Please contact Hannah T. at Hannah.c.temple@gmail.com

MARCH PRAYER LIST

We want to pray with and for each other as we move along our spiritual journey together. Please lift up in prayer the designated persons throughout the week. May our Lord Jesus Christ use this ministry of prayer to build His Church in love!

Feb. 24-March 2: Kevin, Jill, Kate, Meg and Beth B.; Tony and Cheryl B.; George C.; Barb C.; Lenore and Dick Czyzyk.

March 3-9: Laura D.; George and Lynn D.; Evans and Connie D.; Pam D.; Virginia E.

March 10-16: Connie E.; Lisbeth and Jack E.; Rochelle E.; Phil and Mary E.; Den and Debbie F.

March 17-23: Laura F.; Jon and Robin G.; Roger H.; Ralf H.; Dennis and Carla H..

March 24-30: O.D. H.; Dale and Gwen H.; Roy and Donna H.; Mike and Sue H.; Charles and Sara H.

Mar. 31-April 6: Kim H.; Al and Mickey I.; Angela, June and Marcia K.; Paul and Laura K.; John, Laura, David, Elizabeth and Sarah K.

Please remember also to pray for all troops stationed throughout the world.

March 10:00 AM Worship Servers

If you are unable to serve on your scheduled date, please switch with someone, and notify the office and Roy H. If you have any questions, please contact Roy at 616-915-6258 or at GrandRapidsMorris@comcast.net. Altar Server, unless otherwise noted, is Deacon Kim H.

March 3 - Transfiguration of Our Lord

Readers: Dale H. & Kathy T.
Assisting Minister: Esther Y.-P.
Acolyte: Joshua S.

March 6 - Ash Wednesday

Readers: George D. & Paul K.

March 10 - First Sunday in Lent

Readers: Dan W. & Rich W.
Assisting Minister: Lisbeth E.
Acolyte: Meaghan M.

March 17 - Second Sunday in Lent

Readers: Shelly M. & Dale H.
Assisting Minister: Chuck M.
Acolyte: Beth B.

March 24 - Third Sunday in Lent

Readers: Jan S. & Lisbeth E.
Assisting Minister: Dan W.
Acolyte: Paul K.

March 31 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Readers: Agnes K. & Esther Y.-P.
Assisting Minister: Connie E.
Acolyte: O.D. H.

MARCH 2019 CALENDAR

Sat Mar 2	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	EDWM Bishop's Workshop
Sun. Mar 3	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	Worship w/o Music Worship w/Music
Mon. Mar 4	7:00 p.m.	Centering Prayer
Tues. Mar 5	5:15 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday J2A Pancake Supper
Wed. Mar 6	10:00 a.m. 10:45 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist Bible Study Ash Wednesday Service
Thurs. Mar 7	9:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	TOPS Diaper Depot Open Morris Dancers
Sun. Mar 10	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	Worship w/o Music Worship w/Music
Mon. Mar 11	9:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Sr. Foot Care Taize Service @ St. Mary's
Wed. Mar 13	10:00 a.m. 10:45 a.m.	Holy Eucharist Bible Study
Thurs. Mar 14	9:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	TOPS Morris Dancers Happy Souls

Sat. Mar 16	10:00 a.m.	Warm-Up America @ St. Matthew
Sun. Mar 17	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	Worship w/o Music Worship w/Music
Wed. Mar 20	10:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 10:45 a.m.	Diaper Depot Open Holy Eucharist Bible Study
Thurs. Mar 21	9:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	TOPS Comm. Min. @ Kim's Morris Dancers Happy Souls
Sun. Mar 24	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	Worship w/o Music Worship w/Music <i>Newsletter deadline</i>
Mon. Mar 25	7:00 p.m.	Centering Prayer
Wed. Mar 27	10:00 a.m. 10:45 a.m.	Holy Eucharist Bible Study
Thurs. Mar 28	9:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	TOPS Happy Souls Morris Dancers
Sat. Mar 30	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Council/Vestry Retreat
Sun. Mar 31	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	Worship w/o Music Worship w/Music