

Pastor's Report for March 2024 Council Meeting

I am sensing the Holy Spirit at work in our congregation through our strong caring ministries, the bonds being formed in the Discipleship Experience, the sounds and presence of children and young families in our worship, our ecumenical collaborations, the next stage of our RIC journey, our vitalized liturgies, our shared work of trying to gracefully accommodate one another in worship, and the excellent leadership on the CDC board. I am eager for this 2024 Church Council to help us live into our identified focus for the year: welcome and witness.

Please consider attending the 6-session study on the draft ELCA social statement on civic life and faith. As the national presidential election heats up, it is important for us to consider what faithful Christian discipleship looks like in relation to our civic responsibilities. You can read a draft of the statement at <https://bit.ly/CivicLifeFaithDraft>. We will meet Sundays April 28, May 5, May 26, June 2, June 9, and June 30 from 11 am-Noon in the PLC.

Lent has been a deep and fruitful season at Mount Cross and I am looking forward to our Holy Week services and the joyful "Alleluias" of Easter.

Lent Highlights

- The Seven Last Words study on Wednesday evenings with St. Columba's
- Soup Suppers sponsored by different ministries – the donations will be split between Many Meals and the St. Columba's Food Pantry
- Holden Evening Prayer with messages related to *Love Without Limits* (thank you to our speakers – Allison Johnson, Carina McVeigh, Vicky Edell, Lyndsay Mountour, and Bill Stoll.)
- Amanda Berg's ordination on March 16 at Ascension Lutheran

Holy Week and Easter Plans

Again, it has been encouraging to work with our full communion partners in planning for the Great Three Days.

- Maundy Thursday (3/28) will be at 7 p.m. St. Columba's. I will be the preacher.
- The Good Friday (3/29) cross procession will start from Mount Cross at 5 p.m. and end at Camarillo UMC in time for the service there at 7 p.m.
- The Easter Vigil (3/30) will be at Mount Cross at 7 p.m. Claire Johnson will be baptized. (Action needed to approve the membership of Claire Johnson by Baptism and David Dupuis by Affirmation of Baptism).
- Easter Sunday Worship at Mount Cross is at 9:30 a.m. See Joe's notes for details about the Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt.

Regular Rhythms of Worship, Preaching, Pastoral Care and Meetings

Although it feels like there are always things left undone, I am generally finding the regular rhythms of ministry to be sustainable, thanks to great lay leadership at Mount Cross and an excellent staff. The Men's and Women's Bible Studies are solid and grace-filled for those who attend. Pre-school chapel time makes my heart sing. I attend as many committee meetings as possible, respond to urgent pastoral needs as they arise, and try to schedule at least a few in-office appointments or in-home visits each week. I want to make sure I'm not missing anyone who needs pastoral care. Please be quick to make needs known to me and support a culture at Mount Cross where people can express their needs to others.

Sabbatical Planning and Time Away

- I will be away August 26 – Nov. 30 (1 week vacation, 13 weeks sabbatical), returning for the first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1. We are beyond fortunate that Pastor Scott Maxwell-Doherty will be able to fill-in for that entire time. I am working with the Executive Committee to finalize that agreement. We are looking at an arrangement where he is here every Sunday, on call throughout the week for pastoral emergencies, in touch with the staff and leadership during the week, and serving as needed for ½ a day each week. \$6,000 has been accrued to cover this expense, but we will need an additional \$6,000. The Treasurer suggests it come from unallocated Endowment grants.
- For Continuing Education, I will attend a conference called CREDO April 16 -22 in Oakhurst, California for Episcopal Clergy. Pastor Scott Maxwell-Doherty will be the supply pastor April 21.
- I will be on vacation June 13-27. Pastor Scott Maxwell-Doherty will be the supply pastor June 16-23.