



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

You can see that work on the Elevator installation and Breezeway replacement continues. This summer, multiple layers of old flooring in Fellowship Hall and the Kitchen will be removed and a new floor will be installed. After that, new underground wiring must be run for the exterior lights in the parking lot and brighter light fixtures installed. And after that, the exterior foundation of the entire Parish House needs to be dug up and waterproofed to keep out moisture.

If you have not yet contributed to the Capital Campaign, there is still much to do. Your special offerings to the Capital Campaign, over and above your regular offerings, will help us accomplish many tasks to make our campus more accessible and welcoming. If you would like to receive a pledge card, email Karen McClain at [office@augustustrappe.org](mailto:office@augustustrappe.org). She would be pleased to send you the card.

Please be sure to keep your current offerings up-to-date, too. Those current offerings pay for the program budget of our parish and are needed regularly and consistently. When all of us do our part, worship takes place, the faith is taught, and our neighbors in need can be helped.

May the God of glory dwell in you richly, name you his beloved, and shine brightly on your path.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Weleck



## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

2017 marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. **You are invited to join us in our new Bible study on Martin Luther “A Man Named Martin: Part 1: The Man”.** The study started on Sunday, January 29, 9:15AM in the library, but we invite you to join us at any time! Each session has a video and discussion guide. All are welcome to join us!

*Nearly 500 years ago, an unknown monk from a backwater town in Germany, set in motion a movement that would literally transform Western civilization.*

The impact Martin Luther had on the growth and development of Christianity is enormous. But *how* did this unknown miner's son change the world? In this Lutheran Hour Ministries' Bible study, we will examine the life and times of this religious reformer. From his humble beginnings in Germany to his indefatigable work to understand Scripture and share the truths of the Bible, Martin Luther inspired a Reformation that reverberates throughout Christendom to this day.

**The Annual Congregational Meeting** to receive a report on the previous year's actual income and expenses, receive reports from committees and organizations, and act on any new business, will take place on Sunday, February 12, 2017, after the 10:30 AM service. Copies of the bulletin of reports for this meeting will be available after each service on Sunday, February 5, 2017.

### Who can vote at the Congregational Meeting?

**Voting members** are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation.



## From Our Hearts and Hands



Augustus ladies send help and love around the world. In 2016 the Hearts and Hands circle of Augustus's WELCA group made 35 quilts for Lutheran World Relief and 25 afghans and 56 crocheted hats for Laurel House. You may remember seeing all those quilts and afghans displayed in the sanctuary last November. We are continually inspired by our own beloved Bert Long who led this group for so many years. Did you know that for many years Bert herself made 100 quilts a year? That's 2 quilts a week! What an amazing lady she was.

We're looking to widen our circle and spread even more love around the world. We meet on the first Wednesday and third Tuesday of every month at 9:30am in the quilting room in the basement of the parish house. If you can't come we welcome your help at home – knitting, crocheting, cutting fabric, or sewing together squares. Your hearts and hands are always most appreciated. We may never know who receives these creations but we know they are making a difference in people's lives around the globe.

***Want more info? Contact Mildred Stuffle at [jandmstuffle@verizon.net](mailto:jandmstuffle@verizon.net).***

## Vestry Contacts 2017

Vestry Members	Special Area	Home Phone	E-mail Address
Gary Wessner	<i>President/Property</i>	610-454-0106	gtwess@comcast.net
Richard Allebach	<i>Vice President</i>	610-948-3488	dallebach@verizon.net
Brian O'Hara	<i>Secretary/Worship &amp; Music</i>	610-489-0417	brian.ohara24@gmail.com
Cynthia Snyder	<i>Treasurer/Mutual Ministry</i>	610-409-8333	yosua@aol.com
Jeanne Funk	<i>Comm. &amp; Tech.</i>	610-792-3830	jfunk@kpinterface.com
John Kochel	<i>Outreach/Mutual Min.</i>	484-945-0100	John.Kochel@thrivent.com
Janice Reiff	<i>Parish Life</i>	610-385-7493	janicetreiff@gmail.com
Janet Stokes	<i>Parish Life</i>	610-948-8554	sjastokes@aol.com
Deb Augustine	<i>Christian Education</i>	610-489-3869	Anniedwebb@verizon.net
Bob Rodenberger	<i>Trust Fund Treasurer</i>	610-489-3280	r.rodenberger7@gmail.com
Jack Schatz	<i>Old Church</i>	610-489-3176	
Karl Stefan	<i>Cemetery/Mutual Ministry</i>	610-454-0373	kssurf@verizon.net

## Holy Baptism

Holy Baptism was administered to Abigail Marie Schwirian on Sunday, January 15, 2017 during the 10:30 am service. Abigail is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Schwirian and the granddaughter of Mr. John Schwirian. May God bless this little one and her family as she begins her journey of faith.



## *Sympathy and Prayers*

Sympathy and Prayers are offered to the family of Mr. Wayne Adams, recently deceased. Mr. Adams was the husband of Susan Adams and a long-time member of Augustus.

Sympathy and Prayers are offered to the family of Mr. William Oelschlager. Mr. Oelschlager was the brother of Ron Oelschlager.

May God grant eternal rest to Wayne and William, and comfort to their families during this difficult time.

## *A Gentle Reminder*

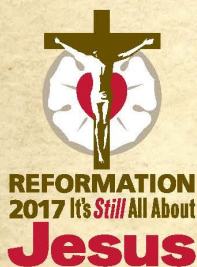
The generations of faithful Lutherans that have gone before us have left us a great legacy at Augustus Lutheran Church. Please do your part to keep our buildings neat, clean, and presentable to the many friends and visitors we welcome throughout each week of the year.

## FACES OF THE REFORMATION

### ULRICH (HULDRYCH) ZWINGLI

Born: Jan. 1, 1484 | Wildhaus, Switzerland

Died: Oct. 11, 1531 | Kappel, Switzerland



LutheranReformation.org

© 2016 LCMS

## Swiss reformer who debated Luther on Christ's real presence in the Sacrament of the Altar

**ULRICH ZWINGLI IS A COMPLICATED CHARACTER IN THE STORY OF THE REFORMATION.** He begins his career as a happy political instrument in service to the pope and ends it dying at the hands of Catholic forces. He is a reformer — like Martin Luther — but unfortunately believes that Luther has not gone far enough in his reforms. Zwingli's theology becomes shaped not only by the Bible but also by the rationalist philosophies of humanists such as Erasmus.

Born in Switzerland only weeks after Luther, Zwingli receives a Master of Arts degree from the University of Basel in 1506 and becomes a priest in Glarus later that same year. He remains in Glarus for 10 years and becomes politically active, taking the side of the papacy in military battles and even accompanying the soldiers in battle as a chaplain. As the mood of the country shifts away from the pope, Zwingli takes his cue and leaves Glarus and takes a two-year sabbatical before going to Zurich to serve in a parish in 1518. During his sabbatical, he serves at a Benedictine abbey in Einsiedeln and there begins to read the church fathers and classical historians. He corresponds regularly with Erasmus and increasingly adopts the Dutch humanist's rational approach to the Scriptures. Zwingli's time in Einsiedeln begins to form his theology and influences his preaching when he arrives in Zurich in 1518.

It is in Zurich that Zwingli's theology coalesces and the Swiss Reformed Church finds a leader. Surviving the plague in 1520 helps to deepen this theological maturity. He begins a series of sermons on Matthew, Acts and Paul's epistles to Timothy, turning his time in the pulpit into a Bible study — something unheard of during a Catholic Mass. Like Luther, he preaches against indulgences and the authority of the pope, emphasizing the doctrines of Sola Scriptura and justification by faith. Zwingli formally breaks with the Catholic Church in 1521 and later marries. But unlike Luther, he advocates the removal of images in the church and the abolishment of the mass.

Zwingli begins to write in opposition to Luther and his teachings of the real presence. In 1529, a meeting in Marburg, Germany, is organized in an attempt to politically unite all Protestants. Both Luther and Zwingli attend and agree on 14 points of doctrine. However, even after heated discussions, they cannot agree on the 15th point: how to understand Christ's Words of Institution. Luther will not budge in his belief that Jesus is bodily present in the Holy Supper, citing passages such as 1 Cor. 10:16 and 11:25–29 and writing the Lord's words "This is my body" on the table where the two were holding their debate. Luther showed that it was up to Zwingli to prove that "is" must mean "signifies" or "merely represents." This he could not do. Therefore, an alliance between the two reformers could not be realized.

The city council of Zurich supported Zwingli and voted to make the city Protestant. The city council was then given authority normally reserved for the church and began to run the day-to-day activities of the church. When hostilities arose between Catholics in Schwyz and the Protestants of Zurich, a battle ensued (1531). The Protestants were badly outnumbered, and Zwingli, again acting as chaplain to the soldiers, died on the battlefield. His body was then quartered and burned to prevent the reformer from enjoying a proper burial.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
ConcordiaHistoricalInstitute.org

Thanks to all for welcoming Dr. Rob Horton as our organist on January 22, and to all who were able to come to my recital in the afternoon. What a wonderful day! On February 26, many members of our choir will be travelling to Holy Trinity Lutheran in Lancaster in a "choir swap." Dr. Rob Horton and the choir from Holy Trinity will be here at Augustus that day, sharing music with you at the 10:30 service while I and Augustus' choir are in Lancaster.

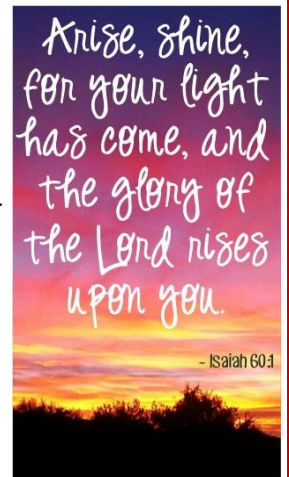
A little of Holy Trinity's history: Formally organized in 1730, Holy Trinity's sanctuary was dedicated in 1766 by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Muhlenberg's youngest son, Gotthilf Henry Ernst Muhlenberg, was its longest serving pastor (1780-1815). So Trinity shares the Muhlenberg history with us!

Some news from the loft: Our bell choir is welcoming new ringers: Katy and Judy Bubeck, and Dylan and Jeannie Funk. We also welcome BACK to the bell choir Alan Shunk and Susan Adams. Bells will ring in church later this month.

This month, the church season of Epiphany continues. "Light" is one of the central themes in Epiphany. During Advent, the world was in darkness, and we prayed and waited for the Coming Light. At Christmas the Light shone forth, but seen only by a few around the crib: Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. But at Epiphany the Light bursts forth to all nations and the prophecy is fulfilled: "The Gentiles shall walk in Thy light, and kings in the brightness of Thy rising."

Arise! Shine! Your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you!

~Laurie Mueller



*Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.*

Martin Luther King Jr.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our Sunday school students are spending the winter hearing the stories of Jesus' life. Jesus calls his disciples, teaches us how to pray and to love one another, calms a storm, blesses children and heals the blind. He calls us to be like him—to pray, love, and calm the storms around us. He shows us how to be a blessing to our children and a light to the blind.

Sometimes we adults forget that education is an important part of our own faith formation—it's not just for children. Winter is a good time to curl up and read or re-read one of the Christian classics. *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard J. Foster, *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis and, of course, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer are all masterworks that remind us of the heart of Christianity. Our Sunday morning adult class is also a great place to enrich your Christian education. In this year of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, they have begun a new study on Martin Luther and invite all to join them.

Our teenagers are also continuing their faith formation through study, fellowship and service. On January 4<sup>th</sup> our middle and high school students were enriched by a visit from some members of a local veterans group. These men described their call to serve their country in difficult times and places—and how the scars resulting from their service are with them today. We are very blessed to live in a nation where we can freely worship God and we must not forget the sacrifices that have been made on our behalf.

Grace & peace,  
Sonya Sowards



# DINNER AT AUGUSTUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

**DATE: February 4, 2017      TIME: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm      PLACE: Fellowship Hall**

**COST: Free. Donations will be accepted to support the Augustus Lutheran Soup Kitchen Outreach program.**

You, your family and friends are invited to a delicious meal of Penne Pasta with Meat Sauce, Spaghetti, Soup, Salad, Fruit and home-made desserts in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 4. Dinner will be served between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Reservations are not necessary and you may arrive at your convenience. There is no cost for the meal; however, you may make a donation towards the Soup Kitchen Outreach.


There will also be information for anyone who wants to learn more about volunteering for the Soup Kitchen. Our congregation provides a full meal to needy individuals once per month at St. John's Episcopal Church in Norristown. Volunteers are needed to serve the meal in Norristown, or to cook an entrée or dessert at home. We welcome anyone who can help once per year, twice per year or more often.

Please plan now to drop-in for dinner at Augustus on February 4. The Soup Kitchen Outreach appreciates your support. And, any donations will be supplemented by the Upper Montgomery Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

*"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in."*  
(Matthew 25:35)



## February *Worship Assistants*

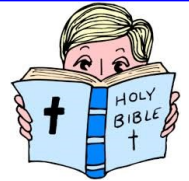
Altar Servers:	Acolyte	Crucifer	Torch Bearers
February 5	Owen Slack	Jennifer Beattie	
February 12	Kevin Beattie	Liz Wentworth	
February 19	Owen Slack	Daniel Reiser	
February 26	Brianna Dubeck	Shayna King	
Readers	8:00 am	10:30 am Lector	10:30 am Prayers
February 5	Earl Catagnus, Jr.	Cynthia Snyder	Jennifer Wentworth
February 12	Ron Hess	Chris Dogonniuck	Brian Funk
February 19	Sandy Trauger	Jeannie Funk	John Kochel
February 26	Sunday School Readers	Sunday School Readers	Sunday School Readers
Communion Assistants	<b>8:00 am: Debra Augustine</b>		
February 5	John Kochel and David Schweitzer		
February 12	Janice Reiff and Bob Rodendberger		
February 19	Barbara Burch and Janice Reiff		
February 26	Jeannie Funk and Brian Funk		
Ushers	Contact Dick Allebach		
Offering Tabulation	Janet Stokes, Jack Schatz, and Gary Wessner		
Altar Guild			
February	8:00 am: Sally Sweeney & Debra Augustine 10:30 am: Jim Lien and Linda Romano		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> Brianna Betz	<b>2</b> Cassidy Hones Joseph Swan	<b>3</b> Matthew Kennedy Jr. Tony Olecki	<b>4</b> Lorraine Betz Caitlin Cunningham Nathan Ottinger
<b>5</b> Jennifer Maurer Brett Schulz	<b>6</b> Avery Benner Nancy Bunting Dylan Firth Stephen Gara John Hamilton Curtis Watro Jerry Wentworth	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Cathy Engel/ Menendez	<b>9</b> Mona Chylack Margaret Coburn Rebecca Wilson	<b>10</b> Teresa Sagwitz	<b>11</b> Amanda Lemon David Linsenbigler Christina Mason Schad
<b>12</b> Jeffrey Stuffle	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Jeff Bauder Tresa Franz Griffin Henze McKenzie Peters	<b>15</b> Allison Bentz David Kemmerer	<b>16</b> Sandra Kirsche Jake Smith	<b>17</b> Donna Pakkala John Wentworth IV Jeffrey Wentworth	<b>18</b> Taylor Brennan Douglas Stearly
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Renee Bar Ellen Davis Thomas Lachenmayer Alfred Paul	<b>21</b> Andrew Keim Brent Wagenseller	<b>22</b> Olivia Hart Elizabeth Staples	<b>23</b> Mary Reese Robert Yost III	<b>24</b> Jeni Gara Carol Oelschlager	<b>25</b> Susan Landis
<b>26</b> Paul Hernandez Connor Slaybaugh Charlotte Wentworth	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Phillip Lien Ally Napier				



## WELCA Bible Study on Winter Break

The SEPA-WELCA, Upper Montgomery Cluster, First Tuesday of the Month Bible Studies will **not** be held on January and February 2017 due to concerns about bad winter weather. Please study *Galatians 2:19-3:29* and *Galatians 1:1-3:29* "*Children of God through faith*" as Home Study lessons. The Bible Studies will resume on Tuesday, March 7th at St. Mark Lutheran, 81 N. Main St. in Pennsburg, at 10:00 a.m. The lesson will be from Galatians 3:24-4:30 – "Heirs of the promise." Kitty Pell will be the Study Leader. Please bring your Bibles and your edition of the Gather magazine. Thank you for your faithful attendance. Please call Fran Ivarson if you need a ride to St. Mark's.



## Augustus Book Club

The January meeting of the Augustus Book Club will be held on **February 20, 2017** at 7:30 pm in the Vestry Lounge. We will be discussing:

### A Candle in the Darkness

by Lynne Austin

New members are always welcome. Come to discuss the book and get to know some new folks!

Refreshments are always served.

Questions?: Contact Karen McClain

610-489-9625 or office@augustustrappe.org



## Resolving to become more involved at church?

Worship Assistants are always needed and welcome!

Contact the church office for more information about one of the ways you can help!

Most commitments are short term, and we could use your help!

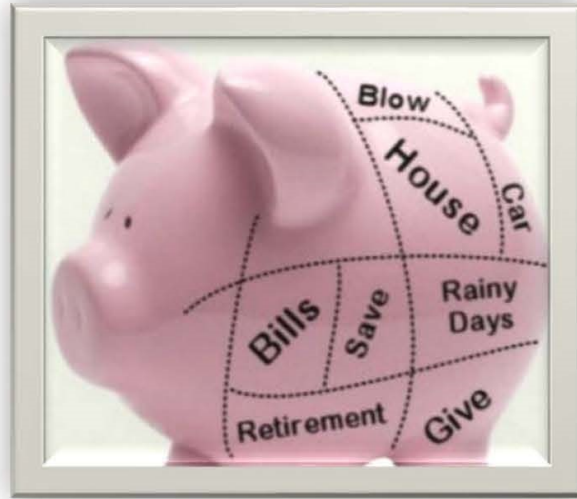


# Money Matters

## *Personal Financial Stewardship*

A budget is a spending plan. You develop a budget to plan your monthly expenditures. The plan determines in advance how much of your income you are comfortable allocating to each spending area. Your income and spending allocations will be defined by your values and interests.

In developing your budget as a Christian, one of your first tasks will be to examine the priorities that God has directly revealed in his Word. Basically, there are four general budget categories that are clearly mandated: giving, saving, living expenses, and debt repayment.



**Giving is part of the budget:** God's Word directs us to give him our first and best. In Proverbs 3:9 we read, "*Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.*" The Apostle Paul wrote, "*On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income*" (1 Corinthians 16:2). Giving demonstrates our gratitude for who God is and what he has done for us.

**Saving is part of the budget:** To prepare for emergencies and to have resources so you can achieve your financial goals, saving is essential. In Proverbs 21:20 God shares his wisdom regarding saving: "*In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.*"

**Living expenses are part of the budget:** If you have not previously developed a budget, you could be struggling to discover a reasonable allocation for your lifestyle that you can afford. An important first step is to distinguish between what you need versus what you want. Jesus said, "*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*" (Luke 12:15). What you allocate for your living expenses should be established with the money that is left after giving and saving.

**Debt repayment is part of the budget:** In Scripture, God warns you to be cautious about debt. God's Word does not forbid you from borrowing money, but it does discourage it. "*The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender*" (Proverbs 22:7). The Bible is clear as to your responsibility to repay money that you borrow.

In order to avoid dependence on others and to set a good example, you should develop a budget. If you include the four above parts within your budget, you will gain control of your money.

## Social Ministry Committee

Thank you to the Congregation and especially the Sunday School for your support of our Hats and Gloves Tree. Seventy-two pairs of gloves and fifty-one hats were delivered to Silver Springs Martin Luther School in early January.



*As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit – we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world.*

**Augustus’ Women/ELCA December Special Activities:**

1. **Augustus Women/ELCA hosted the assembly of Christmas baskets** for the sick & shut-ins of Augustus on Saturday, December 17, 2016. Many thanks to Thrivent Financial for helping to defray the cost of the supplies, to Fran Ivarson for chairing this event and to all the volunteers who helped to assemble & deliver the baskets – Alisha Allebach, Emily Allebach, Nancy Allebach Berg, Barbara Burch, Dave Ivarson, Fran Ivarson, Dale O’Hara, Pat O’Hara, Gemma Patten, Deb Scholl, Ann Walker, Jennifer Wentworth & Gary Wessner. A great church caring about those people less fortunate.



2. **Augustus’ Women/ELCA hosted “Girl’s Night Out”** at Painting With A Twist in Royersford, PA, on Monday night, December 19, 2016. Many thanks to Deb Scholl for organizing this awesome event with awesome people.

**The following ladies participated:**

Top row from left to right is Ann Walker, Deb Scholl, Sonya Sowers, Laurie Mueller, Sandy Trauger

Bottom row from left to right is Kathleen Wilkins, Sherry Jessee, Mildred Stuffle, Dale O’Hara, Fran Ivarson.







**SEPA Women/ELCA Upper Montgomery Conference First Tuesday Bible Study** will not be meeting in February due to concerns regarding inclement weather. The next bible study will be held on Tuesday March 7, 2017, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Pennsburg, PA. Coffee & treats begin at 9:30am and the Bible study begins at 10:00am. In March the topic is "Heirs of the Promise" taken from Galatians 3:24-4:31. Kitty Pell is the study leader. Please bring your Bibles and your March edition of the Gather magazine. Please try to attend. All women and girls are invited. Please contact Fran Ivarson at 610-489-4969 if you have any questions or if you would like to carpool.

**The Hearts & Hands Committee** continues to meet twice a month on the 1st Wednesday & the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 9:30am in Augustus' quilting room. During this time as one of their projects, ladies make quilts for Lutheran World Relief. A wonderful committee coming together to help those in need. In February the workshop will be held on February 1 and February 21. New members are welcome. For more information, please contact Mildred Stuffle at 610-489-7461.

**Tenth Triennial Gathering of Women/ELCA** in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from July 13 – 16, 2017, is now open for registration. The registration book can be downloaded from WELCATG.ORG or see Dale O'Hara for information. The theme for the Gathering is "All Anew".

**Please continue to Save the Following Items** and place them in the appropriate box in the **Lower Narthex** of the church: Redner's Tapes, eyeglasses, General Mills Box Tops for Education, and your old smartphones/cell phones/ipads/ipods. We are no longer collecting Campbell soup labels.

**Spring Turkey Dinner & Vendor Fair** will be held on Saturday, April 29, 2017. Save the date! More information will follow.

### **Schedule Of Events**

- Feb 1: Hearts and Hands Workshop 9:30am  
7: No Upper Montg Conference Bible Study  
21: Hearts and Hands Workshop 9:30am  
28: Augustus' Committee Night in the Chapel 7:00pm
- Mar 1: Ash Wednesday / Hearts and Hands Workshop 9:30am  
7: Upper Montg Conference Bible Study @ St. Mark's LC, Pennsburg – 9:30am  
Topic: "Heirs of the Promise" Galatians 3:24-4:31 Study Leader: Kitty Pell  
21: Hearts and Hands Workshop 9:30am  
28: Augustus' Committee Night in the Chapel 7:00pm

.....Dale O'Hara.....



**SMARTPHONE  
& CELL PHONE  
COLLECTION**



**Please donate your smartphones  
& cell phones to benefit:**

Augustus Lutheran Church  
Women of the ELCA

Money will be earned for every phone.  
Help us reach our goal today!

SMARTPHONE  
RECYCLING.com 800-203-1506  
SmartphoneRecycling.com

### **WELCA COLLECTS ELECTRONICS!**

***Please note the following when donating***

**Regarding the collection of old smartphones/cell phones/ipads/ipods**, please do not include chargers or other accessories. If you are recycling an iPhone, please turn off "Find My iPhone". Go to settings > iCloud, turn off "Find My iPhone". Please place all smartphones, cell phones, ipads, and ipods in the appropriate recycling box on the church's windowsill in the lower narthex.

# Sharing God's Bounty

## Have a Heart

**F**ebruary: the month devoted to love. Stores are filled with heart-shaped boxes of candy and heart-shaped cards and vases of flowers with heart-shaped gift tags. All this is available for the consumer so that he can find the appropriate expression of his devotion to his loved one. If that expression of love has been preceded by a year of thoughtful and loving words and deeds, it is welcomed and cherished by the recipient. If not, it is just an empty ritual, done out of duty rather than true devotion.



Our relationship to the Lord is similar. God, too, desires our sincere devotion, not empty lip service. *“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me’ ”* (Isaiah 29:13).

Stewardship is serving, helping, giving, but love is the basis for stewardship. Without love, our good deeds are empty and without merit. The first act of true stewardship is to *“love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength”* (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus called this the most important commandment (Mark 12:29, 30). With that love for the Lord in us, we are enabled to be good stewards. Then we can do acts of good stewardship, acts of true devotion. We are enabled to . . .

- *“Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart”* (Deuteronomy 15:10).
- *“Carefully observe [his decrees and laws] with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deuteronomy 26:16).
- *“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality”* (Romans 12:13).
- *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”* (Colossians 3:23).

God, through Ezekiel, promised, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27). This promise he has fulfilled in his Son, Jesus, who has followed his Father’s decrees and kept his laws for us. As we strive to live fruitful lives of stewardship, at the same time, we rest in Christ who has been the perfect steward for us.



*Tithing is an outgrowth of a sense of thankfulness. Since God’s mercies are constant and unending, our response should be of the same nature in proportion to our ability. The “grace of gratitude” has high rating in the Christian standard of virtues. It is developed by saying “Thank you” to God. At the entrance to life abounding stands the cross of self-denial.*