

The Seeker

Our Saviour Lutheran Church Newsletter

March 2026

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Reflection and Book Review

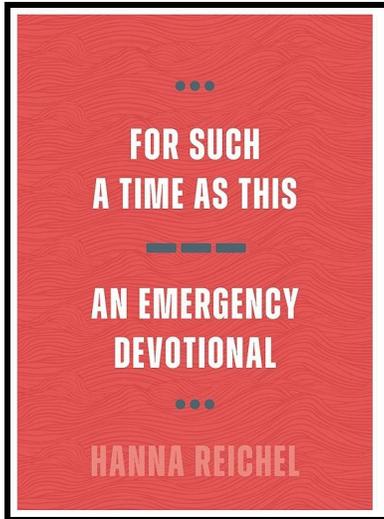
By Rev Dr Justin Johnson

I am writing this during the third week of Lent and it is hard to believe we are just weeks away from Holy Week. This season has flown by so far and Spring is in the air.

As I've thought about this newsletter article, I wondered what I could share with all of you. These have been difficult times and it seems there is worse news every single week. I am often asked, what keeps me hopeful and I can share at times, it has been very difficult. What keeps me hopeful though is prayer and grounding.

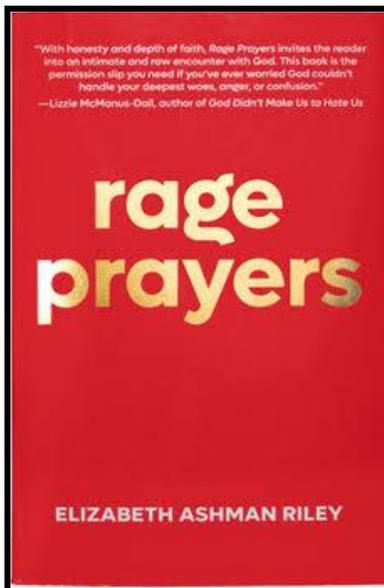
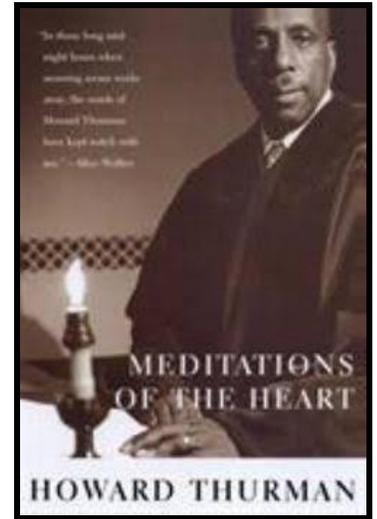
I pray daily for the news, for you, and for my own ministry. I find prayer and meditation is so helpful during these times. I often sit in silence, steady my breath, and listen to the voice of the holy spirit. I've often enjoyed that God speaks in a whisper in Scriptures or God's wisdom is trying to shout over a noisy marketplace, so we have to still and be present to listen.

I also use devotionals a lot and stay grounded in my own devotional life. I've purchased a few recently that I would like to share with you.



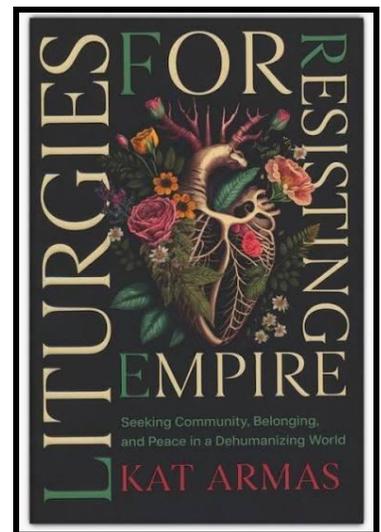
The first was a recommendation from a colleague and it is the pick for the Episcopal Diocese in Metro NY. There are chapters on hope, joy, and what does it mean to stay grounded during this time.

The second is a classic work that I have turned to time and time again. Howard Thurman is a writer I absolutely love. He was the spiritual advisor to Martin Luther King Jr. His story is so interesting, if you read his autobiography. He also wrote a series of prayer books in the 1960s and this is his most classic.



I had a chance to meet Elizabeth Ashman Riley recently as she was doing her book tour for this book. She is very active on social media as well, so if you like her stuff, she posts every day. This takes prayer from a different perspective and opens up prayer to be honest and vulnerable.

Finally, this was an impulse buy. Kat Armas is a Cuban American who writes from a liberation theology perspective. Liberation theology can be pretty shocking at first to people being introduced to it, but it comes from those being oppressed with hope that the oppressor is overthrown.



Hope those help. If you want to thumb through some, please let me know and I will put them in my office. Happy Easter and happy hoping!

Let's Have Some Fun

By Marilyn Grantner

The church council is hoping to offer some ways to bring our church community together, having fun and being creative. It will also be great to spread this cheer to our Croton on Hudson community.

On Sundays March 8th and 15th, during coffee hour, we will be making "Spring letters" to be included in the Croton Caring food deliveries on March 29th. We will have paper, envelopes, stickers, crayons, pens and other supplies on tables to create letters. You can write a short spring message to uplift the recipients. Since we do not know the spiritual beliefs or the recipients we ask for non-religious messages. I will have some samples available on the tables as well. Croton Caring reports they will need 75 to 80 letters. They are excited to be able to include some art work and positive messages in each delivery they make.

Last week Pastor Justin mentioned there will be pot luck on Sunday April 12th. The theme of this will be "Holy Humor Sunday". Everyone needs a good laugh once in the while. A way to continue the Easter celebration, it comes from the early church tradition of Bright Sunday. The week after Resurrection DAY was a time of joy and laughter. Churches actively encouraged the faithful to be merry and celebrate the miracle of Christ's Resurrection. Communities would often throw parties with dances, jokes and even pranks.

There will be a bright orange poster available at coffee hour to sign up for what you would like to bring. Let's try to put some humor in this day. If you think of something to add some fun, let someone in council know. It is an opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor. I look forward to having a good time.

March Stewardship Memo

By Marilyn Grantner

This year has been quite a snowy one so far. Everyone has been busy shoveling the snow, staying warm and caring for family and neighbors needing help. When we establish the church budget for an upcoming year, there is no way to foresee such emergent needs. So far this year the church has had extra expenses for heavy snow removal. The hot water heater in the church also had to be replaced unexpectedly.

Church council members always try to keep costs down while still maintaining our safe buildings. I ask you to consider making financial donations to offset the extra expenses the church has incurred. These donations can be labeled for property maintenance which will steer them to meet the right needs.

Thank you for your assistance.

A Note From the Treasurer

By Bryan Montgomery

Hello! Is it Spring yet? I hope so for multiple reasons. I thought perhaps I should open this piece with a joke to make it more entertaining - but I failed. If anyone has a joke for the next newsletter let me know :)

Having entered all the financial information for the first two months, I'm glad to say that our income is just over 1% higher from last year. That said, last year we felt that we could stretch our budget on the income side; so, compared to the budget passed last fall, we are some ways behind. If you are able to help close the gap that would be great, also if you have any ideas for how we can better utilize our property and hall to grow our income, please let us know.

Not surprisingly, the expenses are less rosy. We were somewhat lulled into false hope after recent years. Given this winter with the cold temperatures, and the plentiful snow the expense for our utilities are significantly more than we planned for. It is not catastrophic, but it does have us more in the red than we were hoping for. Hopefully it all gets better from here!

Looking forward to the next season!

Thank You! Melanie's Retirement Party



Despite wintry weather, folks turned out on January 18th for a special coffee hour to celebrate and thank Melanie Mueller for her 23 years of service as Our Saviour's office administrator!

Over her tenure, many in the community and congregation knew Melanie as the face of the church office. Melanie's efforts, diligence, and thought have been important to nearly every aspect of the church's connection to the congregation and the community.

The event was a wonderful occasion to thank Melanie (and her husband John!) for

her dedicated service to the church and, by extension, to all of us. Of course, Melanie and John remain members and friends, so the fellowship with them will continue long after Melanie's well-earned retirement. But when you see Melanie, please join us all in thanking her for everything she's done!



History We Must Remember

The presentation at our church on March 7 by Holocaust survivor Dr. Annie Kleinhaus was a valuable reminder of a very dark period in the history of the twentieth century. Dr. Kleinhaus was invited to speak in Croton by a group of local clergy and village officials. I'm proud that our church hosted the presentation and the Council thanks Pastor Johnson for his leadership in bringing this about. This is another result of our continuing effort to place the church as a center of the local community.



Dr. Kleinhaus, who was a child at the time, recounted the series of harrowing experiences she and her family went through. Through luck and survival skills, they were able to make it through the war and were eventually reunited and able to come to the United States and tell their story. Most European Jews were not so fortunate. Nazi Germany murdered about 6 million Jews,

two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population, as well as millions of other civilians and POWs. When Karen and I traveled to Israel in 2022, I had the opportunity to visit the Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem and hear the amazing story of a different Holocaust survivor. While genocide has occurred throughout human history, the massive scale at that time is particularly horrifying.

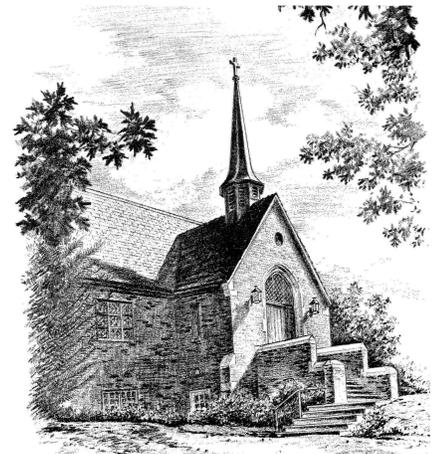
Most of the 90 or so who attended the presentation at our church were older people, who presumably would already have been familiar with the Holocaust. For younger people, this period may seem like ancient history. Nevertheless, it is important to hear these first-hand stories while there are still a few people left to tell them, particularly given the current political climate.





Council Members

- Marilyn Grantner, Co-secretary, Stewardship Committee
- David Greffenius, Property Committee
- Hannah Johnson
- Eleanor Keil, Worship and Music Committee
- John Magerlein, President
- Larry Moy, Vice President, Mutual Ministry Committee
- Matt Papertsian, Property Committee
- Jamie Polcari, Co-secretary, Christian Education Committee
- Eleanor Soderlund, Social Ministry, Evangelism, and Outreach Committee
- Justin Johnson, Pastor
- (*ex officio*) Bryan Montgomery, Treasurer



Our Saviour Lutheran Church
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March 2026

Today < > March 2026 ! 📅 🖨️ Month						
SUN Mar 1	MON 2	TUE 3	WED 4	THU 5	FRI 6	SAT 7
George Herbert, Second Sunday in Lent 10am Worship at						
PJ Off for the week						
John Wesley, die 3pm Afterschool						
		9:30am Christian 6:30pm AA	6:30pm NA	1pm Al Anon	9am Yoga 3 more	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
PJ Off for the week Daylight Saving 2 more						
		3pm Afterschool	9:30am Christian 6:30pm AA	6:30pm NA 7pm Weekly Bible	1pm Al Anon 9am Yoga 6:30pm AA	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Fourth Sunday in Lent 10am Worship at						
		3pm Afterschool	9:30am Christian 6:30pm AA	6:30pm NA 7pm Weekly Bible	1pm Al Anon 9am Yoga 6:30pm AA	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Fifth Sunday in Lent 10am Worship at						
		3pm Afterschool	9:30am Christian 6:30pm AA	Annunciation of the Lord 6:30pm NA 7pm Weekly Bible	1pm Al Anon 9am Altar Guild c 9am Yoga 6:30pm AA	
29	30	31	Apr 1	2	3	4
Sunday of the Passion 10am Worship at						
		Monday in Holy Week 3pm Afterschool	Tuesday in Holy Week 9:30am Christian 6:30pm AA	Wednesday in Holy Week 6:30pm NA 7pm Weekly Bible	Maundy Thursday 1pm Al Anon	Good Friday Resurrection of Christ 9am Yoga 2 more