



Mountain Mover

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH | MARCH 2026

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FAITH Schools

LUTHERAN SCHOOL WEEK
 March 1-7, 2026 • Celebrating 42 Years of Ministry

Rooted in Christ. Growing in Knowledge. Serving in Love.
 "Train up a child in the way he should go..." - Proverbs 22:6

FAITH IN ACTION: MARCH 2026

Help Support Our School!
 Donate Supplies or Give to Our School Wishlist!

Academic Excellence — Christ-Centered Learning — Serving Others in Love

School Wish List

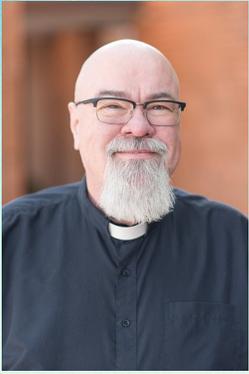
- Unscented Baby Wipes
- Clorox Wipes
- Lysol Spray
- Antibacterial Hand Soap
- Kleenex



Scan to donate Today

Pastor's Thoughts

by Pastor Marvin Havard, Senior Pastor



*Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
The path through noise and silence the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
Then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.*

*Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way;
Your hope burns through the terrors, your love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound;
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.*

*Divine eternal lover, you meet us on the road.
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow,
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.*

-Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993) (© 1991, GIA Publications, Inc)

This hymn by Sylvia Dunstan has become one of my favorite Lenten hymns over the years. We hear this imagery of faith as a journey. and it can seem a worn cliché. Often, things that have become cliché have some deep truth within.

I can only describe my own faith as a journey: from childhood with a simple acceptance of what was taught, through adolescence and young adulthood when questions and doubts became prominent, through desert patches where God seemed completely absent, into wilderness where faith seemed non-existent, and including those moments when faith has been refreshing and reinvigorating.

Faith is often described as a noun – an object we can possess. This can lead to the fear of losing faith or of never achieving a perfected faith. For me, faith no longer is a destination but a process: a willingness to continue the journey without understanding the endpoint or even needing to have a destination to achieve. In Dunstan's imagery, faith is found on the road, in the walking through the various experiences of life. Sometimes trusting that God is present and other times questioning God's very existence. We often focus on the "lands of promise where milk and honey flow." God doesn't wait for this place. God meets us on the very road we walk.

Notice, as well, that Dunstan doesn't classify faith as an individual pursuit. Repeatedly, we hear "all your people", "we yearn", "we are seeking", "you meet us". The tendency of European descent people to focus on the individual to the exclusion of the community allows us to ignore the plight of others and to focus only on our own faith journey. This is not possible. There is no such thing as a self-made person nor is there such a thing as a solely personal faith. We have all been shaped by others; we have all been taught and formed; and we all leave imprints upon those around us.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let the words of this and other hymns sink into your soul and remind you that we do not seek faith on our own. We need the support of our community. We need the challenge of rubbing against each other in our disagreements. We need the community to believe and have faith on our behalf when doubts and struggles become overwhelming. The destination is not the focus, the road on which we walk is the place where "faith is found".



The
Season
of
Lent



Midweek Services

Wednesdays @ Noon
February 25 - March 25
Faith Center Community Room
lunch included

WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026
Worship - 9:30 AM, Sanctuary



Maundy Thursday, April 2, 2026
Dinner Church - 7:00 PM, Faith Center Gym
Stripping of the Altar - After Dinner, Sanctuary



Good Friday, April 3, 2026
Worship - 7:00 PM, Sanctuary



Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026
Worship - 9:30 AM, Sanctuary

HOLY WEEK

Learning to See Our Own Faces

by Pastor Junfeng Tan, Associate Pastor



As we enter Lent, the Church invites us into repentance—not to make us feel ashamed, but to help us look honestly at ourselves in the light of God’s mercy. One of my favorite Jewish stories can help us understand this work.

In the 13th century, Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg was a respected teacher. One day, his young daughter Rachel asked him to teach her how to study the Talmud. He gave her a riddle: “Two men fell down a chimney. One came out with a clean face, the other with a dirty face. Which one went to wash?”

Rachel first answered that the dirty man would wash. Then she reconsidered: “Maybe the clean one would wash, because he would see his friend’s dirty face and assume his own was dirty too.” Her father smiled—she was thinking well. But then he asked, “If they fell down the same chimney, how could only one be dirty? Always look for the question behind the question.”

Lent is our time to look for that deeper question. It is a season to learn how to see our own faces clearly, and to look at others with fresh eyes.

It is easy to notice the soot on someone else. We quickly point out what is wrong in politics, society, the Church, or even our families. But Jesus asks us to pause. When a woman accused of adultery was brought before Him, the crowd was certain of her “dirt”. Jesus answered, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone” (John 8:7). One by one, they walked away. When they returned home, did they finally look in the mirror? Did they see the soot on their own faces?

Around 1910, the *London Times* asked writers to answer a simple question: “What is wrong with the world?” G.K. Chesterton, the well-known English author and theologian, sent the shortest reply of all: “Dear Sirs, I am. Yours sincerely, G.K. Chesterton.” His answer echoes the truth of Scripture: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Lent is not about deciding whether we are sinners; it is about discovering how God’s grace meets us right in that reality.

Looking at our own soot is not an act of self-hatred. It is a way of turning toward the light. We do not examine our hearts alone. We do so with Christ—the One who refused to throw the first stone, who entered our “chimney,” who carried our soot, and whose mercy is deeper than our sin.

If two people fall down a chimney, both are dirty. But if both go to wash, both can be made clean.

This Lent, may we have the courage to look at our own faces before judging someone else’s. Jesus asks us: “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye but do not notice the log in your own? ... First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.” (Matthew 7:3–5).

How do we begin? We slow down our judgments. Before naming another’s fault, we ask: Where do I see this in myself? As God gently removes the log from our eye, our vision changes. We begin to see others not as problems to fix, but as fellow travelers who have also fallen down chimneys. We soon discover a remarkable truth: the clear-eyed person is rarely the harshest judge. Those who know their own need for mercy tend to offer it most freely.

Repentance is not the end of the story. It is the doorway to new life, opened by the boundless mercy and grace of God.

Blessed Lent to you and your family.

FAITH CAMP 2026
GAMER'S JOURNEY



▶ LET'S START GAMING

FAITHBELLAIRE.ORG

WEEK 1: JULY 6-10
WEEK 2: JULY 13-17
WEEK 3: JULY 20-24

EVERY 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

FAITH'S
Prayer Night

NEXT MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
ON ZOOM

TO SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST, PLEASE EMAIL PASTOR TAN AT JTAN@FAITHBELLAIRE.ORG



“What Are You Giving Up for Lent?”

by Pastor Amber Harbolt, Pastor for Faith Formation



Growing up Southern Baptist in southeast Texas, my early exposure to Lent was through my Cajun-Catholic friends who all seemed to show up to school late and sleepy on the same Wednesday in late winter with ashes smudged on their foreheads. At lunch, they would talk about what they were giving up for Lent. Some took on the obvious fasts from chocolate, video games, or tv. Others saw it as a moment to dip their toes into asceticism and chose to fast from sleeping with a pillow or using the snooze button on their alarm clocks. Still others saw Lent as an opportunity to be clever and say they were fasting from homework, chores, or the double-negative fast - fasting from NOT playing video games. One friend said in a flash of teenage girl social rebellion that she was going to fast from shaving her legs for Lent.

“What about on Sundays when you have to wear a skirt for church?” I asked.

“Oh,” she shrugged, “well, you get to break your fast on Sundays, so I guess I’ll shave my legs before we go to Mass.”

Beyond Jesus in the wilderness and preparing for Holy Week, the question “What are you giving up for Lent?” always seemed to be the takeaway point of the season.

One Ash Wednesday a few years ago, actor Mark Wahlberg went on the Today Show to discuss his Catholic faith and promote his Lenten audio series on a prayer app. A screenshot from that interview launched one of my favorite memes about Lent and fasting. The image showed Mark Wahlberg with a conspicuous ash cross on his forehead and a stinger bar below that read “Mark Wahlberg’s 40-Day Challenge.” The internet exploded with Lent-observers chuckling about how they were giving up chocolate or social media for the “Mark Wahlberg 40-Day Challenge.” Personal opinions about Mark Wahlberg notwithstanding, the desire to view Lent as an occasion to hop back on track with our derailed New Year’s resolutions or finally get our act together with a life-changing fast is pervasive.



Pinterest is full of ideas for Lent that promise to improve our lives in 40 days. There’s “40 Bags in 40 Days” - a strategy for taming an unruly home environment by filling a trash bag with clutter each day. For the health-conscious among us, there is 40 Hard - a shorter version of 75 Hard, which calls for strict exercise and dietary discipline. Other ideas promise to help us get a handle on our finances by fasting from excessive spending, cutting out subscriptions or streaming services, or making coffee at home.

Now, there’s nothing inherently bad about any of these practices. We could all do with a reset from time to time. Perhaps some of these could offer spiritual growth if approached from that perspective. But with maturity, we learn that the spiritual practices of Lent aren’t just about giving up creature comforts, achieving personal improvement, or demonstrating how good we are at suffering.

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We enter the wilderness alongside Christ as sojourners seeking the stark clarity of the desert. We set aside that which distracts us from really seeing ourselves and our neighbors. Where the first humans sought cover in the garden to conceal their shame from God, we willingly set out into the wilderness where there is no place to hide. In this place, we confess our sins and shortcomings. We face the world's temptations that fail to satisfy and its promises that fail to deliver. We meet Jesus - the real Jesus, the living Jesus - who ministers to us with tender mercy. We allow ourselves to be attended by the angels in our midst. We learn that despite everything, we are loved.

May the Holy Spirit be with you this Lent as we travel together the road that leads to the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection.

God's peace,
Pastor Amber



March
2026

Pastor Amber's Community Office Hours

Betsy's @ Evelyn's Park
4400 Bellaire Blvd

(Outdoors if weather is nice, indoors if weather is not nice.)

- **Monday, Mar 16th 10 AM - Noon**
- **Thursday, Mar 26th 1 - 3 PM**

Can't make it but still want to meet?
Reach out to me @ aharbolt@faithbellaire.org



"Religiously, the richest image we have for Lent is the image of the desert, of Jesus going into there voluntarily to fast and pray. Scripture tells us that Jesus went into the desert for forty days and, while there, he ate nothing. This doesn't necessarily mean that, literally, he took no food or water during that time, but rather that he deprived himself of all physical supports (including food, water, enjoyments, distractions) that protected him from feeling, full force, his vulnerability, dependence, and need to surrender in deeper trust to God. And in doing this, we are told, he found himself hungry and consequently vulnerable to temptations from the devil – but also, by that same token, more open to God." - Fr. Ron Rolheiser



Beautifully Broken: Lent as Social Transformation

by Rev. Dr. Jerry Maynard, Director of Worship & Digital Ministries



As we venture into the Season of Lent, we are being called to belong, in such a way, that social transformation takes place. Lent is a dedicated time of the year to explore the way we exert dominance over each other, and actively work to amend the ways we blaspheme the face of God, made manifest, all around us; particularly, in the poor and oppressed.

To understand what this kind of outward-facing Lent looks like, I am reminded of a powerful observation by Dr. Cornel West:

We are cracked vessels trying to love our crooked neighbors with our own crooked hearts.

This quote perfectly captures both the beauty and the messiness of belonging as a community - locally and nationally.

Embracing Our Cracks

To be a "cracked vessel" is to admit our own tendency towards missing the mark. Humility teaches us to acknowledge our faults so that we may learn to love our successes thus creating social transformation. Without humility, we become self-righteous and become "morally decadent" as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once declared when talking about the ills of America's systems of oppression. We have biases, we fail to listen, and we often fall short of the radical love Christ modeled. Yet, it is exactly through the cracks in a vessel that the light shines out—and the water pours through to nourish the ground around it.

Loving the Crooked Neighbor

When we recognize our own imperfections, the way we view our "crooked neighbors" changes. Social transformation does not call us to "fixing" other people; It means looking at the broken systems in our community—poverty, isolation, injustice, or division—and engaging with them not as saviors, but as fellow cracked vessels offering grace and mercy.

When we approach the world with this shared sense of humanity, our Lenten practice shifts from inward reflection to outward revolution.

Your Lenten Call to Action

This Lent, I invite you to expand your practice beyond personal sacrifice. Fast from apathy, and feast on radical, community-building love.

Let us use this season to let God's grace flow through our cracks, bringing transformation to our own hearts and to the society we live in.

Lent.

A SEASON OF REPENTANCE



PAULINE IMMERSION IN TÜRKIYE & GREECE

"IN SEARCH OF PAUL"

September 22 - October 8, 2026

a first century immersion for thoughtful rostered leaders and laity to explore Paul's letters in their religious and socio-political contexts

The Rev. Dr. Don Carlson, Host



In partnership with [TUTKU EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL](#)

This trip is open to anyone over the age of 18 who is serious about studying scripture and growing their understanding of the first-century Christian movement. Registration closes **May 1, 2026**. Preparation is required.

Contemporary scholars often describe four "Pauls":

- The Paul of the autograph letters: Philemon, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans.
- The "Paul" of the pastorals: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.
- The "Paul" of Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians.
- The "traditional Paul" of Acts.

Lutherans and other churches of the Reformation may also have a "fifth Paul": the "Paul" of the 16th century.

How did Paul understand justice, righteousness, salvation, faith, law, and gospel as he wrote to diverse urban people living in a society dominated by patronage and Roman Imperial Theology? What does his 1st century gospel mean in a 21st century context?

These are some of the questions we will explore as we travel through the world of the early church focusing on Paul's autograph letters.

For more information or to register, please visit:

<https://leadconnects.org/in-search-of-paul-2026/>



2025 IMPACT REPORT



BASIC NEEDS

- 10,396** 5-day food packages distributed
- 6,595** pounds of fresh produce harvested from the CCSC Garden
- 609** households received rent assistance
- 96%** of surveyed rent assistance clients reported they maintained their residence or improved their living condition
- 71** households received utility bill assistance
- 95%** of surveyed utility assistance clients reported they avoided utility disconnection
- 2,790** Clothing Pantry visits
- 282** people received financial assistance with prescriptions, dental services or eyewear/eye exams

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 512** job seekers helped through workshops, trainings and job search assistance at JobNet
- 161** Martha's Way vocational training graduates
- 71%** income increase reported by surveyed Martha's Way participants 12 months after graduation
- 82** Home Caregiver Training graduates
- 21%** income increase reported by surveyed Home Caregiver Training participants 12 months after graduation
- 44** ESL course graduates
- 251** people participated in career coaching
- 78** career coaching and job readiness program graduates

YOUTH SERVICES

- 2,010** low-income students received vision screenings from CCSC vision care volunteers
- 596** students received professional eye exams through the Louise J. Moran Vision Care Program
- 567** students received new prescription eyeglasses through the Louise J. Moran Vision Care Program
- 4,103** students received new school supplies, backpacks, and clothing gift cards at Back To School
- 2,493** children received toys and books through Jingle Bell Express
- 991** families received a grocery gift card through Jingle Bell Express

VOLUNTEERS

- 1,531** volunteers
- 32,951** hours volunteered
- 475** volunteers involved in regular weekly or monthly roles
- 523** Back To School volunteers
- 385** Jingle Bell Express volunteers
- \$1,106,817** estimated dollar value of volunteer hours

2025 FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Source	Percentage
Individuals	31.3%
Foundations	17.6%
In-Kind Gifts	19.9%
Events	12.4%
Churches	6.4%*
Corporations/Clubs	4.8%
Endowment	4.8%
Miscellaneous	2.8%

*In addition, Bethany Christian Church gave a \$3 million gift toward capital expansion related to CCSC's Strategic Vision.



Volunteer with CCSC Food Pantry

For I was hungry and you gave me food. (Matthew 25:35)

Come to join the Faith food pantry volunteer team! We serve as receptionists, interviewers, or packers.

Saturdays, @ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
March 21, April 11, May 9, June 13

Location: St. Luke's United Methodist Church Gethsemane Campus (6856 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77074)

To join the Faith Food Pantry Team or for more information, contact Pastor Tan at jtan@faithbellaire.org or 832-540-6802.

Buy Tickets to Azalea 2026

Join us at the 2026 Azalea Gala at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 25! Tickets, tables, and underwriting sponsorships are now available.

The 2026 Azalea Gala will honor Sue and Ed Zinni, longtime supporters of CCSC's mission and members of Bellaire United Methodist Church. The Azalea Gala Committee and Honorary Co-Chairs Lana and Dr. Bryant Boutwell are planning an event to celebrate the commitment of the Zinnis and the vital work of CCSC.

Reserve your seat at the Faith table by emailing Stacy (swilliams@faithbellaire.org) or donate today at www.ccschouston.org/azalea.

CCSC

Azalea Gala

2026



Wednesday, March 25

Honoring Sue and Ed Zinni

The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Houston

6:00 p.m. Big Board Auction, CCSC Village,
Raffle and Wine Pull

7:15 p.m. Dinner and Program

ccschouston.org/azalea



SAVE THE DATE!



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Celebrating
80 Years of Ministry

40 Years of Hospitality—
Faith House

30 Years of Faith Formation—
Faith Camp

SEPTEMBER
19-20, 2026

Faith Lutheran Church

4600 Bellaire Boulevard at Avenue B
Bellaire, Texas 77401

Office: 713-664-3048

Fax: 713-664-3371

Faith Day School: 713-664-3233

Mother's Day Out: 713-664-3233

Faith House: 713-664-3048

FaithBellaire.org

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Malcolm Mathis

Teresa Roman

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Pastor for Faith Formation

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Director of Worship & Digital Ministries

Director of Faith Schools

Organist/Choir Director

Office Coordinator

Office Coordinator

Faith Formation Admin Assistant

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