

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
229 South Broad Street  
Jersey Shore, PA 17740  
570-398-1676

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Second Sunday of Lent



**Children's Church will meet upstairs in the youth Sunday School room at end of the hallway at 9:30 a.m. Please take your child there before worship begins**

**Introduction to the day**

*During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PRELUDE**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess to you our faults and failings.**

**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**

**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**

**we spoil rather than steward your creation;**

**we cause hurt though you call us to heal;**

**we choose fear over compassion.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**

**as we seek to follow in your way of life.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:  
God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,  
so that all may receive life.  
This promise is for you!  
God embraces you with divine mercy,  
✠ forgives you in Christ's name,  
and revives you in the Spirit's power.  
**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG:** *There Is the Spirit's Entry Now 448*

**GREETING**

P: The love of God poured into our hearts,  
the saving grace of Jesus Christ,  
and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**C: And also, with you.**

**Kyrie p. 138**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

**O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from Genesis.

**FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a**

*God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

<sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse.

**PSALM: Psalm 121**

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills;

from where is my help to come?

<sup>2</sup>**My help comes from the LORD,  
the maker of heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will not let your foot be moved  
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, the keeper of Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

<sup>5</sup>the LORD watches over you;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

<sup>6</sup>**the sun will not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will preserve you from all evil  
and will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,  
from this time forth forevermore.**

L: A reading from Romans.

**Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**

*In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.*

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

<sup>13</sup>For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share

the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



☩ Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

P: The holy gospel according to St. John.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

### GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

*A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel,

and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *Womb of Life and Source of Being ACS 948***

## Womb of Life and Source of Being



1 Womb of life and source of be - ing, home of ev - 'ry rest - less  
 2 Word in flesh, our broth - er Je - sus, born to bring us sec - ond  
 3 Brood - ing Spir - it, move a - mong us; be our part - ner, be our  
 4 Moth - er, Broth - er, ho - ly Part - ner; Fa - ther, Spir - it, On - ly



heart, in your arms the worlds a - wak - ened; you have  
 birth, you have come to stand be - side us, know - ing  
 friend. When our mem - 'ry fails, re - mind us whose we  
 Son: we would praise your name for - ev - er, One - in -



loved us from the start. We, your chil - dren, gath - er  
 weak - ness, know - ing earth. Priest who shares our hu - man  
 are, what we in - tend. La - bor with us; aid the  
 Three and Three - in - One. We would share your life, your



round you, at the ta - ble you pre - pare. Shar - ing  
 strug - gles, Life of life and Death of death, ris - en  
 birth - ing of the new world yet to be, free of  
 pas - sion, share your word of world made new, ev - er



sto - ries, tears, and laugh - ter, we are nur - tured by your care.  
 Christ, come stand a - mong us, send the Spir - it by your breath.  
 ser - vant, lord, and mas - ter, free for love and u - ni - ty.  
 sing - ing, ev - er prais - ing, one with all, and one with you.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947  
 Music: RAQUEL, Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1944-1992  
 Text © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.  
 Music © 1985, 1991 Estate of Skinner Chávez-Melo

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

## THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,  
 the Father, the Almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is, seen and unseen.  
 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,

**God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you so love your church. Raise up leaders who care for your people. Bless lay theologians, seminary and college professors, and all who are called to the ministry of teaching, that they form and inspire us for the work of the gospel. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: O God, you so love your creation. Breathe new life into our planetary home. Guide the work of researchers, scientists, and activists who love your earth and who inspire us to care for the natural world. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: O God, you so love the world. Uphold leaders who resist tyranny and oppression. Strengthen organizations that promote peace and harmony (*especially*). Direct their work to alleviate human suffering and to address its root causes. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: O God, you so love your people. Draw near to all who live with mental illness, depression, or addiction, and accompany them in healing and recovery. Hear the cries of those who look to you in their distress (*especially*). Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: O God, you so love your children. Bless the young in our midst, and delight us with their joy, wonder, and curiosity. Revive our ministries with children and youth and equip us all for faithful discipleship. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: O god, you so loved your children. We uplift to you the work of Seafarer's International as they help to support and encourage the seafarers on their work in the shipping industry.

Merciful God

**C: receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: O God, you so love your saints. As our ancestors in the faith have been a blessing to us, so inspire us by their example of holy living to be a blessing to those who come after us. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C: Amen.**

Responding in Love

**Our Offering of Music**

**CHOIR ANTHEM** *By Grace We Have Been Saved*

*The assembly stands.*

**OFFERTORY**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with me.*

*Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

A: God of good gifts,  
receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.  
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING** *P.144 (in the beginning of the hymnal)*

**Dialogue**

**Preface by the Pastor**

**Holy Holy Holy**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

**Words of Institution**

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.  
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

**COMMUNION**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*  
The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
*and each person may respond* **Amen.**

**Communion Song** *Lamb of God You Take Away p.146*

**SONG AFTER COMMUNION** *Jesus, Remember Me*

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.  
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

*The assembly stands.*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A: Embodied God,  
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.  
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,  
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors  
and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

## **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## **BLESSING**

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG: *Lift High the Cross* 660**

## **DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Serve in love.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Remember in prayer:** Rowan Aldridge, Jim Allen, Donna Batschelet, Ron Brundrick, Agnes Cryder, Don & Helen Delaney, Joanne Fisher, Joann Hall, Mick Miller, David Mitchell, Cora Pellitier, the Snyder family, Charles and Candace Welshans, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton – ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; and we pray for peace in Ukraine and an end to war.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Kevin Titus, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Special thanks to this week’s helpers: Lector –Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers –Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; Head Usher – Jim Ely; Teller –Lon Myers; Children’s Church – Pam Wehler; Bulletin Sponsor—Pastor and Mrs. Aucker.

Next week’s helper: Lector –Karen Aucker; Assisting Ministers—Bill Ely Jr and Ken Dougherty; Head Usher –Jim Ely; Teller –Lon Myers; Children’s Church --Molly Hollick  
Bulletin Sponsor –Pastor and Mrs. Aucker; Flowers--Wehler.

The Sanctuary Candle in March is in memory of our Gram Yost by Nicole, Hannah, Bryan and Adalynn.

The Lutheran Church Women’s Prayer Chain is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597      Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**Outreach Committee** will assemble Easter candy bags for Jersey Shore Nursing and Rehabilitation and Nippenose Valley Village, March 25th at 10 am at the church. Anyone wishing to help contact Shane Snyder or Cozette Stoltzfus.

**Christian Education** is seeking volunteers to lead Children's Church once a month. If interested please see Cathy Eisner. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays are open.

**NO NEED TO STAY HOME !!!** We now have the volunteers to supervise toddlers/babies, children ...say up to age 6 in the **NURSERY**. Ken Dougherty will have a sign up sheet if you would be willing to help out in the NURSERY.

**NURSERY TOYS.** Molly and I will be cleaning out the nursery in a few weeks and throwing away broken toys. We will be looking for some toys that can replace the ones we will be getting rid of. If you have any toys that are like new and have all their pieces and you would like to donate to the church nursery we would be very appreciative. If you could put them in one of the classrooms upstairs that is not being used that would be great. Thank you so much! Carol Yost

Volunteers are needed to sponsor the weekly **flowers**. A sign-up sheet is on the wall in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor elevator tower. It's neon green and set up for the whole year. Sign up for the Sunday you want!

**WOMEN OF THE CHURCH** will meet after church next Sunday, March 12, 2023.

### **Pictorial Directory**

The last pictorial directory of the members of St. John Lutheran was created in 2009. Over the past fourteen years we have had a number of changes with births, new members, and deaths, along with the pandemic that had a significant impact upon us. It was suggested that we create a new pictorial directory so people have a visual picture of our members.

We also need information from you to verify what we have on file. We have no birthdates on some people. We have a lot of young adults who moved away from home but we have no addresses, phone numbers or emails for them. Just their parent's address.

So, we are asking each of you to send us a photo of yourselves and send it by email to St. John Lutheran Church at: [stjohn@stjl.org](mailto:stjohn@stjl.org)

Please take a close-up photo of ourselves or your family. Use your cell phone or have someone else take your photo and email it to St. John. Please send us a close-up photo. A dot standing out in the field will not show your smiley face.

Please also send us your address, email, and phone number to update the directory and make sure it is accurate. A number of people provided their home phone number years ago but have since discontinued their home phone and use only their cell phones. If you do not want your cell phone listed, please note that when you send us your photo and information

Current church directories are always available without photos. Just ask Pastor to print one out for you. It only takes a few minutes. Remember the directory is only as good as the information that we have available.

Special Thanks to Shelby Rice for volunteering to coordinate the pictorial directory project. Contact her for any information regarding photos. You can text your pictures directly to Shelby 570.506.4934

### **Youth Ministry**

**Camp Mt. Luther** has a new way to send out their summer camp flyers and registration. There is a QR code available here at the church on the bulletin board and in the annual report that you scan and read. You can download the registration, medical, and other forms from the QR code.

Turn in registrations to Molly Hollick. **Deadline is April 9**

This is the last Sunday for Catechism students to register to go to Gettysburg for the Catechism Retreat March 25. Please inform Pastor today.

### **LENTEN SERVICES**

These will be traditional services in the sanctuary with no meal.

Lent 2, March 8, 7:00 pm at Grace Lutheran

Lent 3, March 15, 7:00 pm at St. John Lutheran

Service of Healing, March 19, 9:30 am at St. John Lutheran

Lent 4, March 22, 7:00 pm at Garman Lutheran

Lent 5, March 29, 7:00 pm at St. John Lutheran

Palm Sunday, April 2, 9:30 am at St. John Lutheran. We need volunteers to read the Passion of St. Matthew.

A sign-up list is posted on the bulletin board in the Tower, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:00 pm at St. John Lutheran

Good Friday, Stations of the Cross, April 7 at St. James Lutheran

Easter Vigil Egg Hunt for the children, April 8 at 11:00 am.

Easter Resurrection of Our Lord, Sunday, April 9, 6:00 am and 9:30 am, St. John Lutheran

Holy Humor Sunday, April 16, 9:30 a.m. Rumor has it that the Blues Brothers will return to St. John!

With deep gratitude I thank the members of St. John Lutheran, the Women of St. John, my wife Karen, Becky, Kaye, Don, and so many others for celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my Ordination. It was a time of joy as I reflect on my thirty years of ministry. The food was wonderful and I thank you for your gifts.

Sincerely,

*Pastor Aucker*

## Calendar

Sunday, March 5, 2023

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

- 8:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:30 a.m. Children's Church and Worship Service
- 10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 2:00 p.m. Catechism

Monday, March 6, 2023

- 1:00 p.m. Pack Easter boxes

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

- 2:00 p.m. Jersey Shore Nursing and Rehabilitation Communion
- 6:00 p.m.** Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

- 10:00 a.m. Trinity Episcopal Worship
- 7:00 p.m. Lent Service 2 at Grace

Thursday, March 9, 2023

- Noon – Jersey Shore Ministerium
- 4:00 p.m. Pack food boxes

Friday, March 10, 2023

- 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Saturday, March 11, 2023

**Reminder to turn clocks ahead next Saturday night!**

Sunday, March 12, 2023

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

- 8:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:30 a.m. Children's Church and Worship Service
- 10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
- Women of the Church Meeting



Do you want to Fast this Lent?

In the words of Pope Francis:

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words; be silent and listen.

When I was a child, it was the common thing to give up chocolate or candy for Lent. We never had much of either in our house so it was always a special time to get an Easter basket with chocolate in it. The Easter bunny often brought white chocolate which I wasn't too crazy about. I preferred dark chocolate but back in those times I was always reminded how fortunate I was to get any chocolate!

In recent years churches have changed the views from "giving up candy" to giving up emotions and fears in favor of peace, hope, joy. In these emotional times of war, economy, mass shootings, illnesses, etc. I encourage you to seek those attributes of peace, hope, and joy in your lives.

Pastor Aucker

---