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FEBRUARY TIDINGS



Volume 8, Issue 2

February 2026

A Reflection from your Priest-in-Charge

Beloved Siblings in Christ,

Martin Luther's explanation of the 5th commandment, "Thou shall not kill" is paraphrased as follows: "The fifth commandment is a mandate to not only avoid physically harming a neighbor but also to actively help, protect, and support them in all their needs."

In his explanation, Luther reminds us that the bar is not set so slow that all we have to do is avoid killing people. Instead, the 5th commandment gives us the mandate to do all we can to be active in providing support, care, protection, and love in all of our neighbor's needs.

In the past few weeks, we have seen this commandment repeatedly violated by federal officers from ICE, first with the murder of Renee Good and then with the murder of Alex Pretti. The images and videos that have flooded the internet have proven to be deeply disturbing. Renee Good was killed as she stood watch for her neighbors living in fear of ICE. Alex Pretti was murdered as he was assisting a woman who was shoved to the ground by ICE agents, while filming an ICE raid in an attempt to hold them accountable. These acts are both a heinous violation of God's law and a violation of the mandate to protect and care for our neighbors.

At the same time, we are faced with a force that seems to have no problem violating the constitution, with warrantless searches and seizures along with its disregard for use of deadly force that have taken the lives of two of God's beloved who were seeking to protect and care for their neighbors.

Next week, the gospel lesson from Matthew is the beatitudes, which comes immediately after Jesus calls the disciples and lays the blueprint for what is to come. There are two verses in particular that stand out to me as we navigate these recent murders.

⁹ *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

We live in a tenuous time, but the call for us is clear. We are called to be peacemakers, to stand in the way of forces that seek to use intimidation and violence, and we are called to stand with blessed beloveds who are persecuted by the state. Now the call into this work, this call to discipleship isn't easy, we were reminded of that this past Sunday as Simon and Andrew were called by Jesus, and immediately they dropped their nets and went with him, leaving their old lives and ways behind. The call to discipleship for us today should reorient our priorities and bring us to a place where God is the center of our focus. This can take us to some difficult and extraordinarily challenging places.

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I'm fortunate to know a number of people who have lived into this call to follow the 5th commandment, particularly in actively helping, protecting, advocating and caring for our neighbors. A few days ago, 100 clergy members were arrested at a peaceful protest, as they put themselves between their neighbors and harm in Minneapolis. Then, a friend and colleague of mine, Pastor Jon Hopkins, along with other Episcopal colleagues, traveled to Minneapolis to protest the abhorrent and violent actions of federal agents in Minneapolis. This is the kind of work that lies before us.

The road the disciples walked wasn't easy, and it isn't easy for us. Following Jesus calls us to walk alongside others, not above them. It also comes with a cost as described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

- It is costly because it confronts power and injustice.
- It refuses to compromise truth.
- It involves life together in a Christian community.
- As part of that community, we are called to be a visible witness to Christ in the world, which more often than not, will put us in conflict with the modern day earthly powers.

Yet, to walk the way of love that Jesus lays before us is to walk into the hard places. It is to walk with those who have been terrorized. It is to walk with those who have been persecuted, and it is to walk with those whom Jesus calls blessed. This is where we are called to be, perhaps at times, putting our bodies in harm's way for the sake of our neighbors who are threatened and at risk of harm.

Beloved siblings, I am heartbroken for the loss of life, for the murders that have come at the hands of those in power. I am heartbroken for the current state of the country that has led us to this point. I am heartbroken for those families who have lost loved ones and who now find themselves weighed down with grief.

In the midst of this heartbreaking season, we trust in the goodness of God, that God shows up with us and among us, even in the midst of times such as these. While the road we will walk together during these days will be difficult, we know that we don't walk that road alone. As we are confronted with evil, let us walk the way of love so that those who find themselves in harm's way may encounter the goodness of God in us as we seek to honor the 5th commandment to help, support, and protect our neighbors, especially when they are in peril.

Just in case we need more wisdom and guidance, we receive these words from the prophet Micah in the Old Testament lesson for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Dan



February Mission Plate

The Mission Plate funds for the month of February will be going to the Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) Fuel Assistance Program. This program aids limited-income homeowners and renters in paying their home heating bills.

WCAC's Fuel Assistance Program serves all of our local communities (cities and towns) within Central Massachusetts. Well over 10,000 households obtained fuel assistance through WCAC last year.

This year's economic picture for many of our vulnerable local families isn't any brighter than last year. With rising housing and food costs and escalating utility and heating costs, many people in our local area are struggling to afford to keep themselves warm this winter. Please, give as generously as you can to this program.

No one should be left in the cold during this time of crisis. Thank you.

Rose Reith, Member of the Mission and Outreach Committee



**Our donations for February will go to
Wales Food Pantry**

**Thanks to all who donate monthly and to
Dave and Anne Bouvier Monroe,
and recently Tamsin Lucey
for transporting the food.**

Souper Bowl Sunday



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



2—Tamsin Lucey
3—Robert Ikey
5—Nancy Waugh
6 – Briella Bousquet
15 – Jones Lowery
17—Barbara Wilson
18—Judith Reich
23—Emily Thompson

February 8th, 2026

We will sell soup in the parish hall after the service to raise funds for a local organization addressing food insecurity. (The Vestry designated Food Share as the recipient)

Please let Cat Reith-Lowery know how you can help, and if you will be bringing soup. **Text to Cat 619-962-1946**

Also a sign up sheet is at the back of the church.

TACKLE HUNGER

WITH THE

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game,
help us be mindful of those who are
without a bowl of soup to eat"

PLEASE BRING IN NON PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS TO BETHLEHEM OR
SOUP TO SELL AT HOLY TRINITY TO HELP SUPPORT OUR FOOD
INSECURE NEIGHBORS ON SUPERBOWL SUNDAY.

02.08.2026 | 9:00AM AND
11AM

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH (AFC)
AND HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL
CHURCH (NFC)



Choir will begin rehearsing on Thursday, February 19 at 4:00 and will end at 5:00.

We will be preparing Lent and Easter music. We will also meet on Sunday mornings at 10:15 when we are singing an anthem or more assistance is needed for the hymns that Sunday. A text will be sent out to choir members informing them of the time for Sunday morning. All are welcome who can sing a tune.

Please speak to Anne if you have questions.

Watch Weekly E-News for details.

The Chosen - Season 4



Decorating Team Ministry Wanted!

We are looking for a few people to form a dedicated decorating ministry.

Those involved would inventory the current decorations (for Easter, Advent/Christmas, etc) sort and manage the items, as well as actually doing the decorating!

This would involve a few meetings/work hours per season.
The ministry could involve any age group! A great way to help out!



Interested? Please contact Eileen DeMings 617-429-1798

or eksullivan99@dpcv.org





SHROVE TUESDAY

It's time for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Let's gather for a time of fellowship before the season of Lent begins.

Tuesday February 17, 2026 in the Undercroft

5:00 pm (Food served approximately 5:30-6:30 pm)

There will be a donation board for supplies and ingredients in the sanctuary.

Family and friends are invited!

Please contact Eileen DeMings with any questions. 617-429-1798



**ASH
WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 18**

- *Ashes to Go at Bethlehem Lutheran Church 7:00- 9:00 AM*
- *Ashes to Go at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church 4:00 -6:00 PM*
- *Ash Wednesday service at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church 7:00 PM*

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(trinity)

**The Episcopal Diocese of Western
Massachusetts**

The Rt. Reverend Douglas Fisher

Sunday Services

11:00 a.m. Holy Communion

Priest-in-Charge

The Reverend Dan Purtell



Website



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Tithe.ly—Giving