



Amazing Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

This Month:

Special Lent Worship Services

Outreach Opportunities Await You

And More, See Inside...

Interim Pastor Craig Storlie
3305 Lawrenceville Highway
Lawrenceville, GA 30044
770 381 1293 www.tisgrace.org

Worship Sundays, 8:30 & 11 am

Sunday School, Sundays @ 10 am

Homework Help, Wednesdays @ 5 pm

Midweek Grace, Wednesdays @ 7 pm





Dear friends in Christ,

This month, the church season of Epiphany ends on Sunday, February 15th, with the church celebration of Jesus's Transfiguration. This is when Jesus goes up on the mountain with Peter, James and John and is suddenly transfigured, turned dazzling white and Moses and Elijah appear with him. We get a glimpse of his complete and whole nature. This event is hard for us to understand and the disciples are justifiably terrified. It is a foreshadow of his glory to come.

BUT!

In Jesus's real life, when he comes down from the mountaintop, before any glory can happen, he must go through abandonment, torture, being hung on a cross, and die. This is to remind us that real life and all of its complex and painful realities is as real for Jesus as it is for us. We can never say that he does not know what it is like to be us.



So then on Ash Wednesday we enter into the church season of Lent. We are invited to stop and take the time we each need to know and experience this Jesus who truly knows what it is like to live our life, who knows what it is like to know both grief

and joy, both fear and love, both abandonment and family. And to know that God is in all of life, and despite what we may think or feel, he will never leave, never abandon, and will always say yes to us.

So this Lent season I invite you to look, listen, read the gospel, pray and center yourself in God's Grace and know that God is here with you.

In Christ,
Craig Storlie, Interim Pastor

If you have any questions please e-mail me at craig.storlie@tisgrace.org or call me at [678-595-1933](tel:678-595-1933).

Healing Worship Service with, Healing Prayer, Laying on of Hands, Anointing with Oil and Holy Communion

On **Wednesday, February 11 @ 7 PM**, (the Wednesday before Lent) Amazing Grace will hold a special Healing Prayer Worship Service. This service will take the time needed for individuals to receive healing prayer with laying on of hands, be anointed with oil for healing and with all worshippers invited to share in Holy Communion as well as praying for the people who come up for healing. All are welcome.

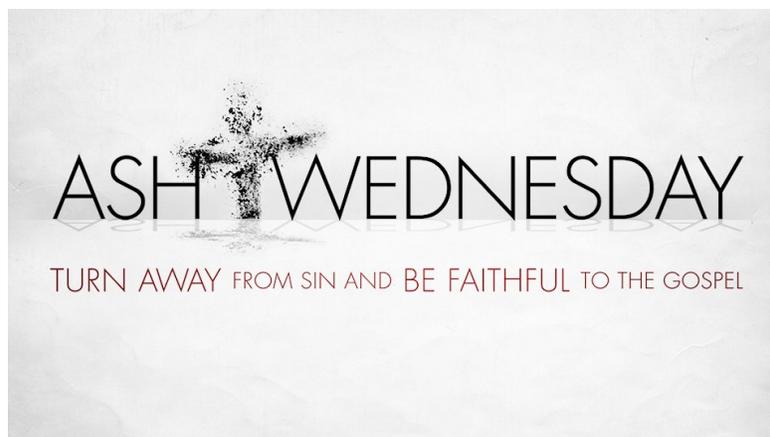
**WORSHIP IS THE
ENVIRONMENT
FOR HEALING**

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday worship this year is on **Wednesday, February 18 @ 7 PM**. The service will include the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. All are welcome.

Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent in the church calendar. With the imposition of ashes all of us are reminded of our mortality and our need for new and renewed life in God's Grace. In the season of Lent we are invited to take the time to pray, study, and to discern and be renewed in Christ. We are invited to turn our life around, to see the world differently through the eyes of Christ, and to live in the healing and wholeness of God's Love.

Lent can be a time of letting go of the attitudes and compulsions of our lives that keep us from realizing God's love and claim over us. Fasting from one's excesses can and may be helpful but the ultimate goal of all of Lent is to prepare us to embrace the new life that comes through Christ, resurrected and alive in Easter Grace.



LENT WORSHIP

Our Lent worship this year will be on **Wednesdays at 7:30 PM** following the **6 pm soup dinner**. We will use Holden Evening Prayer as the core of our worship. The theme for our Wednesday night worship this year is the Greatest Commandment: In Mark 12, a scribe comes to ask Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answers, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our

God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength'" (Mark 12:28-30). Each week a different member of our congregation will share and reflect with us on what it means for them to know the oneness of God and to love the Lord with all their heart or soul or mind or strength. If you would like to be one of the people sharing your reflection on this theme contact me at craig.storlie@tisgrace.org or call me at 678-595-1933.



"FAT TUESDAY" IS
ALSO KNOWN AS
"SHROVE TUESDAY"

JOIN US FOR DINNER @ GA TECH

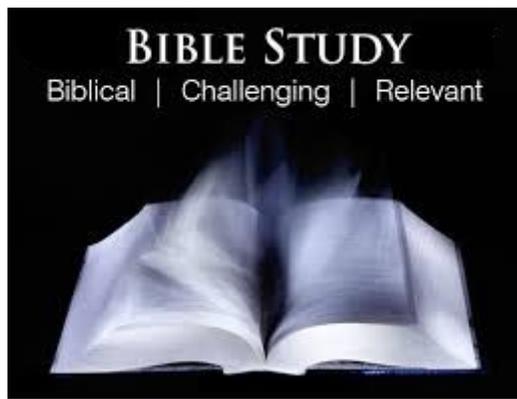
This year you are invited to share Mardi Gras with the students of Lutheran Campus Ministry at Georgia Tech on **February 17th**. We are leaving Amazing Grace @ 4 pm to drive to the Campus or meet us @ 5 pm @ the Grace House @ GA TECH. We Please sign up to participate on the signup sheet in the narthex.

CALL COMMITTEE

With prayer and deliberation the Church Council of Amazing Grace is forming the Call Committee who will do the initial work of interviewing Pastoral Candidates for Amazing Grace's next called Pastor. The committee will consist of 6 members.

The nomination/election of the members to the call committee follows AGLC's constitutional procedure (C 13.05). The church council will finalize their decision at the February 10, 2015 Council Meeting.





BIBLE STUDY

The Monday night Bible Study will only meet on **February 16th** this month (because of Pastoral Scheduling conflicts). We meet in the Fellowship Hall at 7 PM on the third Monday of this month and are studying Paul's First letter to the Corinthians. On the 16th we continue our study at chapter 4. The church at Corinth that Paul is writing to is a very young church. It is easy to forget that the Corinth church was started

around 20 years after Jesus' resurrection. And church/religious traditions that we assume have always existed have not even been thought of yet. Yet Paul's letter to this struggling congregation is uplifting and filled with the love of God. He may yell at the Corinthians a bit but he always circles back to their call to be the church of God in Christ Jesus, crucified and resurrected. Everyone is welcome. Bring your Bible, but if you don't have one, we have plenty to share.

YOGA CLASSES

One of the best ways to show love and honor to God is to take care of the gifts that God gives us. The word for this is stewardship. The most accessible gift from God that we have is the body that we inhabit. So, you are invited to take the opportunity to show your love for God by coming to Yoga class on **Feb. 14** (yes, Valentine's Day) and **Feb 28** at 9 am.

It's never too late to start practicing stewardship of the body!





UPDATE—SUPPORT FOR LUTERANCH

We are in the beginning stages of our “Standing on the Promise” campaign to support the construction of the retreat center & dining hall at Lutheranch camp and conference center in Tallapoosa, GA. For those of you not familiar, Lutheranch is a 519 acre site just an hour outside of downtown Atlanta that was purchased in 2007 to serve the Southeast synod. The total cost of the project is \$4.9 million dollars, \$3.5 million of which has already been raised. That leaves a deficit of \$1.4

million dollars, which is where we come in. We are making a commitment to raise \$20,000 for Lutheranch by January 2018. This may sound like a big number to tackle, but over the next 3 years it really breaks down to \$1.25 a person per week... that’s less than you pay for 1 cup of coffee! If you’ve ever attended church camp, you know how influential outdoor ministries can be to your spiritual development. Lutheranch would provide this opportunity to children & adults in the Southeast synod. Over the next few weeks you will learn more about Lutheranch and its mission. **We are looking for a few volunteers to help communicate information about this campaign. If you are interested, please contact Mimi Layton in person, via email mimifrankman@hotmail.com or by phone @ (770) 876-9500.**

Please join us for a presentation of Lutheranch on Sunday, Feb. 1 @ 10 am in the Sanctuary.

THEOLOGY ON TAP

Theology on Tap continues to meet during February. We will meet at La Sabrosita Mexican Restaurant at 4085 Lawrenceville Hwy NW, Lilburn, GA 30047. We will meet there at 7:30 pm on **February 12 and 26** (on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays). Our topic on the 12th will be, **“Why bother with Lent anymore?”**

Attendance has been very low during January (no one came on the January 22 Tap) so I need to know from you if Tap is something you want to continue. Please let me know if you have some topics that you would like to discuss. craig.storlie@tisgrace.org
phone: 678-595-1933

**THEOLOGY
ON TAP
AGLC**

ALLELUIA GIRLS

On February 11th, we have planned an outing to Delmar Gardens to visit some Amazing Grace residents. We are also planning on how we can bake some goods for the local Fire Station down the street, as a result of our Listening to Our Neighbors meeting. Additionally we have also made and delivered meals for Debi and Dave Linke, due to Debi's recent surgery.



YOU ARE INVITED TO DINNER

The annual Valentine's dinner to benefit the Youth of Amazing Grace will be on **Saturday, February 21st from 5:30-6:30 pm**, with entertainment by the Youth to follow in the Sanctuary. All contributions from the dinner will go toward sending our youth to AFFIRM, a nationwide retreat for Youth. Please consider coming to this fun dinner, where each person will be treated well and you will be benefiting a most worthy cause.





HOMWORK HELP UPDATE

January has brought our homework help children back for more work and adventure. Some Wednesdays we have a smaller group of children, some Wednesdays a larger group. There is always a need for helping hands to work one-on-one with our eager learners and their mothers. With the coming of Lent, there will be some space shifting to accommodate feeding two groups of people at different times and providing the homework help support. Do not let this put

you off! Both can be done as long as we all remain flexible.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

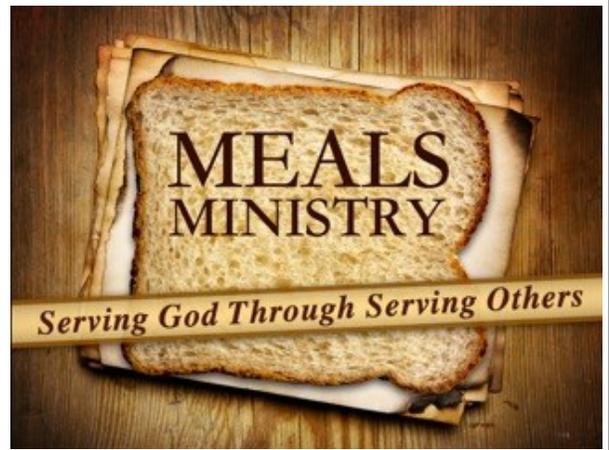
Thank you to everyone who has been signing to help with this outreach project! As I write this, we have received a \$250.00 gift card from Thrivent for our Action Team to begin the work shopping and preparing food for our trip to Ga. Tech on Feb 17.

We will have a plan in place and people designated to cook by the time you receive this newsletter. If you want to be part of the group going down to Ga Tech or one of our cooks, there is plenty of space for you. The sign up sheet will be available until Feb 15 or you can call Wayne Linke ([404-788-0474](tel:404-788-0474)) or Jill Knueppel ([404-840-5612](tel:404-840-5612)).



MEAL MINISTRY

AGLC Meal Ministry has had success with takethemameal.com which is simple to use. We were able to help some members of our Church family this past month. This web site has simplified the arrangements. If you or someone you know are in need of a bit help, please contact me and let's do it. Thank you again to all our wonderful church family for their participation. We could not do it without each other. bev.upton@att.net mobile 678.488.2884 can also text to this number.



the GOOD OLD GUYS

GOOD OLD GUYS

*Our goal is to provide moral and spiritual support for each other by maintaining regular communications with our Christian brothers.

*We meet weekly on Tuesdays at 11:00 am for pool at the Senior Center and then have lunch together at 1:00.

*We also spend part of our event time calling or visiting with our fellow congregation members that are ill or unable to attend our meetings.

*Our get-togethers are informal and are open to all men who wish to participate.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Coming to Adult Sunday School for Lent: 24 Hours That Changed The World.

This DVD series based on the book by Pastor and author Adam Hamilton uses all four Gospels to tell the story of the 24 hours leading to Jesus's crucifixion. In it he brings a wealth of understanding of that period of history placing the last day in proper perspective to the times. Not one to mince words about conditions during the rule of the Romans, many unfamiliar and uncomfortable customs of the time are included in his story.

Hamilton guides us through the last day of Christ's life on earth in human form encouraging us to put ourselves in the position of every major character with a major impact on the proceedings. We are Judas, Peter, John, Pilate, the Council, and others. We are asked to seriously consider our human weaknesses, our prejudices, and the bumps on the road of the spiritual journey that brings us ever closer to God. Make this series a part of your Lenten reflection this year in Adult Sunday School.



LUTHERANCH WINTER RETREAT

Twenty-one men participated in the annual Amazing Grace winter retreat at Lutheranch on the weekend of Jan. 23-25, 2015. We were blessed to have twenty-one men for one night of the retreat and nineteen for two nights. This year we had several first timers join in the fellowship, fun, and food of annul men's retreat. We are looking forward to 2016 and hope to have a few new faces join us!



Celebration Lunch Bunch for February

Because January was such a busy month for many of us, our January Lunch Bunch was moved to Sunday, February 1, 2015.

I know of one thing we will be celebrating on that day, Bob MacKinnon's birthday, his actual birth day! He will be 21 again even though most of us know he is a lot older than that!

A reminder again is that the restaurant for our Celebrate Lunch Bunch is Mah Jong, a Chinese restaurant in Snellville located at 1905 Scenic Highway, Suite 650, in the shopping center with Office Depot, Ross' Dress for Less as well as Party City! It can be accessed from Ronald Reagan Parkway! Please come and join us for a delicious meal and lots of fun and fellowship!

Since we are talking about Lunch Bunch and this will happen in February, I would also like to announce the restaurant for March. We used to choose Sundays later in the month, but with February's lunch being on the first of the month, I think I will set up our March Celebrate Lunch Bunch for Sunday, March 1st! If something comes up for the 1st, we can always move the date to March 8th. I feel I must remind you that March 8 is Daylight Savings Time and we will 'Spring Forward' and lose an hour if we have to 'spring forward' to the 8th of March! Just letting everyone know the facts!

For March, I was thinking that all of us who ate last year at I Love Pho for the first time really enjoyed the food very much! I am suggesting that we eat at I love Pho on March 1st or 8th whichever we decide is the best date for us to Celebrate!

I have spoken with Debi Linke and she said I Love Pho would be a good spot for her to be able to join us for Lunch!

I will be asking each of you in February which Sunday in March you prefer!

Please remember that all of you at Amazing Grace are invited to please join us at any time we are Celebrating with the Lunch Bunch!

God Bless You always,
Linda MacKinnon
(770)972-8605



Listening is the beginning of Prayer

Discerning Prayer continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 7 PM in the church sanctuary. **So we meet on February 9th and 23th.** All are welcome.

In discerning prayer, we ask the question of God, where are you calling Amazing Grace in its ministry? With the aid of scripture we then sit and listen and then after prayer we share our prayer experience and work toward discernment of what we experienced. As we have sat in prayer together we have realized (discerned) the following: Don't be afraid, things are changing but God is here. We have the tools (abilities, gifts, people) to do what God is calling us to do. The ministry we are called to is right here around us. And finally, (and perhaps the most difficult) the vision we assume is Amazing Grace's future may not be the one God has for Amazing Grace, but all will still be well.

Please come join us in this solitude of Grace.



HOSPITALITY VOLUNTEERS WANTED

If you cherish participating in communion, please consider serving on a hospitality team, as we are in need of Volunteers to help in this ministry. If you would like to only be a Greeter to welcome parishioners, that is great. If you

have an interest in volunteering in any of these ways, please contact Mimi Layton @ [\(770\) 876-9500](tel:7708769500) or mimifrankman@hotmail.com or Wayne Linke @ [\(404\) 788-0474](tel:4047880474) or walbigun@aol.com.

The Lawrenceville Cooperative Food Ministry

As I type this month's message for the newsletter, I am wondering how many people are wondering if we are ever going to see the sun shine for more than one or two days at a time. I think my family and I might be sprouting duck feet and are walking with a bit of a waddle!

But seriously, all the bad weather is making it more difficult for our homeless neighbors to be dry and warm for this time of year! Some may think it is 'not our problem,' but Jesus has told us otherwise in the Bible in several references!

Thank you 'faithful' givers of Amazing Grace who are always bringing in a bag of food for the people who use the Coop Food Bank without any advertisement of what might be needed!! It is so good to know that there are those who do not need to be reminded that there are those in Lawrenceville and Dacula who need our help! It is so gratifying to open the closet and see your gifts of love to be taken to the Food Bank! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! This just does not seem to be enough to say to you! I have a great deal of gratitude with each gift I count from the congregation!

Eighty-nine (89) items were delivered to the Food Bank in January, 2015! I pray that we can continue to serve our community in this very special way to show God's Love to all!

Last month I mentioned a new outreach through the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank! I have spoken with others who agree that would be a wonderful project to help the children whose parents use the services of the Coop during the annual Spring Break!

Many of the children in these families who are served by the Food Bank receive free breakfasts and lunches at school! It is a wonderful program that helps keep young students from going hungry and are more alert to learn!

I have talked with some of our members who think it would be a nice gesture to prepare Breakfast / Lunch Bags (a.k.a. Spring Break Kits) for as many children as we can for those who will be on Spring Break from April 6 – 10, 2015! We would be supplying items such as breakfast bars (Pop Tarts, etc.) oatmeal, perhaps even Instant Breakfast powders and cereals with shelf-safe milk and cans of soup, peanut butter crackers, etc. and anything else we could use as breakfast or lunch foods to make sure the children will eat during Spring Break! We could purchase cloth shopping bags from a grocery store (using Thrivent money) to hold their food and also provide them with some fresh fruit to go in the kits! (Does anyone else have lunch ideas? Please let me know! Thank you!!!)

The Spring Break Kits would be taken to the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank the week before Spring Break (by at least March 30th) to be distributed one to each child age 12 and under at the Food Bank as supplies last!

The Thanksgiving Boxes were a smash hit! Please join me and others as we help to feed small children breakfasts and lunches while they are not being fed at their schools! Perhaps this along with the Thanksgiving Boxes can become Amazing Grace's two spectacular events helping our neighbors in their times of need!

Just one note before we start gathering our breakfast and lunch items...please check the expiration dates of the food you buy! Sometimes a bargain is old and not as fresh as we would like for it to be. Ever try eating rock hard 'free' or 'bargain' bread? Most packages do not grow old on the shelves now, but you just never want to take a chance of old and stale!

Thank you very much, Amazing Grace! I hope you get as excited as I am about helping to feed our school children this Spring Break – April 6 – 10!

Many Thanks to you, Amazing Grace! You are wonderful!

Much love always,

Linda MacKinnon





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Good news about your retirement!

Did you know that the average American spends 20 years in retirement?¹ Just think of all you could do during that time!

Now think about how much money you'll need. More good news: An experienced financial professional can help you:

- Find money to save.
- Determine when you can retire—and how much you'll need.
- Develop a retirement savings strategy based on your age, specific goals, risk tolerance and other important factors.
- Select appropriate savings and investment options.
- Optimize your Social Security benefits.

A 2011 survey done by the Employee Benefits and Research Institute (EBRI) found that 44% of people who tried to figure out their financial futures ended up changing their retirement savings plans. It just goes to show that it pays to review your retirement strategy periodically. You may even want to get a second opinion. Also, keep in mind:

The sooner you start saving, the more time your money has to grow.

If you think you're starting too late, you can't change the past—but you can affect your future. Saving and investing come in all different strategies. Whether you've got 20 years until retirement or five years—starting today is better than starting tomorrow.

Get sound financial guidance from Don Goldsmith, Financial Consultant, ChFC, RICP, FIC or Kelly Goldsmith, Associate, CFP®, CLTC, FIC, at 770-982-0420 or e-mail eastmetroteam@thrivent.com today. Also, visit Thrivent.com to learn how our not-for-profit financial services organization has been helping families connect faith and finances for more than 100 years.

¹*Top 10 Ways to Prepare for Retirement*, U.S. Department of Labor, 2013.

Thrivent Financial and its respective associates and employees have general knowledge of the Social Security tenets; however, they do not have the professional expertise for a complete discussion of the details of your specific situation. For additional information, contact your local Social Security Administration office.

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**THRIVENT
FINANCIAL®**

Connecting faith & finances for good.™

Thrivent members—Did you know Thrivent gives you two ways to strengthen your community and support the causes you care about?

Giving back has always been important to Thrivent Financial and its members. Did you know there are two ways Thrivent Financial members can help strengthen their community?

Thrivent Choice*

Thrivent Financial has provided more than \$224 million through the Thrivent Choice® program to help enrolled congregations, educational institutions and other nonprofit organizations since the program launched in 2010. The program gives eligible benefit members an opportunity to recommend where Thrivent distributes some of its charitable outreach funds each year.

Eligible members make their recommendations by directing Choice Dollars to any of the thousands of enrolled nonprofit organizations nationwide, including local congregations. It's easy! To direct Choice Dollars or to learn more about eligibility, go to Thrivent.com, and use your MyThrivent user ID and password to log in and get started. If you aren't signed up yet, or need assistance, call 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) and state "Thrivent Choice."

Thrivent Action Teams

The second new and exciting membership benefit that can help you take action and live generously is called Thrivent Action Teams. Each associate or benefit member may lead two projects per year.

Getting started is fun and easy:

- Identify an unmet need in your community that you're passionate about helping. Your project should bring people together for a one-time fundraiser, service activity or educational event that can be completed within 90 days.
- Visit Thrivent.com/actionteam to log in and apply.
- As a team leader, you'll invite your friends, family and even community members to help.
- Watch your mail for the Thrivent Action Kit to arrive. It comes complete with promotional signage, T-shirts and other resources to make your project a success. It even includes a Community Impact Card with \$250 in seed money to help cover some of the project costs like promotional material and rental expenses.

The East Metro Team would love to help in any way we can, so please let us know if you need help with the application process or need another team member. Call us at 770-982-0420 or email EastMetroTeam@Thrivent.com.

It's an exciting time and members like you can help make a great impact in your community.

*The Thrivent Choice® charitable grant program engages Thrivent Financial members and chapters in providing grants that support charitable activities, furthering Thrivent's mission and its purposes under state law. All grants are made at the sole discretion of Thrivent. Directing Choice Dollars® is subject to the program's terms and conditions available at Thrivent.com/thriventchoice.

Amazing Grace's Events

February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Lutheranch Presentation in Sanctuary 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation; 12:15 Celebration Lunch @ Mah Jong	2 6:30 am Men's Group	3 11:00 am Good Old Guys Meet	4 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help;	5 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon	6 6:30 am Men's Group	7
8 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm EXEC Meets; 12:15 pm Confirmation	9 6:30 am Men's Group; 7 pm Prayer Discernment Group Meets	10 10:00 Magi Conference Meeting; 11:00 am Good Old Guys Meet; 7pm Council Meeting	11 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help; 7 pm Healing Service	12 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon; 7:30 pm Theology on Tap @ La Sabrosita	13 6:30 am Men's Group	14 Yoga @ 9:00am
15 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation	16 6:30 am Men's Group; 7 pm Bible Study in Fellowship Hall	17 11:00 am Good Old Guys Meet; Mardi Gras Dinner @ GA TECH , leave Amazing Grace @ 4 pm, Dinner is @ 5 pm	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help; 7 pm Ash Wednesday Worship	19 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon	20 6:30 am Men's Group	21 5:30 pm Valentine's Youth Dinner in Fellowship Hall
22 Lent Begins 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation	23 6:30 am Men's Group; 7 pm Prayer Discernment Group Meets	24 11 am Good Old Guys Meet	25 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help; 6 pm Soup & Sandwich Dinners; 7:30 Lenten Worship	26 7 pm Men's Bar- nabas Group ; 7:30 pm Narcanon; 7:30 pm Theology on Tap @ La Sabrosita	27 6:30 am Men's Group	28 Yoga @ 9:00am