

From the Pastor's Pen

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

When I look out my window I see the tracks of several deer and other wildlife. The bird feeder serves as a community hub for chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, blue jays and yes, squirrels. They come for their daily feast of suet and seeds and flutter expectantly around the feeder to wait for their turn. These brightly glistening days of February are often breathtakingly beautiful. And while the deep cold of mid-winter can be hard on one's spirit, it is mitigated by the delicately etched beauty of each snowy branch.

In the church we continue to celebrate the season of Epiphany. The light of Christ is coming into the world as the days begin to lengthen ever so slightly. Our Gospel texts during the Epiphany season are filled with the stories of Jesus' baptism and his beginning ministry. "Come, follow me," he calls out to the fishermen of Galilee. And word spreads around the countryside that Jesus is one who speaks with authority and brings healing to the afflicted.

But towards the end of this month we move into a more somber season. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 25. At Good Shepherd we come together to worship and take the opportunity to re-examine our life. Where is the need for repentance? Have we followed inclinations that would lead us away from God and toward self-destruction? Do we need to reassess what is true and valuable in our lives? Are we centered too much on self at the cost of another? It is important that we ask these questions of ourselves so we can make an about turn and walk in a new direction.

From my office desk I see little chickadees fluttering around the tree in front of my window, its branches adorned with little seed packets that our youngest Sunday School children lovingly created. And I remember Jesus' words in the light of our economic crises: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet, your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" *Matt. 6:26*

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Dagmar