



499 PLAZA DRIVE, VESTAL NY 13850 | 607-729-2688

**The Herald****MARCH 2017****Walking Dusty: Transformation Ministry, Mission, and Lent**

Hello there, all of you beloved saints of God! This year the ELCA has adopted the phrase “Walking Dusty” to help us all frame the context and goals for a successful Lenten season. Traditionally, Lent has been marked by a somber tone, a melancholy quietness, dirge-y music and dark colors (as if the world around us isn’t sad enough!). We have been told to reflect upon our sin and ‘repent’; sound advice, indeed, but pretty tough without realistic and practical examples for application.

Likewise, the season of Lent has traditionally made a number of Lutherans uncomfortable, because it has reflected more popular trends than sound, Reformation theology. The invitation to look deeply into one’s self and become introspective, even about sin, does not necessarily keep Christ at the center of all things. If taken too far, Lent becomes a season ‘about us’ and not ‘for us’.

In these days of mission and transformation, at Christ the King and throughout the entire ELCA, we are wrestling with both the dangers and the consequences of poorly applied theology. As the Christian Church in the US continues to shrink and demonstrate scant relevance, we struggle to replace the needs, wants, comforts, traditions of the congregation with God and God’s mission and purpose for the Church.

For the season of Lent, “Walking Dusty” is a good way to frame our discipleship-in-context. ‘Walking’ implies both Jesus’ call to follow him, as well as God’s mission: to go and make disciples and be witnesses at home and to the ends of the earth. ‘Dusty’ implies that we not only remember but celebrate that we are creation and not Creator; that we grieve and mourn our brokenness and sin, knowing that God’s work is reconciliation and grace; that we are not only willing, by God’s grace and gift of the Holy Spirit, to walk the long road of discipleship, but we are ready, with God’s help, to roll up our sleeves and get dirty!

This is the marketing promo for the Walk Dusty campaign:

*As we prepare for Ash Wednesday and Lent let us remember that it is a long and dusty road. It is on this journey that we reflect on those who have gone before and those who will come after. We identify with the hurt and the pain. We live in the messiness that comes with the often dirty road that we must travel. Let us also remember that it is this dust we call life that shapes and forms us into resurrection people. Just as we walk wet in recognition of our baptism and the promise that it holds we encourage you this year to Walk Dusty. Remember that in the brokenness, we are healed. While the journey is long and tiresome, resurrection promises are greater. In our dusty walk we claim the promise of new sandals and clean garments. As we walk dusty we remember that we have come from dust and to dust we shall return.*

As we begin this new journey together, the journey of Lent and the journey of Transformational (transformation + mission) Ministry, it will be a great time to reflect and have some study and conversation. I’d like to invite any and all to join me for 3 Walking Dusty/Transformational Ministry conversations – Wednesday March 8, Wednesday March 22, and Wednesday April 5. It would certainly behoove us to meet and talk and pray and read scripture out in the local community, but for the first gathering let us meet at Christ the King at 7 pm.

Also, if you would like to really get into the spirit of the season and have some of your own Walk Dusty swag, you can visit [www.oldlutheran.com](http://www.oldlutheran.com).

Thank you all for your willingness to join me on this journey! Now, let’s get dusty!

~AJ

**AJ Striffler**  
**Transformational Ministry Pastor**

Hi, everyone. My name is AJ and I am the new Pastor at Christ the King Lutheran Church. I am very excited to be part of the team that is Christ the King. I think we are going to have fun and do great things together for Jesus!!!!

A little about myself, so you feel like you know me. I was born and raised on Staten Island. I went to High School in Manhattan, and college in Gettysburg, PA. I went to seminary in Atlanta, GA: The Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

I served an internship in Westminster, Colorado, and served in Ministry in Denver CO, Garden City KS, and Syracuse NY. I was ordained to Word and Sacrament Ministry on December 30, 2002.

I am one of the leaders in the ELCA that is helping the church – congregations and institution – wrestle with the challenges and changes of moving forward, of participating in God’s mission of reconciliation in the world, and of maintaining relevance in a predominantly secular society. God is up to something new! It’s always fun, but it’s never easy!!

I have 13 year old Dachshund-Chihuahua mix, called Hänsel. You will see him a lot, as he usually enjoys coming to work with me. He and I will live in Endicott as of April 1, 2017.

I am also a Registered Nurse (NYS RN License pending), that has worked mostly in kidneys (Chronic Kidney Disease and End Stage Renal Disease), and that has also dabbled in In-Patient Psychiatric Nursing and Hospice.

I also enjoy playing the (Great Highland) Bagpipes, which I do with the Emerald City Scottish Pipe Band in Syracuse, and visiting my Dad and step-Mom in Florida. Although not a drop of Scottish blood in these veins, I have a plethora of kilts that I enjoy wearing. I imagine you will see every one!

Now, as we are all in the process of listening to God, to each other, and re-inventing “church”, I may strike you at times as not being like other Pastors you have ever met or known. This is very true. I’m just a regular guy who loves Jesus, and who believes that we – the Church – have been invited into a transforming relationship with God, that changes us and is meant for EVERYONE. If I say or do something that tweaks your sensitivity in some way, and causes you anger or sadness, please come and talk with me. Please! YOU CAN TALK WITH ME ABOUT ANYTHING!!!! And, I promise that I did not go out of my way to offend you!!! It’s just me ...

Also, I’d love to be your FaceBook friend! However, I ask you to recognize and accept that my FaceBook page is unbridled and unfiltered AJ. I make no apologies for being 100% authentic. So, the decision is yours.

I already believe you are going to be a super-fun group of disciples to walk with. I will do everything in my power and with God’s help to equip and develop you for this journey and work, as I know you will do the same for me!

**Transformational Ministry**

Christ the King is one of 66 congregations in the ELCA who are receiving a partnership support grant to assist with Transformational Ministry. Six of those congregations are in our own Synod. Although Synod’s grant support is for three years, it is like seed money to get us started on our forever journey.

The Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA is commissioned to provide leadership and support for the ELCA as it reaches out in witness to the Gospel in the areas served by the synods of this church. A principal Domestic Mission function is to provide assistance and support to synods for missional ministry and outreach planning, and offer support to existing congregations that are involved in renewal for the church through change and growth that leads to expanded capacity to serve their communities through outreach with the Gospel. The partnership support totals \$2.2 million. This is just one way that our contributions to Synod help the wider church.



## Christ the King Lutheran Church

---

499 Plaza Drive  
Vestal, NY 13850

### **Ash Wednesday Worship at CTK** **March 1 at 12:00 Noon and 7:00 PM**

Worship with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

### **Christ The King Lutheran Church 499 Plaza Drive Vestal NY 13850**

Phone: 607-729-2688

#### **Christ the King is Full of...**

Hearts Loved By God  
Hands to Serve All  
Through Jesus Christ

We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We are called by Christ to care for, love, understand, and listen to each other, regardless of race, age, gender and gender identities, marital status, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations, national origin, or economic status.

#### **Staff**

Pastor – AJ Striffler  
Church Administrator — Marsha Pulz  
[marsha@ctkvestal.org](mailto:marsha@ctkvestal.org)

Music Director – Jim Ford  
[jrfme2000@yahoo.com](mailto:jrfme2000@yahoo.com)

Nursery Staff- Jane Davis  
Sexton- Gary Robertson

#### **Congregational Council**

Co-President: Joe Brunt  
Co-President: Carol Strano  
Secretary: Rich Lindstrom  
Treasurer: Randy Kerr

Debbie Doyle            Jody Fiorentino  
Dennis Chapman        Tammy Gow  
Todd Eames             Kathy Leonard

Financial Secretary: Phil Roberts

#### **Worship Schedule**

Sundays:

Classic Worship at 9:00 AM

Education Hour at 10:10 AM

Progressive Worship at  
11:15AM

Find us on the interwebs:  
[www.ctkvestal.org](http://www.ctkvestal.org)  
[@ctkvestal](https://www.facebook.com/ctkvestal)