Hi-Lines

HOUSE OF PRAYER



Is a gathering of God's people connecting our faith to our daily lives so that all would encounter Christ in each person.

March 2024



Who is My Neighbor?



Pastor Eric Luedtke

I\m betting you are familiar with the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). Usually when we teach the story, we teach from the perspective of what the man from Samaria (Samaritan) does for the injured man. But the more times I read

that story, I'm struck by the question that spurs Jesus to tell the story, "Who is my neighbor?"

It's a complicated question to ask. We often tell the story expecting the man (a lawyer) who asks it of Jesus is trying to justify himself. But I think the complexity of thinking through who my neighbor is, is never a simple question.

Recently a woman named Sarah left some of her items on the church property. They were neatly piled and out of the way where most people wouldn't even notice they were there. Of course our staff who regularly check our property noticed them and left a note for Sarah to stop by the office and talk with us about her items.

I had the chance to speak with Sarah, learn her name, get a little of her story. She wanted to leave the items there as she moved from shelter to shelter because it was an opportunity for her to "not worry what someone would do to her basic possessions." Sarah shared that even in a shelter she worried about someone taking her items, meager as they are. It seemed a simple request for her to leave items on the church property until she could find a better solution, after all, Sarah is our neighbor and we are called to help her when we can.

Things got complicated when Sarah's boyfriend, Bryan, brought his items over and didn't keep them as neatly organized and was present when our Preschool students were on the playground.

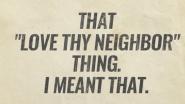
Suddenly the question of "who is my neighbor?" was not just about Sarah, but about our Preschool students and staff. Then we got phone calls from the people who live across the street from the church who noticed the now sprawling collection of items. They are our neighbor as well.

How do we care for our neighbor when caring for one neighbor impacts five or six neighbors? The decision was made to tell Sarah and Bryan to move along, that they had not maintained the agreement that we made in the original invitation to store some items on the church property. They understood the complex nature of the situation, they were grateful for even the few nights that they kept their items on the church property. Jesus' question sits differently with me after that experience, "which of these do you think was a neighbor?" Sometimes the answer to that question is simple. Sometimes the answer is complex. Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we get it wrong.

Maybe the answer is in the words of the man who asked the initial question. His answer to Jesus' question was "the one who showed mercy." I want to believe in my heart that in this interaction we showed mercy to everyone involved. We listened to our neighbors. We weighed the varying needs. We considered the safety concerns. We made a decision. Is it the decision we will make again the next time? Hard to say. Next time the details will be different. What I know I can count on, however, is the heart of each of the House of Prayer staff members who were involved. They each showed deep compassion for the situation and the individuals involved even when we presented different ideas or solutions.

I'm proud to be Pastor of a church whose staff mem-

bers live out the core values. mission, and vision of the congregation. I'm happy to report that we encounter Christ in each person.



- G O D

Leadership Ministry Team Update

Openness



Caity Wright President

I can't believe we are already in March and we are on our last value: Openness! At House of Prayer, we believe that being open to new experiences, ideas, ways of thinking, and people helps us carry our God's will in our lives.

At the core of the House of Prayer Lutheran Church's identity is the affirmation that God is not finished working in our midst. This shapes our approach to every aspect of church life, from worship and community engagement to outreach and service. Instead of staying rigid, we remain open to the movement of the Spirit and the possibility and inevitability of new experiences.

Central to this value of openness is a willingness to entertain new ideas, explore innovative approaches, and collaborate with diverse voices. We understand that growth of-

ten comes from stepping outside of our comfort zones and embracing the unknown, as scary as it is. As such, we are doing our best to seek out opportunities to learn from different perspectives and experiences, recognizing that God's truth is not confined to any one tradition or viewpoint.

This commitment to openness requires a profound sense of humility – a recognition that as human beings, we do not possess all the answers. I know I don't! Rather than claiming to have everything

figured out, we know we are on a journey of endless discovery, continuously seeking to deepen our understanding of God's will and purpose.

We have worked hard to be open and willing to accept how God's plan will keep us on our toes. It means being open to reimagining worship practices to better connect with contemporary culture. It means being open to new forms of ministry that respond to the changing needs of the community. It means being open to welcoming and affirming all people, regardless of background or belief, into the life of the church.





Isaiah 43:19 I am about to do a new thing; now it the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

I think we have done a wonderful job of adhering to what we truly care about as a congregation and a community, and we've incorporated this into our values and it has been great to look into each of them with a little more detail.

Leadership Ministry Team Update

Monthly Finance Report

HOP's financial team is trying a new format for the HiLines Monthly Financial Report based on cash receipts and expenses for the month. We hope this will provide a simplified financial reporting format that shows monthly results and how much cash we have available.

If you wish to have more details contact: Patti Benson at pbenson@hoplc.org.

January Financial Summary:

REVENUE:

January finished with lower than expected offerings resulting in expenses being higher than receipts by \$1,371. Year to date offerings are below budget by \$17,109. Offerings for the typically higher holiday season (Nov - Jan) were down compared to prior year by 16% or \$22,000.

The 2023-2024 budget assumed that Southview rental income would end in January, however, our rental partner is continuing their contract for the foreseeable future. This gives us confidence of stable rent revenue for the rest of the fiscal year. Rental Revenue is above budget by \$13,194 year-to-date.

EXPENSES:

January expenses held below budget expectations, with the benefit of the continued open Human Resources positions, limited snow plowing, fewer repairs, and a couple of delayed contractor billings.

Receipts & Expenses

	J	an 2024
Receipts		
Offering - online & plate		36,963
Rental Revenue		11,254
Preschool Tuition		9,038
TOTAL Operating Receipts	\$	57,255
Expenses		
Donations to Outreach Partners		3,879
Human Resources & Ministry Programming		43,698
Building Maintenance & Utilities		11,049
TOTAL Expenses	\$	58,626
NET OPERATING REVENUE (DEFICIT)	\$	(1,371)

Cash Funds Available

TOTAL	\$ 4	88,495
Dedicated Funds	2	00,188
Operating Reserves	2	25,837
Operating Cash		62,470

Year to date expenses are better than budget by \$60,593.

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Fiscal year-to-date operating deficit is \$440 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$54,311. Combined Dedicated funds have decreased \$2,698 year to date.

Sara Barnaby HOP Treasurer



Ash Wednesday Worship

Tune My Heart

Despite the Ash Wednesday snow, for a second year in a row, we had strong attendance for our Ash Wednesday collaborative worship with Woodlake. Pastor Eric shared the metaphor of an orchestra tuning before a performance as an invitation for us to tune our own hearts to what God will be doing in us through this season of Lent. Whether we take on a spiritual practice or give up something that challenges us, our focus is on the masterpiece that God calls us to be part of. The imposition of ashes reminded us that our journey on this earth is temporary, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's love is eternal.

> ASH WEDNESDAY









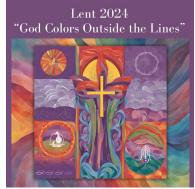




God Colors Outside the Lines - Lent / Easter 2024

Maybe you've looked at a piece of art at a museum and thought "that looks like a three-year-old scribbled that" and there it hangs in the museum with hundreds or thousands of people admiring it. Somewhere along the way, we've been taught that we should color "inside the lines" that there are specific rules we must follow, a certain way things are intended to look. Then we look at scripture and realize that all along God has been doing things differently, "coloring outside the lines" as it were, impacting the world in remarkable ways, or to keep the metaphor going, to make remarkable works of art. Throughout the season of Lent we will join with our collaboration partners from Woodlake Lutheran Church for dinner, conversation, and worship. Each week we'll explore ways that God colors outside the lines, we'll create some community art pieces

together, and we might even be challenged to color outside the lines together.



Lent Wednesday Nights Dinner/Worship 5:30-7pm HOP Fellowship Hall

5:30-6:00 Dinner 6:00-6:30 Guided Conversation

6:30-7:00 Holden Evening Prayer

Holv Week

3/28 - Maundy Thursday - 6 pm at Oak Grove

3/29 - Good Friday Worship 7 pm at HOP

3/31 - Easter Worship—9:30 Traditional / 11:00 Refuel

Welcome Pastor Korla Masters!

On Sunday February 11 at our Special Congregational Meeting, those in attendance overwhelmingly voted yes to call **Pastor Korla Masters as our Minister for Congregational Care!** Thanks to all those who attended, asked questions and voted. Thanks also to Steve Barnes, Betsy Paradise, Ann Barnes, and Cathy Shromoff for serving with Pastor Eric on the call team.

We are excited about the many ways she will help us grow as a congregation and serve our wider community. Pastor Korla's primary responsibility will be visitation of members and helping us grow the ways in which we care for one another. She will also lead worship and preach on a regular basis.

Pastor Korla is concluding her ministry at Augustana Lutheran Church in Northeast Minneapolis and will begin her ministry at House of Prayer on April 16. We look forward to welcoming her and getting to know her more. If you have any questions, please contact me at eluedtke@hoplc.org / 612-866-8471 ext. 2. Pastor Korla shares a bit about herself below:

I'm a child of Minneapolis, formed by communities here as well as in St. Louis, Detroit, and a small community in El Salvador that have been my home over the years. My roots are in Eastern Tennessee and Northwestern Minnesota. Here in town I've served both in the distant exurbs and in a congregation about twelve feet outside downtown.

I have worked in church in some form or fashion for a decade, with political work sprinkled here and there throughout my life. I believe that our faith shapes how we show up in public places and in the private moments of our shared lives.

When I'm not visiting HOP folks, I share in leading worship, bible study, and nurturing the community relationships that foster a sense of belonging within the wider Richfield community. I'm dedicated to journeying with you in your life of faith and curiosity.



And when I'm not at work, I am probably reading, walking near water, under a pile of dogs, or (in the summer) losing at sand volleyball and having a blast doing so.

Pastor Korla

House of Prayer Foundation Update

The HOP Foundation will meet on Monday, April 1, 2024, at 5:30 pm to discuss business and **review funding requests**. At the end of December 2023, the Foundation had total assets of around \$760,000. We will be discussing funding requests at this meeting. If you'd like to make a request, you can email Jill Johnson at stemcoordinator@gmail.com or Sandy Williams at stemcoordinator@gmail.com or Sandy Williams at stemcoordinator@gmail.com or

The HOP Foundation meets quarterly via zoom the 2nd Monday of the month at 5:30 pm (January, April, July, October) and takes funding requests at the April and October meetings.

Current board members are: Charles Robbins, Jill Johnson, Steve Pierson, Sandy Williams, Jill Larson, Julie Bonebrake and Jon Kietzer.



Lenten Choir Opportunity

As part of our special offerings during the upcoming season of Lent, all are invited to come sing with the Combined HOP & Woodlake Lutheran Choir. We will together prepare some beautiful choral music for our Lenten services, strengthening the community we share through the meaningful experience of singing together. Our rehearsals will follow our weekly 6:30 p.m. Lenten Holden Evening Prayer services, meeting from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Choir Room at HOP.

WELCOME TO ALL! If any questions, contact Roselyn Hanson Weber, Dir. Liturgical Worship, at rhansonweber@hoplc.org.



Easter Festival Choir Invitation

The Adult Choir extends a special **EASTER FESTIVAL CHOIR** Invitation to anyone who would like to join us for our 9:30 Liturgical Easter Service. All are encouraged to join the Easter Festival Choir rehearsal on Wednesday 3/27, 7-8:30 p.m. Come and add your voice to the festive tones of the choir, organ and brass as we celebrate Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday morning, March 31st. WELCOME ALL!

For questions, please contact Roselyn Hanson Weber, Director of Liturgical Worship, at rhansonweber@hoplc.org.



Creation Care Team

The Creation Care Team is working on a building-wide project called 'Think Before You Throw."

- New 3-Station recycle/compost/trash bins (hopefully provided by a grant from Hennepin County).
- Efforts to reduce trash to avoid spending more money to increase trash service; streamlined ordering of bags.
- 95% Organic Lenten Suppers.
- Education about what goes where!

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

- Saves energy /resources takes less energy to reuse than to make new
- Reduces landfill waste which lasts many years
- Reduces the demand for virgin resources resources are limited
- Making new products from recycled material produces less CO2 emissions CO2 is a leading "greenhouse gas"
- supports businesses and jobs
- materials you recycle really are recycled- check this website: recycling exists.com

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

- Organic materials are broken down and put back into the soil
- Organic materials decompose in landfills produce methane gas an even more potent "greenhouses"
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers
- Improves the water retention ability of soils

If you would like to be part of the Creation Care Team, please contact Cara Wright at 612-866-8471 ext. 3 or cwright@hoplc.org.



Card Ministry

If you're looking for a fun, creative activity that brightens someone's day, come join us for Card Ministry on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, from 10:00-11:30 am. We meet in Classrooms 1-2.

We will also be selling cards on the last Sunday of the month. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact Nancy Bjornstad at ne bjorn.6203@yahoo.com.



Easter Garden

Consider a special gift to HOP this Easter by sponsoring a flower for HOP's Easter Garden or making a special Easter donation to:

- Facilities Fund (extra building projects; unanticipated maintenance)
- General Operating Fund (all HOP ministries)

Sponsorship forms are available on Sunday mornings beginning on March 10th. You can also give online at hoplc.org/give.

Dedications received by Sunday, March 24, will be included in the Easter bulletin.

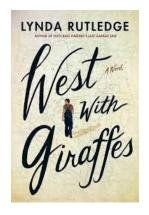
For questions, contact Cara Wright at cwright@hople.org / 612-866-8471 ext. 3.

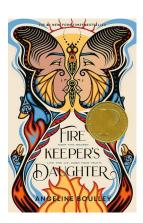


Book Discussion Group

House of Prayer Book Discussion Group will not meet in March due to an unanticipated number of absentee members. We will meet on April 4th at 1:30 pm in the Conference Room to discuss West With Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge and Firekeeper's Daughter, by Angeline Boulley.

We welcome anyone who loves to read! For more information about Book Club, please contact Sandy Williams at srwllms70@hotmail.com.





Game Meet-Up

Do you love card and board games? Want to learn some new ones or play old favorites?

Join Dave and Sara From 1:30 to 4:00 pm on Friday March 1st in the Narthex. Come in the door with the awning, and since **March**



is Food Drive month for VEAP, we are collecting food items if you'd like to bring something to donate.

We will have games to play, but you can bring your own. It is your responsibility to keep track of your games. Covered drinks are allowed.

Want to take the bus? 77th St E & Chicago Ave S Stop Number: 48623 Route 540

Winter Maintenance Update

We are never short of maintenance opportunities at HOP! This winter we have completed several sizable maintenance projects:

- New Carpet in the Nursery—Our House of Prayer Preschool children are loving the new carpet in the Nursery play space and nap room that they use every day. This project was in the works for over a year and was completed between Christmas and New Year's. Thank you to Nicole Olson, for securing a State of Minnesota Childcare Revitalization grant and moving/reorganizing the space. Thanks also to Cara Wright for leading the project, working with the carpeting contractor, and (unexpectedly) the asbestos removal company. The total cost of the project was \$14,350, paid for by the SMCR grant, Preschool dedicated fund, and HOP facilities fund.
- HVAC Digital Controls—As part of our dedicated funds projects for 2023-2024, Building Engineer, Tom Flood, has been working with Gilbert Mechanical to install new controls for HOP's central hot water











boiler that serves the sanctuary & offices. The project should be finished by the end of February. The new digital controls replace the pneumatic controls, allowing the church to provide more comfort in the offices and sanctuary, save time, and significantly increase energy efficiency. The cost of the project will be around \$18,000.

- **Air Conditioner Motor Replacement**—A new electrical motor for the AC unit that supplies the Fellowship Hall was scheduled and approved to be replaced last Fall. Tom Flood will work with Gilbert Mechanical to complete the project by Spring. The cost of will be around \$2,500.
- Entrance Door Repairs—The locking mechanisms on the main parking lot doors and the lower level Fellowship Hall exit doors were not locking consistently and had to be repaired. The cost of this project was \$2,500.
- Parking Lot Drainage Patch—Shortly before the snow flew, we completed the first phase of our parking lot maintenance, the second of our dedicated funds projects for this year. Asphalt was added to fill in low areas of the lot prone to produce ice patches in the Winter. This phase cost \$5,000. We will complete the resurfacing and striping of the lots in the Spring. The second phase is expected to cost about \$20,000.
- Ongoing Daily Maintenance—Maintenance Manager, Steve Pierson, always has a project. Whether its replacing damaged carpet squares, fixing refrigerator seals, rerouting roof rain drainage, repairing bathroom door stalls/locks, replacing toilets (or parts of toilets), fixing garbage disposals, repairing furniture, straightening fences around the dumpsters after being hit by garbage trucks, the lists he gets from Cara Wright each week are long! We budget \$10,000 annually for routine maintenance.

House of Prayer is very fortunate to have such a dedicated Maintenance Staff! We could not continue to own this building without them. If you have any questions about maintenance projects at House of Prayer, contact Cara Wright at cwright@hoplc.org / 612-866-8471 ext. 3.

RALY, Youth, Children and Family

House of Prayer Preschool

Hello from House of Prayer Preschool! We are continuing to love this sweet little group of children and can't wait for all the fun we plan to have this spring! In February we celebrated Valentine's Day and look forward to several birthdays and hopefully some sunshine (!) in March.







From Nicole~

At the latest LMT meeting, I told the group that after much deliberation I have decided to leave my position as Director and Lead Teacher of the program at the end of the current school year, May 31st. It's a very bittersweet decision as I will miss the families so much but look forward to what lies next for me. The LMT will be taking until May 1st to decide if the program will try to hire new staff and continue or if it will be closing. I appreciate all of the support the church staff and members have provided me for the last six years and will be here into the summer to help with any transition that takes place. If you have questions about HoPP, please contact Nicole at nolson@hoplc.org. If you have questions about the future of the preschool, please contact Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org.

Boys and Girls Club

February is often a time of year where kids are feeling cooped up and ready to move! The weather this February has allowed us to play Gagaball and Dodgeball inside and outside. This was a huge blessing to Boys and Girls Club youth who were ready to get some energy out after sitting at a desk most of their day. BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS If you would like to participate as a leader in after school programming, please email Pr. Neal Cannon (ncannon@woodlakechurch.org).



In March, the group will be taking on fun science experiments and need materials to make sure everyone can take part in the fun. If you have any of the following things they could use, please bring them to the office and we will make sure Pastor Neal gets them.

Alka-Seltzer powered Lava Lamp

Vegetable oil

Timer that shows seconds

Homemade Marble Run

Cardboard tubes (paper towels, foil, TP rolls) masking tape

Large cardboard box or cookie sheet size cardboard

Egg Drop Challenge

Containers (cup. box, pint tomato boxes, egg carton)

External protection (cotton balls, balloons, rubber band, craft sticks, straws,) light weight fabric, string (parachute???) Tape

RALY, Children, Youth and Family

HOP Sunday School

Our Sunday School friends continue to gather weekly every Sunday morning at 10:30 AM to enjoy crafts, hands-on projects, games and stories about Jesus' life and teachings.

This month has extra excitement with the joyous celebration of Palm Sunday on March 24th, and our annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 31st. All children Pre-K (age 3) and older are invited to join the fun. No pre-registration required! Parents are welcome to attend or enjoy Coffee and Donuts Fellowship in the Narthex.

For questions or more details, please contact Kristi Liu at kline010@umn.edu.

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, March 17: Spring Break (No Sunday School)

Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday Celebration Sunday, March 31: Easter Egg Hunt at 10:30 am

Celebrate Easter with a hoppin' good time of hunting for eggs! How many treat-filled eggs will you collect in your basket? Join us rain or shine! Sunday, March 31, 2024 at 10:30 am.



HOP Sprout-A-Spark

For children up to 5th Grade

Sprout-a-Spark:

A space to grow your faith

Our special space for our youngest members continues to be a joyful experience Sundays during ReFuel. Children of all ages can gather at the just-right sized art table and engage in worship while letting their creativity flow. The generosity of HOP members to provide craft supplies and toys for this special ministry makes it possible to continue Sprout-a-Spark in tandem with Sunday School all year long. For information and to get involved with Children and Family Ministry at HOP, please contact Andry Jurcich at andry @invisik.com.

RALY Recap – February Richfield Area Lutheran Youth (6th-9th Grade)

This February RALY joined the larger congregation to eat, worship, and discuss how God' colors outside the lines! February 7th, we hosted Big Questions Night! 9 youth showed up to ask meaningful questions of faith and life. Look for us joining the congregation for worship the rest of Febru-



ary and March for our Wednesday, God Colors Outside the Lines worship series!

RALY Upcoming Events

- · March 6: God Colors Outside the Lines, 5:30-7:00 pm
- March 13: God Colors Outside the Lines, 5:30-7:00 pm
- · March 20: God Colors Outside the Lines, 5:30-7:00 pm
- · March 27: NO RALY, Holy Week

Contact Pastor Neal at

<u>ncannon@woodlakechurch.org</u> or Pastor Eric at <u>eluedtke@hoplc.org</u> with questions.

Community Engagement

VEAP March Food & Fund Drive



With warmer days ahead of us hopefully!), VEAP is pleased to officially kick off our annual

springtime March Food & Fund Drive!

This statewide campaign is the **largest grassroots** food and fund drive in the state, bringing together thousands of people to help stock nearly 300 food shelves across Minnesota. Now through April 6, we'll be encouraging drives and donations of all sizes!

The need is still very real in our community and with your support again this year, more than 200 families visiting VEAP a day will receive the food they need to put meals on their tables.

For questions, please contact Terri Behrends Singer at <u>terri@hr4u.org</u>.

Community Engagement

As we turn our faces to the warm Spring sunshine, we look forward to the new season of opportunity in our community.

Watch this space for ways to become involved in city park cleanups, Richfield's 4th of July parade, Penn Fest, and other community events.

If you know of a community event where we should be present, please contact Kim

Houle at 612-558-0634, or

wifeofadrummerguy@gmail.com. There is much to be thankful for, and even MORE to be hopeful for. Thanks be to God!



Luther Park Annual Report

As Luther Park begins the 66th year of ministry, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to your congregations for fostering the meaningful partnerships that have played a pivotal role in Luther Park's story. The 2023 annual report for congregations is attached here for your information. Some exciting news and notes:

- Madison Main began as Associate Director as of Jan. 1, 2024. She brings experience as former camp staff, a lot of passion and skills that will help her oversee retreats, summer camp and on-site operations.
- Luther Park's Annual Meeting will be held at Elim Lutheran in Robbinsdale on Sunday, March 17 from 1:30-3:00pm. All are invited to attend. Kindly RSVP to confirm attendance.
- Summer 2024 planning and recruiting is well underway! We have opportunities for people of all ages- including families, grandparents, and extended families.
- Staff hiring is underway for Summer 2024. Please send recommendations our way. More specific summer and staff information can be found on our website:

www.lutherparkdanbury.com

Retreat dates for Summer/Fall/Winter are filling up. Get in touch now to book your spot. Luther Park remains committed to being a dedicated partner and resource for your congregations. We are eager to connect and continue this partnership with you!

God's Peace to you,

Leah Pletcher Executive Director



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Website: www.hoplc.org.

Pastor: Senior Pastor, Eric Luedtke

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Twin Cities, MN Permit No. 2944

In-Person Worship Services:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. www.hoplc.org/recordings



The *Hi-Lines* is published by the House of Prayer staff and volunteers. Any questions can be directed to Cara Wright, Director of Administration, at cwright@hoplc.org, or Mary Weaver, Administrative Assistant, at mweaver@hoplc.org.

Milestones

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversaries (50+ years and 5 year increments)

Couples	Date	Years
Charles and Sandra Mackenzie	3/21	54
David and Karen Steenson	3/28	60

MEMORIAL SERVICES

2/15/24 PatriciaSack

A Look Back



Caity Wright, Julia Jacobs, Cara Wright, Cindy Jacobs—Fat Tuesday, March 2014