



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings of joy and peace in the name of our risen Lord and victorious Savior, Jesus the Christ.

On one occasion, Michelangelo, the great artist, turned on his fellow artists in a spirit of indignation. He said: "Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures on the one theme of Christ in weakness, Christ on the Cross, and most of all, Christ hanging dead? Why do you concentrate on the passing episode as if it were the last work, as if the curtain dropped on Him with disaster and defeat? That dreadful scene lasted...a few hours. But to the unending eternity, Christ is alive; the stone has been rolled away and He rules and reigns and triumphs!" We move beyond agony of Good Friday, the confusion of Holy Saturday to the joyous celebration of the resurrection.

The message of Easter is dramatic, true, and life changing. The women came to the tomb on that early Sunday morning and were amazed at what they found and heard, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" "Our Lord's resurrection transforms our lives as its meaning sinks into our hearts. The following story illustrates the meaning of Easter and the affect it can have on the lives of people.

Little Philip, born with Down's Syndrome, attended a third-grade Sunday School class with several eight-year-old boys and girls. Typical of that age, the children did not readily accept Philip with his differences. But because of a creative teacher, they began to care about Philip and accept him as part of the group, though not fully. The Sunday after Easter the teacher brought Leggs pantyhose containers, the kind that look like large eggs. Each receiving one, the children were told to go outside on that lovely day Spring day, find some symbol of new life, and put it in the egg-like container. Back in the classroom, they would share their new-life symbols, opening the containers one by one in surprise fashion. After running about the church property in wild confusion, the students returned to the classroom and placed the containers on the table. Surrounded by the children, the teacher began to open them one by one. After each one, whether flower, butterfly, or leaf, the class would ooh and ahh. Then one was opened, revealing nothing inside. The children exclaimed, "That's stupid, That's not fair. Somebody didn't do their assignment." Philip spoke up, "That's mine." Philip, you don't ever do things right! The students retorted, "There's nothing there!" "I did so do it.." Philip insisted, "I did do it. It's empty. The tomb was empty!" Silence followed. From then on Philip became a full member of the class. He died not long afterward from an infection most normal children would have shrugged off. At the funeral, his class of eight-year old's marched up to the altar not with flowers, but with their Sunday School teacher, each to lay on it an empty pantyhose egg.

Last month we were part of two completely different funerals. The first funeral was for a mother and daughter who were robbed of their lives

under terrible circumstances. The second funeral was for an 84 years old man who died in hospice with family at his side. Our Lord shed tears of sadness at both funerals. He also shed tears of joy when He received their souls to himself in heaven. The message was similar, but in many ways different because of the differing circumstances, death did not have the last word. Our Lord, the Lord of life and the living does. This is guaranteed by Jesus' resurrection.

The empty tomb proclaims that Jesus was risen. The empty tomb proclaims the power of Christ to transform lives. He comes to give life in the face and midst of death, hope in the midst of despair, and joy when confronted by sorrow. May our lives be transformed by the resurrected Christ.

The darkness of Good Friday has been replaced with the joy and hope of the empty tomb and our Lord's resurrection.

May the hope, joy and peace of Easter be yours now and throughout eternity. On behalf of Barb, Joy and Steve, Myka and Joslyn may you have a blessed and Christ filled Easter.

In Christ,
Pastor Raether.

Pastor Raether

Our "Journey on to Heaven"

For the past few generations, Martin Luther, who was a pastor, theologian, author, hymnwriter, and professor, has been and continues to be one of the most referenced or quoted spiritual leaders of all time. Luther was a prolific writer, so he has a wealth of articles, books, and essays to quote. The following amazing paragraph from Luther does not reference the word stewardship or steward, but it conveys foundational truths of Christian stewardship.

Therefore, we must use all these things upon earth in no other way than as a guest who travels through the land and comes to a hotel where he must lodge overnight. He takes only food and lodging from the host, and he says not that the property of the host belongs to him. Just so should we also treat our temporal possessions, as if they were not ours, and enjoy only so much of them as we need to nourish the body and then help our neighbors with the balance. Thus, the life of the Christian is only a lodging for the night, since we have here no continuing city, but must journey on to heaven, where the Father is.

Martin Luther aptly points out that, while on earth, we are God's guests. God is the creator, sustainer, and owner of all things. Both the food we eat and the homes we live in are provided by God. God makes it possible for us to plant food to eat, because He provides the seeds, ground,

sunlight, and rain. He gives us the intelligence, strength, and energy to harvest the crops that He makes possible for us to plant. The meat we eat comes from the animals that live in the fields which God has provided along with the food He makes possible for them to eat. God also provides the materials for our homes. Our lives are in God's hands. As His stewards, we receive His blessings with thanksgiving.

Luther's perspective on temporal possessions is totally opposite of what our society promotes. Our society tells us that we create and have control over all we have. Our happiness and security are dependent upon having things. Our status is determined by what we have so we work long and hard to have big homes, new cars, and large investment accounts. In contrast, Luther reminds us that things, both necessities and luxuries, are God gifts on loan to us. Luther encourages us to be satisfied with enough to provide for our needs and to use the rest to support our neighbors and God's kingdom.

Luther reminds us that "the life of the Christian is only a lodging for the night." Likewise, the Apostle Paul tells us that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), so we "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). Our earthly journey is merely temporary until we rest in our permanent home with Jesus. By God's grace, Luther knew that this life is a "journey on to heaven." We do as well.

FROM: Stewardship Advisor

SUNDAY LENTEN SCHEDULE "The Power of Grace"

The theme for our Sunday morning worship services has been "The Power of Grace." The theme is taken from a Max Lucado book simply titled "Grace." This theme will be developed through Easter (The Feast of the Resurrection).

- Mar. 3 Third Sunday in Lent – Romans 3:24,25 – "Grace and the Sweet Exchange" Pastor Raether leads worship at both congregations.
- Mar. 10 Fourth Sunday in Lent – Holy Communion Celebrated - Exodus 6:6-"You Can Find Rest"
- Mar. 17 Fifth Sunday in Lent -Ruth 4:14 – "Grace on the Fringe" Pastor Meyer will lead our worship.
- Mar. 24 Palm Sunday – Holy Communion Celebrated –2 Corinthians 12:9 –"Grace and Fear Dethroned"
- Mar. 31 Easter – Holy Communion Celebrated. – John 6:39 – "Grace and Heaven Guaranteed."

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES



"Be Gracious to Me"

Midweek Lenten services begin this week on Wednesday at 1:00p.m. Area LCMS pastors will exchange pulpits. The theme for this year's midweek services is "Be Gracious to Me" and centers on Psalm 41. Join us as we walk with our Lord to Calvary with repentant hearts.

- Mar. 6 Midweek of Lent 3 – "Soon and Never" Psalm 41:5 – Pastor Raether
- Mar. 13 Midweek of Lent 4 – "Sustained in Sickness Psalm 41:3 – Pastor Benson (Retired Pastor)
- Mar. 20 Midweek of Lent 5 – "Vindication" Psalm 41:7-8 – Pastor Meyer (St. Paul Lutheran Church and School)

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS (10:15 am) The Miracles of Lent"

The Sunday Morning Bible Class will continue its study of the miracles and miraculous signs performed by God during the Passion of Jesus Christ. The important and significant miracles and miraculous signs that God the Father performed to set apart His Son's death from absolutely all others were performed to help spread the Good News, which is centered in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the face of opposition. Following is a tentative schedule for this study:

- Mar. 3 – No class – pastor leads worship at St. Paul and Prince of Peace
- Mar. 10 – "The Miracle of the Splitting Rocks" Matthew 27:51c
- Mar. 17 – "The Miraculous Raising of the Saints from Death" Matthew 27:52,53
- Mar. 24 – "The Miraculous Faith of the Roman" Soldiers" Matthew 27:54
- Mar. 31 – No class – Easter Fellowship
- Apr. 7 – No class – pastor leads worship at St. Paul and Prince of Peace
- Apr. 14 – "The Miracle of Good Friday" 1 Peter 3:18
- Apr. 21 – "The Miracle of Christ's Descent into Hell" 1 Peter 3:18,19
- Apr. 28 - "The Miracle of Easter" Matthew 28:1-10

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS
"You Are never Alone"

We continue our study titled, "You Are Never Alone Video Bible Study". Max Lucado walks you through John's Gospel, and explores Christ's miracles and how He's still at work in our lives today! In this six session video study, you'll discover you're stronger than you think because with Jesus in our lives, we are never truly alone.

Tentative schedule:

- Mar. 6 "God is With You in the Dark"
- Mar. 13 "God is With You in the "Valley "
- Mar. 20 "God is With You When You Need Grace"

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

The Holy Week Schedule will continue the theme "The Power of Grace." God's grace rests upon the work of our Lord and Savior. He died on the cross we deserve, rested in the tomb for three days, and then rose victorious over our enemies. This year we have added one more service during Holy Week, "Holy Saturday." Holy Saturday is a worship service that comes between our Lord's death on the cross and His victorious resurrection. This service is a service from despair to hope, darkness to light, and death to life, Following is our schedule for Holy Week:

- Mar. 24 Palm Sunday 9:15 a.m. – Holy Communion Celebrated – 2 Corinthians 12:9 – "Grace and Fear Dethroned"
- Mar. 28 Maundy Thursday 1:00 p.m.– Holy Communion Celebrated – Ephesians 4:32 – "Grace and Wet Feet"
- Mar. 29 Good Friday – 1:00 p.m.– Psalm 139:23-24 – "Grace and Coming Clean"
- Mar. 30 Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil) - 6:30 p.m. — Holy Communion Celebrated – "Romans 6:4 – "A time to be Born"
- Mar. 31 Easter 9:15 a.m. – Holy Communion Celebrated. – John 6:39 – "Grace and Heaven Guaranteed."

Following our celebration of our Lord's resurrection, you are invited to join us for a time of fellowship as refreshments will be served.

Board of Education

February 7, 2024

Members: Jill Davis, Sue Macek, Pastor Raether
Library: We have a new book written by Joyce Meyer titled, "Managing your Emotions", Daily Wisdom for Remaining Stable in an Unstable World. This book talks about emotions which can serve a

purpose. Sometimes our emotion can cause us to make bad decisions that impact ourselves and others. The Bible contains wisdom which helps us take charge of our emotions. You will enjoy reading the Biblical perspective about or emotions.

St. Paul: February 1st is Kindergarten Round-up
Confirmation report: they will not meet April 17th

Sunday School report: This months Bible stories include David and Goliath, David and Jonathan, David Worships God, and Solomon prays for wisdom. From March until May we will be studying the final quarter Bible Stories until breaking for the summer.

Family Fellowship report: Will meet on February 11th after the church service. The theme is Valentines. Will be serving biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, coffee, chocolate milk, OJ and water. Games will be provided for adults and crafts for the children. Will set up Saturday, February 10th at 9:30 am.

Wednesday and Sunday Bible Study: Sunday session will be "Miracles of Lent" and Wednesday will be a video on Max Lucados series "You're Never Alone"

Cradle Roll: none

Old Business: We have the VBS curriculum titled, "Celebrate the Savior, Jesus Gives Us Joy" for 3 year olds to 5th grade. Need to discuss next month the dates and find volunteers.

New Business: We wish to thank Kari for organizing the craft room in the basement.

Next meeting is March 6th.

Sue Macek, Chairman

Lutheran Women's Fellowship

February 1, 2024

The Lutheran Women's Fellowship met on February 1, 2024 Potluck and Table Prayer at noon. Twelve members attended the meeting. Sally Zuspann called the February meeting to order with devotion "Today Is Special" and prayer. The minutes of January 4, 2024 were given out in the meeting, were read and approved.

Committee reports:

Treasurer, Card Counter, and Funeral Fund reports were all approved.

Old Business:

Shut-Ins Birthday: No shut-ins in February.

Women's Fellowship Year Book for 2024 was handed out to members attending.

Thank you cards received LWML donations: Mom's Talk quilts received, Lord's Cupboard, family of Kathy Nelson.

Jill Davis donated place mats for LWML meetings.

New Business:

March Funeral Committee: Sue Macek, Sally Zuspann.

Lenten After Service Coffee: Sign up sheet passed around for volunteering on: **February 14, 21, 28, March 6, 13, and 20.**

Birthdays: Euvon Miller.

March 7 - Hostess: Euvon Miller, Sally Zuspann.

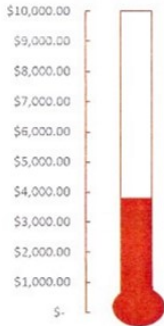
Valentines to color: Sue Macek passed out valentine pictures to color. Sally Zuspann closed meeting 2:00 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

LaVonne Peters, Secretary.

THE ORGAN FUND

The cost of repairing the organ was paid for by the Foundation. The congregation is reimbursing the foundation for this cost. We have received nearly \$3,700 in gifts for this fund through the month of February. You may keep track of the progress the congregation is making by observing the barometer in the Narthex or entrance. There are also envelopes for you use for this project. You may give as a special gift in remembrance of a loved one, a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion. We thank you the Lord of the church for your outpouring of support for this project.

Goal \$10,000.00
Received \$ 3,773.75



MARCH

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Mya Johll -(3/1), Diane Haggman -(3/2), Kaleb Johnson -(3/4), Janet Lennon -(3/4), Madelyn Abrams -(3/9), Sharie Ball -(3/9), Vicky Escobedo -(3/10), Robert Kuebler -(3/10), Judy Dorothy -(3/14), Kurt Davis -(3/15), Ruby Lindner -(3/16), Melroy Hansen -(3/17), Remington Trushcheff -(3/17), Brady Read -(3/19), Jessica Kuebler -(3/22), Renee Schulz -(3/23), Ron Utley -(3/23), Alissa Andrews -(3/29), Haley Thanupakorn -(3/30)

Ron & Jeanette Utley	3/14	49th
Fred & Sharon McPherson	3/16	67th

Membership Report for February 2024

GAIN

Confirmed +

Baptized +

LOSS

Confirmed -

Baptized -

Communicant =162
Baptized (not confirmed) = 46
Total baptized souls = 208

Financial Report February 2024

Income (Offerings)

Home/Current \$9,439.25, Missions Budget \$172.00, Loose Offerings \$565.05, Ash Wednesday \$284.00, Lenten Offering \$114.00, Miscellaneous \$187.00, Organ Fund \$3,673.75.

Total Offerings \$14,435.05

Expenses

Pastor \$2,000.00, Payroll \$1,080.72, Organist \$420.00, Pastoral Expenses \$602.33, Ministry Expenses \$ 223.98, Television Ministry \$63.76, Office Supplies \$64.20, Computer/Internet \$389.30, Water \$108.99, Pest Control \$40.00, Gas & Electric \$643.00, Snow Removal \$100.00, Sanitation \$40.66, Miscellaneous \$567.75, W/H Tax \$172.23, Missions \$172.00, Charities \$187.00, Advertising \$240.00.

Total Expenses \$7,115.92
Net Income \$7,319.13

ATTENDANCE

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Communion</u>
2/4	41	
2/11	55	45
2/18	44	
2/25	47	41
<u>Ash Wednesday</u>		
2/14	31	29
<u>Lenten</u>		
2/21	27	
2/28	30	