



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings of Joy and Peace in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are in the transition from winter to spring. The first part of February was mild and then on the 14th, the weather changed for two weeks. We were hit with snow and cold weather. We anticipate the snows of March and the moisture they can bring for our farmers.

With the coming of March, we anticipate the Lenten Season. We will celebrate our Lord's Transfiguration on March 2nd. The transfiguration marks a movement in the church year as we have a different focus on our Lord. The Transfiguration, reveals Jesus as true God as the glory and splendor of his divinity burst forth. The Epiphany season ends with its time of revealing who Jesus was to the world.

The Lenten Season reveals Jesus as true man going to the cross. It is as if His divinity is covered as He takes upon Himself the sins of the world and the punishment we deserve. We walk with our Lord through the Valley of Darkness of Calvary and the sunshine of the Resurrection. This is a time when God's grace is revealed and made known.

One of the favorite hymns of the church is "Amazing Grace." The hymn is often sung at funerals, during the Lenten Season and throughout the church year. The hymn was written by Englishman John Newton. To help understand the richness of this hymn, remember Newton's past.

He had an unfortunate and troubled childhood (his mother passed away when he was six years old, Newton spent years fighting against authority, going so far as trying to desert the Royal Navy, in his twenties. Later, abandoned by his crew in West Africa, he was forced to be a servant to a slave trader, but was eventually recused. On the return voyage to England, a violent storm hit and almost sank the ship, prompting Newton to begin his spiritual conversion as he cried out to God to save them from the storm.

Newton would become a slave ship master where he served for several years. Bringing slaves from Africa to England, later admitted to mistreating the slaves under his care. In 1754, after becoming violently ill on a sea voyage, Newton abandoned his life as a slave trader, the slave trade, and seafaring, altogether, wholeheartedly devoting his life to God's service.

He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1764, and became a popular as a preacher and hymn writer, penning over 280 hymns, among them "Amazing Grace." In his later years, he fought alongside William Wilberforce, leader of the parliamentary campaign to abolish the African slave trade. He described the horrors of the slave trade in a tract he wrote supporting the campaign and lived to see the British passage of the Slave Trade Act 1807.

Perhaps this helps us better understand the following words from the Hymn:

I once was lost,  
But now am found,  
Was blind  
But now I see.

And

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come,  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

These words carry a much deeper meaning than a sinner's mere gratitude. Close to death at various times and blind to reality at others, Newton would certainly not have written "Amazing Grace" if not for his tumultuous past. And many of us would then be without these beautiful words that describe our own relationship with Christ and our reliance on God's grace in our lives;

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fear relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

In Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic African American novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, has Tom singing three verses of "Amazing Grace," including one verse not written by Newton, which is not traditionally sung as the final verse:

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise.  
Than when we first begun.

During this Lenten Season we see God's grace on display as we walk with our Lord to Calvary and the empty tomb. Paul defines God's grace for us in his letter to the Ephesians "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast." We remember that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Join your brothers and sisters in Christ as we journey through the Lenten season both on Sundays and Wednesdays.

May God's grace surround you and yours during this season of Lent as we go forth in His name and make every day a great day in His service.

In Christ,  
Pastor Raether

*Pastor Raether*



## Abiding Produces Fruit

God calls us to live lives of abundant fruitfulness (good works— thoughts, attitudes, or actions that glorify God). The key to bearing fruit is found in the 15th chapter of John's Gospel where Jesus tells us that He is the Vine and we the branches. As the Vine provides nourishment to its branches, Jesus fills, sustains, and empowers us. It is the connection we have with Jesus, the Vine, that makes our fruit possible. Jesus said, "I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in Him, he it is that bears much fruit..." (verse 5). By God's grace, we understand that, through our own power, we are unable to bear fruit. Because it is Jesus Who enables us to be fruitful, we can bear fruit, more fruit, and much fruit in our lives, thus bringing glory to our Heavenly Father (verse 8).

God's Word refers to the connection between the vine and branches and our connection with Jesus as "abiding." Through His holy Word and Sacraments, Jesus abides in us, stays with us, and makes Himself at home with us. Through His holy Word and Sacraments, we stay in touch with Him, remain attached to Him, and receive life and power from Him. His life-giving Word abides in us, making us fruitful, like healthy branches on a good vine. If our connection with Jesus is severed, it is because we have caused the separation. Jesus will "never leave [us] nor forsake [us]" (Hebrews 13:5).

The fruit that we bear is not only made possible by our abiding in Jesus, it indicates that we have been and are in union and communion with Jesus. Our fruit is Jesus working in and through us. Our fruit is seen as we share the Gospel with others and introduce neighbors, friends, and co-workers to Jesus. Through faith we understand that our efforts to advance the Gospel are both a responsibility and privilege. The more we "abide" in Jesus, the more we will share our time, talents, and money with God by serving and witnessing and giving to others. Each and every day we are given opportunities to bear fruit. Some acts of service may be as small as opening the door for others or they may be as big as spending the entire day or several days helping someone in need. It may be giving money sacrificially to help others in need. Through faith, by God's grace, we can be ready and willing to bear fruit, bringing glory to God through our faithful and fruitful lives.

FROM: Stewardship Advisors

## MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

Our Midweek Lenten services will begin on March 5th . Our services will be held at 1:00 pm. The pastors of the LC-MS in Fort Dodge will rotate as we have in the past. The rotation has not been finalized as of this writing. The theme for our mid- week worship will be "The Salutary Gift: The Lord's Supper." This series will examine the meaning of the Lord's Supper from various approaches. The weekly themes will include (rotation to be determined):

"Life- Giving Fruit" –"Ash Wednesday"  
"Bread From Heaven"  
"Healing Medicine"  
"Blest Communion"

"Rest for the Weary"  
"Nuptial Feast"  
"Covenant Meal" – Maundy Thursday  
"Sacrificial Banquet" – Good Friday  
"Feast of Victory" - Easter

## SUNDAY LENTEN SERIES "Words That Last Forever"

The theme of our Sunday Morning Worship during Lent will be "Words that Last Forever." This classic series focuses on how Christ mapped out his way of suffering with seven famous last words—final phrases that served as tiny touchstones along his path to salvation for us. The weekly schedule is as follows:

March 2 – "Transfiguration Sunday" - Pastor Raether at St. Paul & POP  
March 9 –"Forgiven" – Luke 22:34 – Holy Communion Celebrated  
March 16 – "Paradise" – Luke 23:42-43 - Pastor Meyer leads worship  
March 23 – "Behold" – John 19:25-27 -Holy Communion Celebrated"  
March 30 – "Forsaken"- Matthew 27:46  
April 6 – "Thirst" – John 19:28 - Pastor Raether at St. Paul & POP  
April 13 – "Finished" – John 19:30– Holy Communion Celebrated"  
April 17 – Maundy Thursday – "Covenant Meal" Holy Communion Celebrated  
April 18 – Good Friday – "Sacrificial Banquet"  
April 20 – "The Feast of Victory" – Holy Communion Celebrated  
April 27 – The Sunday After Easter – "To be Determined"

## WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY (10 am)

The weather has not cooperated with our Wednesday Morning Bible Study, as we have canceled the first two weeks. 'One Week' is the title of this study. The study examines Holy Week and the "Greater Passion" of our Lord. We will walk with our Lord as He enters Jerusalem on Sunday, confronts the religious leaders on Monday, and teaches on Tuesday. Wednesday was a day of rest. Thursday, we walk with our Lord to the Upper Room and Gethsemane. Friday included our Lord's arrest and His trials before the religious and political leaders of the day. We will follow Jesus to Calvary and being laid to rest in a new Tomb. Saturday Jesus rested in the tomb and His disciples were filled with despair. Then comes Sunday and the empty tomb and our victorious Lord's resurrection, announcing that He had conquered our enemies, sin death and the power of the devil.

## REMEMBER MARCH 9TH

Daylight Savings Time is scheduled to resume. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour. It is springtime and so we spring forward.



## DUAL PARISH UPDATE

Both congregations have approved the Dual Parish Agreement and it has been submitted to the District President. Pastor Meyer has been in contact with the placement office at St. Louis and we will be able to interview up to four candidates. When we have interviewed candidates before, we were able to rank the candidates according to who would fit our ministry. The interview should take place in the next couple of days.

### Board of Education

February 19, 2025

**Members:** Kari Johnson, Rhonda Waddell, Sue Macek, Pastor Raether.

**Library:** We have Season Four of the Chosen "Rise Up" DVD. Threatened by the reality of Jesus' growing influence, religious leaders do the unthinkable - ally with their Roman oppressors. As the seeds of betrayal are planted and opposition to Jesus' message turns violent, He's left with no alternative but demand His followers RISE UP. DVD's for seasons one, two, and three are available to check out too.

**St. Paul:** Feb 6 is Kindergarten Round-up (snow day 2/13), Feb 17th is Saints Family Night, Feb 20th is Star Lab Field trip, and Feb 21st - no school.

**Catechism report:** Will be making up time for snow days.

**Sunday School report:** Feb lessons include The Lord's Supper, Jesus Betrayal in Gethsemane, Peter Denies Jesus, and Jesus Death/Resurrection. Lessons on Unit 9 will begin in March.

**Family Fellowship report:** Will set up on Saturday March 8th at 9:00 am. Serving biscuits and gravy on Sunday March 9th after church. A sign-up sheet is on the office bulletin board.

**Wednesday Bible Study:** Will complete the video series "3:16--the Number of Hope". A new study will begin on February 12th titled "One Week" (Mark 11-16). No cost for the material on this study.

**Cradle Roll:** Kari is working with six children.

**Old Business:** Simon Lindner is working on the baptismal lambs.

**New business:** We signed two Anniversary cards for Dr Rev Steve Turner and Rev Kendall Meyer for their faithful years in the ministry. We ordered the 2025 VBS program from Concordia titled, "Epic Australian Adventure - An Unforgettable Journey with Jesus"

Next meeting is March 5th (Ash Wednesday) with church at 1 PM.

Sue Macek, Chairman

### Lutheran Women's Fellowship

February 5, 2025

The Lutheran Women's Fellowship met on February 5, 2025, Potluck and Table Prayer at noon. Nine members attended the meeting. Florence Sandgren gave mites devotion; "Grandma Hand" from "Blessed By An Angel" and Mites Pledge. Sally Zuspahn called the February meeting

to order. The minutes of January 2, 2025, were given out in the meeting, were read and approved.

### Committee reports:

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

### Old Business:

### New Business:

**Shut-ins birthdays:** No shut-ins in February.

**Women's Fellowship Year Book for 2025:** was handed out to members attending. Addition to handbook; back page "Shut-In-Birthdays".

**Lenten After Service Coffee:** Sign up sheet passed around for volunteering on: March 12, 19, 26 and April 2, 9.

**Birthdays:** Euvon Miller.

**March Funeral Committee:** Sue Macek, Sally Zuspahn.

**March 7 - Hostess:** Euvon Miller, Sally Zuspahn.

Sally Zuspahn closed meeting 2:00 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

LaVonne Peters, Secretary.

## ORGAN FUND UPDATE

Received in 2024	\$28,453.15
2025 YTD Received	\$ 1,843.40
Reimbursed to Foundation	\$26,000.00
Organ Fund	\$ 4,296.55

## 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), 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

50th

Membership Report for February 2025

GAIN

Confirmed +

Baptized +

LOSS

Confirmed -

Baptized -

Communicant =155  
Baptized (not confirmed) =50  
Total baptized souls =205

Financial Report January 2025

Income (Offerings)

Home/Current \$6,233.60, Missions Budget \$117.00, Loose Offerings \$7.00, Lutheran Witness \$ 58.25, Special \$142.00, Miscellaneous \$227.07, Organ Fund \$440.40.

**Total Offerings \$7,229.32**

Expenses

Pastor \$2,000.00, Payroll \$1,002.40, Organist \$240.00, Pastoral Expenses \$772.10, Ministry Expense \$226.04, Television Ministry \$51.01, Office Supplies \$282.80, Computer/Internet \$284.86, Church Supplies \$32.09, Water \$112.40, Pest Control \$41.00, Gas & Electric \$587.00, Sanitation \$42.80, Snow Removal \$440.00, Miscellaneous \$32.10, W/H Tax \$182.94, Missions \$117.00, Charities \$142.00, Advertising \$120.00.

**Total Expenses \$6,708.54**  
**Net Income \$ 520.78**

**ATTENDANCE**

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Communion</u>
2/2	37	
2/9	36	34
2/16	36	
2/23	44	37

