



Epistle



S T . J O H N L U T H E R A N C H U R C H

Lent: A Time for Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

Ready or not, Lent is just around the corner. During this season, we look to Jesus and see His passion for us as He makes His way to the cross. It begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14th. We will observe Ash Wednesday with a special *Divine Service* including the *Imposition of Ashes* and the *Sacrament of the Altar*.

Christians of many confessions engage in a variety of practices to mark this time of year, a time of preparation for the most important events of Jesus' death and resurrection. For centuries, many Christians have engaged in what are sometimes called the "Lenten disciplines" of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. For many Christians today, however, these invoke the most Lutheran question: "What does this mean?" Let's explore these ancient disciplines to discover exactly what they are, the purpose they serve, and how life in Christ is enriched by these things for the sake of our neighbor and to the glory of God.

Prayer

During Lent we take extra time to gather together in God's word and prayer. Our Wednesday night services provide time for personal devotion and remind us of our sin and the need we have for God's forgiveness. We are pointed to Jesus and His mission. We are shown what Jesus gave up through His suffering and death in order to save us. In repentant prayer, God prepares our hearts to receive in faith the benefits of Christ's passion for us. In Him we have forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, Lent is a time of reverent, solemn joy in the sacrificial love of Jesus. This prepares us for the more exuberant "feast of victory" celebration that is Easter (See "This is the Feast" LSB p. 155, *Divine Service 1*).

Fasting

Fasting (going without food for a time) is an ancient practice to which Jesus and others make reference. The forty days of Lent remind us of Jesus' miraculous time of fasting and temptation in the wilderness. One need not fast for extreme periods of time like Jesus did, and it is not meant to be a religious hunger strike. Historically, it has simply meant depriving one's self of a meal a week, or at most one meal each day to remind us of Jesus' sacrifice for our sake. In modern Lutheran piety, fasting often takes the form of "giving something up for Lent." In conjunction with the extra worship services, it also serves to remind us that we do not "live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (*Matthew 4:4*). Arguably, the most beneficial aspect of fasting is that it contributes in a vital way to the last of the Lenten disciplines, almsgiving.

Almsgiving

Often our "giving something up for Lent" really only benefits ourselves. Yet, that was not the original purpose for fasting. Instead, fasting led to almsgiving. Almsgiving is the ancient Biblical term for giving to the poor (*Isaiah 58:3-7*). While less true today than in ages past, the preparation and consumption of a meal uses resources of time and money. In addition to reminding us of what Christ gave up for us, fasting frees up the resources used for a meal to be given to help others. We can spend time in service to others or set aside the money we would have used for lunch to make a donation to a local food pantry, a homeless shelter, or maybe a missionary.

Lent is a special time. In prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we are being prepared to receive with joy the gift of Christ's death and resurrection. We are given a greater dependence on Christ's heavenly gifts of Word and Sacrament. We are able to pass more of God's blessings on to those who are in need to the glory of His name. As we head into the Season of Lent, St. John will provide opportunities for you to be in prayer and to pass God's blessing on to those who are in need.

The Lord bless and keep you during Lent and always.
Pastor Tim A. Sims

Voter's Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2017 | 11:21 A.M. | Meeting called to order by Don Stallman
Pastor Sims opened with Prayer and Devotion

In Attendance

35 members of the congregation

Approval of Minutes

The Meeting Minutes from September 17, 2017 Read and Changes Submitted, Page 2, instead of loss, the word difference has been suggested and the spelling of word leaving to be corrected to leading. Budget Report Changes to the location of General Fund Checking account figures and Operating Balance Figures entered as read will be changed to reflect changes, 1st motion from Chris Urquhart and 2nd by Paul Stallman, motion carried unanimously

Youth Report:

Dori Smith reported the Halloween Youth Events were well received, the youth took this time to hand out Youth Program Event fliers, inviting others within the community to participate in upcoming events. The Youth Group is taking ownership of their faith, and are asking to create a social media Instagram Account for Encouragement for other youth to join them, they will be working on a Homework Hang-out time, and Santa's Cottage. Dori Smith asked for additional help from others to encourage and lead our youth, she also reminded the congregation in attendance of no Advent Dinners this year.

Board of Education Report:

Pastor Sims spoke for Valerie Blechle. A Veteran's Letter was received thanking the students for their letters. In fund raising the PTL "Kickball" has raised around \$1,000.00 and \$460.00 for the Teacher's through the Go Fund Me Account. Several Teachers are taking Graduate Classes through Concordia University Chicago. Chapel Money was given to the Food Bank, the recent auction event night, brought in \$37,800.00

Board of Elders Report:

Randy Campbell, stated that the Name Removal's from our congregational rolls will need a vote. New Business voting will make the removals official.

Security has been discussed with the Board of Trustees who are seeking information of costs for installation of Panic Doors for the 2-side entrance and back doors to the church

Randy Campbell also requested feedback for Saturday night services time change proposal.

Trustee Report:

Sealing of the Church exterior will need funds in place by the Spring of 2018. Boiler repairs are completed at \$5,300.00. Air conditioning in the school was repaired but began to freeze up again, the condenser unit will need new refrigerant that will be \$120.00 per pound or a new condenser unit. New carpet in the preschool rooms to be laid during winter break for the students and staff of the school.

A call for more congregational giving to help offset the budget shortfall is needed

General Accounts will still have accessibilities by authorized individuals with proper notification to release funds for needed uses, ongoing transfers taking place of accounts currently in place. There will be a Monday night meeting with the School Board for purposes of closing old accounts.

Mike Welge, stood and thanked the Board of Trustees for all of their efforts during this time of change

Treasurers Report:

As previously stated in the old minute the Budget Report needs changes to the location of General Fund Checking account figures and Operating Balance Figures, and the line 3 changes, 1st motion from Chris Urquhart and 2nd by Paul Stallman, motion carried unanimously

Stewardship Committee Report:

Sue Abraham reported that approximately 1/3 of the current congregation members have been contacted and those on our current visitors list, Pastor Massey has been doing very well at keeping the information organized and tracking visits. Current contacts are suspended until after the first of the year in 2018. We do not plan on having the Dent on Debt campaign this year. Pastor Sims and Pastor Massey are working on options for people to give money to missions of the church during this coming Lent. A mailing campaign was proposed to mail cards or flyers to prospective church attendees was proven cost prohibitive, and there is a lack of a personal touch.

Cemetery Report:

Mike Welge spoke for Barbara Welge, a grateful and thankful message for all the individuals who attended the Gerecke Memorial Dedication and to both Pastor Massey and Pastor Sims.

Constitution Report:

None

Pastor's Report:

Advent and Christmas services are in the planning stages.

Pastor Sims reflected on the last 6 months, reminding the voter's that he can only assist as an overseer and not dictate leadership and day to day operations, if the Church's Constitution and By-laws are followed. "The parable of today's service applies to our boards, our leaders, the church, and school financing." He recalled how in Guatemala, during his time there, that their doors were always open, saying these are different times and we are in a place of time that requires security in churches.

Current & Next Couple Months: Priorities

Ministry with Associate Pr. Justin Massey continues & is going well. Continuing work with Pr. Massey, Stewardship, Elders, and other volunteers on phases 2-3: letters, calls, visits on members who are "missing." Pastor Massey is doing marvelous in keeping things organized. Special thanks to all who are helping in this valuable work. Visiting Confirmation & other school children/families.

Pastor addressed "Joint Services Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation" and why LCMS congregations did not participate.

Pastor addressed some confusion regarding "What is your pastor(s) Called to do?" He is a servant of Word & Sacrament (1 Cor. 4:1-2); He is to preach, teach, & evangelize (1 Tim 4:1-5). Further, under our constitutional, congregational polity and administrative practices the pastor is to guide and "assist in administrating policies and procedures" (Call documents). The pastor(s) is to be concerned with things which are the responsibility of lay leaders only in regard to whether or not things are being done according to Constitution & By-Laws and in a manner of Christian love & respect. The pastor(s) is not to side with one group of elected leaders over another. He is to be neither a dictator ("Herr Pastor"), nor a micro-manager (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Stewardship is working the relationship between boards and leaders, membership and restoring the relationship between membership, community, and weekly worship, Hispanic Outreach, and reestablishing Constitution Committee.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Mary Stallman asked if an article could be placed in the newspaper about the upcoming church events, Pastor Sims said he would follow up on that information.

Pastor Sims, pointed out that meeting minute changes may need to be approved prior to the voter's approval when read and may cause a delay in the Epistle.

Gary Eggemeyer, spoke of the cost of \$7,500.00 repairs needed for the Organ Bellows, plus the costs of \$400.00 dollars for time and travel to Wicks from Highland, IL. Trustees will continue discussions. No work will be performed on the organ during the Holidays. He said, "It will be more difficult to replace our present organist as time goes on, and there is a great skill to the playing of our style of organ."

Ryan Petrowske suggested we consider getting an electronic organ or keyboard instead of investing in the repairs of the organ.

Official Acts:

Randy Campbell stated that the Constitution article 5.B Lists the way to remove someone from our congregational membership rolls. Thus, number 7 on removals should be deleted. Randy Campbell 1st motion, 2nd motion Mike Welge. Unanimously, carried.

Ashley and Heather Allen will be contacted by the Stewardship Committee as well as Daryl Steele for verification purposes.

Don Stallman suggested that the Stewardship committee or others could deliver the Offering Envelopes that are left not picked up.

Meeting Adjournment:

Pastor Sims closed in prayer and song.

S A T U R D A Y N I G H T T I M E C H A N G E

Beginning on **February 3** the Saturday night service will start at **5:00 p.m.** This will continue through **March 10**.

This is being done on a trial basis. Please let one of the pastors, an elder, or church secretary know if you have feedback, positive or negative, on this time change.

C H U R C H I N T H E P A R I S H H A L L

The weekend of February 3rd and 4th, worship services will be held in the Parish Hall due to the installation of new flooring in the church.

L E N T E N S U P P E R S

Please join us for supper before the Lenten services. Supper will be served in the Parish Hall beginning at 5:00 p.m. This year our meals will be served by the following groups:

February 14 Youth Group

February 21 LWML

February 28 LWML

March 7 Youth Group

March 14 PTL Spaghetti Dinner

March 21 CAPPERS

April 1 Easter Breakfast Youth Group



**O U R 2 0 1 7 - 2 0 1 8 Y E A R - T O - D A T E
F I N A N C I A L S T A T U S**

Cash Flow from 7/31/2017 to 1/23/18

Year-to-date Income \$522,020.91
 Year-to-date Expense \$591,204.99
 Difference (Income - Expense) (\$69,184.08)

Money owed on Line of Credit

Beginning Balance 7/31/17 \$214,603.08
 Paid on Debt year-to-date (\$291,871.05)
 Paid from Dent on Debt (\$)
 Borrowed year-to-date \$172,020.00
 LOC Renewal Fee \$80.00
 Current Balance as of 12/26/17 \$ 89,300.26

Average 2017 Attendance per Week 213

L U T H E R A N B R A I L L E C E N T E R N E W S

We are now in our 7th year at our Chester location with St. John as our sponsoring organization. We have a busy crew with seven sessions of seven to eight workers each. Within groups these workers may vary with substitutes from month to month, but we estimate that we have about 70 volunteers from St. John and the surrounding area who are active in this wonderful mission outreach. We are now producing volumes of Judges & Ruth, Hebrews – Jude (both in English), and a double volume of Ezekiel & Daniel in Spanish. These books are sent all over the world with many now headed to India. In the past two years we have been a part of shipments of full Braille Bibles totaling over 150 each to Nigeria and Costa Rica. The Bibles in the latter region are used to teach the visually impaired to read Braille. What a fantastic educational and spiritual use of God’s word!

With mailing 45 books each month, our expenses have been rising, and we are finding ourselves in a financial crunch. We are blessed with free rent from a local benefactor and free postage from the USPS, but our expenses for paper, covers, shipping cartons, binders, packing tape, utilities, and miscellaneous office supplies are mounting. Our yearly expenses total approximately \$3,500.00. This work is not subsidized by our St. John budget or the headquarters in California, so we are dependent on donations from individuals and local organizations.

We would ask that you prayerfully consider the amazing opportunity that our church has to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus’s death and resurrection not only to the visually impaired in all 50 of our American states, but also those in 46 foreign countries around the world during our past six years. If you are interested in helping this mission work financially, please make your check payable to “St. John Braille Center” and drop it by the church office or in the offering plate in a separate envelope noted “Braille Center”. We understand if you are unable to help us in this way, but we ask that you keep our work and the commitment of our volunteers (some in their nineties) in your prayers.

Lutheran Braille Workers – Helping others touch (and be touched by) God’s promises.

P R E S C H O O L R E G I S T R A T I O N

“Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a real blessing.”
 Psalm 127:3

It is almost time for Preschool Registration for the 2018-2019 school year. This registration will take place during the week starting Monday, February 26 – March 2, 2018 in the school office. The 3 year old Preschool class and the 4 year-old Preschool class will meet in the morning from 8:15-11:15 a.m. Both sessions include a daily hot lunch. The hours for the Extended Care/Early Childhood Room will be 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Mark your calendar because registration will be on a first come, first serve basis. Class sizes are limited. If you have any questions, please call the school office (826-4345).

May God bless you – and your little blessing from Heaven.

Biblical Motifs for a Lenten Journey

For our Lenten journey this 2018 season, evening mid-week Vespers services will be using biblical *motifs* to help tie together some of the familiar elements and their related meanings scattered through the Bible. We will expand upon the five Lenten Year-B lectionary readings as printed on page xvi (16) in your Lutheran Service Book (LSB) hymnal. Since there are no texts for midweek services, we hope to expand on five elements or places that are first introduced in the readings: (1) water, (2) garment or veil, (3) garden, (4) tree or pole, and (5) wilderness.

Motif is a newer French word used in art and literature to denote a distinctive feature or dominant idea. Since the *Battle for the Bible* in the 1970's, much LCMS preaching and study was focused on the truthfulness and reliability of Holy Scripture. Critics were undermining the LCMS by attacking its foundation: the Word of God. It was a test which some failed by disbelieving that God could or would sustain His perfect and eternal Word and its meaning through fallible human beings. Thus, they have twisted and interpreted the Bible to allow whatever they wanted such as abortion on demand, homosexuality, and women pastors.

Now that we rest in the faith that God does sustain His Word despite the sinfulness of His children in this life, we pay more attention to the beauty, complexity, and depth of the Bible. The five motifs we will be using for evening Lenten Vespers services are related to the assigned readings for Lent (page xvi). We intend to explain their meaning and interpret their presence in many stories and doctrines in Holy Scripture. We pray that God will lead our preaching for your nourishment so that you will see the depth and beauty of God's Word. A short preview of our plan follows.

MW-1, Feb 21st, after Genesis 22, James 1, & Mark 1: Water

Just as Jesus was first baptized before He was tempted and began His ministry, so God also makes us reborn soldiers of the cross by baptism. Herein we enter the spiritual battle against the chaotic forces of the world, the devil, and our own sinful nature.

MW-2, Feb 28th, after Genesis 17, Romans 5, & Mark 8: Garment/Cloth

God commanded Moses to keep His covenant by the shedding of blood in circumcision. This covenant pointed to Christ, the promised descendent of Israel, Who would cover their sins. Peter shamelessly confesses Christ as his hope for justification, the covering for the sinful.

MW-3, Mar 6th, after Exodus 20, 1Corinthians 1, & John 2: Garden

The same Ten Commandments that were once written on Adam and Eve's hearts now have to be written more permanently on stone. Wild human hearts constantly need tending; after all, our lives are not exactly beds of roses. Jesus shows how far even He is from the Garden of Eden as He prays and struggles in the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet, Jesus will obey His Father's command and will for our sake.

MW-4, Mar 14th, after Numbers 21, Ephesians 2, & John 3: Tree/Pole

From the saving bronze serpent, the tree of life comes from Christ's sacrifice nullifying the consequences of eating from the tree of knowledge. God gave poisonous serpents because of the impatience of His people, His children of wrath. But good fathers discipline their sons for fruitfulness.

MW-5, Mar 20th, after Jeremiah 31, Hebrews 5, & Mark 10: Wilderness

God's bride has become an adulteress and all her children struggle through a fallen wilderness. The glory of the wilderness declines from the cross and those at the right and left hands of Jesus. Only our great high priest Jesus Christ can show the way through death to life.

Pastor Justin Massey

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

“I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It’s not so much that we stop giving, but we don’t put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is a sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God’s Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service.

Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

Taken from lcms.org/stewardship

APPLES FOR STUDENTS

Shop, Save, and Send. St. John Lutheran School is collecting Rozier’s Country Mart receipts. Our school can earn free educational equipment simply by saving and turning in your Rozier’s receipts. If you shop at Rozier’s, please save your receipt and turn it in to the church or school office or place in the box in the back of church. Thanks so much.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Did you know that the church offers the monthly newsletter electronically? This is a great way to help the church save money. If you would like to sign up please email Kelly at secretary@stjohnchester.com.

ACOLYTES



Sat Feb 3 6:30 pm Jasmine Merideth
 Sun Feb 4 7:45 am Aden Runge
 10:00 am Evan Dunning
 Sat Feb 10 6:30 pm Jordan Merideth
 Sun Feb 11 7:45 am Noah Homan
 10:00 am Alex Williamson
 Wed Feb 14 7:00 pm Ash Wed Abby Bollman
 Sat Feb 17 6:30 pm Jesse Heath
 Sun Feb 18 7:45 am Jordan Buskohl
 10:00 am Max Blechle
 Wed Feb 21 7:00 pm Alex Maes
 Sat Feb 24 6:30 pm Kaden Freytag
 Sun Feb 25 7:45 am Clayton Kothe
 10:00 am Joshua Sims
 Wed Feb 28 7:00 pm Kinsi McCartney

ALTAR GUILD

Feb 3 & 17 Dr. Allan & Louise Liefer, Ken and Virginia Rowold
 Feb 4 & 18 Janet Bargman, Karen Hecht
 Feb 11 & 25 Richard & Brenda Pautler, Nancy Urquhart and Pam Johnston

USHER TEAMS

List not available at time of printing.

Sat Feb 3 5:00 pm Volunteer
 Sun Feb 4 7:45 am
 10:00 am
 Sat Feb 10 5:00 pm Volunteer
 Sun Feb 11 7:45 am
 10:00 am
 Wed Feb 14 7:00 pm
 Sat Feb 17 5:00 pm Volunteer
 Sun Feb 18 7:45 am
 10:00 am
 Sat Feb 24 5:00 pm Volunteer
 Sun Feb 25 7:45 am
 10:00 am

WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturday 5:00 p.m., Sunday 7:45 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
 Sunday School and Bible Class at 9:00 a.m.
 Sunday Worship Broadcast on KSGM 980 AM
 online at ksgm980.com

GREETERS

Sat Feb 3 5:00 pm Amber Cushman
 Sun Feb 4 7:45 am Edna Neislein
 10:00 am Pam Johnston
 Sat Feb 10 5:00 pm Mary Webster
 Sun Feb 11 7:45 am Linda Sympton
 10:00 am Norma Vieregge
 Sat Feb 17 5:00 pm Janice Dettmer
 Sun Feb 18 7:45 am Janet Bargman
 10:00 am Susan McClure
 Sat Feb 24 5:00 pm Doris Knoke
 Sun Feb 25 7:45 am Anne Ebers
 10:00 am Nancy Urquhart

ALUMINUM CANS

Jan 29-Feb 3 Gary Knop
 Feb 5-10 Brett Klindworth
 Feb 12-17 Steve Stallman
 Feb 19-24 Fred Fricke
 Feb 26-Mar 3 Larry McDonough



WEEKEND JANITORS

Feb 3/4 Mike Schwarting / Ryan Petrowske
 Feb 10/11 Ron Cushman / Chris Urquhart
 Ash Wednesday Feb 14 Chris Urquhart
 Feb 17/18 Ron Hillerman / Gary Kelkhoff
 Lent Feb 21 Korey Baker
 Feb 24/25 Korey Baker / Larry McDonough
 Lent Feb 28 Dennis Mott

RADIO ANNOUNCER & TECHNICIANS

Feb 4 Chris Urquhart / Charlie Bargman
 Feb 11 Chris Colvis / Lynn Rickenberg
 Feb 14 Chris Colvis / Lynn Rickenberg
 Feb 18 Tim Lochhead / Bob Platt
 Feb 21 Tim Lochhead / Bob Platt
 Feb 25 Dallas Redeker / Tony Young
 Feb 28 Dallas Redeker / Tony Young



CHURCH E-MAIL

Rev. Timothy Sims- timoteosims@hotmail.com
 Rev. Justin Massey- Justin.Massey@ctsfw.edu
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JESUS LOVES:



February

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BIBLE TREASURE HUNT:



Bible Incomplete: Fill in the missing letters to complete the passage.

AND _E BR_UGH_ HIM _ORT_ ABR_AD, A_D
SA_D, LO_K NO_ TOW_RD H_AVE_, AND _ELL
_HE S_ARS, _F TH_U BE _BLE _O NU_BER _HEM:
ND H SAI_ UNT_ HIM, _O SH_LL T_Y SE_D BE.
ND H BEL_EVE_ IN T_E LO_D; AN_ HE
C_UNT_D IT _O HI_ FOR _IGH_EOU_NES_.

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S BIBLE TREASURE HUNT:

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Galatians 5:14

CAPPERS



CAPPERS will meet on Sunday, February 11 at 1:00 p.m. to play cards and have a light meal in the Parish Hall.

NEW FACILITY

The New Facility Fund has grown to \$546,839.92. Please continue to support this fund when you want to honor your special Valentine, a birthday or anniversary, or any time you want to express thanksgiving for all your blessings.

