



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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St. Luke Lutheran Church

Open doors, open hearts, open minds.

Parish Times March 2017

For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.
 Romans 3:28

We begin our Lenten journey with Ash Wednesday worship at 7:00 pm on March 1. Come, remember who you are and whose you are. For our Wednesday evening Lenten worships (6:40-7:15), we will once again use the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer. During this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation, we will take time each Wednesday evening to contemplate sections of Luther's Small Catechism. This will include the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and Holy Communion. Also, I would like to revive a simple "soup" supper time for fellowship from 6:00-6:30. Bring some soup or whatever kind of dinner you like; you only need to bring enough for yourself (although sharing is allowed!). As we eat a simple meal together, we will take time to talk about impressions and thoughts from our reading of the book "40 Day Journey with Martin Luther." If you need a copy of this book, either order it on Amazon or you may buy a copy at church as long as supplies last. The book is divided into 40 two-page chapters; the intention is to read one chapter (two pages) a day throughout the forty days of Lent.

God bless each of us in this journey,

Pr. Dave



Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for February: Gwen, Steve, Matthew and Samantha Brummund, Mike and Nancy Hegdahl, Linda Funkhouser, Roger Diestler. Our ushers for March will be: Jill Burchill, Jim Kroschel, Doug Nelson, David Nedrelow, Larry and Carol Vigdal, Pam Ballis, Katy Eggert.



Ladies Night Out in March will take place on Tuesday, March 21st at Shamrock's, 995 w. 7th St, at 5:30 p.m. Please notify Joyce Blueel (651-690-4614) if you are planning on attending by Sunday, March 12th so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.

March WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Readers:

- 1 Christine Olson
- 5 Beth Peterson
- 12 David Nedrelow
- 19 Laurie Herrmann
- 26 Wendy Bjorklund

Communion:

- 1 Wendy Bjorklund
- 5 Dee Plagens
- 19 Dee Plagens



Fall Bazaar Meeting There will be a meeting on Sunday, March 12th at 10:30 a.m. in the Sunday school room across from the Library. We will meet to decide how to spend the proceeds from 2016, as well as setting a date for the 2017 event. After doing things the same way for 32 years, we will be discussing a possible new format and name for the event. All committee chairs, as well as any members interested, are invited to attend.

Ash Wednesday and Lenten Devotions featuring 40 Day Journey with Martin Luther

Ash Wednesday worship is at 7 pm on Wednesday, March 1. This year during Lent we will be using Martin Luther's catechism as the basis for our Wednesday evening worship services, as well as for individual Lenten devotions. If you would like to purchase a "40 Day Journey with Martin Luther" devotion book, please let me know or sign up on the kiosk. The cost is \$10.00.
Pr. Dave



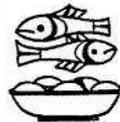
March 7 we will be volunteering at the Feed My Starving Children Eagan branch from 6:00 to 7:30. March 14, 21, 28 we will have class as usual.
-Pr. Dave



**Set your clocks ahead
March 12!**

Feed My Starving Children Tuesday, March 7 6:00-7:30

We are volunteering at the Eagan branch of Feed My Starving Children from 6:00-7:30 on Tuesday, March 7. This is not only an easy and fun event for everyone involved, it is also life-giving. Sign up on the kiosk. See you there.



86 Hungry men, women and children enjoyed a very good meal at Loaves and Fishes on Monday, January 23 at St. Matthew's Catholic Church. Workers from St. Luke were Pastor Dave Person, Larry Litzkow, Joyce Bluel, Matt Brummund, Zach Moore and Roger and Dianne Diestler.



March Birthdays

- 3 Abigail Winecke
- 4 Carl Elliott
- 6 Connel McGough
Mark Stadem
- 7 Judy Salaba
- 10 Amelia Mathis
Lois Porter
- 12 Betty Hoard
- 13 David Verschoyle
- 15 Donald Annala
- 16 Susan Lorenz
- 18 Jacob Arndt
Larry Eckstrom
Lisa Beiswenger
- 22 Alex Klein
- 24 Michael Fabie
- 26 Sheridan Moore
- 31 Julie Gaarder
Robyn Rongstad
Ralph Skoe



March Anniversaries

- 12 Mike Amundson & Kimberly Tyl: '04
- 19 Sue & Dan Grzywinski: '77



March Acolytes

- 5 Victor Landenberger
- 19 Zach Moore



Our heartfelt thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for February: Larry Litzkow, Julie Ellingson, Mike Hegdahl and Sandy and David Grzywinski.



**Micro-lending Dinner
Monday, March 13
6:00 pm**

We will have a delicious dinner and make some life-saving micro-loans to people around the world on Monday, March 13, beginning at 6:00 pm. Come enjoy a mouth-watering meal for just \$5.00, then help us make those loans that have helped so many people. Sign up on the kiosk so we know how much food to buy and join us! Since we began this program we have lent out \$22,500 to 199 people in 48 different countries! We will be loaning out about \$800.00 this time.

**EASTER
BREAKFAST**

This year, our annual Easter Breakfast fundraiser (April 16) will be raising money for Out of Darkness, a suicide awareness organization, in loving memory of Teagan Burchill Riley. We will be serving egg bake, cheesy potatoes and fresh fruit. We will need several volunteers who can help shop, set up and prepare food the Saturday before Easter and serve and clean up on Sunday. No one person has to do it all. If you are interested in helping with this important event, please sign up on the kiosk ASAP.



**March is
Minnesota
FoodShare
Month!**

Each March, Minnesota FoodShare directs the March Campaign, the largest food drive in the state, and restocks 300 food shelves across Minnesota. It recruits thousands of congregations, companies, schools and civic groups to run local food and fund drives to aid in the effort.

Minnesota FoodShare actively promotes statewide food shelf donations, provides resources for food drive organizers, distributes funds to participating Minnesota food shelves, lobbies lawmakers on the behalf of those who are hungry, and educates the public about hunger in Minnesota.

So, during the month of March, we will be collecting donations of food and money for those in need. The food gathered will be donated to St. Francis Basket, which is our neighborhood's local food shelf. Checks can be made out to St. Luke with a notation of "food drive" in the memo line. Thanks for all of your help!

Musings from the Music Director

Dear Members of St. Luke,

Lent is upon us! Please let me know if you are interested in being a part of the Wednesday night Lent services. They occur from 6:40-7:15.

Also, due to scheduling concerns we were not able to have worship band in February. We will in March, however. We will do it on the fourth Sunday, March 26th. Again, please let me know if you are interested in being a part of this. We have enough female vocals lined up, but could use some male vocals. My email is kohle091@umn.edu.

Peace,
Katie

Commentaries for the March Gospel Readings

In preparation for worship, please read the gospel text for the day as well as the commentaries found below. Prepare your heart and mind for worship and you will find yourself enriched. Sources for these studies include Working Preacher, Preaching Matthew's Gospel by Richard Jensen, Matthew by Robert H. Smith and my own notes.

March 5, Matthew 4:1-11 Lent 1

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River the Holy Spirit descended upon him and led him into the wilderness. The wilderness is a place of temptation. This brings back memories of the Hebrews being led out of Egypt into the wilderness by the cloud and pillar of fire of God. The Hebrews were in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days, where he was tempted by the devil. The Hebrews wandered in the desert/wilderness crying for food and were fed by manna...bread from heaven. They were faced with many temptations in the wilderness and succumbed to those temptations. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and did not succumb. The devil's first temptation was, "IF you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." This took place just after Jesus was baptized and the Lord God himself declared, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." The devil knew Jesus was the Son of God, but he is tempting him here. The devil had his own distorted interpretation of how the Son of God should act. He wanted acts of POWER. He wanted Jesus to DO something. He wanted Jesus to dance to his tune and put on a show. It is like the musical "Jesus Christ Superstar" when Jesus is commanded to strut his stuff by walking across a swimming pool. "Let me see what you can do!" the devil tempts. Jesus responds with the first of three quotes from Deuteronomy. The context of Deuteronomy is that of the time the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness, when they succumbed to temptation. Isn't it fitting that he draws from that book of the Bible. Jesus' first response is from Deut. 8:3 saying, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." The devil then takes Jesus to the very top of the temple pinnacle and once again says, "IF you are the Son of God..." The devil then misuses (to his own liking) Psalm 91, telling Jesus to jump so the angels come to save him. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, saying, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Finally, the devil showed Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world and said, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Quite a temptation, but false! In Matthew 28:18 Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Jesus has the true authority, not the devil. The devil then left him and suddenly angels came and waited on Jesus. One more temptation story connection that can be made with this passage, is the temptation of Adam and Eve by the devil. They succumbed and sin entered the world. It is through Jesus that sin and the devil have been defeated! Paul understood this well, writing, "Therefore just as one man's trespass (Adam) led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness (Jesus) leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." Romans 5:18-19. Finally, a quote from Hebrews 4:14-16, "Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

March 12, John 3:1-17 Lent 2

Here we see the beautiful account of Nicodemus meeting with Jesus at night. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The word "Pharisee" literally means, "separated." They were totally committed to the law. They believed the law was the perfect will of God and so spent their lives dedicated to the observance of the law. Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the religious government of the Jews. Nicodemus defended Jesus in the Sanhedrin (John 7:50f) and helped prepare his body for burial (19:39f) after he was killed on the cross, a very dangerous thing to do. Nicodemus is only found in the Gospel of John. He was probably quite wealthy. Nicodemus went to see Jesus at night. Perhaps this was for the sake of secrecy. But it was also said that the Pharisees thought

the best time to discuss theology was at night. The word John uses in his gospel of miracles is "signs." Nicodemus is referring to the miracles of Jesus when he says, "Rabbi (which means "teacher"), we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these *signs* apart from the presence of God." It is right after this that Jesus gives Nicodemus an ambiguous answer that totally confuses him. The reason for the confusion is that the word for "born from above" can also mean, "born again." Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above (born again)." Nicodemus mistakenly thinks Jesus literally means, "born again" and asks if it's possible to reenter their mother's womb (not a very pleasant thought for Nicodemus nor his mother, I am sure). Jesus continues saying that a person enters the kingdom of God by being born from above through water (most often thought of as a reference to baptism) and the Holy Spirit. It is not our work. It is God's work. Jesus then begins another play on words using the word "pneuma," which in Greek has the triple meaning of wind, breath, and spirit. In verse 8, using this word, Jesus says (you can fill in the English word), "The pneuma blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the pneuma." Nicodemus was now totally confused, even though, as we see, Jesus was comparing the wind and the Spirit; explaining that both blow where they will and we cannot control either of them. God is in control. Totally befuddled, Nicodemus asks, "How can this be?" Jesus now moves into a classical rabbinical way of explaining this, beginning with earthly things and from that, moving to heavenly things. Jesus refers to the story of the poisonous snakes found in Exodus 21:6-9. If a Hebrew was bitten by one of the snakes, he looked up at the bronze snake Moses lifted up on a pole, and was saved. Jesus then told Nicodemus that in the same way the Son of Man (Jesus) must be lifted up, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Of course, we know now that Jesus was referring to his crucifixion here, being lifted up on to the cross. Actually, the word "lifted up" also has the meaning of "exalt" or "glorify." Jesus would be lifted up and glorified on the cross. It is through the cross and resurrection that we receive salvation. In verse 16 we once again see God's extravagant giving, the gift of his beloved Son. This verse is so familiar to us that we often just gloss over it. Yet here we see the good news of Jesus in all its beauty. "For God so loved the world that he GAVE his only Son." In the Gospel of John, "world" is often used for that which stands in opposition to God (17:14). The Lord gives his son, even to those who hate and stand in opposition to him! As Paul wrote in the Letter to the Romans, "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Another very important word here is *gave*. God GAVE his son. He is a gift. We did nothing to deserve the gift, yet the Lord freely gives his Son to and for us, pure gift. That is how much the Lord loves you. Luther said that this verse is the gospel within the gospel, since it declared the good news of Jesus Christ in just one small verse.

March 19, John 4:5-42

There is so much in this passage that we only have space for a few comments. I encourage you to read through it slowly, deliberately a number of times in order to enter more deeply into it. This is the first time in the Gospel of John that Jesus reveals himself as the Son of God, the Messiah (verse 26). What does it say to us that Jesus reveals his identity to a woman...a *Samaritan* woman no less. Women were little less than chattel in those days. Men (and certainly not religious teachers) did not speak with or have anything to do with women. Samaritans were thought of as impure and unclean by the Jewish people. There was no love lost between them and they even went so far as to kill one another (note the disciples' shock when they come back and find Jesus talking with this Samaritan woman - John 4:27). Yet, none of that seemed to matter to Jesus. He was tired out from his journey (remember he is fully human) and sat down at the well while the disciples went into town. It was about noon. That is one of the hottest times of the day. Most people living in such desert areas took care of their business in the morning and evening coolness of the day. Because this woman came out in one of the hottest times of the day, commentators think she was avoiding other people. As we shall see, she was a kind of outcast. Again, this did not matter to Jesus. He immediately struck up a conversation with her. She was surprised he spoke to her because he was a man and a Jew (Jews and Samaritans wore slightly

different clothes). It was completely out of the ordinary that a Jewish man would talk with her, a Samaritan woman! Who was this guy??!! If you read this passage closely, you will see that Jesus takes this woman step by step deeper into faith, until finally revealing himself as the long awaited Messiah. He carefully, deliberately and lovingly led this outcast Samaritan woman, step by step, deeper into faith until she saw her Savior standing in front of her. He then gave this woman back her life, sending her, the outcast, to be the messenger of good news to the whole village. She was so deeply moved that she forgot her water jar, ran back to the village, no longer ashamed, but instead boldly declared what she had witnessed. Did you notice what she said? She said exactly what Philip said to Nathaniel in 1:46, "Come and see." That is what we are called to say to people also. Come to worship and see. Because of this woman, the whole village came to faith! What a beautiful story. Please note verse 24, which says, "God is spirit." God is not some old guy with a long beard sitting up in heaven as is often depicted. God is spirit. In fact, God can look like anything or anyone he wishes. God is spirit, pure being (I am who I am).

March 26, John 9:1-41

A friend of mine who suffered from MS took great comfort in this passage. He said that before he read this, he often wondered if he or his family had done something wrong to deserve such a terrible disease. The clear answer from Jesus is no. Why it happened, we are not sure, but it was not because of some sin he or his parents committed. This set his mind at ease as he both battled against and lived with this terrible disease. The man in this story was born blind, but as Jesus made clear, that blindness was no fault of his or of his parents. Jesus made some mud, spread it on the blind man's eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did as he was told; suddenly, he could see. Neighbors and others who saw the man couldn't believe that he was the same man, but he assured them over and over, he was that man who was formerly blind. When they kept asking him how this happened, he told them the man called Jesus gave him sight. He was then brought to the Pharisees, who disputed that Jesus was a man of God because he performed this miracle on the Sabbath. When they asked the former blind man about Jesus, he said, "He is a prophet." Next "the Jews" (how John often refers to those in leadership who opposed Jesus – remember, Jesus himself was a Jew), called the man's parents and asked them. His parents were afraid of the Jews (those in power), so they said, "He is of age, ask him." So for a second time they called the man in and asked him again. He said, "I told you already." Then, it seems that the man becomes a bit frustrated and he begins berating the leaders. In the end he says, "Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this person were not from God, he could do nothing." The leaders then berated him and drove him out. It was after this that Jesus finds the man and asks, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Remember, this man had never seen Jesus. He had only heard his voice. The man asks to be shown, so he may believe. Jesus then says, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." The man then confessed, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Jesus. Did you notice the progression this man went through? He went from calling Jesus "the man" (verse 11), "prophet" (verse 17), "man from God" (verse 33) and finally "Lord" (verse 38). It reminds one of Jesus guiding the Samaritan woman to faith in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John. Jesus guided her step by step. This man's physical eyes were not only opened, his eyes of faith were also opened to recognize Jesus as Lord. This is something the Pharisees were unable to see. Who was truly blind? John emphasizes the importance of a life open to hearing the Word of God, to open the eyes of faith.

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. -Numbers 6:24