



St. Luke Lutheran Church  
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 Editor: Jo Klein

# St. Luke Lutheran Church

*Open doors, open hearts, open minds.*

## Parish Times March 2018

*Jesus came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. Luke 22:39-44*

We are in Lent, walking with Jesus as he journeys to the cross for you and me. He is journeying to his torture and death...a painfully hideous death on the cross. What does humanity do when it gets God in its hands? The cross. Death. What do you and I do as we walk with Jesus and stay with him as he journeys to the cross? Are we too busy for that? Do we fall asleep like the first disciples? Let us walk with Jesus. Let us comfort Jesus. Let us give thanks and praise to our Savior who gave *everything* for us. Let us give thanks that God does not act as humans do. For what does the Lord do with humans when God has them in his hands? He gives his very life in love, so you and I can live in peace and joy. Come, meditate on this deepest of all mysteries of God giving his very life for you and me. Worship the Lord these Wednesday nights (6:30-7:15), on Maundy Thursday (March 29, 7PM) and Good Friday (March 30, 7PM). Come, walk with your Lord. Watch with him. Stay with him. Give him your very heart in thanks and praise.

See you in worship,

Pr. Dave



**Attention parents:** Early Communion Preparation Classes will be held on March 4 and March 18 after worship. St. Luke Church has a policy that a child is eligible whenever the parents and the pastor believe that the child is ready. First Communion will take place Easter Sunday, April 1. Each child must have a communing adult accompany them for the sessions. Please talk to Pastor Dave or contact the church office at 651-698-9443 if you wish to participate so that materials can be obtained.



### March Acolytes

4 Alek Landenberger  
 18 Evan Nelson

Heartfelt thanks to our  
 March **Bun Run**  
 volunteers: Mike Hegdahl,  
 Dave and Sandy Pilgrim,  
 Ken McGrew, Doug and Jo  
 Klein, Larry Litzkow.



### Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for March: Jill Burchill, Doug Nelson, David Nedrelow, Carol Vigdal, Pam Ballis, Katy Eggert.



**Set your clocks  
ahead March 11!**



**Ladies Night Out** in March will take place on Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at Patrick McGovern's, 225 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St., at 5:30 p.m. Please notify Joyce Bluel (651-690-4614) by Sunday, March 11 if you are planning on attending so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.



**Please join us for  
Lent and Holy Week Worship**

Weekly Lenten Worship, Wednesdays, 6:30PM  
Maundy Thursday Worship, March 29, 7PM  
Good Friday Worship, March 30, 7PM  
Easter Sunday Worship, April 1, 7AM & 9:30 AM

Also on Easter: Fundraiser Breakfast at 8AM and Egg Hunt at 9AM...join us!

**There will be an audit of the church financials on Sunday, March 4 after worship. This is an open meeting; your participation will be welcomed and appreciated.**



**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!



**Thank you from  
Ronald McDonald House**

"Thank you for your gift of hats and mittens to Ronald McDonald House Charities, Upper Midwest. Your support will enable us to provide families a comfortable and caring home-away-from-home while they face their child's health crisis. Each year we serve more than 5000 families at our four Twin Cities locations. Families are never required to pay for our services, including lodging, meals, schooling and more, so your donation is truly appreciated."

**March  
WORSHIP  
ASSISTANTS**

**Readers:**

4 Beth Peterson  
11 Wendy Bjorklund  
18 David Nedrelov  
25 Laurie Herrmann  
30 Wendy Bjorklund  
Jill Burchill  
Jen Fredrickson  
Barb Jensen  
Beth Peterson  
Cindy Schroer

**Communion:**

4 Katy Eggert  
18 Kay Reich



**March Birthdays**

3 Abigail Winecke  
4 Carl Elliott  
6 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  
22 Dick & Dee Plagens: '75  
19 Sue & Dan Grzywinski: '77

**SAVE THE DATE** for Pr. Dave's retirement party which will be Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> right after our service. More details to follow. Come one, come all!



## BAZAAR UPDATE

### Results of the 2017 Fall Bazaar

The Bazaar committee met on January 21st after worship to discuss the results of the 2017 Fall Bazaar. The net proceeds for 2017 were \$3,609.

The committee voted to send \$150 to the Airport ministry and \$600 to Camp Onomia for dues, along with previous years proceeds this leaves a balance of just a little over \$12,000. We will be looking into purchasing more white plastic tables to replace some of the older, heavier brown tables currently being used in the Rummage Sale rooms the day of the Bazaar.

### 2018 Fall Bazaar

It's never too early to start planning for the St. Luke Church Fall Bazaar! As you have read above, this event raises quite a bit of money that can be used for things that we do not have in our general budget. We would like to encourage all members to get involved; it is a great way to get to know your church family better and the money raised has been used for some very worthwhile projects.

The date for this year's Fall Bazaar is Saturday, October 27th. Listed below are the committee chairs, who have graciously volunteered again this year. If you are interested in working in these areas, please contact the chair(s) to volunteer your time and talent.

Jo Klein: Rummage Sale

Beth Peterson: Kitchen

Joan Wilson & Deb Vigdal: Bake Sale

Pam Ballis: Publicity

Judy Salaba & Joyce Bluel: Raffle & Co-chairs

Last year we changed things up a bit by renting out tables to outside vendors to sell products/crafts. We will continue with this format in 2018. That took up the total space in the social hall, aside from the kitchen/eating area. We are going to reconfigure things in order to move the Bake Sale back into the social hall for 2018. The Library will still be available as an eating area.

## Important Info for St. Luke Members

Are you, or a family member, or even a friend, a policy holder of a Thrivent insurance policy? Do you have money invested at Thrivent Financial? If you do, did you know that you can be HELPING St. Luke Lutheran through the benefits that Thrivent is offering?

First, we have Thrivent Choice, which is a benefit available to eligible members of Thrivent Financial. This gives members the opportunity to recommend how the Thrivent Financial organization distributes some of its charitable outreach funds among thousands of churches and 501c3 nonprofit organizations. Because of you and other members, Thrivent Financial is able to make a difference every day, across the country. Giving back is important to Thrivent Financial.

You will need to log in to [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com) and go to the tab Making a Difference and choose Thrivent Choice. Then click on Get Started Now where you will be asked to create an account. There you will be able to check your member eligibility requirements, which is basically to be a benefit member/policy holder. If you are an eligible benefit member you will be designated a minimum of \$25 Choice Dollars and a maximum of \$5,000 Choice Dollars per eligibility period, which is January 1 to December 31. You must designate your dollars on an annual basis before March 31 every year. So don't lose that password to the account that you just created!

If you are a Thrivent member we are asking that you let us know. If you have questions or need help logging in, you can talk to Nancy Hegdahl at 651-600-8179. If you are interested in becoming a Thrivent member you can talk to Larry Behnken or Jonathan Behnken from Thrivent Financial at 651-287-3030.

Second, there is the \$250 Thrivent Action Team benefit. Each Thrivent member can apply for this twice a year. This means, for example, if we have one Thrivent member apply for \$250 in January for the pancake breakfast, this member can apply for another \$250 in July to host a potluck for community members, bringing a total of \$500 extra dollars into the church to help defray the cost of expenses for these events. If we have five members doing this for various events throughout the church that would be an additional \$2,500 that Thrivent would provide to our church. All you have to do is lead or work with your volunteer team in a one-time fundraiser, service activity, or educational event that can be completed within 90 days. Once again, you will log in as you did above, and apply for a Thrivent Action Team event and receive approval for your project. Thrivent will send you an Action Kit which includes a banner to hang at your event, t-shirts, invitations and thank you cards if needed, and a \$250 community impact card that you can use as seed money to get your project off the ground and make a bigger impact. As I have been told by my Thrivent representative, you need to "think outside the box" when you plan those bigger events, and more than one person can apply for \$250 for these events. If you have any questions, please contact me, Nancy Hegdahl.



### *Musings from the Music Director*

This Lent, it's all about perspective. As I picked hymns for the Lenten season, I was struck how the perspective of a hymn changed depending on the week I placed it in. This idea isn't surprising, or new, I mean that's kind of the idea behind hymn picking - a hymn is going to take on a different flavor depending on what is framing it. It was the balance of the weeks and hymns that intrigued me. In all, I found 14 songs that changed perspective as the scriptures framing them changed and narrowed it down to four pairs:

"Bless Now, O God, The Journey" - Feb. 18th and Mar. 25th: Maybe it's the fact that we've been listening to Simon & Garfunkel's iconic Bookends, but I decided to bookend the Sunday Lenten season. Our gathering song on the first Sunday is the song of guidance through our season to remind us that God is with all of us - the whole Christian church - as we observe the season. As the sending song on the last Sunday of Lent, each verse holds a new meaning: for the Lord to be a constant during the ups and downs of Holy Week, the reminder that in all this sadness, there is hope; and finally what all of Jesus's suffering was for - our salvation.

"Seed That In Earth Is Dying" - Feb. 18th and Mar. 18th: In this song, I focused on the contrasting idea of the dying seed. In February, the Old Testament will be about the end of the flood - to think of the seed dying in the earth as the rains fell and sat there for 40 days, then growing as the world revived. At the end of the first verse "Grant us faith in our deepest darkness," brought to mind the concern and worry felt on the boat as those 40 days stretched on. In March, the third verse will remind us of the Gospel and how a seed of wheat must die in order to produce more seeds (John 12:24).

"In Christ There is No East or West" - Feb. 25th and Mar. 11th: The song has a more literal feel on the 25th when we read of Abraham being the father of generations - it also fulfilled a small challenge I gave myself to include a black composer each week of February for Black History Month. In March, the hymn sounds its missionary feel in the reading of Psalm 107, gathering the redeemed from all corners of the earth.

Our final pairing is "On My Heart Imprint Your Image" Mar. 4th and Mar. 18th. The Old Testament for these Sundays stood out in bold in my mind as I sang through this hymn: the 10 Commandments written on stone, and then the Lord declaring in Jeremiah 31:33 that he will put the law in our minds and write it on our hearts. But then this short hymn unites the idea of these writ things (at least to me) with the Gospel of everyday: "Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me, is my life, my hope's foundation, all my glory and salvation!" The dichotomy of Lent represented in 17 bars - the law, the beauty, the fragility, the hope, and the sacrifice.

The continuity and thread of life weaves through us in so many ways, and what we surround it with can have such an effect. Before signing off, I should mention I'm starting up a hymn sing every three weeks before church on Sunday morning. I'll have three hymns picked out, maybe a story or history to go with, plus requests will be welcome as time allows. A few acoustic and percussion instruments will be laying around - so you can sing or play along! (or listen, that's cool too!) Keep an eye on the bulletin for upcoming days!

-Becca Ruiz



**Once again St. Luke is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive.** If you are able, come give blood on Saturday, March 17 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. To make an appointment or for more information call 1-800-733-2767 or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Our sponsor code is: St Luke SP. Do it today. You could very well save a life! **If you can volunteer for the blood drive (either from 9-12 or 12-3), please let Jo know.** We need two volunteers for each time slot. The work is simple and valuable! Please lend a helping hand.



# Study notes for Sundays in March

Below are some notes for your study and meditation on the Sunday gospel readings in March. Please take out your home Bible, read the gospel lesson, along with the notes for that reading, then meditate on it in preparation for Sunday worship. The main sources I have used are studies by Rev. Brian Stoffregen, Working Preacher and my own notes.

## **March 4: John 2:13-22 – Third Sunday in Lent**

This reading is basically divided into two parts, the cleansing of the temple and Jesus talking about the destruction of the temple (The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., and has not been rebuilt since that time.). The animals sold at the temple played an important role for worship in those days. They were necessary for sacrifices. Mary and Joseph made a sacrifice after Jesus was born (Luke 2:22-24). People couldn't easily take a cow, sheep or bird along during their pilgrimages to the temple in Jerusalem. So they purchased a sacrificial animal when they arrived at the temple. Some people traveled a long way! Also, money changers were needed to change the Roman money (which had the blasphemous image and inscription of the Caesar on it) into Hebrew minted money. The Roman coins were not allowed in the temple, so it was necessary to have money changers! However, I have heard it said that there were so many animals and money changers around the temple grounds that the Gentiles who wished to worship (and were only allowed in the outer courts), had a difficult time getting in. All the animals and money changers were making it impossible for people to worship! Because of this, Jesus made a whip, turned over tables, and drove everyone out, yelling, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" Watching him, the disciples recalled Psalm 69:9, "Zeal for your house will consume me." Had "business" become more important than the worship of God? Can that happen in the present day church? What is central for you? Are there things that interfere with our worship of God in our day? Jesus then talks about the Temple, referring to the temple of his body (I Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews chapters 9-10). After his resurrection, does Jesus become the new temple? In what way? How does or doesn't this affect your worship or view of worship?

## **March 11: John 3:14-21 – Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Read the Gospel reading, better yet, read John 3:1-21. Our gospel reading is the final portion of Nicodemus' evening visit to Jesus (John 3:1-21). The gospel reading begins by referring to Moses lifting up a serpent (Numbers 21:4-9). Moses did this soon after the Exodus (Moses leading the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt) when the people were impatient wandering around in the wilderness and complaining. The Lord sent poisonous snakes that bit the people. They repented and asked for help. The Lord told Moses to make a snake and lift it up on a stick. Anyone who looked at the snake, even though bit, would live. In a similar way Christ was lifted up on the cross. People focusing on Jesus in faith are saved. Martin Luther referred to verse 16 stating it is the gospel within the gospel. The word "love" here is "agape" in the Greek (there are four kinds of love in Greek, agape being one of them). In seminary, my Gospel of John professor said that this love (agape) is not an emotion that arises, but rather part of the will; it is a conquest. For example, no one loves their enemies, but through agape love our emotions to hate our enemies are defeated. Agape love is the power to love the unlovable, people we do not like (Matthew 5:43ff). It is not a natural instinct, rather something we receive from the Holy Spirit. Agape love is:

1. unmotivated and spontaneous, there is no worthiness in the recipient, but agape love, loves all.
2. It is indifferent to human value. It loves even the unattractive.
3. It is creative, making the object precious, valuable.
4. It is the initiator of fellowship with God.

In I John 4:16 it says, "God is love" (agape). God is this love. In John 3:16 it says, "For God so loved the world..." In the Gospel of John, the "world" is often used for that which stands in opposition to God (John 17:10-19, specifically 14-16). God loves even the unlovable; even that which stands in opposition to God. Also in verse 16 it says God GAVE his only Son. It is a gift! (Romans 3: 21ff; Ephesians 2:8). In the Gospel of John, salvation or judgment happens now, when you believe or reject God's Word (verse 18-19, also 3:36; 5:24). Light and darkness is another theme we see in John, beginning with the first chapter (1:1-9). Light chases out the darkness. Jesus is light (1:9; 8:12). What darkness can Jesus chase out of your life? Sometimes it is scary exposing the darkness in our lives, yet when we do, the light of Christ shows us we have nothing to fear (I John 4:18).

## **March 18: John 12:20-33 – Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Please read the gospel for this Sunday. The Greeks mentioned here were either seekers or Jews of Greek origin. They came for the Passover Festival (John 12:1). The reason Philip and Andrew are specifically

mentioned may be that they have Greek names, and so the Greeks sought them out. The Greeks wished to see Jesus. Andrew and Philip told Jesus this. Could it be that the Greeks are mentioned because in John 12:19b the Pharisees say, "Look, the world has gone after him (Jesus)!" Do the Greeks represent "the world" going after Jesus? This also ties in with what Jesus said in 12:32, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all people** to myself." Has that "drawing all people" begun with the Greeks seeking out Jesus? This also ties into last Sunday's reading when Jesus talked about Moses lifting up the serpent on the stick and in the same way, the Son of Man (Jesus) being lifted up. It is interesting to note that in the Greek, the word "lift up" used here and in 32 also means "to exalt." Whether Jesus actually meets the Greeks or not, we are not sure. He begins to speak about his upcoming suffering and death in terms of a seed falling to earth and dying. However, the "dying" is not the end. In fact, it leads to the bearing of much fruit. Then, like the Mark 8:31-38 reading from the second Sunday in Lent (see above), Jesus talks about the necessity of his followers losing their lives, dying to their own wants and desires and following him. One year my confirmation students asked if this meant that we are to literally kill ourselves. I said no, that is not what Jesus means. But one way to think about it is to live fully for Jesus first and foremost. There we see life. How can we do that in our daily lives? After this Jesus speaks of being troubled as he journeys to the cross. Like anyone, Jesus did not want to suffer and die. It troubled him. We see this coming to a peak in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42). Jesus knows suffering and pain. He knows what you go through in your suffering. He has experienced it firsthand. "This hour" refers to the crucifixion (Mark 14:35; Matthew 26:45). Jesus asks that God glorify his name and then we hear God the Father say, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The word "glory" in John refers to Jesus' saving work, which includes the cross. How do we see the glory of Jesus in and through the crucifixion? One answer is that it leads to our salvation, but there are other answers too. What do you think? Explore that in your prayers. In verse 30 Jesus says, "Now is the judgment of the world..." As was stated above, in the notes for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, in John salvation and judgment take place right now, here, in belief or rejection of the gospel. "The ruler of this world" is Satan. It is Jesus who drives him out, as Martin Luther says, defeating sin, death and the devil. It is through faith in Jesus that we too take part in this victory.

### **March 25: Mark 11:1-11, Palm Sunday**

Congregations celebrate Palm Sunday in two basic ways: 1. Beginning the worship waving palms celebrating Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, then reading the passion story of his suffering and death, 2. Simply celebrating his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, then remembering the passion of Jesus on Good Friday. This year, St. Luke will follow #2. So I will only include a few notes on Mark 11:1-11. Please read it. This is the beginning of the plot played out in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, which Jesus tells in Mark 12:1-11. Read the parable. Why do you think Jesus told the parable? The writer of the Gospel of Mark often uses the word "immediately." Where do you see that word in the Palm Sunday passage? Why do you think he uses it? Jesus directs two of his disciples to go ahead to find a colt that had never been ridden and bring it to him. They do as he commanded. It is said that when pilgrims approached Jerusalem in those days, they approached on foot. For Jesus to ride in, especially on a donkey or colt, brought immediate attention. People of that time, anxious for the Messiah, knew well what was written in Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." They most likely also remembered Solomon riding on a donkey to be anointed as the king (I Kings 1:38-40). What were they thinking as Jesus approached and in the days to come? Spreading coats and branches on the street before Jesus was a way of showing honor to the one entering. Could this be the king? Hosanna!! (Hosanna was originally a Hebrew invocation to God meaning, "O Save." Later it was used as a cry of great joy.) Some going ahead of Jesus shouted and declared, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:26). They also declared, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!" The messiah was to come from the lineage of David. This would make ordinary people sit up, take notice and ask, "Who is this guy? What is everyone talking about? Is the messianic king here?" Yes...the king has arrived! He will soon be crowned...with thorns.

## **A Look at The Lord's Prayer**

Martin Luther once called the Lord's Prayer "the greatest martyr on earth." Luther said that everyone tortures and abuses the Lord's Prayer, while few comfort and cheer it with proper use." What was true in Luther's day is just as true today. This is probably the best known prayer in the Christian Church, crossing all denominational lines, yet it is seldom prayed with all the joy and confidence that is in it. Part of the problem is familiarity. We often say it automatically, without thinking. During worship, even when we try to

think about the words as we pray them, it goes by so fast it's hard to keep up. Let's take some time now for this beautiful prayer.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, Jesus teaches them using language that is very ordinary, very familiar. He even begins his prayer by addressing God simply as "Father." "Our Father in heaven." In his Small Catechism Luther asks, "What does this mean?" Luther writes, "Here God encourages us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are his children. We therefore are to pray to him with complete confidence just as children speak to their loving father." Our Father... you don't need special words or highfalutin language. Our father in heaven simply wants you to come to him and it brings him great pleasure when you do!

A long ago when our older son John was about two or three years old, he fell asleep in a chair. I picked him up as gently as I could, carried him to his bed and laid him down. Without opening his eyes, he said in a sleepy, little voice, "Thank you." Those words went straight into my heart and brought me such joy. I'll never forget that. John trusted me completely as I picked him up, carried him and laid him down in his bed. He could relax completely in my arms because he knew those arms carried him in love and care. That is how it is with God our Father, who carries you in love. That is why Jesus teaches us to pray, "Father." You don't need flowery or special language, just speak to your loving God straight from your heart and know that it goes straight to the heart of our loving Father. With this in mind, we boldly and joyfully begin our prayer, "Our Father in heaven," and know that the Lord listens to us with the same kind of joy as parents experience when listening to their beloved child.

When we look at the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer, we make an interesting discovery. Through these petitions, Jesus teaches us to pray *for* God. In the last four petitions Jesus teaches us to pray for our neighbors and ourselves, but in these first three petitions we pray *for* God. It reminds me of the two great commandments that Jesus said summarizes all the commandments, that is, love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Let's look at how we pray *for* God.

The first petition is: "Hallowed be your name." Concerning this Luther writes, "God's name certainly is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that we may keep it holy." In his talk about the Lord's Prayer, Dr. James Nestingen explains that the word "holy" can mean, "something that works as it is supposed to work." So when we pray that God's name be holy, we are praying that God's name works as it is supposed to work. And how is God's name supposed to work? It is the name that saves. It is the name that brings salvation. It is not the name that we use to curse or use as an exclamation point. God! It is the name to use joyfully in telling others of the promise of what God has done and will do. It is the name that brings peace. It is the name which raises us above despair to a new life of hope. And so when we pray, "hallowed be your name," we are praying that God will continue to bring salvation to this world, and that we may keep his name sacred by using it properly. Hallowed be your name O Lord!

The second petition is, "Your kingdom come." About this Luther writes, "God's kingdom comes indeed without our praying for it, but we ask in this prayer that it may come also to us." God's kingdom is not a place, but rather God's kingdom is his rule or reign, and so God's Kingdom is found wherever God rules. Through baptism, God has begun his rule in you, but the Lord isn't finished yet. The old sinful Adam or Eve in you still rebels against that rule. That sinful part of you would rather fight than give up power to God. That sinful part of you wants to be in charge, not God. And so we have a power struggle going on here. God's rule has not been made complete. So in this petition we are praying for the new you or me. Not only that, we are praying that God establish his rule over the whole earth, making all things new in him. We need it. This whole world needs it desperately. "Your kingdom come," we pray. Let your rule be completed in me and in the whole earth.

The third petition in which we pray *for* God is the petition which says, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What does this mean? Luther says, "The good and gracious will of God is surely done without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may be done also among us." We rebel against God, that is for sure. More often than not we want MY will to be done, not THY will be done. We rebel. Me first! The world is also full of rebellion. You don't have to look far to see that with all of the killings and hatred that surrounds us. The devil himself is actively opposing God, trying to lead us astray, away from God. But the Lord hinders his enemies, and through the gospel, the Word of Christ has begun to bring about a different world, a world not ruled by hatred, death, and defeat, but a world ruled by the resurrection, new life and the victory of our Lord Jesus. When we pray the Lord's prayer saying, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we are praying that God's rule will be made complete and final in this world and in each of us.

As we wait for and work together with the Lord for the new creation, as he fills us with hope, it is also good and necessary that we be able to fill our stomachs, have something to wear, and a place to sleep. And so when Jesus taught us to pray, he also included these very practical things by teaching us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." About this Martin Luther wrote, "God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all people, though sinful, but we ask in this prayer that he will help us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanks." Luther continues, "Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as

food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name and true friends and neighbors." That little phrase packs a lot of meaning, doesn't it? Not only that, but you are praying for a thankful heart for the gift of daily bread. These gifts are from the one who says, "I am your God, and like a loving father, I will watch over you."

It is easy to worry about all the things we need in life; I know I find myself doing it. Not only do I worry about some of the basics, I find myself concentrating on those things I really don't need, but want. The head of a large multi-national company once said that inventing and designing an entirely new product isn't that difficult. What is really difficult is making people believe they can't live without this new product. Advertisers do a very good job of making us believe that, don't they? The more we worry about these things, the more we focus attention on ourselves and what we *don't* have. It becomes me, me, me and that takes up the whole picture....me. It's one big selfie. When we pray, "Give us today our daily bread," we are asking that God help us focus on him, and trust that he will indeed provide us with all that is good and necessary.

However, we have a nasty habit of centering on ourselves and forgetting about others and God. This is called sin, and makes us feel empty and guilty. We are full of sin and full of guilt about all kinds of things. That is why Jesus gave us the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "And forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us." About this Luther wrote, "We ask in this prayer that our Father in heaven would not hold our sins against us and because of them refuse to hear our prayer. And we pray that he would give us everything by grace, for we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment. So we on our part will heartily forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us." When we are feeling guilty, God doesn't just say, "Get over it," then walk away. The Lord says, "I have put all of your sins on my son Jesus, and those sins are still nailed securely to that cross. Go now free, your sins are forgiven. They no longer have power over you."

Sometimes that is hard for us to believe, isn't it? It reminds me of something that happened to a pastor friend of mine. He was leading a worship service in a home for the aged. They confessed their sins and then he gave the absolution, in which he said that through Christ, all their sins were forgiven. Upon hearing that, one elderly woman, who must have been very hard of hearing, leaned over to the person sitting next to her and said in a loud voice, heard by all, "Kind of hard to believe, isn't it Mabel?" It *is* hard to believe, because we are all sinners. When I pronounce the forgiveness of sins through Christ here at St. Luke, I sometimes notice the same kind of thing; some people aren't even paying attention. Yet I know there are sins in your past that have left deep scars on you, and continue to haunt you, riding you like a monkey on your back, making it impossible for you to forget the past, sometimes burdening you in the middle of the night. In this way the past rides you, controls you, won't let you go. The Lord says, "I'll take that from you, thank you. You are free of the past. Live now in freedom and peace, full of forgiveness. And as I have forgiven you, forgive your neighbor." God sets you free. God freely forgives you so you can freely forgive your neighbor and be freed from the past to live in a wide-open present and future.

In the sixth petition, Jesus teaches us to pray, "And lead us not into temptation." About this Luther writes, "God tempts no one to sin, but we ask in this prayer that God would watch over us and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful self may not deceive us and draw us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins. And we pray that even though we are so tempted we may still win the final victory." That final victory is won through Christ our Lord. Praying this petition, we are asking God to protect us from anything which would lead us away from his promise, or causes us to sin against a neighbor or this beautiful earth God created.

This leads us to the final petition in which Jesus teaches us to pray, "But deliver us from evil." About this Luther writes, "We ask in this inclusive prayer that our heavenly Father would save us from every evil to body and soul, and at our last hour would mercifully take us from the troubles of this world to himself in heaven." There is evil in this world, there is no doubt about that. We see it every day. There are times when evil falls upon us and there are times when temptation to participate in evil comes our way. At times such as this, Jesus teaches us to look to God, to God's promise and his word of grace. That is what Jesus did when confronted by Satan in the desert. He didn't simply trust in his own power, but met the devil's temptations with God's word and promise. If that is good enough for Jesus, you know that it is good for you and me. God's word is the power the Lord gives us in our weakness. It is our way to victory over evil. So when temptation strikes, when we are confronted by evil, it is to the Lord we turn so we may be delivered. Thanks be to God.

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