

The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

Vol. 8, No. 3 March 2012

Peace Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We believe, teach, and confess the doctrine of the evangelical, catholic faith as it is taught by Holy Scripture and faithfully confessed in the Book of Concord of 1580. We are committed to the pure preaching of God's Word and the right administration of the Holy Sacraments, catechesis of all people in the Christian faith, and liturgical worship consistent with our Reformation heritage. We are an evangelical, orthodox, and catholic congregation, proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and reigning for the salvation of the world!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

"Two Goats = One Lamb" ...	1-2
Lenten Discipline	3
Lutheran Piety.....	4
Private C & A	5-7
Holy Week Schedule.....	8
Peace News & Notes.....	9-10
Ladies Guild Info	11
Council Minutes	12
Thrivent Choice Dollars	13
Christian Education.....	14
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	14
Parochial Report.....	14
March Calendar	15
Serving in March	16



From the Desk of Pastor Messer

"Two Goats = One Lamb"

As I write this, we are on the cusp of beginning our Lenten journey with our Lord Jesus Christ to the Cross. The first Sunday of our Lenten journey (Invocabit Sunday) has us following our Lord into the wilderness, where He fasts for forty days and overcomes the devil's many temptations. He does this to undo the failures of Adam and Eve in the Garden, when they succumbed to the serpent's slithering temptations. He does this for us, children of Adam and Eve, who have followed in their footsteps, falling prey to the devil's temptations and the temptations of this sinful world and our own sinful flesh. Jesus doesn't overcome temptation in the wilderness to provide us with an example of how we can do likewise. Rather, He does so precisely because we cannot. He faces the devil head-on, standing in our place, resisting and overcoming the devil's temptations in our stead, that His victory over the devil would be ours.

But, there is more to this little forty-day jaunt into the wilderness by Jesus than meets the eye. Jesus is here showing Himself to be the fulfillment of the two goats employed on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the chief Old Testament Feast, which we have recorded for us in Leviticus 16.

You might recall that it was only on the Day of Atonement that the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, the innermost chamber of the Tabernacle (and, later, the Temple), where the Presence of the LORD was. The high priest was to perform a number of duties on this Most Sacred Day. He was to cleanse himself and don the holy garments, prepare incense and bring it burning into the Holy of Holies, sacrifice a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, and do this very interesting thing with two male goats, which I want to focus on here.

The high priest took two male goats from the congregation, both for a sin offering. He cast lots over these two male goats at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to determine which would be sacrificed for the sins of the Israelites and which would be sent away into the wilderness bearing the sins of the Israelites as their scapegoat (this is where this term originated).

The high priest would then kill the goat upon which the lot had fallen to be the sacrifice and sprinkle its blood inside the Holy of Holies and throughout the

Tabernacle to make atonement for the Holy Place and all the Holy Items inside, and for the sins of the Israelites. After this, he would lay his hands upon the scapegoat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Israelites. In doing so, he put all their sins on the head of the goat, and then he sent the goat away into the wilderness.

We were studying the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness a couple weeks back in Youth Confirmation Class. After reading that account, we turned back to Leviticus 16 and read that whole chapter. Before I could even ask the kids about the goats, they said, “Hey, those two goats are Jesus!” I love when that happens. The kids were right. Those two goats are Jesus. He is their fulfillment. He is the goat of sacrifice, for it is His Blood shed on the Cross that makes atonement for the sin of the whole world. And, as we find out in the Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent, He is the scapegoat sent into the wilderness bearing the sin of the world upon Himself.

This is the perfect Gospel lesson to begin the holy and penitential season of Lent, not only because this forty day season is based upon the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, but also because of what His being sent into the wilderness fulfills and means for us sinners. He is bearing our sins upon Himself to be our Scapegoat; to take the blame we rightly deserve for all of our iniquities, transgressions, and sins upon Himself, so that He might carry them to the Cross and put them away from us for good.

But, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest confessed all the sins of all the Israelites upon the scapegoat before sending him out into the wilderness. How is it that Jesus has the sin of the world confessed upon Him? That happens when He is baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. He steps into the water that has become dirtied with the sins of all those who had been baptized by John. Jesus enters the water not to be cleansed of sin, for He has no need of that, but to be drenched with our sins and, indeed, with the sins of all people of all time. He has all the sins of all people confessed upon Him, for His Father says, “This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased.” What pleases the Father is to have His Son be our Savior, to have His Son bear our sins upon Himself and carry those sins to the Cross to make full atonement.

Immediately after being baptized with our sins, Jesus emerges from the water and is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, thus removing any doubt as to what is being fulfilled here, for this is exactly what was done with the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement. Jesus is the Scapegoat of all scapegoats, the Scapegoat par excellence, the One sent to take all of our sins upon Himself and to be sent away into the wilderness to do battle with the devil on our behalf. He will defeat the devil for us there, and will continue to bear our sins as He journeys through the wilderness of this sinful world until He reaches His ultimate destination—that hill outside of Jerusalem where He will fulfill the other Day of Atonement goat by sacrificing Himself for our sins, shedding His Blood on the altar of the Cross to cleanse and make atonement for all sinners.

Thus, two goats equals One Lamb: the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And this, dear friends, is what our Lenten journey is all about, following Jesus on His journey through the wilderness of this sinful world to the Cross, recognizing the salvation He wins for us by taking our sins upon Himself and atoning for them with His Blood, and coming to a deeper realization and appreciation of our need for this salvation via prayerful self-examination and engagement in the various disciplines of Lent. Lord, grant this unto us all! Amen.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer



Lenten Discipline

The holy and penitential season of Lent provides Christians the opportunity to refocus, rededicate, and recommit themselves to Gospel-motivated holy living. There are six particular areas of discipline Christians can concentrate on during this holy season for self-examination and improvement: 1) Prayer, 2) Almsgiving, 3) Fasting, 4) Confession, 5) Commitment to be in the Word, 6) Service and Support. These disciplines are not given as works to be performed to merit God's favor or as a checklist Christians can check off so that they can feel better about themselves. God forbid! Rather, they are given as gifts Christians can unwrap to examine themselves and strive for improvement. I pray that each of us will prayerfully consider embracing these disciplines this Lententide.

To that end, our **Wednesdays in Lent** will be full days set aside for Lenten Discipline. Each Wednesday will begin with the praying of **Matins at 7:30 a.m.** Following Matins, I will be available for **Private Confession and Absolution from 8-10 a.m.** (and at other times, by appointment). Lent would be the perfect time to avail yourself of this Blessed Sacrament if you have never before been inclined to do so. Our Wednesdays will continue with the praying of **Sext at Noon**, followed by the praying of **Vespers at 4:30 p.m.** Youth Confirmation Class will take place at 5 p.m., followed by our **Lenten Soup & Salad Dinners at 6 p.m.** Then, we'll conclude each Wednesday with **Divine Service at 7 p.m.** Matins, Sext, and Vespers on these Wednesdays will be short, spoken, Prayer Services. The Divine Service each Wednesday evening will be sung and will focus upon the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Drawn from the Four Gospels, which is divided into five parts: 1. The Lord's Supper, 2. Gethsemane, 3. The Palace of the High Priest, 4. The Praetorium, and 5. Calvary.

We'll also observe several **Feast Days** during Lent with Divine Services on **Thursdays at Noon**. When we get to Holy Week, we'll follow the same schedule we've observed the past couple of years, the only difference being the addition of Vespers each afternoon on Monday through Thursday (see the full Holy Week Schedule on page 5).

I pray that these additional opportunities to be in our Lord's Holy House to pray, give, fast, confess, be in the Word, serve and support, and receive our Lord's Gifts, will be a blessing to many of you!

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer

Lutheran Piety

On his blog a couple of weeks ago (www.pastoralmeanderings.blogspot.com), Pastor Larry Peters wrote an excellent post about the importance of maintaining a distinctly Lutheran piety (piety is not to be confused with pietism), especially in a day and age when so many Lutherans are allowing non-Lutherans to shape the way they live out their confession of the faith. What is a distinctly Lutheran piety? The following list provides the answer:

- Lutheran piety is centered in the means of grace (Word and Sacrament). Lutheran piety realizes and rejoices in the God who comes to us hidden, yet accessible, in the water of baptism, the living voice of His Word (read, preached, and heard in absolution), and, especially, the heavenly food of His body and blood in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. These concrete places where God has placed Himself are the anchors of our faith and our life in Christ as the baptized people of God.
- Lutheran piety flows from the Divine Service on Sunday morning in which we confess and are absolved, where we gather to hear His Word read and preached, and where we receive together the body and blood of Christ . . . AND Lutheran piety flows back to the Divine Service as source and summit of our faith and life as the baptized people of God.
- Lutheran piety mandates no outward gestures, practices, or ritual forms, but rejoices in the evangelical and catholic heritage and in the privilege of these church usages which, though not demanded, are salutary and consistent with our confession (everything from kneeling to ashes to making the sign of the cross to bowing your head at the Name of Jesus to the church year to vestments, etc.) We welcome these and use them both in Christian liberty and sober reflection as they show externally the faith spoken on our lips and believed in our hearts.
- Lutheran piety rejoices in the gift of music and receives this privilege from God as it was intended - primarily as a means of expressing what we believe, confess, and teach (saying back to Him what He has first spoken to us). We honor music as the handmaiden to the Word and we acknowledge that its content is to be a vehicle of the Word and only when it is this servant of the Word can it also include the faithful and joyful response of the Christian. Lutheran piety is expressed in both an appreciation for the arts in service to the Gospel and for the role of art and beauty as a way of teaching and helping us appreciate what God has given to us in Christ and our faithful response to that gift.
- Lutheran piety remembers that in baptism we are given the gift of vocation and Lutherans celebrate this worship, witness, prayer, and works of mercy as the high and holy calling of the baptized. Lutheran piety sees the domain of our service to God as including most prominently our service to our neighbor. We are mindful that although certain callings are especially noble (church work vocations), the life of the laity is not second class, but the very sphere in which the baptized carry forth the works of God to spouse, children, family, friends, neighbor, employer, community, and nation.
- Lutheran piety rejects every usage of good works as cause or reason for our justification and yet rejoices and confesses that good works flow from faith and are marks of the work of the Spirit within us. We speak of good works and encourage one another to good works both as part of our common life within the church and our care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Lutheran piety refuses every attempt to turn private confession and absolution into a rule to be satisfied and yet rejoices in this gift of God through which the burdens of our hearts are relieved, our place within the community of faith restored, and our lives directed to the fulfillment of that baptismal calling. Lutheran piety is neither ashamed of nor embarrassed about this godly practice rooted in the words of Jesus and practiced faithfully throughout Christian history (though restored from its abuse during the Reformation).

Private Confession & Absolution

Since I have had a few members ask about this recently, and since I have been wanting to write about this in more detail for some time, what follows are my thoughts on the Gift of Private Confession and Absolution:

Private Confession and Absolution has sadly fallen into disuse among Lutherans in America. This is sad because our Lutheran Confessions make it clear that it was the sincere intent of our Lutheran forefathers to retain this beautiful gift and to not allow it to fall into disuse among us: “Our churches teach that private Absolution should be retained in the churches . . .” (AC XI).

Our Lutheran forefathers held Private Confession & Absolution in such high esteem that they were even willing to conclude that, properly understood, it is a Blessed Sacrament. Far from desiring to discontinue this practice, they, instead, reformed it to rid it of the abuses that had crept in over the years, as the Roman Catholic Church had turned this beautiful gift into a burdensome work, thereby robbing it of the Gospel and making it a most deplorable act. Thus, our Lutheran forefathers restored Private Confession and Absolution to its Gospel-drenched goodness and it was received with praise and thanksgiving among Lutherans for a long time thereafter until, again sadly, Lutherans allowed it to fall into disuses mostly due to pressures they felt from Protestants in America to avoid giving the impression that they were “too Roman Catholic.” Rather than using that occasion to confess their faith and make it vividly clear that our Lutheran practice of Private Confession and Absolution was decidedly not like that of Roman Catholics, Lutherans buckled under the pressure and took the easy way out, phasing this practice out of existence over time until eventually it was all but extinct. Some of you lived through some of the “phasing out” that was done, as you still remember the days when Private Confession and Absolution gave way to Announcing to the pastor your intention to Commune on Sundays, which gave way to signing a Communion Card on Sunday mornings, etc.

In fact, what some of you may not know is that the inclusion of the Corporate Confession and Absolution which precedes the Divine Service on Sundays today was a part of the “phasing out” process. It wasn’t until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that this practice became a norm among Lutherans, and other historic church bodies. Until then, the Divine Service always began with the Introit (or a Processional Hymn), since those who would be Communing that day would have been absolved privately by their pastor ahead of time.

But, I am happy to report that this practice is making a comeback among us today. You might say that it is slowly being “phased back in” among us. There are increasingly more pastors around our synod teaching about this, raising awareness, and making this Blessed Sacrament available to their people. We have even witnessed a few recent synodical resolutions passed by our synod in convention encouraging pastors and congregations in our synod to reintroduce Private Confession and Absolution and to encourage its use, and there are more and more of our pastors who are reaping the benefits of this beloved gift themselves, securing for themselves Father Confessor to whom they can confess and be absolved. As your pastor, I make regular use of this Sacrament, going to my Father Confessor at least seasonally to confess and be absolved, and on other occasions when I feel the need.

I understand the apprehension many have about this. I had it, too. I was a nervous wreck the first time I went to Private Confession and Absolution. But, what I learned was that my fears were unfounded and I left with more relief than I had ever before experienced, which is a sentiment I’ve heard many others express as well. Even so, I remain a sinner, and the Old Adam in me remains apprehensive. Confessing sins out loud to a pastor is a difficult thing to do, and the Old Adam in us hates it. So, I will not promise you that it will be easy, and I won’t even promise you that you’ll leave with a feeling of relief, as the Old Adam in you may continue to harass you about it. What I will promise you is that whatever fear and apprehension you have will be, indeed, unfounded, for your Lord is there for one reason, and one reason only: To say to you through the mouth of His called and ordained servant, “I forgive you all your sins,” and that is a beautiful and blessed thing, no matter what your feelings may suggest to you in your coming to, and departing from, this Sacrament.

But, what will your pastor think of you when he hears your sins? That question, which is a question I asked myself, too, fails to recognize that your pastor is just as big a sinner as you are. He will not be shocked or disgusted or turned off by anything

you confess to him, for he has most likely done the same or worse himself. What will he think of you? He'll think that you are a sinner who takes your sins seriously and wants them absolved by your Lord Jesus Christ, and he will delight in being the instrument through whom your Lord sets you free. He'll not look down on you in the least no matter what you confess to him, for those sins you confessed will have been forgiven and forgotten, never to be thought, or spoken, of again.

But, why do I need to go to Private Confession and Absolution when I confess my sins and receive absolution every week in the Divine Service? Let me ask you a question in return: Why do you need to go to the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins when you already heard the absolution pronounced at the beginning of the Divine Service? Or, here's another question: Why would you deprive yourself of additional Gifts your Lord desires to give to you? That's what we're talking about here, dear friends. Private Confession and Absolution is an additional Gift our Lord desires to give to you. And, each of our Lord's Gifts to us serve us and build us up in different ways. Why wouldn't we want to receive all that our Lord desires to give us?

Think of it this way. Most, if not all, of us have friends or family members who belong to one of the Protestant denominations, where they don't believe that our Lord is truly Present in the Holy Supper and, therefore, do not receive the blessings that come with the reception of His very Body and Blood. We would all agree that such friends and family members are missing out on a wonderful Gift our Lord has given to His Church (at least, I hope we would all agree—if you wouldn't, let's chat). Or, what about the many Christians out there who are deprived week in and week out of the Gospel altogether, receiving it neither in the Sacraments nor in the preaching, as popular false teachers scratch their itching ears with nothing more than motivational messages and pep-talks. Again, we would say that these Christians are missing out on the wonderful Gifts our Lord desires to give them. Isn't it the same with Lutherans who refrain from the additional Gift of Private Confession and Absolution? Think about it.

Granted, we Lutherans are extremely blessed. Unlike our Protestant friends and family members, we do have the Gospel preached to us in its full purity and the Sacraments administered to us according to Christ's Institution, and we should be extremely thankful for that, since this is only by the grace of God. But, this doesn't change the fact that we Lutherans have been missing out on all that our Lord desires to give us by allowing the Sacrament of Private Confession and Absolution to fall into disuse, which is why the movement to "phase this back in" has begun. We need to 'fess up and admit that we were wrong to allow this precious Gift to fall into disuse and work on restoring it to its rightful place in Christ's Church for Christians to use for their blessing and edification.

Martin Luther said, "When I urge you to go to [Private] Confession [and Absolution], I am simply urging you to be a Christian." At the same time, Luther was careful not to mingle Law with Gospel, making it clear that no Christian should be forced to use Private Confession and Absolution. It is not a Law Christians must follow or else be deprived of forgiveness, life, and salvation, but, as I've tried to make clear in this article, a Blessed Gift that should be made available to all who wish to receive it. It's the Gospel, dear friends. Just like Holy Baptism is the Gospel. Just like Holy Preaching is the Gospel. Just like the Holy Liturgy is the Gospel. Just like the Holy Supper is the Gospel. Holy Absolution, whether Corporately or Privately, is the Gospel. Christians love the Gospel. Christians long to receive the Gospel. That is what Luther meant when he said that he was just urging people to be Christians when he urged them to go to Private Confession and Absolution.

So, I invite you to receive the Gospel as it is delivered to you in this additional and unique Gift from the Lord. It's an invitation, not a command. You are free to receive this Gift or not to receive it. But, the Church is not free to deprive those who want to receive this Gift of the opportunity to do so, and neither are her pastors. Thus, throughout the season of Lent, I am setting aside Wednesday mornings from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. for anyone who wishes to receive this Gift (and, as always, I will readily make myself available to anyone who wishes to receive this Gift at other times). I will either be in the sanctuary or in my office, as I plan to use the time not spent hearing confession and pronouncing absolution for prayer and study. A hymnal will be set up on the altar rail with its ribbons marking the pages for Psalm 51 and for the Rite of Individual (Private) Confession and Absolution. Simply let me know that you are there to receive this Gift and then go to the altar to kneel (or stand), where you may prayerfully prepare. If I'm not already vested and in the sanctuary, I will get vested and come in to sit in the chair on the other side of the altar rail to hear your confession. When you are ready, you turn to the Rite in the hymnal and begin. I will also have a sign on the doors going into the nave, so that no one will enter and disturb us.

For those of you who have never done this, the Rite itself is short and simple. It is found on pages 292-293 of our hymnal, and is included here for you to review:

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

You may prepare yourself by meditating on the Ten Commandments (pages 321-322). You may also pray the penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, or 143).

If you are not burdened with particular sins, do not trouble yourself or search for or invent other sins, thereby turning confession into a torture. Instead, mention one or two sins that you know and let that be enough.

When you are ready, kneel (or stand) and say:

Pastor, please hear my confession and pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will.

Proceed.

I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. I have lived as if God did not matter and as if I mattered most. My Lord's name I have not honored as I should; my worship and prayers have faltered. I have not let His love have its way with me, and so my love for others has failed. There are those whom I have hurt, and those whom I have failed to help. My thoughts and desires have been soiled with sin.

If you wish to confess specific sins that trouble you, continue as follows:

What troubles me particularly is that . . .

Confess whatever you have done against the commandments of God, according to your own place in life. The pastor may gently question or instruct you—not to pry or judge—but to assist in self-examination.

Then conclude by saying:

I am sorry for all of this and ask for grace. I want to do better.

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

Amen.

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Yes.

Let it be done for you as you believe.

The pastor places his hands on the head of the penitent and says:

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The pastor may speak additional Scripture passages to comfort and strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed.

The pastor concludes:

Go in peace.

Amen.

As the rubric above states, do not torture yourself by searching for or inventing sins to confess. Confess only those sins that are troubling you. And, if no specific sins come to mind, simply confess the general confession included in the Rite and leave it at that. Remember, this is not meant to be burdensome, but a Gift! Also, while the rubrics state that the pastor may gently question or instruct you during your confession, or speak additional Scripture passages following, that will only happen if it is necessary. Usually, I will not say a word beyond what is given me to say in the Rite itself. The Rite is short and simple, as said above, and oh so sweet—for it is pure Gift, and I hope that you will prayerfully consider receiving it.

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer

Holy Week Schedule



Palm/Passion Sunday—April 1

9:30 a.m.—Divine Service w/Procession of Palms

To commemorate our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall and process into the nave together carrying palm branches and singing, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor." Divine Service with Holy Communion, including the responsive reading of the Passion of Our Lord According to St. Matthew, the Evangelist, will follow.



Holy Monday—April 2

7:30 a.m.—Matins

12:00 p.m.—Divine Service

4:30 p.m.—Vespers

7:00 p.m.—Divine Service



Holy Tuesday—April 3

7:30 a.m.—Matins

12:00 p.m.—Divine Service

4:30 p.m.—Vespers

7:00 p.m.—Divine Service



Holy Wednesday—April 4

7:30 a.m.—Matins

12:00 p.m.—Divine Service

4:30 p.m.—Vespers

7:00 p.m.—Divine Service

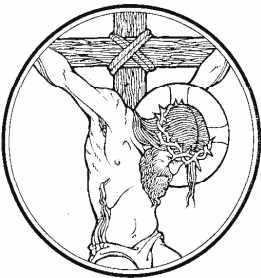
We will begin each day, throughout Holy Week, with the praying of Matins at 7:30 a.m. Matins will be spoken responsively, using the readings and prayers found in the Treasury of Daily Prayer, and will provide us the opportunity to begin each day during Holy Week prayerfully focused on our Lord and His Passion. Divine Service (spoken liturgy) will be held at both Noon and 7:00 p.m. (same Service) to allow everyone the opportunity to attend and receive the blessings of Word and Sacrament. We will also pray Vespers each day (Monday through Thursday) at 4:30 p.m.



Holy (Maundy) Thursday—April 5

7:30 a.m.—Matins 12:00 p.m.—Divine Service 4:30 p.m.—Vespers 7:00 p.m.—Divine Service

The focus on this Most Holy Day is on the Blessed Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, which He instituted on the night when He was betrayed. The Divine Service at 7:00 p.m. will be different from the spoken Divine Service at Noon, and will include the "Christian Questions with Their Answers," written by Dr. Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament, and will conclude with the Stripping of the Altar while Psalm 22 is being read.



Good Friday—April 6

7:30 a.m.—Matins

12:00 p.m.—Divine Service

3:00 p.m.—Devotion at the
Sacred Hour

7:30 p.m.—Tenebrae

The Sacred Noonday Good Friday Service will focus on the Seven Words of Christ from the Holy Cross, and will include the Procession of the Sacred Cross and the Distribution of Holy Communion. A short devotion will take place at the Sacred Hour (3:00 p.m.) in which our Lord gave up His Spirit and died. The evening Tenebrae Service will be completely different from the Noon Service. Please note the later start time, which will allow it to be a little darker in the church for the dramatic conclusion to this Most Holy and deeply profound Service.



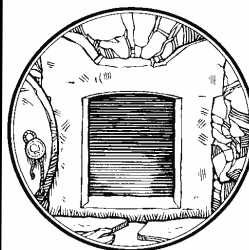
Holy Saturday—April 7

7:30 a.m.—Matins

10:00 a.m.—Divine Service

7:00 p.m.—Easter Vigil

After Holy Saturday Divine Service at 10:00 a.m., we will decorate the Church for Easter. Then, we will gather together at 7:00 p.m. for Easter Vigil, one of the most ancient and special Services within the tradition of the Holy Church.



Easter Sunday—April 8

7:30 a.m.—Matins

8:30 a.m.—Easter Breakfast

9:30 a.m.—Divine Service

With the Easter Vigil in place, there will be no Sunrise Service, but we will pray Matins at 7:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m., and the glorious and celebratory Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord will be held at 9:30 a.m.

**HE IS RISEN!
HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

PEACE NEWS & NOTES



NEWS

March

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Location</u>
Monthly Meeting	2/18	5:00 PM	7:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
Fellowship	Sundays	10:45 AM	11:15 AM	Youth Classroom
Bake Sale	3/24	9:00 AM	3:00 PM	Alma WalMart

Greetings in Christ

The Youth continue with our preparation for the upcoming Higher Things convention. We have been able to adjust the schedule and will be attending the event in St. Catherine's Ontario.

Part of our fundraising for this will be a bake sale on Saturday, March 24 at WalMart in Alma. It was decided in our February meeting to focus on youth prepared goods, but we will be asking for support for ingredients. Please keep an eye on upcoming bulletins and the PYG board. We had our largest turn out for the February monthly meeting in the last few years.

Our Mexican kick off Lenten dinner went very well. Thanks to everyone for your support of this and all of our ongoing fundraisers. These include the pop can drive, Spartan labels and our new 'Green' collection. We are collecting a number of recycling items, an expanded list and directions are on the PYG board. We will have a new collection container of these items next to the pop can barrel to kick off collection 3-4-12.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you.
Jonathan Penzien

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

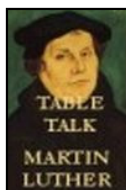
We are going to try a new place for March. We will meet for lunch on **Monday, March 12 at 1:30 p.m.** at the Blue Shamrock in downtown St. Louis. A menu and signup sheet are posted in the fellowship hall. The menu is also accessible at www.theblueshamrockpub.com. All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest - the more, the merrier! Hope to see you there!

USE OF CHURCH BUILDING

Please let Gary Miller know when you wish to use the church building for events that are not listed on the church calendar. Thank you.

TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. If you have never had the opportunity to attend, perhaps this Lenten Season is a great time to take advantage of the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. Plus, THEY'RE FUN! All are invited to our next Table Talk, which will take place **Thursday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Church**. We hope you're able to join us!



SALT NEWS

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us.

Please see our Meeting Minutes on the SALT Bulletin Board

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Saturday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Art and Cassie Tennant in Breckenridge

Come join us for a night of Family Fun! Snacks, board games, and cards will be provided. Hope to see you there!

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

This is an ongoing outreach for the SALT Committee. If you know of a person in the armed forces who is serving abroad, please contact Carolyn Johnson (email ckj1969@yahoo.com).

PEACE BOOK CLUB

The next book for the Peace Book Club is the **New York Times** best seller "**11/22/63**" by Stephen



King. Based on the assassination of President John Kennedy, which took place on November 22, 1963, this book is a fictional account of the goings on around that historic event. We will meet on **Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at 7 pm** at the home of Yvonne Elenbaas. Even if you don't have time to read this rather long book before then, please feel free

to join us anyway. The conversation will be a good one, and perhaps you will then be motivated to read it later. If you remember where you were the day John Kennedy was shot, you will enjoy this exciting read. And, if you're too young to have such memories, "**11/22/63**" brings the account to life, along with providing some interesting ethical dilemmas that will be fun to discuss. These Book Club meetings are informal and provide an opportunity to get to know your fellow congregation members better. Please join us!

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

SALT FUNDRAISER

Please support our Evangelism Committee by attending our...

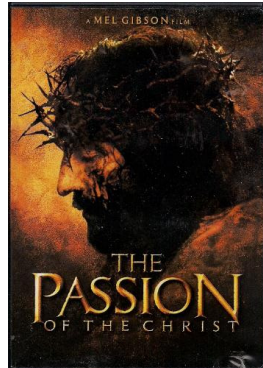
Spaghetti Dinner & Peace Movie Night

Menu



Spaghetti	Applesauce
Meat Sauce	Cake
Marinara Sauce	
Salad	
Garlic Bread	

Movie, ***The Passion of the Christ*** will follow the dinner. If you have seen this movie, you know how gripping it is and how its graphic presentation of the Passion of our Lord further prepares us for the Services during Holy Week. If you have never seen the movie, please consider starting this Lenten tradition with us. Bring your own comfy chairs and movie snacks, if you wish. Hope to see you there!



6:00 pm—Spaghetti Dinner

6:30ish—Introduction and devotion by Pastor Messer

7:00 pm—The Movie

(Length: 2 hours, 6 minutes)

9:00 pm—Discussion led by Pastor Messer

(**Note:** This movie is rated R for sequences of graphic violence. Children under 17 must be accompanied by an adult or parents must speak with Pastor Messer in advance to give their consent.)

Christian Care/Mission Collection

Collection cans are available in the Fellowship Hall. Please take them home, fill them with your spare change and bring them in on the third Sunday of each month. They will be emptied and available for you to take home immediately following church the same day. The first Sunday to bring in the cans is March 18th. Some members have mentioned that the bottoms have fallen off as the can gets heavy, so just be careful when picking up your can. The funds collected will be split between the Christian Care Fund and the mission funds. If you have any questions please contact Cassie Tennant. Thank you for your participation!

REMEMBERING OUR SHUT-INS

We all love to receive greetings from people who care for us. What better way to remember our shut-ins (when it is difficult for us to make a personal visit) than to send a note or a card periodically to let them know we are thinking of them and to give them something to look forward to in the mail, and especially at this time of the year! Please consider dropping a few lines to our shut-ins during the course of each month.

Marlene Wiltshire
Warwick Living Center
842 W. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Vivian Strom
Masonic Pathways
1200 Wright Avenue
Alma, MI 48801

Joan Burch
Schnepf Health Care Center
427 E. Washington
St. Louis, MI 48880

Marion Greening
1025 Vassar Street
Alma, MI 48801

Joyce Kohler
2700 Marfitt Road, Apt. 213
East Lansing, MI 48823

Also, while correspondence is not requested for him, please remember our dear brother in Christ, Dick Wiser, who is at Pine River in St. Louis, in your prayers.

50th Anniversary Celebration Committee

Next meeting of this group is March 20, at 7 p.m. Please join us to help plan to celebrate this important event in the life of our congregation. We are still in need of a chairperson. Please consider volunteering! If you are not able to attend this meeting, but are interested in helping, contact Pastor Messer.

OFFICE SUPPLIES

The response to our request for donations has been very well received. Thank you so much to our generous donors. Our paper supply is now well stocked, as is our pens, pencils, small paper clips, rubber bands and post-it notes. We will gladly and thankfully accept all donations for those items listed above, and for the following office supplies:

- Filing labels (Avery #8478—1/3 cut—30 labels/sheet; Avery #8163—2 x 4—10 labels/sheet; Staples #479880—1 x 2 5/8—30 labels/sheet)
- File Folders (Manilla, 1/3 cut)
- Postage stamps
- Scotch Tape (3/4" refill role, 1" core)
- Standard Staples (Swingline)
- Adding Machine Tape (2")

Ladies Guild

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our Ladies Guild will meet on **Monday, March 5, at 12 pm.** Hostess will be Lois Ramsey. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

PLC Women's Prayer Chain

The current list is posted on the Ladies' Guild Bulletin Board. All participants should have a copy. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, or if you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," please see or call Marlene Miller at 463-3710.

Altar Flowers

There is a flower calendar for 2012 is posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. We are now working toward ordering altar flower arrangements that coordinate with and enhance the liturgical colors of each Season of the Church year. Depending on the dates, flowers may not always be displayed for a calendar month. Some Seasons of the Church year cross calendar months. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please put your name on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. If there is a specific date in the month that commemorates an occasion, please also enter that date. A bouquet costs \$25. We encourage two persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand. Please make checks payable to Peace Lutheran Church, attach a note marked "Altar Flowers" and place in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Any questions may be directed to Carol Zeile or Amy Blair. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel.

Lenten Soup Dinners

Ladies' Guild provides Lenten Dinners on Wednesday nights at 6:00 p.m. Please come and enjoy soup, salad, dessert and fellowship before the 7:00 p.m. Midweek Service.

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD



the Ladies Guild is collecting the following items for Layettes to send to the Lutheran World Relief:

- 2 receiving blankets
- 2 shirts
- 2 gowns or sleepers
- 4 cloth diapers
- 1 sweater
- 2 washcloths
- 1 bath-size bar of soap
- 2 diaper pins

Wrap the items in one of the receiving blankets and secure with diaper pins.

COLLECTION DATES: January 1 - March 31

PEACE LADIES GUILD COOKBOOK

Cookbooks are available for \$13.00 and can be purchased during fellowship time from any member of the Guild. Questions, ask a member of the Guild.

LADIES GUILD SELLS CUTLERY

Rada cutlery is on display the 3rd Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall during the coffee hour. We have seven different items in stock: Paring Knife, Large Slicer Knife, Tomato Slicer, Serrated Steak Knife, Spatula, Pie Server, and Veggie Peeler. A product catalogue is available for viewing and orders may also be placed through the catalog.



March

Carolyn Johnson

April

Altar Care

Carol Zeile

May

Coaline Luplow

Coffee Hostesses

- 4 Andrea Elliott
- 11 Jo Wendt
- 18 Lisa Messer
- 25 Jenny Baughman

- 1 Carol Zeile
- 8 Easter (no coffee)
- 15 Peace Youth Group
- 22 M. Miller/C. Dargie
- 29 Tina Schafer

- 6 Coaline Luplow
- 13 Gretchen Harrison
- 20 M. Isaksson/H. Meyers
- 27 Amy Blair



**REGULAR MEETING
PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL**

Date: January 3, 2012
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Peace Lutheran Church
325 Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

MINUTES

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- ♦ President Zeile called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Carol Zeile, Gary Miller, Sharyn Greening, Dave Zeile, Carolyn Johnson, Larry Elliott, Amy Blair, and Cassie Tennant. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

- ♦ Motion made by Carol Zeile, supported by Gary Miller to approve amended agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- ♦ Motion made by Sharyn Greening, supported by Gary Miller, to approve minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously

Report(s)

- ♦ **Pastor** – Report Attached; **Treasurer's Report** – Full report attached, \$150 was received from the City, which was reflected in the total offerings for 2011, correction will be made on final income/expense report. Motion by Larry Elliott, supported by Gary Miller to give \$300 from the memorial fund to the youth group to cover the registration fee for Higher Things Conference; **Financial Secretary** – Yearly reports just need to be printed; **Board of Elders** – No report; **Board of Trustees** – No report; **Board of Christian Education** – The Christmas program went great, all the kids did an excellent job; **Board of Evangelism** – next meeting is January 12th, need better attendance and more ideas; **Board of Stewardship** – need to meet to setup new health insurance program for Pastor Messer and his family.

Business

- ♦ **Consumers Energy Bill** – Gary Miller will contact consumers and inquire about their monthly payment plan program and report back to the council in February
- ♦ **Transition to New Officers** – Pastor Messer will email officer job descriptions to all the new officers. Motion made by Larry Elliott, supported by Gary Miller, to remove Carol Zeile and Christopher S Brown from Peace Lutheran Church's 4 savings accounts, 1 checking account, and the safe deposit box, and to add our new Treasurer, Amy Blair, and new President, David W Zeile, to all 4 savings accounts and 1 checking account and safe deposit box. Online Banking access and the debit cards for Carol Zeile and Christopher S Brown should also be removed and deactivated, and setup new account access and debit cards for Amy Blair and David W Zeile. Please note that account 1710336395 should also include Carolyn Johnson. Motion also includes establishing a new savings account for Thrivent Choice Dollars, with Amy Blair and David W Zeile as the authorized signors for this account. Motion passed unanimously.
- ♦ **Thrivent Choice Dollars** – Now that a new savings account is being established Carol Zeile and Sharyn Greening volunteered to serve as representatives for discretion over use of funds. Carol will draft a procedural document for the voter's assembly explaining how the Thrivent Choice Dollars can be used by members of the church.
- ♦ **Scrip Pro** – Program is going well, made \$476.58 already, another order to be placed on Sunday January 8, 2011
- ♦ **Replacing Office Printer** – Larry Elliott will look into replacing the office printer

Pastor Messer excused himself from the remainder of the meeting at 8:58pm. Council members continued

- ♦ **Proposed 2012 Budget** – Motion made by Sharyn Greening, supported by Larry Elliott, to review the 2012 proposed budget as presented by the Budget and Finance Committee now that the final income and expenses have been presented for 2011, the council reevaluated the proposed budget and made some changes that will be presented to the Voter's at our next meeting on January 22. The first item to note is that we can within \$700 of our income budget, so the council felt that the offering budget for 2011 was reasonable, the Stewardship committee also received an additional \$3000-\$4000 in additional pledges for 2012. So total offerings budgeted for 2012 was adjusted to a total of \$113,003. The two expense areas that were then changed were Administrative Assistant and Pastoral. Motion passed unanimously. Carol will also put an article in the January newsletter so members of the congregation so they have a chance to see and review the budget prior to our next Voter's Assembly meeting.
- ♦ **Forgiving Pastor's Loan** – this discussion was tabled, for further research

General Comments –

- ♦ Email all Voter's Assembly meeting agenda items to Cassie, Thrivent Choice Dollars and Approving 2012 Budget, have already been added
- ♦ **Adjournment & Closing Prayer** – Motion made by Gary Miller, supported by Sharyn Greening, adjourn at 9:56pm. Motion carried unanimously. Larry Elliott closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**Respectfully submitted,
Cassie Tennant, Secretary**

Thrivent Choice Dollars

As you have heard at Voters' Assemblies and read in previous newsletters, Peace is now a recipient of **Thrivent Choice Dollars**. We receive these funds monthly from **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**. The amount we receive is based on the amount of qualified products owned by our members who also have asked Thrivent to direct their Choice Dollars to Peace. If you are a Thrivent member and are interested in directing funds to Peace, please contact Carol Zeile. There also are pamphlets available at Peace that will guide you through this process.

Following is a request form that may be used by members of Peace to ask for some of these Thrivent Choice Dollars that have already been directed to us. Please see either Sharyn Greening or Carol Zeile with questions or to submit a form.

Thrivent Choice Dollars Request Form

February, 2012

The Peace Council voted to make these Dollars available as matching funds to people and groups within our congregation who are having fundraisers or doing special projects. Requests may be made for a maximum of \$250 for each fundraiser or special project and \$500 per group per calendar year. For fundraisers, the group would raise at least as much as is being requested. This form must be completed in advance of the event in order to apply. If sufficient Thrivent Choice Dollars are unavailable the request cannot be granted. Please direct completed forms or questions to Sharyn Greening or Carol Zeile. Once a decision is made concerning your request, the form will be returned to you. **IN ORDER TO RECEIVE YOUR FUNDS, YOU MUST RESUBMIT THE FORM AFTER THE FUNDRAISER OR PROJECT IS COMPLETE.**

Name of Peace member(s) or group requesting funds:

Fundraising event or project for which funds are requested:

Date of fundraising event or project:

Estimated profit (if any) from the event/project:

Amount of request:

Date approved & initials:

Actual amount raised or needed [to be completed by requester]:

Matching/project funds awarded:

Date of check:

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class is offered on **Sundays at 11 a.m.**

Together in the Word

- We meet every **Thursday at 10:00 a.m.** We are currently studying *2 Samuel*. All are welcome to join us!

Christian History Class

- Wednesday classes meet at 6 pm and are currently on hold until after Lent.

First Communion and Confirmation Classes

- First Communion Classes take place as arranged (see Pastor Messer if interested); Confirmation Class for our 1st-year Confirmands takes place on Wednesdays at 5 pm (no 2nd-year confirmands this year).

PLAN AHEAD!

Vacation Bible School is planned for June 18-22. We will be using the program "In The Name". This program is based on the Holy Trinity and the gifts which the Holy Trinity gives according to each article of the Creed. If you are able to volunteer to teach, help with snacks or crafts, provide needed copies of student activities or assist in any way, please see Sharyn Greening.

TALK RADIO FOR THE THINKING CHRISTIAN!

Listen to what you want, when you want, at:
www.issuesetc.org



MARCH

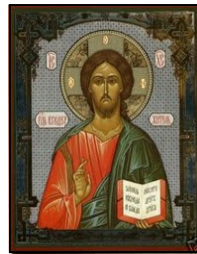
Happy Birthday

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Tyrel Harwager | 20 Barb Komar |
| 1 Zane Luplow | 22 Ken Hill |
| 5 Tina Schafer | 27 Ashley Rodriguez |
| 8 Ariel Row | 28 Donna Bebow |
| 11 Bob Wendt | 29 Deb Penzien |
| 20 Morgan Johnson | |

Happy Anniversary

- 19 Miguel and Sue Ortiz

If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.



PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

*Check in from time to time
to see what's on his mind.*

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 7:30 a.m. | Matins (Prayer Service) |
| 8-10 a.m. | Private Conf. & Abs. |
| 12:00 p.m. | Sext (Prayer Service) |
| 4:30 p.m. | Vespers (Prayer Service) |
| 5:00 p.m. | Confirmation Class |
| 6:00 p.m. | Soup and Salad Dinner |
| 7:00 p.m. | Divine Service |

The Lord Bless Our Lententide!

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 2/29/12)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 139; Confirmed - 119

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0


















Financial Report as of 2/29/12

YTD Budgeted	\$ 19,593.00
YTD Receipts.....	\$ 17,288.25
Difference	\$ -2,304.75

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
(989) 463-3093—Home
(989) 388-2037—Cell
pastor@peacealma.org
pastormesser@gmail.com
www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

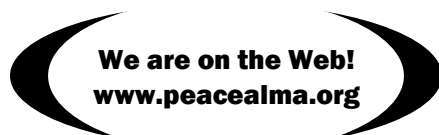
Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Drive
Alma, MI 48801
(989) 463-5754
contact@peacealma.org
www.peacealma.org

March 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 Reminiscere (Lent 2) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	5 12 pm - Ladies Guild 	6 <i>Pastor at Winkel</i> 6:30 pm - Church Council	7 Reminiscere Midweek 7:30 am - Matins 8-10 am - PCA Noon - Sext; 4:30 - Vespers 5 pm - Confirmation Class 6 pm - Soup Dinner 7 pm - Divine Service	11am - Together in Word 12pm-DivSer-St.Matthias 5 pm - Weight Watchers 8 10am - Together in Word 12 pm - Divine Service Sts Perpetua & Felicitas 5 pm - Weight Watchers	2/9	3/10
11 Oculi (Lent 3) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	12 1:30 pm - Lunch Bunch 	13 7 pm - Peace Book Club at the home of Yvonne Elenbaas.	14 Oculi Midweek 7:30 am - Matins 8-10 am - PCA Noon - Sext; 4:30 - Vespers 5 pm - Confirmation Class 6 pm - Soup Dinner 7 pm - Divine Service	15 10 am - Together in Word 12 pm - Divine Service St. Patrick 5 pm - WW 7 pm - Table Talk 	16	17 6:30 p.m. - Family Fun Night at the home of Art and Cassie Tennant
18 Laetare (Lent 4) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - SS 5-7 pm - PYG 	19	20 7 pm - 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee	21 Laetare Midweek 7:30 am - Matins 8-10 am - PCA Noon - Sext; 4:30 - Vespers 5 pm - Confirmation Class 6 pm - Soup Dinner 7 pm - Divine Service	22 10 am - Together in Word 12 pm - Divine Service St. Joseph 5 pm - WW 6:30 pm - SALT 	23 Peace Movie Night 6:00 pm SALT Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser followed by <i>The Passion of the Christ</i> 	24
25 Judica (Lent 5) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	26 <i>Newsletter articles due</i>	27 7 pm - Stewardship	28 Judica Midweek 7:30 am - Matins 8-10 am - PCA Noon - Sext; 4:30 - Vespers 5 pm - Confirmation Class 6 pm - Soup Dinner 7 pm - Divine Service	29 10 am - Together in Word 12 pm - Divine Service Annunciation of Our Lord 5 pm - WW 	30	31
April 1 Palm/Passion Sunday 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	2 Holy Monday 7:30 am - Matins 12 pm - Divine Service 4:30 pm - Vespers 7 pm - Divine Service 	3 Holy Tuesday 7:30 am - Matins 12 pm - Divine Service 4:30 pm - Vespers 7 pm - Divine Service 	4 Holy Wednesday 7:30 am - Matins 12 pm - Divine Service 4:30 pm - Vespers 7 pm - Divine Service 	5 Holy Thursday 7:30 am - Matins NO Together in Word 12 pm - Divine Service 4:30 pm - Vespers 7 pm - Divine Service 	6 Good Friday 7:30 am - Matins 12 pm - Divine Service 3:00 pm - Devotion 7:30 pm - Tenebrae 	7 Holy Saturday 7:30 am - Matins 10 am - Divine Service 7 pm - Easter Vigil <i>Champagne Reception</i> 

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

Serving in March

March	ELDERS	ACOLYTES	USHERS	GREETERS
4 - 9:30 am <i>Reminiscere (Lent 2)</i>	Gabriel Blair	Myka Luplow Savannah Blair	Terry Luplow Daren Johnson	Sharyn Greening
11 - 9:30 am <i>Oculi (Lent 3)</i>	Larry Elliott	Morgan Johnson Samantha Messer	Gary Miller Miguel Ortiz	Marlene Miller Charlotte Dargie
18 - 9:30 am <i>Laetare (Lent 4)</i>	Terry Luplow	Sierra Luplow Farrah Blair	Chris Brown Gabriel Blair	Larry & Andrea Elliott
25 - 9:30 am <i>Judica (Lent 5)</i>	Miguel Ortiz	Natalie Penzien Paige Harwager	Vern Jakolat John Lemmermann	Dave & Carol Zeile
April				
1 - 9:30 am Palm Sunday	Gabriel Blair	Savannah Blair Aaron Messer	Tyrel Harwager James Sager	Terry & Coaline Luplow

"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men" (Eph. 6:7)