

The St. John Lutheran Church
Volume 73 — Number 03
March 2025 Jottings

“We lift up Jesus Christ in our lives, our church, and our community.”



Pastor Michael's Musings

March 2025

Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” And the man got up and went home.

--- Matthew 9: 2 – 7

There are many things going on in the passage printed above. Some of them are challenging if we truly think upon them and ponder them. They might call us to question some of the presuppositions about God’s love that we often entertain.

The first eye-raiser of note is the fact that “some men” bring the paralytic to Jesus, and it is because of *their* faith that the paralytic is forgiven of his sins. Note it is not the paralytic’s faith that brings about the process of forgiveness (at least so far we are told in the above passage), but instead it is the faith of the people who are carrying him that triggers the forgiveness and subsequent healing that comes from Jesus. Now, wait a minute! That’s not how it is supposed to work! You and I know the process. We are called to have a personal relationship with Jesus in our hearts, and then because we can take that step, Jesus will take his step and make us spiritually as white as snow. Paul adds an oddity to the biblical mix later by writing in 1 Corinthians 7: 13-15 “And if a

woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband.” And vs. 16 “How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?” The teachers of the law in the passage at the top of the page have extreme difficulty when Jesus declares that he can forgive sin. In their minds, only God can forgive sin, and they do not see Jesus as God. The punchline of the lesson above is when Jesus performs a harder miracle than mere words (i.e. forgiving sins) and instead performs the miraculous healing of eliminating the man’s paralysis so that it is plain for all to see his incredible powers. The greater miracle of physical healing begs the question of the supposedly smaller one; saying that one’s sins are forgiven. If Jesus can do this... then surely, he can do that!

And therein lies the answer to the question posed in the great challenge of who it is that works salvation. Do not be deceived. Where does the real power of healing and forgiveness lie? Is it really the carriers of the paralytic who work the salvation of the man, or is it Jesus? Let’s put it this way, if you pray for someone, you diligently pray for them so that they might see the light of Jesus (you in essence spiritually carry them), and you live your life in Christ and even invite them to church, is it you that works salvation, or are you simply, but importantly, being a testament to that joy that lives within you in Christ? That is the seed that is of the ultimate effect; the seed that springs from the feeling of Joy you have as a Christian. You are “preparing the way of the Lord”, perhaps in the spirit of John the Baptist, or working alongside the power of the Holy Spirit so that the seed of faith is planted. Paul is talking about the sanctity and power of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7, and not the question of eternal, spiritual salvation coming from the efforts of another mortal. Paul is trying to keep pagan families together that might otherwise split apart because one person of the couple has seen the light and salvation of Jesus Christ. The power of “sanctification” lies in that the act of professing Christ as Lord is an ongoing, all day long type of thing. Sanctification is living. Are you willing to live together in peace and harmony regardless of your differences? It’s an important question that we need to ask ourselves today. Who knows what might happen if we do. One of us just might be the avenue through which the Holy Spirit enters in and makes a difference in so many ways.

Be the one who carries those that cannot carry themselves, be the one who refuses to let evil thoughts to take root in your heart, be the one who stands up and walks home, and be the one who is patient, loving, and who creates a home for the power sanctification.

Lent—Are you OPEN to do God's will?

Ash Wednesday is almost here! Lent starts on March 5th. Lent runs for 40 days (NOT including Sundays), so besides Ash Wednesday, that gives us 5 Wednesdays to have mid-week services. Each year, we've been trying to find a theme to carry a subject through all 5 weeks; this year, we are called to be OPEN. What's that mean? Well, as Christians, we should be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and in order to do that, we have to OPEN ourselves up to be led. So, here are the ways we will be challenged to be OPEN on each of the Wednesday evening services:

Week of Lent 1: Open My Eyes, Lord

Paul saw the light of Christ shining around him on the road to Damascus. As individuals and communities, what do we have difficulty seeing? How does our perspective change when we view the world through the eyes of Christ?

Week 2 of Lent: Open My Hands, Lord

We use our hands to pick up a child, to serve a meal, to play an instrument, to wipe away a tear. Jesus used his hands for healing and for deeds of great power, and the psalmist reminds us that we are always held fast in God's hands. In Deuteronomy, Moses encourages us to open our hands in service to others.

Week 3 of Lent: Open My Ears, Lord

Ancient Greek philosophy notes that we have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. Jesus reminds us that we often hear but don't listen, listen but don't understand. Opening our ears isn't as easy as it sounds.

Week 4 of Lent: Open My Heart, Lord

Listening to Paul's teaching, Lydia opened her heart to God and was baptized. Her willing, trusting faith echoes down through the centuries as we witness her "open heart procedure."

Week 5 of Lent: Open My Life, Lord

Moses presents us with a choice: death and adversity, or a life cracked open to the love of God. Writing to the Galatians, Paul tells us that we have died to the law so that we might live to God. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.

Ash Wednesday—Why ashes?

Again this year, we will offer TWO services on Ash Wednesday to give more people the opportunity to start their Lenten Journey. We will offer a MORNING service at 10:30 am, and the usual EVENING service at 7 pm. The services will be identical, except the choir will only sing at the evening service.

The highlight of the Ash Wednesday service is the imposition of ashes, which were made by burning the palms from last year's Palm Sunday service. Why ashes? Sackcloth and ashes were an outward sign of mourning, repentance, or abasement. Sackcloth was cloth made of black goat's hair that was thick, rough, and coarse material. It was uncomfortable to wear, and later it was used as a sack. It was also used as an outward sign of mourning and submission (Genesis 37:34; 42:25; 2 Sam. 3:31; Esther 4:1 Esther 4:2; Psalms 30:11). The ashes were an outward sign that signaled to everyone absolute grief, desolation, and ruin. Ashes served as a reminder of where we came from beginning in Genesis when God formed Adam from the dust (Genesis 2:7). Later, God tells Adam, "By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). We know our humanity was formed from the dust and to dust, we will return when we shed our earthly bodies.

Because of the symbolism of dust, ashes became a sign of humility before God. Like dust, the ashes were an outward sign that signaled to everyone absolute grief, desolation, and ruin. When someone was deeply grieved by their actions against and in a state of repentance, they often would wear sackcloth and ashes.

Lenten suppers and services

LENT is a time when we are challenged to spend time getting closer to God. One way to do that is to reserve Wednesday Evenings for Lenten services. These services provide a unique way to learn more about God's will for us. These are not communion services, and usually last 45-50 minutes, starting at 7 pm. In place of a usual "sermon", Pastor Jones will once again assume various Bible Character roles and present his "message" in character. That popular method provides a unique way to get a better feeling for what the lessons are trying to tell us.

BEFORE each service, we will have a simple soup-&-salad pot luck supper in the dining area starting at **5:45 pm**. There are sign-up sheets in the "elevator room" off the sanctuary for people to sign up to bring various foods to share. Please come...join us for this time of fellowship.

This suppers and services run for the 5 weeks between but not including Ash Wednesday and Holy week—so that's March 12th through April 9th.

Until Next Month...

As we begin our study in being OPEN
Christians here's a quick reminder:

*Since there will never cease to be some in need
on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open
your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in
your land."*

Deuteronomy 15:11 NRSV)

Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the Glory)

Donald L. Bauer Director of Music

Look what is happening in Sunday School.

3 years old-PreK
Kindergarten-3rd grade
4th-6th grade
Middle School
Adult

Kathy Ellis
Becky & Shannon Sanders
Patti Riley
Fred Rosenbohm
Eric Jones

Starting Sunday, March 9th and throughout the spring months, our lessons will follow the Year C Lectionary to connect with Pastor's sermon.

March 2 nd	The Transfiguration
March 9 th	Tempted
March 16 th	God's Promise to Abram
March 23 rd	Parable of the Fig Tree
March 30 th	The Prodigal Son
April 6 th	Mary Anoints Jesus
April 13 th	Holy Week
April 20 th	The Empty Tomb
April 27 th	Doubting Thomas
May 4 th	Saul to Paul
May 11 th	Peter & Tabitha
May 18 th	Peter's Dream
May 25 th	Lydia
June 1 st	Paul & Silas
June 8 th	The Holy Spirit
June 15 th	Praise God

4th – 8th grade aged children are learning about Bible History, The Creed, and the importance of establishing their own unique faith journey.

As always, all Sunday School age children are welcome to join. If you have questions and/or would like to enroll your child, please contact me at your convenience.

John Wetterauer
christian.reichert@att.net
691-0434-home
678-1736-cell

Homebound List (as of February 10, 2025)

Jim & Nadine Bartell	2705 S. Hilton Ln. Bartonville, Il. 61607	Barb Dickerson	2422 S. Daycor Divide Bartonville, Il. 61607
Jay Baumgardner	Swan Special Care Center 109 Kenwood Champaign, Il. 61824	Pat Janssen	12615 Lancaster Rd. Hanna City, Il. 61536
Art Campen	4169 King St.	Joyce Jones	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 24 Peoria, Il. 61607
% Carrie Campen	Denver, Co. 80211		
Jeffrey Campen	Lennox Guest Home 2875 W. 33 rd Ave. Denver, Co. 80211	Debra Look	Timber Ridge 2125 Veterans Rd. Morton, Il. 61550
Millie Carlson	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 48 Peoria, Il. 61607	Jo Ann Lambie	Lutheran Hillside Village c/o Pepper Bauer 5220 S. Cameron Ln. Mapleton, Il 61547
Sally Catterall	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 28 Peoria, Il. 61607	Jane Look	Heartis Village Peoria 8201 N. Il. Route 91 Peoria, Il. 61615
Evelyn Cool	Lutheran Hillside Village 6901 N. Galena Rd. Acorn Way Apt. A1 Peoria, Il. 61614	Jerry Pitzer	Independence Village 1201 N. Northmoor Rd. Rm. 242 Peoria, Il. 61614
Shirley Cramer	7815 W. Plank Rd. Peoria, Il. 61604	Sharon Resler	The Loft 1500 W. Northmoor Rm. 415 Peoria, Il. 61614

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Special Gideon Bible Presentation Sunday March 2nd: We will be welcoming the Gideon's International Bible Organization on March 2nd. They will present a message of matters pertaining to the Christian faith throughout America and the World. They will receive a special donation after each service. Please prayerfully consider donating to this worldly organization.

God Bless!

Altar Guild: The next Altar Guild meeting is this Sunday, March 2nd at 9:15am after early church in the Reception Room.

Lent Is Around the Corner: Starting March 5th with Ash Wednesday Services at 10:30a.m. and 7:00p.m. We will have Lenten services for five Wednesdays after that starting at 7p.m., with Lenten meals starting at 5:45p.m.

Confirmation: Confirmation this month is on Sunday, March 9 and the 23 starting at 6pm.

Help the Child Care: Go to Scooters, on Monday, March 10, (in Bartonville ONLY). Buy anything on the menu and 10% of all proceeds will be donated to the St. John Child Care.

Statements: The 2024 statements are in the library. If you have any corrections that need to be made, please let Patti know asap before she closes out the 2024 year on Shepherd's Staff. Thank you for your patience in getting the issue resolved.

Leisure Group: In consideration of Lenten Services, Leisure Group will not be meeting in March.

Adult Bible Study: Wednesday night Bible Study will be suspended March 5th during Lent so the class can participate in Ash Wednesday and Lenten/Holy Week services. We will reconvene on April 23rd. All are welcome. If you have any questions, please call or text:

Jane Rosenbohm at (309) 645-9009. Thank you!

LWGP Easter Parade Style Show and Tea: The Lutheran Women of Greater Peoria present the sixth "Easter Parade" Style Show and Tea at 2 pm on Saturday, March 29 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1427 W. Lake Ave. Peoria. Models will show off some of the delightful spring styles available at The Church Mouse while

everyone enjoys coffee, flavored teas, and “English Tea Room” type desserts. Pastor Michael Jones, and Don Bauer from St. John Lutheran in Bartonville will provide background piano music and accompany the singers and models. Pastor Lisa Dietrich from St. Paul in Peoria will be our Master of Ceremonies. Door prizes, raffles, items from the Church Mouse for sale and more will round out the afternoon. Tickets will once again be \$10, and \$5 for children under 12. Call 309-697-5762 or 309-360-8734, or your LWGP delegate for reservations. You can pay in advance or at the door. Groups can reserve tables together on a first come first serve basis. Proceeds go to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois Children’s Programs. If you’d like to model call 309-697-5762.

Sign-Up Sheet: There is now a Greeter sign-up sheet located at the back of the church. Please consider signing up to be a greeter at a service.

Help: Sewing ladies need help. Can you tie a knot, iron, and any other help you can give us, like putting squares together for a top. We meet about 9:00am on Thursday mornings. We would enjoy your company.

Church Altar Flowers: Altar Guild flowers are \$36. & make checks payable to Becks Florist & give to Jo Ann Brooks or the Altar Guild mailbox which is located in the Reception Room by the elevator. Sign up calendar for the flowers on the bulletin board in the West Entrance. Thank You, Altar Guild

Readers:

Mar. 02	Jim Rindfleisch
Mar. 09	Jane Rosenbohm
Mar. 16	Deb Sammis
Mar. 23	Sally McGrew
Mar. 30	Sue Rosenak

Ushers:

Mar. 02 (8:00) Bill & Jodi Miller
(10:30) Shirley Schmitt

Mar. 09 (8:00) Joe Baumgardner
(10:30) Denny & Elvessa Severt

Mar. 16 (8:00) Dan & Deb Sammis
(10:30) Alex Heuermann

Mar. 23 (8:00) Lisa Suydam
(10:30) Shirley Schmitt

Mar. 30 (8:00) Roger Shafer
(10:30) Dave & Teri Sammis

Greeters:

Mar. 02 (8:00) Levi Miller
(10:30) Joan Resler

Mar. 09 (8:00) Janice Baumgardner
(10:30) Cara Severt

Mar. 16 (8:00) Deb Sammis
(10:30) Brenda Heuermann

Mar. 23 (8:00) Betty and Brody Lyons
(10:30) Marilyn Hartseil

Mar. 30 (8:00) Elaine Shafer
(10:30) Teri Sammis

St. John Lutheran Church
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Year Round Worship Schedule :

8:00 a.m. Worship With Holy Communion
9:15 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

UPCOMING EVENTS THIS MONTH

Ash Wednesday: Ash Wednesday is March 5th at 10:30am and 7:00pm

Lenten Weeks: Following Ash Wednesday, there will be 5 Lenten weeks. Service starts at 7:00pm with a soup and sandwich dinner before service at 5:45pm.

Leisure Group: For the month of March, Leisure Group will not be meeting.

Confirmation: Confirmation this month is Sunday March 9th and Sunday March 23rd from 6-8pm.