

GIFT of GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE NOTES

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 19, 2025

A WORD FROM PT

“As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love – the disciplines of Lent – help us to wage our spiritual warfare.” This is taken from the Liturgy for Ash Wednesday in the Lutheran Book of Worship.

What do we know about fasting? Of the four “works of love,” I would bet that for most of us fasting is the one with which we are the most unfamiliar. There are benign reasons for this. For starters, the Bible does not provide much by way of instruction for how to fast. It simply assumes the prac-

tice. And then, although mentioned throughout Holy Writ, it does not receive the attention of the other three. Finally, the abuse of the discipline is highlighted more than its benefit.

So, why bother with it? We need to concern ourselves with it because Jesus assumed its use. In His Sermon on the Mount He says, “And *when* you fast...” (Mt 6:16). Note, He does not say, “*If* you fast...” Our Lord’s concern is that *when* we fast that our motivation is not to call attention to ourselves.

Fasting is going without something, usually food and/or drink, for a determined length of time, either short or longer. It is the

temporary giving up of something good for something even better. In Scripture fasting is usually combined with prayer, sometimes with repentance. It can function as disciplined training for the body. It is good to say “No” once in a while to our body’s appetites. It can poignantly remind us that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4; cf. Dt 8:3)

The discipline of fasting should not be overlooked by us! Giving up something for Lent is a good exercise. But give up something in order to devote more time for prayer and acts of charity...

SINCE YOU ASKED...

What is the significance of sharing the peace?

“The peace which enables people to live in unity and in the spirit of mutual forgiveness comes only from Christ whose word has been proclaimed. ... The peace is a sign that those who partic-

ipate in it open themselves to the healing and reconciling power of God’s love and offer themselves to be agents of that love in the world. ... The personal exchange of the peace should be as unpatterned as possible, but its meaning and significance should be

kept clear. It is not the occasion merely for conviviality. The choice of gesture, whether a handshake, holding hands, or an embrace, should be left to the persons themselves.” (from “Manual on the Liturgy” companion to the LBW, from Augsburg Pub.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, 3/19
6pm Midweek Soup then Service

Thursday, 3/20
10am Clergy Gathering at Olivet

Friday, 3/21
7am Men’s Breakfast at McDonalds

Sunday, 3/23 Third Sunday in Lent
8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service with Communion
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, 3/26
6pm Midweek Soup then Service



**Making
Disciples
for Life**

LCMS (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) (LCMS.org)

PERSONAL STORIES ON STEWARDSHIP

On First Fruits giving

What in the heck is first fruits giving you might ask? Well, to me it means determining our giving based on what our income is, without considering our expenses; for us currently our offering is about 11% of our gross income. My spouse has a wonderful habit. When the first of the month rolls around, she writes the offering checks for each of the upcoming month's Sundays, in advance. She doesn't look back at what our expenses were in the last month, and she doesn't look ahead at what our expenses might be. So no matter our situation, no matter if we had an expensive car repair, or have a big bill looming, we give based solely on our income, and trust the Lord will provide. (scripture that was helpful included Malachi 3:10...Proverbs 3:9,10...Mark 12: 41-44). There is also the benefit to the church in that our giving is consistent; it doesn't have wide variations in amounts.

And if we miss a Sunday or two, when we come back, we just pick up the offerings that we already had written out, and give them so we get all caught up, and so the church doesn't go without. When you don't do that, it's scary to write out a big check to make up for the Sundays you missed, and the temptation is strong to not do that, and instead to just give your usual amount for one Sunday. Well, that's not good, because whether we are there or not, the church's expenses continue.

- anonymous contribution

This is the second of four contributions received. They are from our congregation, and we would welcome any of your personal story contributions.

Email your contributions to Pastor Tim at stmaximos@aol.com, or to President Tom Rislow at tomrislow@gmail.com. Either Pastor Tim or President Tom will know where the contribution came from, but it is your choice whether you wish to remain

anonymous, or have your identity revealed.

For those of you who have your check mailed to the church, or who give electronically, thank you for your regular support! You might also consider placing an offering envelope with the words on the outside saying simply "electronic giving" or "mailed in offering". Why go to the bother? So you can participate in the important point in the Divine Service where we offer ourselves in Thanksgiving for all that God has first given us. What we offer monetarily is a symbol of offering the whole of ourselves. Extra offering envelopes are available on the usher's table....

LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICES...

During the Season of Lent we will gather at 6pm on Wednesdays for a **Soup Supper**. There will be a signup sheet in the kitchen for contributing soup, bread, beverages, and a dessert.

This year we are providing up to an hour for the supper, during which time our head elder, Jeremy Schoonover, will give a presentation and teaching on the liturgy.

Then, no later than 7pm, Pastor Tim we lead the congregation in the Lutheran Service Book "Service of

Prayer and Preaching". This service will last from 20 to no more than 30 minutes in length. And Pastor Tim will be devoting his meditation/teaching on the "Apostles' Creed" following up on last year's treatment of the "Ten Commandments".

The Midweek Services are scheduled for March 12, 19, 26, April 2, and 9.

The Theme for the Midweek Services is "**The Gifts of God: Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification**".

The schedule for the medita-

tions is as follows...

Mar 12: 1st Art: "The Lord Creates, Sustains, and Protects"

Mar 19: 2nd Art: "The Mystery of the Incarnation"

Mar 26: 2nd Art: "Redeemed, Delivered, and Inheritors"

Apr 2: 3rd Art: "Called to Faith and Sanctified"

Apr 9: 3rd Art: "The Workshop of the Holy Spirit"

THIS AND THAT...

The Wednesday Evening **Lenten Midweek Services** starting March 12, will begin with a Soup Supper at 6pm, and then followed with a 20-30 minute Worship Service at 7pm.

The Theme for our Midweek Services will be **'Gifts of God: Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification'**: reflections on the Apostles' Creed

The **Men's Breakfast Bible**

Study meets on Friday mornings, 7am, at the McDonald's Restaurant.

The **Prayer Group** will next meet at the church on Thursday, March 27.

Don't forget non-perishable **Food Donations** for the Food Pantry!

The Molstads will clean the church the week of March 16. Mary Bartos and Jackie Repaal are signed up for the

week of April 20.

The March **Designated Benevolence** is for **Voice of the Martyrs**.

There is a history of public fast days, such as that encouraged in the Season of Lent. And then there is such a thing as personal fast days that the individual does in private. Fasting can be partial. It can be for a single meal, or for a day's meals. You should seek out good advice before attempting fasting beyond this.

GIFT of GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. - Eph 2:8

HUMOR DEPARTMENT

Celebrations

Birthdays

March 16 Jackie Repaal
 March 16 Jon Uy
 March 17 Mike Meunier
 March 18 Nikki Hanson
 March 26 Asher Roll
 March 26 Benjamin Roll

Anniversaries

Ole Turns Catholic

Ole liked to grill venison steaks on Friday's after work, even during the Season of Lent. The delicious aroma wafted all around the community. This upset all his Catholic neighbors.

The Priest thought he had found a solution when he discovered that Ole was open to his suggestion that he become a Catholic.

After several classes and much study, Ole finally attended his first Mass. The Priest sprinkled holy water over him and said, "You were born a Lutheran; raised a Lutheran; but now you are a Catholic."

Unfortunately this did not solve the problem of Ole's Friday night grilling.

As the neighbors once again complained, the Priest was called. One Friday evening

during Lent the Priest rushed into Ole's yard, clutching a rosary and prepared to scold him. Instead, he watched in amazement.

There stood Ole, clutching a small bottle of holy water which he carefully sprinkled over the grilling meat. Ole was chanting: "You vuz born a deer; you vuz raised a deer; but now you are a walleye."

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

tbd (to be determined)

3/23 Third Sunday in Lent
Asst Minister: Tom Rislow
Reader: Jarrod Roll
Crucifer: Benjamin Roll
Acolyte: Dawson Staff
Ushers: Jarrod Roll
Counters: Dan M/Tom Rislow
Comm Asst: Mike Meunier
Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg
Fellowship: Connie Meunier
Livestreamer: Cole Warner

3/30 Fourth Sunday in Lent
Asst Minister: Karri Bjornstad
Reader: Nikki Hanson
Crucifer: Dawson Staff

Acolyte: Elliott Cunningham
Ushers: Jarrod Roll
Counters: Connie M/David B
Comm Asst: Jeremy Schoonover
Accompanist: Tom Rislow
Fellowship: Jessica Schoonover
Livestreamer: Jeremy Schoonover

4/6 Fifth Sunday in Lent
Asst Minister: Jeremy Schoonover
Reader: Connie Meunier
Crucifer: Regan Cunningham
Acolyte: Chase Repaal
Ushers: Dan Molstad
Counters: Jeremy S/Jackie R
Comm Asst: Jarrod Roll

Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg
Fellowship: tbd
Livestreamer: Jeremy Schoonover

4/13 Sunday of the Passion
Asst Minister: Cole Warner
Reader: Mike Meunier
Crucifer: Stella Roll
Acolyte: Asher Roll
Ushers: Mary Bartos
Counters: Cole W/Dan M
Comm Asst: Mike Meunier
Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg
Fellowship: tbd
Livestreamer: Cole Warner

Gift of Grace Lutheran Church
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Services held at 9am at:
 642 Western Avenue
 A block north and then
 a block west of King Furniture