

GIFT of GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE NOTES

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 26, 2025

A WORD FROM PT

Beloved in the Lord, this week I feel compelled to write to you about Christian unity. What compels me? I'm not sure. Hopefully we all know how dear this is to our Lord Jesus Christ. And at the same time, we are well aware of the lack of such unity and the damage this causes.

Jesus made unity an important part of His prayer in John 17. The context for this prayer is His soon departure by way of the Cross and later Ascension into heaven. He prays for our protection from the evil one, and for our sanctification. And importantly He prays that we might be one just as He is one with the Father.

The Apostle Paul indicates that this unity is a gift of the Holy Spirit and is enabled when by baptism we were joined to Christ (cf. Ep 2:11-22; 4:1-7). He further indicates that this unity is reflected in being of the same mind on what our Lord has taught us (cf. 1Co 1:10; Ph 2:2).

It is important to note that true Christian unity is a gift, and something enabled by our Lord. Our flesh (fallen, sinful nature) is not capable of it, but instead produces divisions. The divisions among confessing Christians from early on is not the fault of the Holy Spirit, but of our sinful nature. And the overcoming of these divisions is not something

we are capable of apart from God.

There is a grave danger today of trying to effect and declare a unity that sadly and unfortunately is not being reflected as it was intended. That is when Biblical doctrines are deemphasized or minimized, and unity is celebrated at the lowest common denominator. A more faithful path forward is to emphasize what we genuinely hold in common, work together where we can with integrity, and agree to disagree as humbly we pray that the Light of day would prevail in making us of one mind. There is, after all, such a thing as false teaching...

SINCE YOU ASKED...

What is an Alb? And why does our Pastor wear one?

Alb (from the Latin "white"): a white ankle-length vestment with sleeves, often gathered at the waist with a cinch, worn by all ranks of minis-

ters, ordained and unordained. The classical tunic became a specific church vestment about the fifth century. One of the functions of an ordained minister in our tradition is for that person to represent Christ to the people. Christ is pictured in the Book of

Revelation with a white robe. The white robe is also a symbol of his righteousness. For this reason, the alb is a proper covering for the presiding minister with the function of representing Christ to the people. *(from "Manual on the Liturgy" companion to the LBW, from Augsburg Pub.)*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, 3/26
6pm Midweek Soup then Service

Thursday, 3/27
9:30am Prayer Gathering

Friday, 3/28
7am Men's Breakfast at McDonalds

Sunday, 3/30 Fourth Sunday in Lent
8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service with Communion
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, 4/2
6pm Midweek Soup then Service



**Making
Disciples
for Life**

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

PERSONAL STORIES ON STEWARDSHIP

Our Giving Plan

Tithing is the goal, but what exactly does this mean? Ten percent of our family gross, net or after taxes income? There is not an exact number. It is something that each family needs to decide with prayer and help of the Word that works for them. First Fruits is how you reach this plan. The first payment you make is to the church instead of what is left on Saturday night. There will always be funds for the things we need and want. Try it. It works for my family.

- Dan & Cyndi Molstad

This is the third of five 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....

Bible Verses

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the

firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

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: "The Mystery of the Incarnation"

Apr 2: 2nd Art: "Redeemed, Delivered, and Inheritors"

Apr 9: 3rd Art: "Called to Faith and Sanctified"

FROM OUR PRESIDENT, TOM RISLOW...

Our Work with the SWD

(South Wisconsin District of the LCMS)

Dr. Meador helped us arrive at a written WHY statement from which to evaluate all the activities we do as a church.

Here is that WHY statement:

"God has placed Gift of Grace in Holmen to be a welcoming family in Jesus Christ; living together as His people".

The next step we have begun working on is to list and discuss all the activities we do under the categories of Preaching/Teaching - Fellowship - Service - Outreach - Prayer... to ensure everything we do aligns with that written statement.

A final task with our work will be to meet with different community leaders to learn community needs and how/if Gift of Grace could be involved in helping meet those needs. Our next meeting with Dr. Meador will likely occur during our council meeting in May. Let Pastor or Tom Rislow know if you'd like to be a part of that meeting.

Stewardship Testimonies

Please give thought to sharing with us (anonymously if you like) what you have learned over the years from your

financial giving. God's Word has much to say about our use of money, but life has a way of getting in the way. We're interested in hearing how you have grown and matured in your attitude toward financial giving, and what you have learned from scripture. Several statements have already been emailed to Pastor Tim. Please prayerfully consider submitting one of your own that he could share in a future newsletter. One of our goals in 2025 is to encourage and build one another up in knowledge about this topic of which Jesus has much to say. Thank you.

Church Finances.

Our financial position is strong. However, weekly giving in 2025, similar to 2024, continues to lag behind expenses. It is because of this that our council during its meeting in March, authorized our treasurer, Mary Bartos, to move \$5,000 from savings to our checking account. This is not the first time we have moved money over in order to cover expenses, and we wanted you to be aware.

Pastor's Benefits

Pastor Tim has 4 Sundays off each year. Recently he asked the council if

that could be increased to 6 Sundays. The council approved this request and we wanted you to be aware.

Future Church School

While this topic may have appeared to be on the back burner, members have continued to express interest in the topic. Recently an idea was brought to the attention of the council in regards to a national program known as Life-wise academy - which works within laws regarding release time from public schools. It could be a way for us to help area youth develop a relationship with Jesus Christ without our having to spend money on bricks and mortar. We are just at the very beginning stages of looking at this and wanted you to be aware.

Questions

Please ask any of us on the council, including Pastor Tim, if you have any questions or concerns about any of the topics mentioned in this update. Thank you.

Tom Rislow, President, Gift of Grace council

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!

Mary Bartos and Jackie Repaal will clean the church the week of April 20. The Fehrs are signed up for the

week of May 18.

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

What can we do to help promote Christian unity? Pray for it! Remain humble and ask for forgiveness for ways knowingly and unknowingly we have caused division. Realize that many of the divisions we inherited. Without glossing over important differences, celebrate those things truly held in common.

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 26 Asher Roll
 March 26 Benjamin Roll
 April 1 Jarrod Roll
 April 9 Leslie Duesenberg

Anniversaries

April 27 T & P Betlach

Clean Jokes

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" The mother replied, "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life." The child thought about this for a moment then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Three boys are in a schoolyard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him \$50." "That's nothing!" said the second boy. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him \$100." "I've got you both beat," the third boy says. "My dad scribbles a few words on a

piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money."

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

tbd (to be determined)

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: Asher Roll

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

4/17 Maundy Thursday
Asst Minister: Mike Meunier
Reader: Heather Roll
Crucifer: Benjamin Roll
Acolyte: Dawson Staff
Ushers: Cole Warner
Counters: not needed
Comm Asst: Jarrod Roll
Accompanist: Tom Rislow
Fellowship: not needed
Livestreamer: Jarrod Roll

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