

GIFT of GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE NOTES

February 2026

A Word from PT

This year's Sunday Gospel Readings will be mostly from Matthew's Gospel. One thing you might notice is that there is a lot of preaching and teaching going on in Matthew. The preaching is either by Jesus or about Him. And it is quite a contrast from Mark's Gospel that will be featured next year. In Mark's account Jesus is revealed more by His actions than by His words. Accordingly, Mark is a shorter account than Matthew.

An example of this contrast is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount found in chapters five through seven of Matthew. That is three full chapters! You find no similar lengthy sermon in Mark. Of course, Mark records words and teachings of Jesus, but not as much as in Matthew. And as been

said, Mark lets Jesus' actions do a lot of the talking.

So, why do I bring this up? You might imagine that I especially like Matthew's Gospel. No surprise there. I mention this because both words and actions are important in our Christian witness as we go about Christ's evangelistic mission. We can't simply opt for one or the other.

Some of us may be more inclined to use words, but if our actions betray our words, they will be less effective. On the other hand, some of us may be more inclined to action. Well and good. But without some words, folks will not learn of the source of your action.

This month in our challenge as a congregation to be renewed in our dedication to witness to Christ I want

us to focus on Jesus as a preacher and teacher. Through words He gathered disciples and called people to faith in Him.

And as it is given to His followers to continue Christ's mission in His name, the core of doing so will involve words, especially preaching and teaching. Not all are called to preach or teach in public spaces. But in less formal ways we can all share with others the basic content of the Gospel, with who Jesus is and how by His death and resurrection He rescues us from sin, death, and the devil. This He did so that we might belong to Him.

It is also the case that we all can invite and bring others with us to where the Gospel is preached and taught.

Calendar of Events

Sunday, 2/1 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Annual Voters Meeting
11:15am Potluck Brunch

Wednesday, 2/4

6:30pm Bible Study on Important Teachings

Thursday, 2/5

9:30am Prayer Gathering at church

Friday, 2/6

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study
10am Service at Care Center in Onalaska
5-7pm Spaghetti Dinner at Shep of the Hills

Sunday, 2/8 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Tuesday, 2/10

5:30pm Ladies Night Out at Features

Wednesday, 2/11

6:30pm Bible Study on Important Teachings

Thursday, 2/12

6pm Church Council Meeting

Friday, 2/13

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Sunday, 2/15 Transfiguration of Our Lord

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Wednesday, 2/18 Ash Wednesday

7pm Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, 2/19

9:30am Prayer Gathering

Friday, 2/20

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Sunday, 2/22 First Sunday in Lent
8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Wednesday, 2/25
6pm Soup Supper at church
7pm Lenten Midweek Service

Announcements

Our Congregation's **Annual Voters Meeting** will be on the first Sunday in February, which just so happens to be February 1. The meeting will take place on the heels of the Divine Service. And we will continue our tradition of enjoying a potluck brunch following the Voters Meeting. A signup sheet for the brunch is in the kitchen.

The Wednesday evening **Bible Study** considering **Important Teachings of the Christian Faith** will meet on February 4 and 11. Then with the Ash Wednesday Service on February 18 and the beginning of the Lenten Season with Wednesday evening Lenten Midweek Services, it will be suspended until April 15..

We are invited to the **Annual Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction Fundraiser** for **Shepherd's Flock**

Thursday, 2/26
6pm Elders Meeting
Friday, 2/27
7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Preschool, Friday, February 6, 5pm-7pm, at 1215 Redwood Street, Onalaska (Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church). There is no need to register, or purchase tickets. The meal involves a Free Will Donation.

Wednesday, February 18, is **Ash Wednesday** and is the start of the 40-day Season of Lent. We will gather for the Divine Service that evening at 7pm. The Service will include an extended Confession of sins, the imposition of ashes, and the celebration of Holy Communion.

For our **Lenten Midweek Gatherings** we will serve a Soup Supper (bread, drinks, and dessert included) at 6pm. There may be some light teaching during the eating, but plenty of time will be provided for fellowship and conversation. Then at 7pm we will gather in the nave for a 30 minute **Midweek Service**. The meditations for the Midweek Services will be on

Sunday, 3/1 Second Sunday in Lent
8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

the Third Part of Luther's Small Catechism: The Lord's Prayer.

The next **Ladies Night Out** will be on Tuesday, February 10, at Features Restaurant in Holmen. Please let Mary Bartos know if you plan to be a part of the gathering.
(mbartos57@gmail.com)

The **Designated Benevolence** for the month of February is **Holmen's Hope**.

The Duesenbergs are listed to clean the church the week of February 15, and the Molstads are on the hook for the week of March 15. Starting with April we need more signups for most of the rest of the year. The signup sheet is in the kitchen.

Worship Assistants

Feb. 1
Assisting Minister: Leslie Duesenberg
Reader: Naomi Rislow
Crucifer: Asher Roll
Acolyte: Benjamin Roll
Usher: Mary Bartos
Counters: Jarrod R/Naomi R
Comm Asst: Jarrod Roll
Accompanist: Tom Rislow
Live streamer: Jarrod Roll

Feb. 8
Assisting Minister: Naomi Rislow
Reader: Connie Meunier
Crucifer: Dawson Staff
Acolyte: Chase Repaal

Usher: Jeremy Schoonover
Counters: Connie M/Tom R
Comm Asst: Tom Rislow
Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg
Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

Feb. 15
Assisting Minister: Mike Meunier
Reader: Jarrod Roll
Crucifer: Chase Repaal
Acolyte: Jed Roll
Usher: Dan Molstad
Counters: Dan M/tbd
Comm Asst: Jarrod Roll
Accompanist: Tom Rislow
Live streamer: Jarrod Roll

Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday
Assisting Minister: Tom Rislow
Reader: Mike Meunier
Crucifer: Elliott Cunningham
Acolyte: Regan Cunningham
Usher: Jeremy Schoonover
Counters: N/A
Comm Asst: Mike Meunier
Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg
Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

Feb. 25

Assisting Minister: Jeremy Schoonover

Reader: Craig Bartos

Crucifer: Dawson Staff

Acolyte: Chase Repaal

Usher: Mary Bartos

Counters: Connie M/Tom R

Comm Asst: Jeremy Schoonover

Accompanist: Tom Rislow

Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

By Way of Humor

You Might Live in Wisconsin...

- if you consider it a sport to gather your food by drilling through 38 inches of ice and sitting there all day hoping that the food will swim by.
- if you instinctively walk like a penguin for five months out of the year.
- if you have worn shorts and a parka at the same time.
- if you have a pet or a child named “Brett”.
- if your town has an equal number of bars and churches.
- if you know how to say Oconomowoc, Waukesha, Waunakee, Stoughton, Menomonie, and Manitowoc.
- if you think that ketchup is a little too spicy.
- if you know several people who have hit deer more than once.
- if your whole family wears Packer Green to church on Sunday.
- if you see people wearing camouflage at social events (including weddings and funerals).
- if you install security lights on your house and garage and leave both unlocked.
- if you carry jumper cables in your car and your wife knows how to use them.
- if there are 7 empty cars running in the hardware parking lot at any given time.
- if you refer to the Packers as “we”.

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

February 17: Carter Repaal (birthday)

February 24: Jedidiah Roll (birthday)

February 22: Regan Cunningham (birthday)

February 28: Cindy Schoonover (birthday)

Becoming More Familiar

Concerning the Season of Lent? The English word “Lent” means “springtime”. Lent is the six-week period of spiritual discipline before Easter (40 days not counting Sundays). At an early period in the Church’s history baptisms might only be celebrated once a year at the Easter Vigil Service. Accordingly, there was a period prior to this of introducing and training candidates for baptism. In time the training for baptismal candidates grew to a six-week period, and this training involved fasting. The 40 days was, no doubt, modeled on the 40 days of our Lord Jesus’ fasting

in the wilderness before his temptations by the devil. As the years passed the Lenten fast began to be applied, not only to the baptismal candidates, but to the church as a whole. Church members were encouraged to approach Easter in the same manner in which they had solemnly prepared for their baptisms. That is why the Season of Lent has finally developed as a time for fasting, study, prayer, acts of love, and humility.

Concerning the Significance of Ash Wednesday? Ash Wednesday signifies the start of Lent, a solemn

40-day period of prayer, fasting, and penance leading to Easter, reminding Christians of their mortality, calling for repentance, and marking their commitment to God through the imposition of ashes on their foreheads. The ashes, made from last year’s Palm Sunday palms, symbolize grief for sins, humility, and the biblical phrase, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”

Concerning the Pastor’s Alb (White Robe)? *Alb* (from the Latin “white”): a white ankle-length vestment with sleeves, often gathered at the waist with a cincture, worn by all ranks of

ministers, 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.

Stewardship

(of time, talent Treasure)

Table of Duties: The Forgotten Stewardship Tool

Luther's Small Catechism is a magnificent tool. Joined with a well-used copy of the Holy Scriptures and an orthodox hymnal, and the Christian is well equipped to live a life of faithfulness to the Lord and service to the neighbor. First in German and now in English and just about any language known to man, this handy masterpiece has introduced generations of people to the central doctrine of justification by grace, through faith, on account of Jesus Christ. The Six Chief Parts have proven to be a faithful framework for a clear confession of the truth of the Gospel for nearly five hundred years!

But more than a textbook, the Small Catechism also serves well as a handbook for Christian living. As a part of its treasure, there is an element that teaches an extraordinarily strong message of stewardship. That hidden treasure that needs to be rediscovered is called the Table of Duties.

The Table of Duties is really nothing more than a categorized gathering of Bible verses. These verses are set apart for "various holy orders and positions,

admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities." Addressing pastors and people, government and citizens, husbands, wives, children, youth, workers and so many more, it very clearly lays out what faithful stewardship looks like. Even better, these assembled passages teach one important truth: we are stewards of one another!

The Table is much more than a "how-to" tool; it also lays out the interconnectedness that exists within the body of Christ. Pastors are described by what they are to be as stewards of the Word. 1 Timothy 3 highlights the characteristics of a faithful pastor. Even more, Titus 1 highlights the need for the pastor to be faithful for the sake of those under his care.

Those who hear the faithful preaching of the pastor are stewards of the pastor as well. 1 Corinthians 9 talks about the need for the people to support the livelihood of the pastor. Galatians 6 talks about how the hearers share in the good things that the pastor teaches. 1 Timothy 6 talks about the honor that is owed to the pastor, not because of WHO he is, but rather WHAT he is teaching! Hebrews 13 shows the impact of this stewardship on the pastor, that they perform their duties with joy. Joyful pastors and people are always going to be better stewards of the Gospel!

Outside the church this interdependent stewardship is on display as well. Romans 13 highlights the respect necessary for the governing authorities. As citizens, the faithful steward is called to pay taxes (Matthew 22), pray for their leaders (1 Timothy 2) and that they should be ready to serve in the civil realm (Titus 3), because they are in these positions by God's direction (1 Peter 2).

These steward duties are in the home too! 1 Peter 3 and Colossians 3 shape the husband steward. Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3 shape the wife steward. Ephesians 6 form parental stewards and child stewards.

The Table of Duties is a wonderful place for the individual steward to learn how much our stewardship is more than just a "me and Jesus thing!" In fact, it ends with these words: "Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well share fare." This is interdependent stewardship on clear display. As each learns stewardship in this way, the more faithful we will be as a family, congregations, communities and the church at large.

- from LCMS Stewardship Ministry Website



Gift of Grace Lutheran Church
Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg
642 Western Avenue
Holmen, WI 54636
www.giftofgracelc.org
giftofgracelc@gmail.com
(608) 668-1587

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