

The Good News of Peace

March 2021 Newsletter from Peace Lutheran Church-LCMS, Rogers City, MI

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Here we are nearing the end of February already, and another Lenten season is now underway. The season of Lent gives us a much-needed opportunity each year to reflect upon our Savior's suffering and death for our salvation, as well as our need for His mercy. And at the same time it prepares our hearts for a joyful celebration of our Savior's resurrection victory on Easter morning.

This year's Lenten schedule is going to look a little bit different than in past years. Other than our Ash Wednesday service last week (February 17), there will be no more formal midweek services this year until Holy Week - Holy (Maundy) Thursday (April 1) and Good Friday (April 2). In their place **Wednesday Praise**, an informal and abbreviated service featuring contemporary worship songs, will continue meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Praise is live-streamed, as well, on our Facebook page.

Following Wednesday Praise, our **Wednesday Evening Bible Study/Discussion**, which has been focusing on the topic of discipleship and our daily interaction with others, will be shifting gears for the Lenten season. Beginning on March 3, we will be reading and discussing a classic Lutheran novel by author Bo Giertz entitled, "The Hammer of God," in which three men learn the necessity of relying on God's grace. You will best be able to participate in the discussion by obtaining a copy of the book and reading along as we go. Please be assured that the reading is easy and enjoyable. The Kindle version of the book may be purchased on Amazon for approximately \$10, and the paperback version may be purchased for approximately \$15 (used on Amazon) or \$20 (new from Concordia Publishing House). If you would like a paper copy to be ordered for you through the church, please see Pastor or contact the church office. Please plan to join us, as this book has the potential to be perspective-changing!

Our **Wednesday Morning Bible Study** will also continue to meet through Lent. We meet at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Our current discussion topic is Heaven and Hell. For those interested in participating but not currently comfortable attending in person, this study is also being streamed live on our Facebook page, and the recording is being posted afterwards on our Vimeo channel. If you're interested in the printed materials for the study in order to better follow along at home, and/or to enhance your own personal Bible study, please see me.

On Sunday mornings during Lent, and into Holy Week, we will be following a sermon series entitled "**Questions of Lent.**" This series will focus our attention on a number of questions from our Lord's Passion, several asked by Him and several asked about Him. Our schedule will be as follows:

February 21: "Could You Not Keep Watch with Me for One Hour?"

February 28: "Friend, Why Have You Come?"

March 7: "How Then Would the Scripture Be Fulfilled?"

March 14: "Are You the Son of God?"

March 21: "You Are a King Then?"

April 1 (Maundy Thursday): "What Shall I Do with Jesus?"

April 2 (Good Friday): "Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

Our **Holy Week schedule** will be as follows:

Palm/Passion Sunday: March 28 with Holy Communion

Holy (Maundy) Thursday: April 1 with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday: April 2 at 1:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday: the Board of Elders will determine our Easter morning schedule at its March meeting on Tuesday, March 2

Lenten Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries

Following the narrative of Mark's Gospel, *The Marks of Love*, this year's Lenten devotional, explores the life and ministry of Jesus. The tragedy of Golgotha is met with the triumph of the resurrection on Easter morning. Along the way, we learn of Jesus' deep compassion for those He loved and served, including those who put Him to death.

No story in human history is like the narrative of Jesus' Passion. In it we see God in the flesh, coming to seek and to save the lost. In *The Marks of Love*, we meet a Savior who endured life's hardships, suffered our pain, and bore the weight of our sins. Each left its mark on Him as He pressed on to the cross, giving His life for ours, appeasing God's wrath against sin, and rising victorious over sin, death, and the devil.

Daily Devotions from LHM (available throughout the year) will help strengthen and encourage your faith as you do the same for others. Have them delivered right to your email inbox, podcast the audio devotional, access them on your mobile device through the FREE app, or listen with Spotify, iHeart Radio, Alexa, or Google Home. Visit <https://www.lhm.org/lent/> for more information. A few paper copies are also available in the narthex.

Long-Range Planning Process

Finally, a Long-Range Planning retreat was held at the end of January for members of the Long-Range Planning Committee. Pastor Randy Johnson, our North Zone Congregational Mission & Ministry Facilitator (CMMF) for the Michigan District, facilitated the retreat and shared with us an insightful presentation about a concept referred to as “Pier to Pier Ministry.” He then led us in a discussion of such topics as asset mapping (evaluating our congregational assets), a SWOT analysis (examining our congregational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), and a gap analysis (where are we now as a congregation vs. where we would like to be in the future).

The Long-Range Planning Committee held its first follow-up meeting in early February in order to begin to establish some concrete goals on the basis of our retreat conclusions. Those goals are currently being fleshed out by small groups of committee members and will be discussed at a second follow-up meeting in early March. Shortly after Easter, we are hoping to meet with Pastor Johnson a second time in order to continue towards the goal of establishing a concrete plan to present to the congregation later this year. Please continue to keep this process in your personal prayers.

As our 2021 Lenten journey continues into March, the Lord’s blessings to each of you!

In His Service,

Pastor Riddle

Pastor Derek Riddle

Daily Bible Reading

In 2021 you are invited to continue reading through the Old Testament, at the same rate as our readings during 2019 (New Testament) and 2020 (Genesis-Isaiah) of one chapter per day. As we move into March, we are currently in the middle of Jeremiah. From there (we will conclude Jeremiah on April 1) we will continue on to the remainder of the prophets until we reach Malachi at the conclusion of the Old Testament. March’s schedule is as follows:

March 1-31: Jeremiah 21-51

As always, please feel free to share your questions with Pastor any time.

March’s “Life Quotes” from Lutherans For Life:

March 7 “Whether you are five or 35 or 65, there will be days when it seems to you that God has dropped it. When that happens, when the darkness threatens to close in on you, just go back to the simple truth that God taught you in your youth. Go back to the Word of Light, the Word that is Christ. ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.’ That

will lighten the way for you, for us all.” *Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, the Lutheran Hour – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

March 14 “Christ does not refuse our sense of tragedy or awareness of pain. He bears it in love, affirming our condition, carrying our sorrows to the end, all the way to the heart of God.” *Jill Carattini, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

March 21 “We affirm again and again that God handmade all people and Jesus died for all people. And that means ALL lives are valuable and equally loved.” *Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life for Lutherans for Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

March 28 “Good Friday shows us—in case there was any doubt before—that something is wrong with the world, something worth mourning deeply...There will be a time when God wipes all of these tears from our eyes. We are not there yet, but we can surely take heart in the knowledge that God is close to the brokenhearted.” *Derek Caldwell, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Board of Elders

At present we find ourselves in the middle of the Lenten Season, so we would like to share some Church history concerning this period in the Christian church year.

The following information is taken from: “The Church from Age to Age” authored by Edward A. Engelbrecht, Associate Editor: Laura L. Lane, Concordia Publishing House.

The first annual holy day that Christians developed was the annual Easter festival, considered the “Christian Passover,” or the yearly celebration of the redemption of Israel from slavery and death. Jesus was the new and perfect Passover Lamb, whose blood protects His people from destruction (Exodus 12: 21-27; 1 Corinthians 5:7). In this celebration Jesus’ death and resurrection formed an invisible unity; there was for a long time no separate day for recalling Jesus’ death. Redemption was grounded in Jesus’ death and resurrection and thus the two were two sides of the same coin and were celebrated together during Easter night.

Christians could not at first agree on when to celebrate the Christian “Pasch” (from *Pesach*, the Hebrew word for Passover), whether on the actual night of the Jewish Passover or on the Sunday of the first full moon after the vernal equinox, which is how the Passover date is determined each year. (**Note:** *The reason why Jewish and Christian Passover celebrations often do not coincide in time is there are different ways of calculating the spring equinox*). After a prolonged controversy, the Sunday was

selected as the universal day for the annual celebration of Easter as the “Christian Passover,” because it was on a Sunday that Jesus rose from the dead.

The paschal (or Easter) celebration came to be extended over a period of fifty days. The season—not just the fiftieth day—was called “Pentecost,” from *pentekonta*, the Greek word for fifty. It coincided, at least in principle, with the fifty days between the start of the Jewish Passover festivities and the Jewish Feast of Weeks, originally the early harvest gathering, which took place seven weeks after the Passover night. The paschal season among Christians likewise had two high points: (1) Easter night and (2) the day closing the festal season, that is the fiftieth day after Easter. This was the day on which, according to Acts 2, the original disciples were given the Spirit. Both Easter night and the fiftieth day—the day completing the Pentecost season—were favorite days for receiving catechumens into the Church by Baptism.

Just as the Easter celebration came to be extended forward, so on the other end it eventually also came to be anticipated by a lengthened period of preparation—from two days to two weeks, to forty days, and to almost seventy days prior to Easter. Thus came about the Passion season, Lent and Septuagesima (Latin for seventy). The forty days of Lent were developed before all else for the sake of the catechumens and the public penitents. For the catechumens, Lent formed the final weeks of instruction, scrutiny, and exorcism before their Baptism on Easter night. This determined much of the character of Lent and helps to explain the choice of traditional Gospel readings for most of the period. The accent of Lent was not on Jesus’ forthcoming suffering but rather on His victorious power over the forces of darkness. The Gospel episodes read during this season concentrate on Jesus’ triumph over the demonic in His wilderness temptation and on His healing of those possessed by evil spirits. They were meant to encourage the catechumens in their hope that the Lord, to whom they were turning, would be victorious in *their* lives.

The final two weeks of Lent came to focus on Jesus’ conflict with the authorities and on His suffering, or Passion (from *passio*, the Latin word for suffering). The entire pre-Easter period came to be considered a part of the paschal season.

A somewhat longer read this month, as we look forward to the Resurrection of our Lord. God’s blessings from the Board of Elders.

The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at

www.lutheranhour.org. You can also download the Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at www.lhm.org/apps/.

March 7

"A Place to Belong"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

A house is not a person—but, could a Person be a house, a place to belong? Dr. Michael Zeigler talks about finding that place, in Christ.

(Mark 11: 1-26)

March 14

"Widow's Mite"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Why did Jesus commend a poor widow who gave all her money to a corrupt institution that oppressed widows? Dr. Michael Zeigler takes a deeper look.

(Mark 12: 13-34)

March 21

"But He Is Strong"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

(Mark 14:10-72)

March 28

"TBD"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

(Mark)

Stewardship Corner

Hudson Taylor, a Nineteenth Century British missionary to China, is reported to have said, “God’s work, done in God’s way, will not lack God’s supply.” To know God’s way, we need to know His Holy Word. Or to say it another way: you need to know your Bible.

St. Paul, before he spends two chapters on giving, wrote that every thought is to be taken captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5). Doctrine matters. And doctrine matters because the Scriptures matter. And the Scriptures matter because this is where we learn the teaching of Christ. Our thoughts must be brought into line with the teaching of Scripture so that our work is what God wants done and so that we do this work in His way.

A good tree bears good fruit. A bad tree bears bad fruit. We have been made good trees in Holy Baptism. We are fertilized and pruned for bearing good fruit by constantly hearing God’s Word preached and taught in sermon and Bible Class and in receiving the life-giving, faith-sustaining food of the Lord’s Supper. Remember your doctrine, hold on to the Lord’s teaching, and your thoughts will be taken captive to the obedience of Christ.

Bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ is recognizing that God does provide. The Lord’s Prayer teaches

us to pray for daily bread. Praying this day in and day out reminds us that the Lord is the giver of our daily bread, and that we are to give thanks for His daily provision of it. God is rarely early and never late in His work, as Abraham learned on the mount of the Lord it will be provided. The Lord's generosity forms our generosity in return.

Thus, we set aside for the work of God a generous, first-fruits, proportion of the daily bread that God has given to us. This act of trust in the Lord's provision is the working out of our faith in Him. When budgetary discussions pop up our natural reaction is to point fingers. But remember your doctrine, and what your mother taught about pointing fingers. Our first natural reaction is not always right. In fact, when our thoughts are brought into captivity of Christ, our first reaction should be repentance. It should raise questions in our own lives. As good trees in Christ who are to bear good fruit, we should ask whether our thoughts have been taken captive by obedience to Christ. Have we given generously? Have we given our first-fruits? You know. And God knows. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chron 16:9).

God will provide. He always has and He always will. He gives His meat in due season. He has not left you as orphans but has grafted you into His own family. You belong to Him. Remember this, letting this thought dwell in you richly. And you will then be rich toward others.

Taken from www.LCMS.org

Click on this hyperlink www.michiganintouch.com to view this month's Michigan in Touch supplement.



"Shamrocks & Blessings" (A Shipwrecked Saturday Adventure)

Saturday, March 13, 2021
from 10 am - 4 pm

Share your BLESSINGS with others by bringing in an item (or two) for either the Presque Isle County Food or Baby Pantry.



Door Prizes to be awarded



Goodie bags provided by Peace Lutheran

Service Project

So...new year, new project! In partnership with our sister congregations St. John's and Immanuel, the members of Peace will be collecting cleaning items for the Franklin Avenue Mission in Flint.

If you are able, please take one of the brown paper sacks (located by the Hygiene Pantry) and fill it with cleaning items such as:

toilet bowl cleaner
Spic & Span
paper towels



Comet cleanser
window cleaner
sponges, etc.

To make it easier, you can opt to pick up one item each time you go shopping and just add it to your sack!

The bags need to be returned by May 9. Shortly thereafter, members of the Mission will pick the items up for delivery to Flint.

If you'd also like to include an encouraging note for the recipients, that would be great!

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Thank you for your support in this Mission Project!

Speaking of Renewed Blessings....

Did you know that in just six short months of being open, Renewed Blessings was able to SHARE their blessings by donating money to 15 area churches and also helped three parochial schools? God has surely blessed their mission!

In addition, with help from fundraising, they are now proud owners of an enclosed trailer to aid in the collection of furniture donations! Scheduled pick-up dates will be advertised on their Facebook page when available.

So, if you're BORED, or just tired of being "COOPED UP," stop by RENEWED BLESSINGS for a couple hours...paint some furniture, fix "boo-boos," stitch some rips, clean donations, help Missie stage our showroom, or just flash your smile. We'd love to share the fun with YOU! Call the store at 474-9170.

Renewed Blessings is a non-profit organization supporting Rogers City churches. The resale shop is open to receive donations on Mondays. Furniture and other household items accepted (no clothing). Winter store hours are Wednesday - Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.