



Business  
Meeting

### **Reminder – Joint Council**

**Joint Council Reminder:** the parish's Joint Council will meet on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm @Messiah.



### **Your Pastor's Ponderings**

As we enter one of the most holy times of the year (Holy Week & Easter) and as spring begins to bloom all around us with its many blossoms and varied colors, it seems fitting that as we continue our series on important characters in the Bible that this month we focus on Abraham – the father of the faith (and as such a most holy person) and the one to whom God promised would make his offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven.

We first get a clue as to the importance of Abraham based simply on the number of chapters allotted to him in Genesis. Up until now, the Bible narrative has focused on one or two characters for a chapter or two with Noah getting the most attention at three chapters. But after the origin and genealogy stories, we now get almost fourteen chapters focused on Abraham's story.

Like Jesus, we don't get much about Abraham's childhood. The story picks up with Abram (as he's named before God makes the covenant with him) as an adult. Abram is called by God to leave his comfortable home and venture out into a new life of faith. And that call comes with a promise – that this new life of faith will come with a blessing upon Abram and all his descendants. In this promise is the good news that God will one day restore the world and bless all its people.

It strikes me how much the call and promise of Abraham relates to the call and promise of Easter. Through Abraham, God promises new life and restoration for all his descendants. In Easter, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God promises new life and resurrection (eternal life) to all who trust in him, for all his children. From the very beginning, God hasn't changed his promise to his creation or to his people, that God longs to be our God and that we

should be God's people. In other words, God wants to be in restored relationship with us and with creation. The promise hasn't changed merely the vessel. The final vessel of the promise is Jesus on the cross and Christ risen from the tomb. If nothing else, know this about Easter – God keeps God promises.

And that is what Abraham eventually discovered – although at times, it sure seemed like it took God awhile—Abraham was eighty-six when he had his first child. Still Abraham is the first to trust God's

promises against all the odds. From then on, faith meant believing what God said. Paul calls Abraham the father of all who have faith. Abraham wasn't at peace with God because he was circumcised or kept the law or did things the correct way. Abraham was right with God because he believed God's promises.

Abraham did many other things as well – let Pharaoh take his wife Sarah into his harem, gave Lot (his brother's son) his first choice of land of where to live, had a child with his wife's maidservant (Hagar and Ishmael), witnessed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, has a child with Sarah named Isaac, is tested into offering Isaac as a sacrifice, and eventually dies.

In Abraham's story, we become aware that through all those adventures and misadventures listed above the supreme quality of his life is his faith. He wandered in an unknown land, he worshipped an unseen God, and believed in an unfilled promise. By the time he died, Abraham owned no more of the Promised Land than a cave in a field, which he used to bury Sarah (and in which Isaac and Ishmael would also bury him). And yet, God does not forget him or the promise.

Abraham's son with Sarah, Isaac becomes the promise bearer. Isaac is the link between Abraham and the future. Isaac is the seed that bears out the promise. In Abraham and eventually Isaac, God shows what he can do in every life. As Paul says of Abraham in Romans – “he is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.”

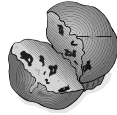
In the promise of Abraham, in the promise of Easter, we have the promise of the God who gives new life to us through Christ. Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Of course, that's what I think. Happy Easter. *Pastor Will*



### **New Orleans Meeting**

There will be a meeting for our youth going to New Orleans on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. We will meet in the parking lot of Messiah at 6:15pm and head out to Trinity Lutheran where we will join with Trinity and Friedens Lutheran youth groups to hear more about our trip this summer.



### **Attention Bakers:**

Messiah has been asked to furnish deserts for Meals On Wheels the week of April 27<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 Lets all help to give to this much needed program. Things requested are:

- 10- 9x12 cakes*
- bundt cakes*
- 20 Doz. -cookies*
- 15 - quick breads*
- 12 - angel food cakes*
- 15 Doz -muffins or cupcakes*
- pumpkin pies*

**\*Just keep in mind – No nuts, chocolate, or icing.**

Your kindness and generosity will be much appreciated. Bring your donations to the church Sunday morning April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 All help will be sincerely appreciated.



### **Volunteers Needed for Meals on Wheels**

The Meals on Wheels program is in need of substitute volunteers to help pack the meals and drivers or carriers to deliver the meals. This service is greatly appreciated by the clients you would be serving and dedicated volunteers who help, have testified that they thoroughly enjoy their work. Please step forward and volunteer some of your time to help those in need. For more information call 443-2787.

## **SEQUANOTA SHORTS – Upcoming Events**

### **1) 5K CROSS COUNTRY RUN/WALK AT CAMP SEQUANOTA**

On Saturday April 18 at 10 AM the first annual 5K Cross Country Run / Walk at Camp Sequanota will begin. The event will traverse trails, log roads, and camp roads. Come, enjoy the beauty of God’s creation and improve your health through physical activity. Shorter runs or walks will be available. Refreshments will be available and awards given at the end of the race. Call or check online for registration forms. Registration fee is \$20.00 with an event T-shirt or \$15.00 without a shirt. (814-629-6627 / [contact@sequanota.com](mailto:contact@sequanota.com) / [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com))

### **2) SEQUANOTA OPEN HOUSE AND INTRODUCTION TO CAMP**

On Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 6 PM come, tour Camp Sequanota and learn what a week of camp is like. You will meet some of our exciting 2009 Summer Staff. There will be time to ask questions about what happens at camp, enjoy a great camp meal, gather around a neat campfire and worship in God’s glorious outdoors. Many of this summers clothing and other items will be available for purchase at this event. **This event is free.** If possible, please call or email the camp to let us know you are coming. Those who attend this event and also come to camp will receive a \$5.00 store card this summer.

### **3) MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS CHRISTIAN YOUTH GATHERING**

Saturday May 2 from noon to 9 PM Camp Sequanota will be alive with music. There will be concerts by groups during the day ending with a major concert at 7 PM by Shawn Smith. During the day there will be sing-a-longs, jam sessions with musicians and workshops on guitar playing, singing, how to form a music group and more.

Shawn Smith will deliver a keynote address at 4 PM on a topic relevant to the issues faced by Christian youth today. Learn more about Shawn Smith’s ministry and music at [www.ShawnSmith.com](http://www.ShawnSmith.com). An adult must accompany individual youth or groups with youth under 18. Food will be available to purchase or you may bring a picnic. The Camp Store will be open and Shawn Smith will have a sales area with his music and many hand made items from Guatemala. A keyboard will be raffled off at the beginning of the evening concert. There are a

limited number of event tickets, do not wait to purchase your tickets. Tickets for youth and adults are \$15 purchased before April 24<sup>th</sup> and then \$20 at the gate - if tickets are still available. Call 814-629-6627, email [contact@sequanota.com](mailto:contact@sequanota.com) or visit [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com) to purchase tickets.

#### **4) MOTHER'S DAY DINNER AT SEQUANOTA**

Join us for our first Mother's Day Dinner at Camp Sequanota on May 10. This is a reservation only meal with reservation start times from noon to 1:45. For larger groups (over 15) we could arrange a private dining area in one of the meeting rooms. This will be an all you can eat buffet with chicken and ham as the meats. There is no price set for the meal. Your free will gifts will help cover the cost of this event and support the ministry of Camp Sequanota. After your meal take your mother on a hike around Camp Sequanota. For those unable to walk around or who would rather ride, driving tours of the camp will be offered on each half hour in our newly painted bus. First tour begins at noon. Call the camp at 814-629-6627 to make a reservation.

#### **5) FORMER SUMMER STAFF REUNION**

August 8 and 9. If you are a former summer staff member (volunteer or paid), have a family member or friend who was, please send us email or other addresses. We want to make this a great event and we do not want miss inviting anyone. We would love to reach our goal of having a staff member from every one of the last 62 years.

#### **6) SUMMER CAMP 2009 IS GETTING CLOSE**

Registrations are coming in every week. Every camper in 2009 will receive a 2009 Sequanota Summer Camp T-shirt. Register by May 15 to insure your T-shirt will be at camp when you arrive. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Scholarships are available for basic cabin camping.

#### **Updates from Camp Sequanota**

1. Cabins 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, Boys Staff, Girls Staff and the Nurse's Cabin are all having work done on them this spring.
2. Our 2009 Summer Staff is about full and eagerly awaiting the beginning of Summer Camp. A very large percent of our staff are returning staff or former campers.
3. The Dining Hall restroom project is moving slowly through the permitting process. We still need to raise about \$40,000 before

we start building. Please call if would like to make a major gift or know someone who might give a major gift.

4. Camp Sequanota will host family reunions either in the Enrichment Center or the cabin area. Generally these need to be before June 1<sup>st</sup> or after August 15<sup>th</sup>. Reunions using the Pavilions can be held most any weekend.
5. This spring the diving platform at the pool will be repaired or replaced.
6. International Staff this summer. Both are returning staff - Robert from Kenya (studying in St. Paul Mn) and Gabe from Spain will be with us.
7. We continue to operate in the black. With some retreat cancellations and increasing costs this Spring has been a challenge. All bills are being paid on time
8. Registration numbers are slightly behind last year. In these difficult economic times, remember we have scholarships available so every camper who wants to can come to camp this summer. Call Pastor George Mason for information (814-629-6627).



#### **There's Wisdom in the Word – Parish Bible Study**

All are invited to come, pray, and study scripture as we continue to explore the Book of Faith. This month we begin a new session called – Rediscovering the Book of Faith. This study explores how the Bible came to be our Book of Faith and what it means for our lives today. We will learn, how, why, when, and where the Testaments were created, explore how the Bible was put together and examine the impact of the Reformation on our encounter with scripture. Our topic for April is Rediscovering God's Family Album – a look at the stories and writings of the Old Testament.

Bible study meets on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm or Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am in the lounge at Messiah.



## **Confirmation**

- April 5 – 5pm: Class @MC
- April 12 – EASTER: NO Class – Take A Sabbath
- April 19 – 2pm: Fellowship Event—Bowling @Somerset  
Lanes Meet at the Bowling Alley
- April 26 – 5pm: Class @MC
- May 3 – 5pm: Class – Wrap Up, End of Year Reports DUE
- May 10 – Visit Your Confirmation Partner
- May 31 – Pentecost: Confirmation Sunday

### **REMINDERS TO 3<sup>RD</sup> YEAR CONFIRMANDS**

- 1) Day of Confirmation is: MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>
- 2) How are you coming on your service project?  
Talk to Pastor Will if questions
- 3) Don't forget to select a Bible verse to read at your Confirmation
- 4) Don't forget to Turn in your Affirmation of Faith Report by **May 15<sup>th</sup>**

PS – Info about your Affirmation of Faith Report may be found in the material you received at the beginning of the year. If you need a refresher, please call Pastor Will at 926-2215.



### **Preview of Holy Week Worship –**

**April 5 – Sunday of the Passion and Palm Sunday**

Regular Worship Times

**April 8 – 6pm -- Passover Meal @Messiah**

**April 9 – 6:30pm – Maundy Thursday (Holy Communion/Handwashing)**

**@Samuel's** – Combined Soup Supper and Worship

**April 10 -- Good Friday (Tenebrae)@SP**

**@SP – 7pm**

**April 12 – The Resurrection of our Lord: Easter Sunday**

6:30am – Sunrise Service of Holy Communion

**@Messiah**

8:30am – Service of Holy Communion **@SP**

10am – Service of Holy Communion **@Samuel's**



### **A Passover Celebration and Meal**

On **Wednesday of Holy Week, April 8**, all members of the parish are invited to attend a Passover observance and meal. Our meal and program begins at 6pm in the fellowship hall at Messiah. The meal takes place during the program about halfway through.

Christians recall Passover as the final meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples before he was betrayed, arrested, and crucified. During that last supper, Jesus was celebrating the Passover as a remembrance of the time when God, through Moses, led the Israelites out of their slavery. Our observance will help us to learn a little more about Jesus' history and our ties to the Jewish faith.

Pastor Will is making the meal. So that we may know how much food to prepare and how many places to set up, please make reservations in advance by signing up by April 5<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday). A sign up sheet has been placed in the narthex of each congregation.

PS – Pastor Will is in need of a few readers including some youth to help with this celebration. Please let him know if you are interested in being part of this special Holy Week celebration.



### **Rise N Shine with the Risen Lord**

**MESSIAH** – Following Easter Sunrise Service @Messiah, we invite all early risers to attend our annual Easter Breakfast. All may come and partake of a feast of Ham N Eggs. Anyone who can stick around and help clean up after the meal (and before heading home to Easter Dinner), your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

**SAMUEL'S**—In the same glow of Easter's early morning, Samuel's invites everyone to their annual Easter Breakfast before worship (April 12) from 8AM to 9:30AM. Come and enjoy great food and good fellowship.



### **On the Horizon: Worship Happenings in April**

**April 1 – Final Mid-week Lenten Worship @St. Paul’s**  
6pm – Soup Supper; 7pm – Service @SP

**April 5 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion**

Today begins with Christ’s entry into Jerusalem with the waving of palm branches and singing Hosanna. This day is also about what happens after Jesus gets to Jerusalem. For Jesus didn’t just go to Jerusalem, he was arrested, tortured, crucified, and buried in Jerusalem. We do not just enter Holy Week on this Sunday, we are drawn into it.

**April 8 – Passover Celebration and Seder Meal**

Join us for a Christian Observance of the Jewish Passover Meal in the fellowship hall of Messiah. (See full article elsewhere in newsletter).

**April 9 – Maundy Thursday**

This night begins with an integrated worship service and soup supper as we remember Jesus’ Last Supper. Our worship begins at 6:30pm @Samuels. In remembering his Last Supper and his commandment to love one another, we are called to follow his example as we humbly care for one another, especially the poor and unloved.

**April 10 – Good Friday**

The ancient title for this day – the Triumph of the Cross – reminds us that the church gathers not to mourn this day but to celebrate Christ’s life giving passion and to find strength and hope in the tree of life. Through readings, reflections, and hymns, we offer remembrances for all the world for whom Christ died.

**April 12 – The Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Sunday**

This is the day. This is our Passover with Christ from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom, from death to life. The resurrection of Christ is proclaimed in word and deed. Christ is Risen! We will

celebrate joyous day with three separate services of Holy Communion: 6:30am @Messiah; 8:30am @St. Paul; 10am @Samuel’s.

**April 19 – Believing is Seeing Sunday**

Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. An Easter faith says that believing is seeing the presence of God in our lives.

**April 26 – Witness to the World Sunday**

Today, the risen Christ shares food with the disciples and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures: the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

### **NEEDED: Helping Hands (for Synod Assembly)**

The TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL ASSEMBLY of the ALLEGHENY SYNOD of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA will be from Thursday evening, June 4, 2009, through Saturday afternoon, June 6, 2009 at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona. The Theme of the Assembly will be “God’s Work: Our Hands.”

Opening worship of Holy Communion will be held on Thursday evening at 7:30pm at First Lutheran in Altoona. This year, Bishop Mark Hanson from the Chicago Church wide Office will assist with worship. The Assembly will take place Friday and Saturday at the Convention Center. This year we will use our traditional format for Assembly where we have the opportunity not only to act as a legislative body for the Synod but to hear and study God’s word and sing his praises - to be renewed in faith and spirit. Bishop Hanson will also be our Bible Study leader. Our Assembly will include the Election of Bishop.

Pastor Will is looking for two helping hands from each congregation to attend this year’s Assembly as voting members. **Registration is due by April 15<sup>th</sup>** with final late registrations due by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Please see Pastor Will for a registration form. The cost of this event will be picked up by the congregation. Presently, we have one person interested from Messiah. We are looking for five more.

Please prayerfully consider being a part of this church-wide ministry. As a helping hand, you serve an important role in the decision making process of the Synod and the church for the coming year. In addition to time spent in devotion, you will hear updates from our Partners in Ministry and meet and greet hundreds of fellow Lutherans from churches across our Synod. Please let Pastor Will know if you are willing to take on this

important ministry. God isn't concerned with our ability or inability but our availability.