



Your Pastor's Ponderings

“Lent starts in two weeks. Get ready for six weeks of dreary music and feeling sad.”

Not too many years ago, many of us might have said the same thing about Lent. Some of us may still think that. This attitude is not surprising when we consider the most common question related to Lent: “So what are you giving up for Lent?”

But Lent is not about giving up something. It’s not about torturing ourselves with self denial – no chocolate for 60 days, no desserts for 60 days, no television for 60 days, etc. Rather, Lent is about returning to the Lord, remembering our baptismal identity, and renewing our calling as disciples, especially disciple that have been called to serve, trust, learn, share, and pray. We practice these characteristics of discipleship through our Lenten discipline and practices.

So while Lent is not completely about giving up something, on the other hand, giving up something can be appropriate if it can help us in our spiritual discipline. For instance, if whenever we miss the thing we gave up, it allows us to focus our attention on the Lord and recommit ourselves to following him then it can be beneficial.

Another way to return to the Lord has to do with remembering our catechism, remembering the words of Martin Luther and the teachings of the church. Early in its history the Lenten season was a time of education in the basics of the Christian faith for new converts seeking baptism at the Easter Vigil. Martin Luther encouraged preaching on the catechisms, especially during Lent. Using the catechism as a focus for worship during Lent will allows us to remember some of the basic teachings of the Christian community.

That is why for six weeks in Lent, we will be looking at the catechism through Martin Luther’s eyes as well as the pastor’s. We will begin with the confession move on to the commandments followed by the creed. In March, we will focus on the Lord’s prayer, move into baptism and conclude with communion before we get to Holy Week.

And so I invite all of us to come to Lenten worship with open eyes, ears, hearts, and minds as we explore the basic tenants of our

faith, those teachings on which we ground our faith and our life. We hope to dust off those corners of the brain that perhaps haven’t been visited since the days of confirmation. Each week, we will begin with a scriptural basis for the teaching, followed by a reading from Martin Luther, and concluding with the pastor’s reflection on said topic.

Through these examinations we hope to have a better understanding of God, the Lutheran faith, and our own lives. And may our Lenten journey through Luther’s eyes help us all to be better disciples.

Have a Blessed Lent!

Pastor Will



Coming Soon -- Souper Bowl Sunday

On Sunday, February 7th, we will be holding our Souper Bowl Sunday. Help score a touchdown against hunger by bringing a can of Soup to worship on Sunday, February 7th or Sunday, February 14th (if you can’t make it on the 7th). Your donated soup will go to the Somerset Food Pantry to help the fight against hungry and poverty in our own neighborhoods.



Where Did You See God this week!

Please share your stories with Pastor Will about where you saw God this week by email, bulletin insert, writing a letter, leaving a message on the voice mail, or in person. **Please continue share with me where you see God in your lives.**

Example: I saw God in

I saw God _____



Pastor Will is praying for families in our directory because we all need God's care in our lives. Please note people in this list are not sick or ill but are simply being prayed for this week as a way to remember the people of our parish throughout the year.



Global Mission Request – Prayers Needed

The Allegheny Synod's global mission team is asking for some help with a project that we are doing with the KELC, our companion synod. We are asking people from the Allegheny synod to write down prayer concerns and joys (one or two sentences) that they see around us in our every-day ministry. Then we hope to compile them into a 40-day prayer list for Lent (one concern or joy for each day) and send them to Kenya. That will help our Kenyan sisters and brothers to remember us, and in some ways get to know us better, as they come to recognize our struggles and the things that we are thankful for. The KELC is going to do the same thing for us.

One example might be: We pray for the people in our towns and out in the country who do not have enough resources for heat during these very cold months, and whose homes let in the chilling air.

Those who are willing, please submit your prayer sentence (concern or joy) to Pastor Will – by note, voice mail, or email. We would like to have a nice mix of clergy and lay participation. Please turn submissions in to Pastor Will by Sunday, February 7th. Thanks for your consideration - hope to hear from you.

Pastor Elisa Osman, Global Missions Team



Cooking for Crowds Workshop

The Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a food safety course to help organizations like churches, fire companies, and booster clubs learn how to prevent foodborne illnesses, protect consumers, and practice good food safety strategies for fundraisers and the like.

The course is being offered on Tuesday, February 9 from 9am to Noon at the Cooperative Extension Meeting Room in Somerset. The cost is \$15 for the first person and \$5 for each additional person. **The deadline to register is February 2nd.**

Pastor Will is planning on attending. The church/parish will pay for any one else who would like to go as a representative of our parish. Please let Pastor Will know of your interest by **Sunday, January 31st** so that he can send in our registration before the deadline.



LENT: Return to the Lord as Luther Looks at the Catechism

The very word “Lent” comes from an Old English word for spring, and the purpose of repentance is the renewal of our lives through the renewing of our baptismal identity not only as individuals but as community. Our focus this Lent will revisit some of the basic teachings of the Christian community through Luther’s teaching on the catechism. Hence Luther looks at the Catechism.

Our Lenten catechesis begins on **Wednesday, February 17th with Ash Wednesday**, the first day of Lent. On that day, there will be a worship service with **Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion at 7:30pm @Messiah**. The sign of ashes reminds us of our mortality and weakness. The sign of the cross reminds us of God’s strength and our new life found in the Risen Christ.

Some worship changes for Lent –

SILENCE -- Lent is a time of reflection and reexamination, something best done in the quiet times of life. During our worship, we

will have periods of extended silence to help us reflect on our discipleship of Christ.

LENTEN CANDLES/WINDOW VEILS – As the Advent wreath anticipates the coming of the light into the world, we will use a new Lenten candle ritual whereby we extinguish one of six candles each week to symbolize the approaching darkness of Christ's crucifixion. Veils on our windows will also represent this same theme.

CROSSES/BANNERS – Lent is a time to focus not on the ornate trappings of worship but upon the plain symbols of our faith. We have removed all banners and processional crosses from our worship space and veiled our altar crosses. In their place, we focus on the rough and bare wooden crosses as might have been used in Jesus' day. It is a reminder of Christ's cruel passion but also of our Easter promise.

THE FONT – To remind us of our human limitations and our re-turning to the Lord, the font has been moved to the back of the nave, emptied, and filled with river rock to symbolize our occasional spiritual dryness and Christ's thirst.

During the confession and forgiveness, we will be asked to turn around and face the font as a physical reminder of our re-turning to the Lord.

HOLY COMMUNION – As we have done these past couple of Lenten seasons @Messiah and Samuel's, we will be using a set of pottery communion ware as its' simplicity more closely resembles the tableware that might have been used in Jesus day.

Because this set does not have a pouring chalice, when using this communion ware we will commune by intinction, dipping the bread into wine before eating. If you should accidentally eat the bread before dipping, the pastor will provide you with more.

PS – Please note: For those who prefer to receive communion by the glass, we will have glasses of Wine and Grape Juice on the altar available for any who desire.



Helping Haiti

In our loose offering for a couple of weeks in January, our congregation s made donations to ELCA Disaster Relief to help our Haitian brothers and sisters recover from their devastating earthquake. Between the three congregations, we contributed \$1164.00 to earthquake relief.

If anyone so desires, you may also go to www.thrivent.com and click on Haiti Helps. There you will find that Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will add \$1.00 to every \$2.00, up to a total Thrivent Financial contribution of \$1 million, when their members donate to one of the following:

- a) Lutheran World Relief or b) ELCA Disaster Response or c) LCMS World Relief / Human Care or d) WELS Committee on Relief.

Thrivent Financial will add a maximum of \$250.00 per member donation, and donations will be accepted through March 31, 2010



A Feast before our Lenten Fast: Pancakes and Sausage

Before we enter the time of Lenten restraint, everyone is invited to come fill up on pancakes, sausage, and fried potatoes on Shrove Tuesday. Our Parish Pancake Supper will be held **at Messiah on Shrove Tuesday, February 16th between the hours of 5pm and 7pm**. Stop by any time during those hours are your schedule allows and join us for an evening of delicious food and good fellowship.

The supper is free to all who come but if you'd like to leave a free will offering you may.



Lenten Midweek Worship Opportunities

In addition to our Ash Wednesday service, we will continue our Lenten practice of mid-week Lenten soup suppers and worship services held in partnership with the Laurel Mountain Lutheran Cluster (the New Centerville Lutheran Parish, the Lavansville-Bakersville Parish, and St. Luke's in Rockwood).

Our mid-week Lenten schedule is as follows:

February 16th – Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Supper,
5pm-7pm @Messiah

February 17th – Ash Wednesday, 7:30pm @Messiah

February 24th – Midweek: 6pm – Soup; 7pm – worship @
Mt. Zion (Bakersville)

March 3rd – Midweek: 6pm – Soup; 7pm – worship @
St. Luke's (Rockwood)

March 10th -- Midweek: 6pm – Soup; 7pm – worship
@Messiah

March 17th – Midweek: 6pm – Soup; 7pm – worship @
Mt. Calvary (Lavansville)

March 24th -- Midweek: 6pm – Soup; 7pm – worship
@Samuel's



There's Wisdom in the Word

!!Due to a scheduling conflict, our Parish Bible study in February will meet a week earlier than normal. We will meet on February 16th immediately following the conclusion our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. (approx 7pm). !!

This month we continue to look at David: Israel's Favored but Flawed King. In January, we examined David's rise to power (his defeat of Goliath, his mercy towards Saul, and God's continuing protection). In February, we will examine David's flaws and the

consequences those bring (Saul's death, David & Bathsheba, and the consequences of those events).

Again, we meet on Tuesday, February 16 after the Pancake Supper.



Confirmation- Schedule for February

Feb. 5-7 – SNOW CAMP

Feb 16th (Tues) – 4pm: (or as early as you can there)

Servant Event Help w/Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Feb 21st – 5pm: Class @Mt. Zion

Feb 28th -- No Class: TAKE A SABBATH



SNOW CAMP is Here!

Attention Snow Campers – We will depart from the parking lot of Messiah on Friday, February 5th at 6:15pm (Please try to arrive by 6pm). Also, please eat supper at home before you come. Snacks will be available later Friday evening but not right away. We will return on Sunday, February 7th around 12:30pm.



Confirmation Servant Event – Flipping Pancakes and Frying Sausage

As our service project for February, confirmation youth are asked to come help set up, prepare, cook, serve, or clean up after for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at Messiah. According to your schedule, please show up between 4pm and 6pm on February 16th to help out.



On the Horizon: Worship Happenings in February

February 7th – A Disciple Shares Sunday

This week after a miraculous display of abundance (filling their nets) Jesus calls three fishermen to leave everything behind to follow him. God calls us to lifelong discipleship. Caught in God's abundant grace and fed out of that bounty, we are called to go catch others, to share not only the good news but also ourselves. And so we see how a disciple shares.

February 14th – A Disciple Prays/Transfiguration Sunday

On the mountain, the disciples are witness to the glory of God in the face of the transfigured Jesus. As such they are unable to avoid reflecting that glory in the world. A disciple prays that it will be true of all of us who see the glory of God as well.

February 17th – Ash Wednesday/Luther looks at the Confession

Now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent, we will reflect on the meaning of our baptisms into Christ's death and resurrection as we examine that calling through the eyes of Luther and Luther's Catechism. Tonight we are reminded that confession is a two part event – expressing our sinfulness and calling to God for mercy then hearing the words of grace and mercy from our loving God.

February 21st – Luther looks at the Commandments

The commandments are a call to a relationship with God and how we are to live out that relationship. From this relationship, flows our calling to serve God and to care for our neighbors.

February 28th – Luther looks at the Creed

The creed helps us to know more about the God we serve, reminding us of the nature and work of God as revealed in the creative Father, the saving Son, and the ever-present Spirit. The creed also shows us the many ways we see the God of the Trinity at work in our world and in our lives.



Business Meeting

Joint Council Reminder

The Joint Council meets on Tuesday, February 2nd at 7pm @Messiah.