



ST JOHN AMELITH PARISH NEWS

February 2024

From The Pastor

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

You would have to be loveless not to admit the brokenness of our times. Families have lost the stability of married life as God’s blessing for a man and a woman. Many churches run after a social Gospel or try to surf the current cultural waves that has nothing to do with forgiveness for sinners. Government fights over policies for a direction or to balance a fiscally sound budget, but who knows how an election year will stir the pot even more. Society wonders about a terrorist attack, but plenty fear the lawless violence lashing out in another city. Here is the reality check at the present time. Rather than reconciling, we are trying to live with divorce.

Lent takes us from brokenness between others to show the brokenness of all before God. This gaping hole is not going to be fixed on our terms whether a person denies God, pretends that all religions are the same, or claims a private Christianity against the visible Church. The call of repentance during Lent is for all to consider Christ and Him crucified. As one writer states, “Between people, reconciliation is a two-way street. But it is not so with God’s reconciliation of the world. God is the subject; we are always the objects. He reconciles us. We are passive...Christ’s work is the cause of God’s reconciliation” (Just Words, 139).



There is no superglue to hold together what today is in so many pieces and shambles. However, God already had plans for our broken lives being the great reconciler by sending His Son. St. Paul goes on to declare, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Rather than divorce, God gives unthinkable love. Here is the reality check of Lent. Reconciliation is not only possible, but proclaimed, lived, and shared in Christ for sinners. Since God has reconciled the world to Himself, righteousness by faith in Jesus has brought reconciliation into the world. In view of His Word and Sacraments at work by the Gospel, we will take up the topic of reconciling for our midweek services during this Lent season.

Such peace established by God is also effective before life by His grace shared between sinners. If things are fractured and faltering, it means we are only dancing around the need for a reconciled life. Even churches will fail if they try to reconcile to a culture today that has divorced itself from God and His Word. Mending life without Christ leaves it to be manmade apart from what God delivers for men by the Gospel. The Lord has our best interest in mind, since His aim is on our eternal salvation. From this hope to save by His Son, there is a place to reconcile relationships. “‘Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will heal him’” (Isaiah 57:19). Lent offers healing to us and any by way of the cross. Christ bears the brokenness with love from God and this love can be shared with one another.

Pastor Gauthier



Cardinal Connection

Recently my grandmother passed away. She had humble beginnings. Born during the great depression era, she was brought up in a single parent home. I've heard stories of dirt floors, and magazine pictures of butterflies and flowers pasted to walls to add a little bit of beauty to an otherwise drab dwelling. Meager meals were served, provided by the back breaking work of my great-grandmother to scrape a few pennies together to feed four children.

Despite all this, the Lord pulled my grandma up from the ash heap, so to speak. She married a Pastor, who later became the Michigan District President, and it was because of this position my grandparents gained many friends who would travel the world with them. To 37 countries to be exact.

Before my grandma passed away, she assigned some of her prized possessions to her children and grandchildren as an inheritance. My sister got the painting from Moscow because she too had visited Russia. My cousin, the only boy in the bunch of us, got the men's ascot hat that I only assume my grandfather wore on blustery travel days. What did I get? Concrete and a bit of rusted rebar. To many passersby a second glance wouldn't be given and they might scoff at the thought that I was thrilled to now have it as my own. You see, I love history. My grandparents made a trip in the Spring of 1990 to Germany and they themselves chipped the concrete and pulled the rebar out of the Berlin Wall! How awesome is that!

While I have heard stories about my grandma's childhood, I often fail to remember the hardships she had to go through years before she had the chance to circumnavigate the world, and while I've been eyeing that chunk of rock all these years, I regret the fact that I didn't appreciate more the person giving it to me; a faithful woman who loved me, prayed for me, and supported me.

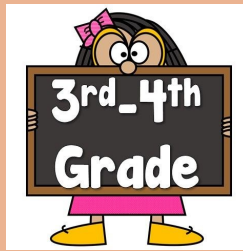
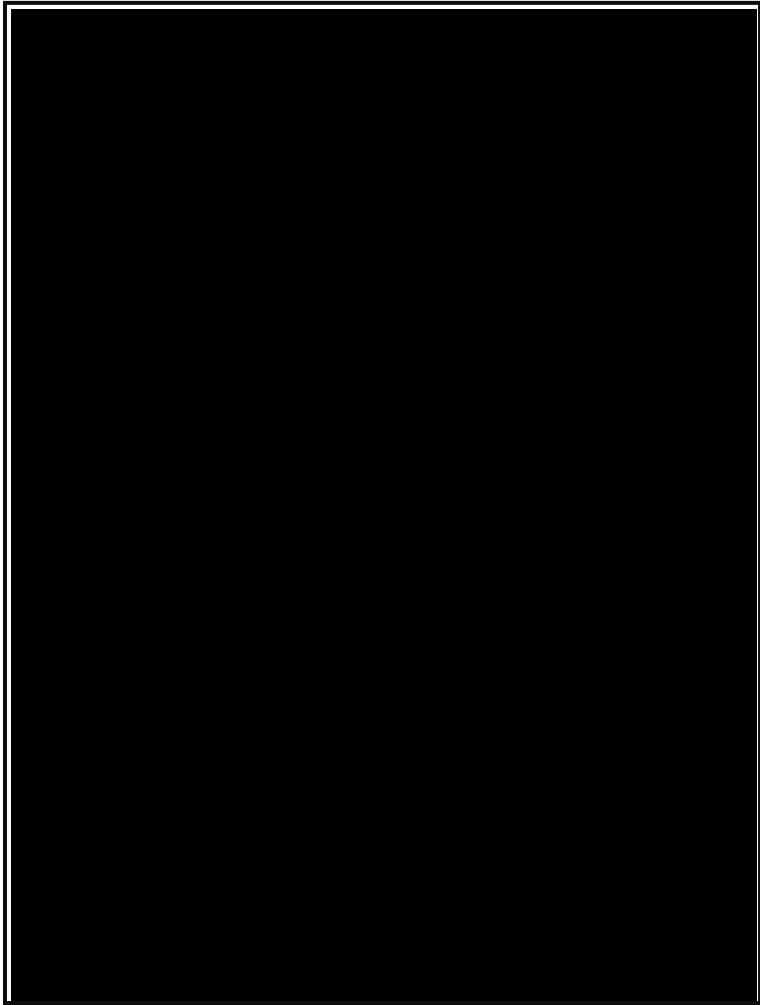
We often do that with our church and school. For 172 years God has blessed St John Amelith. For 172 years there have been hardships, wars, depression, and financial struggles, and for 172 years God has been with us through it all. And when the good times happen, we fail to remember. We fail to give credit where credit is due. When troubles arise we run to ourselves for solutions without giving a second glance to our God who loves us, supports us, and saves us through it all. But He doesn't fail to remember us. He doesn't fail to keep His promises. He hasn't failed to give us our inheritance.

When we come to church it is easy to forget about the ministry that happens daily across the parking lot. But the Lord hasn't forgotten. I have the privilege of being in our school classrooms. I tangibly see the faith of children grow. We are facing some tough times ahead, but in it all the Lord is with us. He commands us to do this work and He promises to bless it.

"Children are a heritage from the Lord." (Psalm 127:3) Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14). Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20a). Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6). So shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11). And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20b).

Let us thank God for our heritage; for His blessings. Let us go to Him and His Word for guidance and clear direction in the days ahead. And let us praise Him for this wonderful work He has set before us.

- **Rebecca VanTol, Administrative Assistant and Kindergarten through 6th Grade Religion Teacher at St John Amelith**



3rd and 4th Grade has been participating in an after school club called Invention Convention since the late Fall. They have been working hard on problem solving, working together and learning a lot along the way! Excellent job to all of our participants, no matter how far you made it in the process I am proud of you for showing a lot of grit and perseverance during this tedious process.

I would like to congratulate Laine Hill on her nomination and participation in our Regional Invention Convention competition on February 24th at Central Michigan University, where she has the chance to earn a bid to the State Level Competition being held in Dearborn at The Henry Ford Center!! Give her a big congratulations and words of encouragement if you see her in the halls in the next few weeks!!!



St John Amelith
Chicken



Sunday, February 18, 2024
1664 Amelith Rd., Bay City

Take-outs 10:30 a.m.
Sit Down 11:00 - 1:00 or until food runs out

1/4 Chicken Meal - \$10
1/2 Chicken Meal - \$15

Includes: baked potato, coleslaw, corn, rolls,
and the best desserts anywhere!

Join us for the BEST CHICKEN BBQ in mid-Michigan on February 18!

Three different Lenten Devotionals are available for members to use through the months of February and March. They can be found on the table in the church narthex. Please take one or all! This is a wonderful opportunity to be in God's Word daily.

The Nomination Committee is taking names for candidates for the Board of Ed. They are also searching for anyone who would be interested in chairing Fund Development. This is a task force which means the Chair finds the people to help on the committee. Please call Wendy Jacobs, Deb Hutter or Joyce Helmreich if you're interested in either position. Thank you.

The Tri-City Good Friday Service will be held on March 29, 2024, at the Horizon's Conference Center at 1 pm. The Reverend Dean Davenport will be the guest speaker. He is a Vice-President of the Michigan District and a Pastor at Christ Our Savior in Livonia. To underwrite the cost of the service, we are seeking support from congregation members. If you would like to donate, please contact Tom Rohde. Checks should be made out to "Good Friday Service". Thank you for any support you can give.

**Valley Lutheran
High School**

MONOPOLY



21st Annual
Benefit Dinner
& Auction

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2024

at the DoubleTree Hotel
on the Bay City Riverfront

Attend In-Person or Virtually!

- * In-Person (\$85/person):
Hors d'oeuvres
Open Bar
Atrium Activities & Games
Dinner
Live Auction & Short Program
- * Virtual Bidder (no cost)

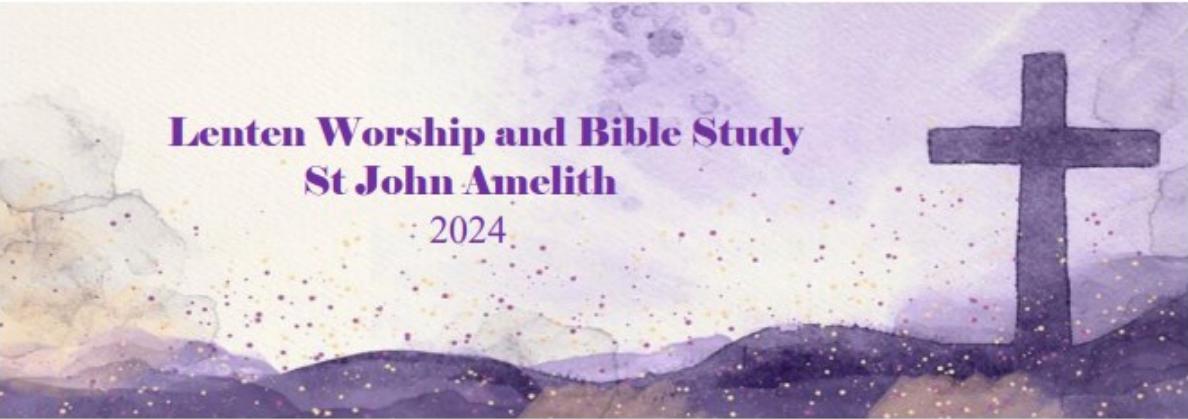
REGISTER TODAY

REGISTER ONLINE:
VLHSAUCTION.COM

A movie poster for 'The Great Deceiver'. The background is dark with a bright sun or moon in the upper center. Below it, the title 'the GREAT DECEIVER' is written in a stylized, white, serif font. The lower half of the poster features a large, gnarled, leafless tree with many branches, set against a lighter, hazy background.

It should come as no surprise that an adversary fit to be called the "god of this world" and the "power of darkness" is a force to be reckoned with. And so he is. In *The Great Deceiver* explore a being so diabolical he will stop at nothing to separate us from God.

Place: Church basement
Date: February 21st for four Wednesdays
Time: 6:45pm and done around 7:30pm



Lenten Worship and Bible Study
St John Amelith
2024

Ash Wednesday

February 14
6 p.m. with Holy Communion

Midweek Wednesday Services

February 21 - March 20
6 p.m.

**Palm Sunday Worship
with Holy Communion
and**

Confirmation Sunday
March 24
9:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday

March 28
6 p.m. with Holy Communion

Good Friday

March 29
1 p.m. - Horizon Center
7 p.m. - St John

Easter Sunday

March 31

Sunrise Service with Holy Communion
6:30 a.m.

Festival Service with Holy Communion
9:30 a.m.

Every Sunday Worship Services

9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Bible Study

10:45 a.m.

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays 9 a.m.

Midweek Bible Study

Wednesdays during Lent
February 21 - March 20
6:45 p.m.

Rooted in God's Word, Growing in Christ's Love, Branching Out to Serve, Bearing Fruits of Faith

Contact Us

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