

February 2024 News & Updates



From the Pastor's Pen

"Greater love has no one than this, that some one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

This is one of those years when calendars clash. February 14 is St. Valentine's day as well as Ash Wednesday. Two holidays that can't seem to be farther from each other. One is the celebration of romantic love, the second reminds us of our mortality due to Original sin and our inability to save ourselves from that sinful condition.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Lent season leading up to Easter. We gather together on Ash Wednesday and are reminded that we are created from the dust of the earth, and to dust we shall return. It is a time of reflection on our lives that leads to repentance. Many folks give up one thing as a 40 day fast. But instead of giving up something trivial, like not eating chocolate, we need to give up an habitual sin, which most of us still cling to. It is a time to get our priorities in order so that we are not left wanting like the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 to whom the Lord says, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." (v 12).

So, in a couple of weeks, I hope to see all of you in worship, getting ash crosses on your forehead and those sobering words, "From dust you are and to dust you shall return." Those are not the only words you will hear from me to you all personally. You will also get to hear gracious words of comfort, "_____," in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of +Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen." Individually you will receive the Holy Absolution by name.

May the Holy Spirit stir up our hearts to increase our desire for true repentance during the Lenten season that leads to the mortification of our sinful flesh and its sin-filled desires that the Lord would continue to mold and shape us more and more into the image of His Son, Jesus the Christ. And may our faith in Him continue to grow as we make our Lenten journey together. --
Pastor



From the Deacon's Desk

Judges

The book of Judges covers 351 years after Joshua's death in 1300 B. C. God used the Canaanites and the five nations of Philistine to punish the (12) twelve tribes of Israel. These are the nations Israel failed to completely drive out as God had commanded. This remnant led Israel astray as they chased after Baals and Asherah poles. The people cried out to the Lord for a deliverer, a redeemer, so God raised up a judge, who also was an equivalent to a savior. We

all remember Samson for his tremendous strength, Gideon for his cleverness and Deborah for her unfaithfulness to the Lord. Do we remember Shamgar?

The first judge was Othniel who gave Israel peace for forty years followed by Ehud who gave them peace for eighty years. The third judge was Shamgar, but all we really know about him is that he killed 600 of the Philistines with an ox goad, therefore saving Israel from the idolatrous influence the Philistines had. Being only briefly mentioned in verses 3:31 and 5:6 and then again in the Song of Deborah 6:6-7, why should we remember him? His mighty acts were according to God's command! An ox goad is simply a long stick with a pointy end to prod the ox and a flat dull end to clean up the dung. The fact that Shamgar was able to kill 600 with such a device shows to what depths Israel had fallen (5:8 "not a shield or spear was seen among 40,000 Israelites") and that God is in control. Shamgar's loyalty to the Lord shows us that even the smallest act, if done in obedience to the Lord, will be remembered, if not on earth, in heaven. Colossians 3:23-24 tells us "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord".

During the three and a half centuries of Judges the problem was the same. "In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25. Are we having the same problem today in our own nation, state, and family? Have we deserted the moral Law of God in our own lives? We need to confess our sins daily, repent and turn to the cross of Christ.

Bible Trivia Question: January answer – Melchizedek (Gen. 14: 8-20)

Bible Trivia Question: February question – Which of the following historians was not a Roman: Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus, Suetonius.

In Christ,
Nick DeRose



From the Trustee's Bench

Thanks to Ray Coburn for volunteering to cover any emergencies during our absence. We are back and ready to go to work (or not).

Dennis Coburn



Kitchen News

Thank you Diane Staff for covering the kitchen duties during my absence.

Jean Coburn



From the LWML

UNDIE SUNDAY

Again this year Ascension will be partnering with PSD LWML to participate in a Gifts from the Heart Ingathering for UNDIE SUNDAY scheduled for Sunday, February 11, 2024. Please bring a package of NEW underwear or socks for men, women, girls, and boys for needy people within our Pacific Southwest District, and through Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry and other ministries in Mexico through Orphan Grain Train. A box will be provided in the Narthex for your donations. Cash donations are most welcome to help deliver your gifts and may be made payable to Orphan Grain Train and sent to Steve Rice, 42217 55th St. W., Lancaster, CA 93536.

“JESUS, THE HOPE OF ALL NATIONS”

40th Biennial LWML 2024 District Convention will be held on June 7—9, 2024 in Rosemead, CA. Registration is now open. If you would like more information, see me or go to psdlwml.org. Scholarships are available. Ascension can send two voting delegates. Let me know if you are interested in attending.

The ladies of Faith, Hesperia have invited all the ladies of Sage & Sand Zone 20 to their Spring Tea to be held on Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Since there will not be a Zone Spring Celebration, this can be a time for fun and fellowship for Zone 20 ladies to get together. Let me know if you would like to attend.

Linda Merkel
President



Stewardship News

Caring for My Neighbor

If any of the Ten Commandments might tempt us to think that keeping the Law is easy, it would be the Fifth Commandment. After all, how hard is it to get through life without murdering somebody? The vast majority of people can handle that!

But Jesus famously blows up this notion by pointing out that the command, “you shall not murder,” goes much deeper — down to the heart.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:21–22)

Hatred and disdain come from the same sort of crookedness of heart as murder. With both murder and hatred, you look down on another person and think them of little worth.

In the Small Catechism, Luther also points out that every “do not” in the commandments also includes a “do this:” “We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body but help and support him in every physical need” (SC, Fifth Commandment, emphasis added).

We are not called merely to avoid evil; we must also do positive good.

So when Jesus drew near to us and became our neighbor by taking up our humanity, He came not only to avoid harming us, but He came to positively help us, bless us and serve us.

We are now called to show the love to our neighbors that Christ showed to us. Your neighbor is yet another gift that God has given you that requires your stewardship. We are called to show mercy, to be kind, to love and serve our neighbor. One aspect of this stewardship is financial: our neighbors need us to support the church’s work so that they can hear the Gospel and come to faith. Our neighbors need the church’s alms and mercy work. Our neighbors need our faithful service in all we do in the name of Christ.

Elders

By Member's Last Name:

A-E: Rick Ferrell 760-694-3309
F-K: Joe Yancho 760-617-1580
L-R: Mark Amer 602-619-2232
S-Z: Ken Porter 760-792-1069

February Birthdays

Dennis Lumley 2
Bruce Benson 13
Francis Durfee 13
Kathy Barron 19
Karen Roeber 19
Bill Blanton 20
Sherry Leese 20
Wendy Walsh 20
Maria Wills 22
Manuel Reyes 24



February Anniversaries

Ernie & Carol Schmidt 2/1/1958
Mike & Theresa Stewart 2/13/1982
Sandy & Mike Park 2/17/1996
James & Gabby Reyes 2/28/2004
Ora & James Thomas 2/14/2009
Joyce & Larry Cramins 2/16/2019

