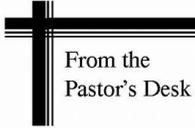




The Dual-Parish Review



From the
Pastor's Desk

The following article has been adapted from a 2017 blog post found on www.lutheranreformation.org by Kantor Jonathan Swett *Our Savior Lutheran in Michigan. – Pr. M.*

Each year, the Christian church takes a forty-day journey leading up to Easter, known as the season of Lent which we are already well into the middle of by the time you read this since it began on February 18th this year. In most Lutheran churches there are traditional practices that are observed in almost every congregation big or small, rural or urban. These practices can typically fall into three different categories: Visual, Historical/Traditional, and Emotional/Spiritual. It's possible that some things can easily fit into multiple categories, but for the most part I think the following parts of Lent can be placed in these different categories.

The first visual component is color, and it's usually seen with a change of paraments. The color purple is traditionally used to adorn the Lord's house throughout the season of Lent. The dye to make purple was very difficult to obtain in ancient times, so it was almost exclusively used by the very rich and by royalty. It was used by the Christ only once—as He was mocked and ridiculed as the "King of the Jews" by the guards just before His gruesome crucifixion. This deep, rich color has come to represent solemnity, penitence, and prayer as God's people meditate on the agony that His Son willingly endured for us. Twice in the Lenten season, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Lord's house might be adorned with the color black to represent the absence of light and the curse of sin and darkness which fell over creation. Only the death of the perfect Son of God could abolish such darkness.

The second visual component is the sign of the cross applied to the repentant Christian's forehead with the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Historically, the ash was created by the burning of palms from the previous Palm Sunday, and palm ash is still used today. This symbolic rite is a reminder of the sign of the cross that was placed on us in our Baptisms; the ash and words used remind us of our mortality, "Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return;" and it reminds us of the filth of our sin that is washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

A historical/traditional component of the Lenten season is the omission of the word "Alleluia" from the liturgy and hymns that are sung as well as an omission of the Hymn of Praise in the Divine Service. "Alleluia"—a Hebrew word meaning "Praise the Lord"—doesn't return until the glorious celebrations of the Easter victory. The very last hymn on Transfiguration Sunday is called "Alleluia, Song of Gladness." This hymn, with a text that can be traced back to the eleventh century, says farewell to the use of the word "Alleluia" for the season of Lent with the words "Alleluia cannot always be our song while here below; Alleluia, our transgressions make us for a while forgo; for the solemn time is coming when our tears for sin must flow." With the words of this hymn we transition into the holy time of Lent and Easter.

As mentioned earlier, the emotional/spiritual character of the Lenten season is one of repentance. But the season of Lent is also one of preparation to celebrate the Resurrection as well as a time of preparation for new believers to be confirmed in their Christian faith. Historically, the service of the Vigil of Easter would be held on the Saturday night between Good Friday and Easter morning, and these new Christians would be baptized at that service and receive the Sacrament of the Altar for the first time. It provided one more reason to celebrate God's grace and love as well as giving a reminder to faithful believers that they are connected to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The historical practice of giving something up during Lent is also spiritual. It's used to deprive yourself of something that you enjoy so that you can use that time instead for extra prayer and meditation. This practice serves as a way to remember the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pay for your sins.

May this season of Lent be a blessing to you as you again experience the depth of Jesus' obedience and the great love of God to redeem a world so desperately in need of salvation. – *until next month!* – Pr. M.



2026

Bethlehem

Lutheran Church

233500 County Road E

Milan, Wisconsin 54411

Sunday Worship at 8:00 am

Sunday School at 9:15 am

Adult Bible Study at 9:15 am

St. John "High Steeple"

Lutheran Church

119415 Huckleberry Road

Edgar, Wisconsin 54426

Sunday Worship at 10:30 am

Sunday School at 9:30am

Adult Bible Study at 11:45 am

Pastor: Rev. Michael Mathey

Pastors Office Hours: M—T

Pastors Number: 715-352-2888

OR 715-330-5599

Not a cell phone.

Please leave a message

Pastors Email:

lcmsrevmike@gmail.com

Secretary Office Hours:

Tues. - Fri., 9 am - 12 pm

Dual Parish Office:

715-352-2888

Office Secretary Email:

secretary@stjbeth.org

Dual Parish Website:

www.Stjbeth.org



MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Bethlehem Birthdays

Daniel Becker	3/01
Melanie Kunze	3/01
Alexis Gumz	3/02
Dawn Gumz	3/09
Lois Niemi	3/11
Blake Reinhart	3/12
Christina Cook	3/13
Amber Weiler	3/15
Donna Solchenberger	3/17
Tayler Bender	3/18
Susan Gumz	3/19
Darlene Wittlinger	3/19
Emanuel Strack	3/20
Bradley Thielman	3/21
Braxton Thurman	3/21
Timothy Mathey	3/26
Roger Empey	3/27
Brittany Schreiber	3/27
Scott Parker	3/30
Alan Schmitt	3/30

St. John Birthdays

Ryan VanDerLeest	3/01
Perry Wolff	3/07
George Murkowski	3/13
Micah Schulz	3/17
Rhonda Wolff	3/17
Michael Thompson	3/18
Kaleb Schulz	3/20
Nicholas Pehlke	3/21
Mark Koepke	3/22
Danielle Schoenrock	3/24
Timothy Mathey	3/26
Ben Hartwig	3/29
DuWayne Werner	3/29
Kristina Apfelbeck	3/30

Bethlehem Anniversaries

Raymond & Sarah VanLuven 3/3

St. John Anniversaries

Wade & Raegene Rodman 3/15

Doris & Peter Scherr 3/31



Newsletter
Deadline is
March 25th



Acolyte Schedule

Greeter
Schedule

Bethlehem

3/1 Madalynn Johnson
 3/8 Aleah Kosik
 3/15 Evan Strack
 3/22 Kelly Mathey
 3/29 Bailey Schreiber

St. John

3/1 Cale Koch
 3/8 Lexie Noller
 3/15 Sam Hartwig
 3/22 Kassidy Thompson
 3/29 Isabelle Kramp

Bethlehem

3/1 Randy & Christina Cook family
 3/8 Phil & Tammy Kunze family
 3/15 Phil Carlson & family
 3/22 Wendy Johnson & family
 3/29 Kyle & Ashley Kunze family

Lenten Schedule

Wednesday Lenten Services March 4, 11, 18, 25

STJ: 1:00pm

Beth: 7:00pm

Palm Sunday March 29

Beth: 8:00am

STJ: 10:30am

Maundy Thursday April 2

STJ: 1:00pm

Beth: 7:00pm

Good Friday, April 3

STJ: 1:00pm “Devotional Service”

Beth: 7:00pm Full Service

Easter Sunday April 5

Beth: 8:00am

St. John: 10:30am



LCMS Family Ministry

Visit lcms.org/family to find free family devotional and prayer resources to help make devotions and prayer a family habit.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18.

Many Christians give something up during Lent as a reminder that Jesus gave up everything when He came down to earth to die and rise for us. Lent is a time where we remember our sin, repent and focus on Christ's suffering for us. In this time of reflection and repentance, instead of (or in addition to) giving something up, it can also be helpful to add something into our lives. These verses from 1 Thessalonians tell us to “pray without ceasing” and to “give thanks in all circumstances.” One habit that could be helpful to focus on is prayer. As a family, you can start developing this habit by finding times to pray together such as before meals, before bed or whenever works best in your family’s routine.



Quarterly Voters’ Meeting will be April 19th after worship.

YOUTH GROUP Happenings



News

The Youth Group will be hosting suppers

Where and Time: Bethlehem from 5:30 pm—6:30 pm.

Dates: March 4th and 18th

March 4th : Walking Tacos & Taco Salads

March 18th : Baked Potato Bar

Enjoy a great meal, fellowship and support the youth.
Leave the cooking and cleaning to the youth.



Lenten Supper Dates available is March 25th.

If you, your family, or a group would be interested in hosting a Lenten Supper, please see the sign-up sheets on the table at Bethlehem and on the bulletin board at St. John.

BETHLEHEM SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE:

Sunday School will be singing during the service on Palm Sunday, March 29. Breakfast will be served following the church service. There will be no Sunday School on Easter.



SAVE THE DATE:

St. John VBS will be
July 20-24, 2026

Thank you everyone who contributed to making subs and those who placed sub orders. It was a successful **Lutheran Hour Sub Sandwich** fundraiser with \$774.00 donated and \$94.00 went to the Lutheran Hour in Spencer WDLB.

Blood Drive at St. John

Date: Saturday, March 28th

Time: 8 am to noon.

More information coming soon.

Grain Train is in need of **prescription pill bottles.**

Labels need to be removed
and pill bottles need to be
clean. Collect boxes located
at church.

Contact person Arlette (Beth)
or Jeff W. (St. John).

3rd ANNUAL Buckets O' Blarney Trivia Contest Fundraiser



FRIDAY

March 13, 2026

St. John Lutheran Church- High Steeple
119415 Huckleberry Rd, Edgar

**CASH
ONLY
EVENT**

*Doors open 5:30p
Trivia begins 6:00p*



Call 715-216-6634
for ticket reservations.

****Cost is \$12 each****
Space is limited!

Prizes!

Appetizers

Desserts

Beverages

Silent Auction!

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PLUMBING
HEATING
AND
ELECTRICAL
CONTRACTORS INC
715-223-6563
800 OLD HWY 29
PO BOX 566
ABBOTSFORD, WI 54405
info@jacketplumbing.com Contractor ID# DC-059801450

All proceeds go toward sending our Youth to the Higher Things Youth Conference in June.

The youth heading to Higher Things this summer are asking for your help in spreading the word about the upcoming trivia night and also have some ways you can be involved.

You can spread the word by:

1. Coming Trivia Night!
2. Inviting your friends and neighbors to attend.

You can be involved by:

1. Praying for our event to have a good turnout.
2. Attending the event and bringing a friend or two or three....
3. Donating something to be included in our Silent Auction
4. Volunteering to help with setting up or cleaning up after.
5. Volunteering to be an answer judge for the event...yes you will be explained how to do the job!
6. Thanking our youth and their families for all their hard work!

We appreciate all of you for your support in whatever way you choose!

Buckets O'Blarney Silent Auction

Along with the trivia contest, we will also have a silent basket auction in the multipurpose room. For the gift baskets, we are asking for donated items. If possible, also include a monetary value of your item so that we can start the bidding on the baskets close to the value of the items in the basket. Below are some theme ideas for the basket donations:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Children's Basket | Chocolate, Coffee and Tea Basket |
| Baby Basket | Gardening and Tools Basket |
| Date Night Basket | Cooking and Kitchen Basket |
| Family Game Night Basket | Sports and Packers Basket |

Items can be given to Deb Mathey or Cathy Schneider. They can also be left on a table in the Parish Hall with a note FOR THE BASKET AUCTION. **Please have donations to church by Sunday, March 8th**. For questions or for more information, contact Cathy Schneider at 715-660-1718 or cathy_schneider2@yahoo.com.

St. John Quarterly Voters' Meeting

January 18, 2026

20 voters signed in for the roll call. Pastor Mathey opened with prayer.

Motion made to approve previous quarterly Voters' Meeting minutes. MMSP.

Pastor's Report

Attendance was fairly good for Advent services due to soup suppers.

February 18th is Ash Wednesday with Holy Communion – 1:00pm at St. John and 7:00pm at Bethlehem. All other Lenten services will be prayer services without communion.

Synodical convention is in July in New Mexico. Roger Ballerstein is going as a lay delegate. Today is the deadline for submitting names for elected positions in the synod. Voters decided not to submit names.

Pastor planning to be gone next week for chaplain training at Camp Luther.

Elders Report

Keep shut in your prayers. Let Pastor or an Elder know about people in need of help or any that have hospitalizations. Also let Elders know about any concerns.

Evangelism (former Outreach) Report

Working on projects.

Board of Education Report

Sunday School is going well with Mary Schultz and Traci Pehlke leading.

Planning for VBS will happen soon.

Three adults and 5 youth will be going to Higher Things in St. Louis June 23-27. Proceeds from the Advent soup suppers were \$992. Red Robin fundraiser was \$550. Four admissions are paid for.

Trivia night is coming up on Friday, March 13. Look for more information soon.

Trustees Report

Pete VanDerLeest asked how we liked our new snow plower. One concern was that the plower was not coming until later in the morning and that has been a problem for Pastor and his family to get out of their driveway.

Let trustees know if something needs to be fixed. Put a note in their box.

Treasurers Report

Report was reviewed.

Approximately \$51,000 was put into the LCEF checking account for the Refresh Project. A copy of the Refresh Project contract is available from Dani or Tabitha.

A large donation was given at the end of 2025 to cover the general fund shortfall.

Approximately \$56,000 is earning interest in an LCEF CD.

Thank you cards were sent to those who gave through Thrivent Choice dollars and Vanco (online giving). Vanco funds go into a restricted account. Let Dani know if you want to designate those funds to a different account.

Finance Report

Statements will be available soon in members boxes. Others will be mailed.

More offering counters are needed

Motion was made to accept all reports as given. MMSP.

Old Business – None

New Business

Pete VanDerLeest is forming a committee to remodel the chancel. Pastor Mathey, Mike Thompson, Mary Schultz, and Nick Pehlke volunteered to be on the committee. All are welcome. Motion made to have an investigating committee to figure out the costs to replace the floor of the Chancel. MMSP.

Pete VanDerLeest would like to replace windows in fire side room, narthex, and lower entry. A total of five are needed at a cost of approximately \$1,100 each. These will be purchased with donations since they are not a budgeted item. Let Pete know if you would like to donate by mid-February.

Motion made to adjourn. MMSP. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectively submitted, Cathy Schneider

St. John Monthly Council Meeting February 10, 2026

Linda Mueller called the meeting to order with Peter VanDerLeest, Cathy Schneider, Danni Seibert, Mary Schultz, Lloyd Schultz, Stephan Schneider, and Pastor Mathey present. Pastor Mathey opened with prayer.

A motion was made to accept the minutes from January 13, 2026. MMSP.

Pastor's Report

- ◆ *Lent begins on February 18th with Ash Wednesday with Holy Communion and imposition of ashes. Following Lenten services will be prayer services. "Places of the Passion" sermon series will be used. Pastor received continuing education credits and is now certified for Critical Incident Stress Management. This was the training he attended in January at Camp Luther.
- ◆ "Small Church Clarity" is a free District workshop that will be held once a month on a Tuesday afternoon in March, April, May, and June in Eau Claire. This can be attended by Pastor and 3-5 lay people.
- ◆ The Strunk/Mueller wedding is coming up on February 28, 2026.
- ◆ *New member class starts Sunday night at Bethlehem at 6:00pm.

Elders Report – No Report

Evangelism (Former Outreach) Report

- ◆ St. John will be hosting the blood drive on March 28, 2026.
- ◆ Planning on presenting the program "Everyone His Witness" on November 14, 2026.

Board of Education Report

- ◆ Youth will be hosting Lenten suppers on February 18, March 4, and March 18. Reminder that February 25, March 11, March 25 are available for other organizations to host suppers.
- ◆ Last Day of Sunday School and Graduation Recognition will be May 17, 2026.

Trustees Report

- ◆ Sump pump replaced in parsonage around Thanksgiving.
- ◆ Replaced church basement bathroom sump pump.
- ◆ Parsonage boiler quit during a cold spell. It is working again but will be checked later.

Treasurer's Report

- ◆ Detailed printed financial reports reviewed and discussed for January.
- ◆ Amount that has been received for the Refresh Project is \$52,514.35.
- ◆ Budget funding was met for January 2026.

Finance Report – No Report

Motion was made to accept all reports as given. MMSP.

Unfinished Business

- ◆ Pete VanDerLeest reported that money has been promised for all 5 windows by donors. Project will move forward.
- ◆ Chancel committee working on how to modify the chancel steps. Next meeting is February 21, 2026 at 9:00am.

New Business

- ◆ Issues Etc. has made available an audio commercial that can be used for churches locally. We could attach this to our website, Facebook page, or purchase a spot on radio.

Motion made to adjourn. MMSP.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Cathy Schneider, Recording Secretary

"Happenings in the District" - Check out our district (North WI District) monthly newsletter at www.nwdlcms.org. The website has plenty of church resources as well as event registrations, calendars and more. Each week highlights from around our district are added to the NWD Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nwdlcms

March 1, 2026 "The Fifth Act"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Through the Bible, God invites us to help Him complete the unfinished drama He's been writing for the world.—1 Corinthians 4:1

March 8, 2026 "What Was the Price on That?"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola

When we couldn't pay the price of our redemption, God did so completely by the life of Jesus.

-1 Corinthians 6:19-20

March 15, 2026 "No Command from the Lord"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Jesus is the only way to God, but with there are many adventures with Jesus. Which ones will you pick? -1 Co-

rinthians 7:6-7

March 22, 2026 "Meeting You Where You Are"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Gregory Manning

Jesus meets you where you are, not where you should have been. - 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

March 29, 2026 "Dime-Sized"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

God doesn't look for valuable, desirable, beautiful people so that He can love them. God loves first, and by loving them He makes people valuable, desirable, and beautiful.

1 Corinthians 13:11

Station City, State Freq. Day Time

WDLB	Marshfield, WI	1450 AM	Sun	8:00am
WRVM	Marshfield, WI	91.3 FM	Sun	10:00am
WRVM	Medford, WI	98.7 FM	Sun	10:00am
WRVM	Wausau, WI	101.3 FM	Sun	10:00am
WSAU	Wausau, WI	550 AM	Sun	8:30am
WSAU	Wausau, WI	99.9 FM	Sun	8:30am
WAXX	Altoona, WI	104.5 FM	Sun	6:30am

You can also go on line at www...lhm.org or download the free App @ LHM.ORG/APPS



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strengthen and encourage your faith as

you do the same for others. Have them delivered right to your inbox, podcast the audio devotional, access them on your mobile device through the FREE app, or listen with Spotify, iHeartRadio, Alexa, or Google Home.

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Lutheran Hour Ministries ~ God has called all laypeople to be powerful witnesses for Christ to their families and communities. At LHM, we strive to create convenient ways for you to connect with Jesus and share your faith with others. Our products are free, easy, and digital so that you can use them in your home, on-the-go, or wherever you may be.

HIGHER THINGS REFLECTIONS: Two minutes. It takes two minutes to read a daily *Reflection* full of the Gospel of Christ crucified for you. Each day you get a reading, a devotion, and a prayer to help you confront the devil, the world, and your own sinful flesh with hope in your Lord's victory over all of it.



Issues, Etc. is a ten-hour weekly syndicated radio talk show and podcast. The program features expert guests, expansive topics, while extolling Christ. The program is hosted by Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod



Bethlehem & St. John Lutheran Churches
119415 Huckleberry Road
Edgar, Wisconsin 54426
715-352-2888



*Where
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