

From The Pastor's Desk

"But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray."

Luke 5:15-16

As the Season of Lent now approaches, it was not easy to find a Paczki further out west. However, MI has plenty of these pastries and many are familiar with this pre-Lenten delight. The

appearance of these deep fried donuts from the Polish heritage signal what would soon be the opposite. A time of fasting from lard, sugar, and other designated foods for Lent. Of course, the Paczki cannot escape our capitalistic market. They are now up for sale like any other product to consume even apart from the season.

The relation of eating certain foods prior to Lent might be lost, but Lent still holds that emphasis of repentance, fasting, and alms giving (charity/mercy). These all help to redirect the Christian life during Lent to go in a way different from the world being humility, denial, and service. Yet, as much as these are important to consider, another aspect often forgotten during Lent is how Gods relates to us. He goes the way of the cross, which invokes increased worship, prayer and attentiveness to His Word.



As the glory of reports and miracles increased over Jesus during His ministry, always remember they never kept Him from prayer. The Son never let such glory consume the perfect relationship He had with the Father. This was necessary since the true report to go out and miracle would turn out to be Christ as the sacrifice for a sinful world. Jesus in relationship to His disciples shared the value of prayer for their livelihood even before the His death saying, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46).

During the reformation times, lay people were lost in praying to saints and over those in purgatory. The Devil had a heyday that cut justification off from God's grace to save sinners. Luther revived how the firm foundation for prayer had nothing to do with prayer at all, but purely Christ and faith in the Gospel. He redirected prayer to have a bigger purpose than many see even today. "For Luther, prayer involves spiritual warfare, and the catechism is weaponry for this battle, both defensively and offensively." What the Small Catechism still gives Christians is a compact Bible to listen and speak to God in what He says as well as to fight off the Devil.

As we journey through the season of Lent, the order of service called, "Compline" or "Prayer at the Close of the Day" will be a guide. The shape of this service will help us as the baptized at St. John to be rooted in God's Word, grow, in Christ's love, branch out to serve and bear fruits of faith. Before the darkness that ends any day, we can pray commending all things to God especially the griefs, sins, and struggles of life. Our mid-week sermons series during Lent will confirm to who we pray is, "The Great 'I Am." The only true God is not merely a name revealed, but God's love in action to forgive, redeem, and save sinners. By the Father sending His Son to be the sacrifice, the Holy Spirit gives us the confidence to pray all our days. The shape of this service will help us as the baptized at St. John to be rooted in God's Word, grow in Christ's love, branch out to serve, and bear fruits of faith. Before the darkness that ends any day, we can pray commending all things to God especially the griefs, sins and struggles of life. Our mid-week sermon series during Lent will confirm to WHO we pray is, "The Great 'I Am."

Blessed Lent,

Dear Cardinal Families,

We end our short month of February with enthusiasm and engagement. Our students this past month had done several STEM projects school wide. Whether it was preschool doing volcanoes or the middle school dissecting sheep hearts we are committed to hands-on learning here at St. John's. Along with STEM this past school year we introduced Inquiry Based Learning in our Social Studies classes. Students have been showing improvement on their critical thinking and writing skills with this new curriculum.

As we begin March there will be more opportunities in STEM learning with another Lutheran school coming to Amelith. We will also be starting March Reading Month. There are a lot of varying activities that the school will be partaking in during this month. Anyone interested in reading to the students please contact the main office and we will get you scheduled to do so.

Martin Luther once stated, "Every book is a great action and every great action is a book!" As we enter reading month try to take some time to read with your son/daughter, grandson/granddaughter, niece/nephew, or yourself. My wife and I will be selecting a book a week to read together. The faculty and staff at St. John's are excited for the different reading activities to come.



CMS President Harrison letter about U.S. immigration and Lutheran organizations

Some facts and reflections about the confusing and complex situation surrounding Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and LCMS Recognized Service Organizations

February 6, 2025

Dear Saints of the LCMS, Grace and peace in Jesus!

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph. 1:15–23)

As many of you are aware, General Mike Flynn (retired) publicly took to task Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and several other Lutheran social ministry agencies for receiving large federal grants for work with immigrants. That got the attention of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). I was surprised at the dollar amounts involved. The post on X accused LIRS and the other agencies bearing the name Lutheran of "money laundering." I am writing to provide you with some facts about this complex and confusing situation. The LCMS is a law-abiding and patriotic church body. We don't invite or support illegal immigration. We don't say much to or about the government. We don't have government contracts. Not one. We leave issues of government to our 1.8 million members and 5,700 active pastors, who

act in the civil realm according to their Christian consciences as good citizens. We have spoken as a body to certain issues. The Bible and reason teach us that the unborn have the God-given right to life (Luke 1:39–45). The government has no right to infringe upon religious freedom, including the free exercise of religion. "Thoughts are tax free!" said Martin Luther. All our people are trained from Sunday school and catechism class, and every Sunday sermon, to be good citizens and advocate for just laws, punishment for evildoers and mercy for those in need. Specific views on the details of how the government is involved in this are left to the individual as a citizen. The LCMS uses legal means to fight for First Amendment rights when those rights are under attack. We have suffered formal legal action and much more as we have watched as DEI philosophy (formally rejected by our church body along with white supremacy) has pervaded nearly every aspect of government activity, even as the U.S. government has burgeoned beyond all ethical and rational propriety, in effect stealing the future from our children. We've been inundated with government attacks on those First Amendment rights. This subjects us to anxiety in the workplace, fear and lack of promotion in the military, and constant attacks at public schools and universities for merely following the Bible and sound reason on matters of sex. Our children are subjected to coercion at public schools. Millions of fellow Lutheran saints around the globe are chagrined at U.S. embassies and programs preoccupied with LGBTQ issues in their many different countries, as this program has been carried out globally.

The LCMS loves all people. We believe "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). We are sinners loved by Christ. And Christ bids us, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 19:19). When our congregations, pastors and people come into contact with individuals who are not legally in the U.S., particularly when such individuals find themselves in our churches, we welcome them. We tell them about Jesus' forgiveness. We also always urge and often assist them in doing the right thing, that is, becoming legal residents. The LCMS is officially pro-immigrant. Our church was founded by German immigrants.

The LCMS is no longer part of LIRS. At its inception, LIRS assisted with the resettlement of many Europeans suffering the devastation of WWII. We still have many people in our church who were children in the late 1940s and early 1950s, who were resettled in the U.S. by LIRS in partnership with our local congregations. They are eternally grateful. That partnership happened again in a remarkable way in the 1970s with many southeast Asians in the wake of the Vietnam War. LIRS was at one time officially related to a number of American Lutheran church bodies, with specific board positions reserved for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and LCMS representatives. As the ELCA over Flynn's post, many of our LCMS people are wandered away from the clear biblical teachings on sexual morality, this and other intersections of the ELCA and the LCMS (such as Lutheran Disaster Response, institutional chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, Lutheran World Relief and so on) became ever more challenging. As LIRS secularized, it hired a non-Christian, Hindu person to serve as president and CEO. The agency reorganized to become fully independent of its former partner church bodies. This diminished Lutheran identity is reflected in its new name, Global Refuge. For the past five years, the LCMS has provided no funding to LIRS and has provided no official representation on the board. The post-WWII push within the LCMS toward

one Lutheran church body in America that precipitated the disastrous events of the Concordia Seminary Walkout in 1974 brought the LCMS into the Lutheran Council USA, and into various cooperative agencies. Lutheran World Relief likewise became and remains a rebranded independent entity apart from the LCMS. Like LIRS, it does charitable work as a government contractor. There is no specifically Christian content, no sharing of the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. More than a decade ago, I was part of an LCMS delegation that attended what would be our last Committee on Lutheran Cooperation meeting at the ELCA headquarters in Chicago. The ELCA bishop prayed, avoiding "Father" and "Son" in his prayer. I told him that we would no longer meet. Among other things, including the ELCA's teachings and statements on sexuality, I told him, "I'm no longer sure we are praying to the same God." It is difficult enough to carry out what we call "cooperation in externals" (for in-

stance, doing mercy work together without church fellowship for the benefit of people in need) when we no longer agree on what the Gospel is. It is impossible when we can't even agree on what the Law is.

The LCMS grants special status to certain agencies as Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs). Like LIRS, we have no ownership of, governing authority over or hand in the financial management of such agencies. They are independently audited. Some of the organizations on the list circulated by Flynn for public scrutiny are LCMS RSOs and at the same time retain affiliation with the ELCA. Because of the public uproar asking for a review of these RSOs. Rightly so. We are following up on these concerns. To maintain RSO status in the LCMS, an agency must agree to "[respect] and ... not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod." In short, our RSOs are not to give themselves over to ELCA doctrine and practice.

Let me just note (and this is NOT an official position of the LCMS): I'm personally pleased with DOGE. The federal government is bloated beyond all rational limits. It can't fund its activities without accumulating debt. And it's failing in its basic tasks. Christians believe the government should protect its citizens, maintain just laws, prosper marriage and family, and punish criminals. I think the government is failing across the board. The bigger government becomes, the more it meddles in what should not be its business at all, such as promoting faddish, unscientific philosophies of sex and family to the detriment of those who in good conscience cannot agree and never will agree no matter the coercion. I'm sure that General Flynn meant well with his muckraking, but he misses the mark in two ways. First, though I do not agree philosophically with every operational aspect of LIRS, if there is something legally amiss, the blame falls squarely upon the federal government. LIRS — and even our own LCMS RSOs — simply does what the government asks and pays for them to do. During his first term, President Trump and the First Lady visited one of the LCMS RSOs currently under scrutiny. The president wanted to ensure that the institution would be a place to deliver outstanding care to unaccompanied minors. That agency has been quietly doing this work

since that visit. They take the work with profound seriousness and love. They did not and do not deserve the broad brush of disdain brought upon them. Second, our immigration laws are a mess. I can safely say our LCMS people are all for removing criminal bad actors from this country. Caesar "beareth not the sword in vain" says St. Paul (Rom. 13:4). There are indeed millions who have broken federal immigration law. That is wrong. It is also true that millions have been enticed and encouraged to enter illegally into this country by contradictory American voices at all levels: federal, state and local. I cannot but be sympathetic to their plight. At the same time, a well-regulated border, sound immigration policy, and welcoming space for persecuted refugees are all fundamental parts of a God-pleasing answer to the question: Who will contribute to this marvelous and blessed American experiment? Blessings to you all. In Christ, Pastor Matthew C. Harrison, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis

75 Years of Musical Excellence

Concordia Publishing House

February 1, 2025, marked the 75th anniversary of Concordia Publishing House's Music department. That's three-quarters of a century dedicated to publishing organ, choral, and handbell settings. Almost a lifetime of bringing you hymnals and music books to enhance your personal playing or congregational offerings. In celebration of these 75 years, we wanted to share some fun facts and questions. Put your knowledge to the test and see how much you know below.

How long has CPH been publishing music? Trick question! CPH has *always* published music, from our very first day in 1869 when we took over publishing the Synod's German hymnal. Yet, back then, there was no Music department. It wasn't until 1950 that the few people who made up the scarce part-time music team became their own department. Edward Klammer was hired as the first full-time staff dedicated strictly to music on February 1, 1950.

What is the oldest setting still in print? This piece even predates the founding of the Music department by five years. "Lord, Let at Last Thine Angels Come" from 1945 by Hans Leo

Hassler is still available to purchase today. It was written for double chorus and is an important part of our musical history at CPH. Take a look at the setting below!

What was the first setting the Music department published? Under Klammer, the first setting was "Hosanna to the Son of David" by Andreas Raselius. When it was first released, the setting only cost \$0.24 to purchase. While it's no longer available, this collection edited by Carl Schalk features a setting by Andreas Raselius so you can see the beauty of his historic compositions.

How many hymnals has CPH published? Five! Starting in 1847, with Kirchen-Gesang-Buch für Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden, all the way to today's hymnal, Lutheran Service Book, the team has been very busy. That doesn't count the numerous variations each hymnal has received throughout the years either, such as Lutheran Service Book: Devotional Edition and Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns. See the team's hard work and dedication by viewing all of the hymnals available below.

When was the CPH Music YouTube Channel founded? 2016 is when our very first video was published, and since then we've continued to grow! Originally started as a way to share audio of newly released music, now it contains interviews from composers, playlists for home use, and seasonal reading sessions with curated lists for your church. Subscribe to see when we publish new videos or interviews.

What composer worked with CPH for more than 60 years? Carl Schalk (1929–2021). He was a prolific composer whose settings and contributions to Worship Supplement (1969), Lutheran Book of Worship (1978), and Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns shaped much of today's Lutheran hymnody. He composed hundreds of hymn tunes, many of which we are honored to have published. A huge congratulations to the CPH Music department on their 75th anniversary. With God's blessings, we hope to see them continue to thrive for many more years to come.

https://blog.cph.org/worship/75-years-of-musical -excellence

The World Famous Amelith Valentine's

Chicken BBQ was a huge success again this year! Although the day started out snowy, windy and terrible it makes for a great barbecue day. We served more than 360 dinners raising over \$4000 for the fund development debt elimination. Thank you for all of our volunteers! The inside kitchen help; wrapping potatoes, getting the coleslaw ready, putting the bread in the bags, and serving up all the desserts just to mention a few things. The outside help; setting up the barbecues, getting the fires going, plowing snow, and cooking the chicken. The real star of the show is all of the volunteers who baked and brought goodies for the desserts; they were all delicious! Without all of our volunteers, none of this would be possible. Thanks and praise be to God for our Congregation. Vinny Revord

St. John Amelith presents Our pizza fundraiser!!



It's Pizza! Pizza! Time! Time for you, your friends, and your family to stock up with Little Caesars Pizza Kits! Have them on hand for quick dinners, parties or entertaining! They're fun to make and delicious to eat!

For every kit we sell, SJA will get \$6.00.

All proceeds raised by the 7th & 8th graders will go towards their class trip. The rest raised assists in funding educational outings, activities throughout the year and staff appreciation as well as many other miscellaneous projects.

If you choose to place order online, fundraiser ID is 457304. Order will still be shipped to St. John Amelith School for pickup.

Please keep the following dates in mind: Sale starts: Monday, March 3rd Sale ends: Friday March 28th

Pick up: Orders will be in the week of April 14th, but we do not have a scheduled day yet.

Please turn in all orders and money (cash or check) to the school office by Friday, March 28th. Please have all checks made payable to "St. John Amelith". If you have any questions please feel free to contact Jackie Town (989)274-0880.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ST. JOHN PTO!!!

The **Annual Report** for 2024 has been printed and Hutter. is available at church. Thank you to all who submitted reports! Molly

Lenten Suppers Schedule

March 5th....youth, sloppy Joe's

March 12th....potluck

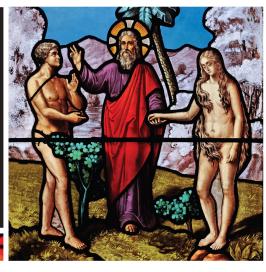
March 19th....LWML, pizza

March 26th....Elders, pulled pork

April 2nd......Board of Ed, pasta

April 9th......Altar Guild, hot dogs





March 22, 2025 We are hosting a seminar with Doxology presenting "Navigating Christian Sexuality in a Post-Christian Culture. With the legal redefinition of marriage, the confusion regarding gender, and rapidly changing sexual mores in society, biblical educators, pastors, singles, couples, and parents are looking for guidance in articulating and promoting a positive view of the Christian vision for marriage and sexuality. Please visit our website to register and save your seat. The conference will be featuring speakers Rev. David Fleming and Dr. Beverly Yahnke from Doxology.

- Christian Worldview and Sexuality
- Caring for the Child who Identifies as Transgender
- GPS Essentials for Traveling through Difficult Conversations
- Light in the Darkness: Christian Responses to Conflict in a Sexually Toxic Culture

Lunch will be provided. To register scan the QR code, go to www.amelith.org, see the event on Facebook or see Deb Hutter







Come and see what makes SJA so special.

Current and prospective families can tour the school, visit classrooms, chat with the teachers, staff and board of education and ask questions.

Pop and popcorn for everyone and each student will receive a goodie bag!!

Can't wait to see you there!

St. John Amelith Church and School 1664 Amelith Rd. Bay City, MI 48706 989-686-0176 www.amelith.org



Lenten Season 2025

Ash Wednesday Service Lenten Supper @ 5:00pm March 5, 2025 @ 6:00pm

Mid-week Lent Events
Wednesdays, March 12-April 9
Lenten Supper @ 5:00pm
Evening Prayer Service @ 6:00 pm

Confirmation Examination Night April 3 @ 6:00pm

Palm Sunday Divine Service April 13 @ 9:30am Confirmation Sunday

Maunday Thursday Service April 17 @ 6:00pm

Good Friday Tenebrae Service April 18 @ 7:00 pm

Easter Divine Service April 20 @ 9:30 am

The elders invite you to join us this Lenten season as we walk together in humility to joy of Easter Sunday. Come hear the holy gospel of sins forgiven as we repent of sin and look to Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God and His great sacrifice. We encourage you to receive the true body and blood that Jesus delivers in the Lord's Supper. The peace of our Lord and Savior be with you this time of the year and all your days!

The Elders of St. John Amelith

Book of Concord Lenten Reading Plan

A Forty-Day Reading Plan from Concordia Publishing House

Page numbers, given in parentheses, reference Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, second edition (Concordia Publishing House, 2006).



D	1						
	DATE	LITURGICAL DATE	READING	<u> </u>	DATE	LITURGICAL DATE	READING
	5-Mar	Ash Wednesday	The Three Ecumenical Creeds (16–18);	2	26-Mar W	Wednesday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIII–XX (184–201)
	2	Thursday after Ash	-	2	27-Mar Th	Thursday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXI–XXII (202–10)
	6-Mar	Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Preface-Part I, para. // (351-6/)	2	28-Mar Fr	Friday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXIII (210–18)
-	7-Mar	Friday after Ash Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 78–178 (367–78)	2	29-Mar Sa	Saturday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXIV (220–37)
	8-Mar	Saturday after Ash Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 179–291 (379–92)	М	30-Mar Le	Lent 4	
	9-Mar	Lent 1		m	31-Mar M	Monday, Lent 4	Apology: Art. XXVII–XXVIII (237–51)
	10-Mar	Monday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 292–Part II, para. 70 (392–	-	1-Apr Tu	Tuesday, Lent 4	Smalcald Articles: Preface—Part III, Art. II (259–72)
	1 1 1	-	408)	2	2-Apr W	Wednesday, Lent 4	Smalcald Articles: Part III, Art. III–XV (272–85)
	II-IVIar	luesday, Lent I	Lutrier's Large Catechism: Part III, para: 1–64 (406–16)	κ'n	3-Apr Th	Thursday, Lent 4	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (294–306)
	12-Mar	Wednesday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part III, para. 85—Part IV, para. 86 (419—31)	4	4-Apr Fr	Friday, Lent 4	Preface to the Christian Book of Concord (3-12): Formula of Concord: Epitome Summary–Art. I (473–77)
	13-Mar	Thursday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part V (431–40); Brief Exhortation to Confession (649–53)	T.	5-Apr Sa	Saturday, Lent 4	Formula of Concord: Epitome Art. II–VII (477–91)
	14-Mar	Friday, Lent 1	Augsburg Confession: Preface–Art. XX (27–44)	9	6-Apr Le	Lent 5	
	15-Mar	Saturday, Lent 1	Augsburg Confession: Art. XXI–XXVI (44–53)	7	7-Apr M	Monday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Epitome Art. VIII—XII (491–502)
	16-Mar	Lent 2		00	8-Apr Tu	Tuesday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Introduction—Summary, Rule, and Norm (505—11)
	17-Mar	Monday, Lent 2	Augsburg Confession: Art. XXVII-Conclusion (53–63);	0	9-Apr W	Wednesday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. I (511–19)
			Apology: Greeting to Reader (73–74)	1	10-Apr Tł	Thursday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. II, para. 1–56 (520–30)
	18-Mar	Tuesday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. I–IV (74–102)	7	11-Apr Fr	Friday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. II, para. 57–Art. III, para. 25 (530–40)
	19-Mar	Wednesday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. V, para. 1–122 (102–18)	7,4	12-Apr Sa	Saturday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. III, para. 26–Art. IV, para. 40 (540–52)
	ZU-IMIar	ı nursday, Lent Z	Apology; Art. V, para. 123–212 (116–33)	(1)	13-Apr Pa	Palm Sunday	
	21-Mar	Friday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. V, para. 213–79 (133–43)	7	14-Apr M	Monday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. V–VI (552–61)
	22-Mar	Saturday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. VII-XI (143-57)	7,	15-Apr Tu	Tuesday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VII, para. 1–62 (561–73)
-	23-Mar	Lent 3		14	16-Apr W	Wednesday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VII, para. 63–128 (573–81)
	24-Mar	Monday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIIa (158–71)	1	17-Apr H	oly (Maundy) Thursday I	Holy (Maundy) Thursday Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VIII (581–96)
	25-Mar	Tuesday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIIb (171–84)	**	18-Apr G	Good Friday	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. IX–XI, para. 47 (596–609)
		©	© 2025 Concordia Publishing House	\$1	19-Apr H	Holy Saturday	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. XI, para. 48–Art. XII, Conclusion (609–19)

March Prayer Calendar

mentioned in our prayers. You can pray for them, the job they do, those who recieve or in whatever way you are Every day, let us include the person/position/event led.

Saturday	1 March Birthdays	8 K-2 students	15 Choir Members	22 Seminar	29 Treasurer	
Friday		7 Preschool Students	14 Finance Team	Outreach	28 SJA Parents	
Thursday		6 March Anniversaries	13 Principal	20 Trustees	27 Choir Members	
Wednesday		5 Lenten Supper Servers	12 Visiting Pastors	19 Pastor	26 Women's Bible Study Group	
Tuesday		4 Council Members	11 SJA Teachers	L8 Funeral Luncheon Volunteers	25 Elders	
Monday		3 March Altar Guild Servers	10 Quilters	17 Music Director	24 School Janitors	31 Morning and After Care
Sunday		2 Cemetary Crew	9 3-8 students	16 Confirmation Students	23 Church Mice	30 Sunday School Teachers