

Covenant News



March 2021

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

Toward the middle of March, “madness,” as they call it, will ensue. At least, that’s what sports (and gambling, for that matter) enthusiasts refer to the NCAA Division I basketball tournament that will include 68 teams from all over the country, competing in the annual set of single-elimination games leading up to a coveted national championship. Usually, the matchups would ensue in different stadium sites scattered across the nation.

This year, in hopes to minimize the chances of coronavirus outbreaks, the entire tournament will be hosted, rather fittingly, by the Hoosier state to the west of us.

As the story so goes, the game may have been invented by a YMCA instructor named, James Naismith, in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1892, but many of the aforementioned sports enthusiasts would say the sport came to life in Indiana. After all, baseball never took hold in the state. Football rosters could never be filled by all the small farming communities throughout Hoosier-land. But basketball?

It didn’t mess with the farming seasons. It was cheap, and it didn’t require nearly as many people to play. So, one of Naismith’s proteges from the YMCA named, Nicholas McCay, arrived in Crawfordsville, Indiana. He asked a local blacksmith to put together two metal rings for the rims and used cut-open coffee burlap sacks beneath them. On March 16, 1894, three hundred people watched the first “basket ball” game in the state, in the Terminal Building of Crawfordsville.

Almost as important of a date in Indiana’s history of adoration for the game was just over 90 years later: November 14, 1986. That’s when the film *Hoosiers* was released, about a basketball coach (played by Gene Hackman), with a rather questionable past, attempting to shape a small-town high school varsity team into a state championship contender. This movie had its fair share of VCR playing-time in our house with my brother being a decent basketball player, himself. And it is still played as inspiration by plenty of coaches to their teams across the country.

One of the players in the movie is the son of a pastor, and one of the scenes that continues to stick with me (although I cannot tell you how many years it has been since I've actually watched it), is when the player is kneeling over in prayer before a game, the coach comes over and says, "Strap, God wants you on the floor." I cannot help but think of that line in terms of its real-life application to us: God wants us on the floor, in the action, in the life of the world.

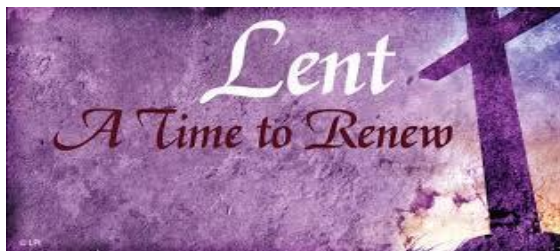
We always must be careful in this season of Lent with the "bulletin board" material we may subconsciously create as a church. We tend to focus on the bullet points of our sin, our broken humanity, and the pain our collective humanity unleashed on our Lord on the cross. It's not that we shouldn't recognize that we do, in fact, make mistakes that hurt God and our neighbors that God loves just as much at us. We are part of an imperfect humanity with rather misplaced priorities when it comes to basic human decency, to say the least. We realize that if we were in the crowds of Jesus' trial, we would have most certainly joined their fight song of "Crucify him!"

However, this season is not meant to make us feel so incredibly sorry for ourselves that we end up believing we don't belong on that court of the world at all. Or that we need have to a certain talent level or "natural giftedness" of faith depth, Bible-literacy, prayer eloquence, etc., in order to be "good enough" to be out there in service of any kind. We are part of a team that is not meant to be perfect, but we are perfectly loved, and perfectly set free from sin and death to go out with the same holy conviction that took our Savior to the cross and out of a tomb.

As the "madness" ensues, yet again, this year, there will be a wide range of talent, concentration, dedication, body language, not to mention young adults from different communities and all-around backgrounds. If only we could go along with the body of Christ being like that, too, as if we are all part of one family that God still loves beyond our wildest imagination: no matter where we are from, no matter what talents we bring to the court of God's Creation. Regardless, no matter what physical or spiritual condition we may be at any stage of this life, "God wants [us] on the floor." Amen (so let it be)!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

Image: "Hoosier Gym" used as the home court for Hickory in Hoosiers (Sidney Daily News)



We invite you to continue joining us through virtual means as we worship with our siblings in Christ of the Lutheran Church of the Master for our midweek Lenten gatherings. We will provide a separate email with two videos: one that will include prayer, a reading from Scripture, and a brief homily; the other will be Holden Evening Prayer, as we have sung together in recent years. We will provide a PDF of Holden Evening Prayer that you may use to sing along from home, or you may pick up a paper copy in the sanctuary, if you come for worship on Sunday mornings. Even through such circumstances, let us still offer our praises to this God of new life!



3/2 Alexandra King

3/2 Claudia Senderak

3/2 Marie Prendergast

3/4 Scott Spychola

3/5 Maren Dickey

3/11 Harry Werner

3/16 Deena Gaglione-Hernandez

3/19 Christopher Gaglione

3/24 Avery Lockmiller

3/24 Daralynn Constant

3/30 Toni Ridgell

3/31 Vanessa Petrakos(Besednjak)



Our worships for Saturday's at 5pm will return March 6, and will continue on the 1st and 3rd Saturday's of each month going forward (except April 3). The same protocols

will be in place as we have been doing for worships on Sunday.



For Palm Sunday (March 28), we will not gather at the back of the sanctuary for our usual joint-procession following the cross. We will worship at a safe distance from our pews as we have been doing.

Also, as of right now, we are planning on continuing worshipping virtually for Maundy Thursday (April 1) and Good Friday (April 2) with our siblings in Christ of Church of the Master. If so, those recordings for worship and a bulletin will be emailed to you and uploaded to our website.

Finally, we will do the same for Easter Vigil: a recording of the worship and a bulletin will be provided beforehand, which you can, then, use for worship from home that Saturday (April 3) evening or early Easter morning.

We will, then, worship in-person with the same protocols as we have been observing for Easter Sunday (April 4). Special music will be provided by a brass quintet and soloists. Yes, we wish we could worship on Easter with a full-scale celebration with everyone singing, but we continue to do our part to remain as safe as possible so that we may one day celebrate together all the more soon enough!



Unfortunately, we will NOT be hosting our annual Easter breakfast this year. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but we hope this ensures everyone's safety.



We will continue to do our part in providing the safest environment possible as the vaccines continue to be rolled out, knowing that risks still remain. We want everyone who worships with us to feel safe, so that they may focus on worshipping God with their whole heart. With that in mind, here is what to still expect (of course, all plans are subject to change, and we will do our best to inform you of any changes as soon as possible, through email, our website, Facebook page, and through our call-in Covenant Groups):

- You will be asked to wear a mask the entire time you are in the church building (unless you have a health condition that prevents you from doing so).
- Worship will be made shorter with the lack of air flow in the sanctuary during the colder months.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements in plastic cups will be available for you to pick up as you enter the back of the sanctuary.
- An offering basket will also be in the back of the sanctuary for you to drop your offerings into, as there will not be a time during worship for offering plates to be passed around.
- Blue X's have been placed in front of the pews to mark where we encourage you to sit to maintain physical distancing from those who are not of your household/family. Each spot also has hand sanitizer bottles on that respective pew.
- We will *not* be singing together as a congregation, as more published scientific studies reveal the harm with the potential spreading of aerosols/droplets.
- Also, for the bold print in the bulletin, we ask you speak in a whisper voice as opposed to speaking loudly as a group for the prayers of intercession responses, the Lord's Prayer, etc.
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, as well as no receiving line after worship with Pastor Brad. He will continue the monthly calling check-in's, but if you have anything you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact him.

We understand this may still seem extreme, but we will always err on the side of caution for our Covenant family's health and safety, including your individual family and friends whom you may come in contact with during the week. We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding as we take on this unique journey together with God's help to be sure. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Covenant council members.



Covenant's annual plant sale will still be taking place this spring.

We appreciate Arlene Lasher for still taking the lead to provide this wonderful opportunity for our Covenant family!

More information and forms will be available soon.



Don't forget the time change is

Sunday March 14

Spring ahead one hour!

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

March 2021

Sunday Servers	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5	6
				Holden Evening Prayer with YouTube video			5:00 Saturday Service at Covenant
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	7 9:00 Third Sunday In Lent	8	9 7:00 Council Meeting	10 Holden Evening Prayer with YouTube Video	11	12	13
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	14 9:00 Fourth Sunday in Lent Daylight Savings Time	15	16	17 Holden Evening Prayer with YouTube Video	18	19	20 5:00 Saturday Service at Covenant
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	21 -9:00 Fifth Sunday in Lent	22	23	24 Holden Evening Prayer with YouTube Video	25 Community Meal Pick-Up 4:30-6:00 pm	26	27
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susaneck	28 9:00 Palm Sunday	29	30	31	April 1 Maundy Thursday	April 2 Good Friday	April 3
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susaneck	April 4 9:00 Easter Sunday	April 5	April 6	April 7	April 8	April 9	April 10

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The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

