

March , 2022

**MARK: MY WORDS**

It is the least-known of the Triduum, or Holy Week, liturgies. We all grew up attending Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services in our home congregations. In many cases they were among the most well-attended services of the year, but the Easter Vigil on Saturday was unknown to us. Holy Saturday was as empty of worship as was the tomb of Jesus on which we focused the next morning on Easter.

I do not have specific data at hand; but in my own experience, it seemed as though the Vigil gained acceptance with the work of the commission that formulated the “green hymnal” or *Lutheran Book of Worship* in the 1970s. The Vigil had, of course, been celebrated within the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Orthodox traditions for many centuries. In the commission’s effort to drag Lutheranism into a fuller ecumenical experience, the service was introduced to Lutheran congregations in *LBW;* and its popularity began to grow.

In its entirety, it is the longest liturgy of the church year. There are twelve possible readings from the Old Testament; the Blessing of the New Fire; the Procession into the darkened nave meant to represent entering the tomb of Jesus; the Great *Exsultet* or Easter Proclamation; Baptism(s) or the Affirmation of Baptism if there are no candidates; the Great Litany of the Saints; the First Proclamation of Easter, the Easter Gospel, and the Eucharist.

The purpose of the service, as stated in the *Manual on the Liturgy* for the *LBW* is:

“The climax of the sacred triduum that began on Maundy Thursday is reached in this service that abounds in archetypal imagery that evokes responses from deep within the human psyche: darkness and light, death and life, chaos and order, slavery and freedom. The cross is vindicated as the Lord’s throne (already prefigured on Good Friday), and the fullness of salvation finds expression—creation and redemption, old covenant and new covenant, Baptism and Eucharist.

Through the Word, the sacraments are revealed as symbols of God’s salvation of humanity. This most holy Night is the solemn memorial of the central mystery of salvation—Christ’s saving death and mighty rising.” (p. 326)

Because this liturgy is so relatively new to Lutherans, many do not understand its place in the Three Days. It is usually not well-attended, partially because of its length; although for those who do participate, it is often their favorite service of the church year. All of this is raised here in an effort to familiarize our worshipers with the rich Scriptural basis for the service. We will use five of the twelve readings as the basis for our mid-week Lenten Service of Evening Prayer this Lent. (see below)

These are some of the best-known stories of the Old Testament that we often do not hear during our regular three-year series of readings. The hope is that by revisiting these stories and hearing a brief homily on them, more people will be enticed to join us for this beautiful and powerful service that leads us into the celebration of The Resurrection. Regardless of whether that ends up being the case, these rich stories will enrich our Lenten journey and prepare us for the majesty of all our Holy Week liturgies.

We hope you will join us on the dates below and in April as we rehearse and celebrate the grand sweep of God’s work of rescuing, renewing, and recreating us and the whole creation.

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**FIRST COMMUNION INSTRUCTION**

Last year we did not have any students register for First Communion classes; but Lent is the time for such instruction, so we are offering that opportunity again. Children of any age who are not currently communing are invited to participate in these three classes. Parents or grandparents who wish their children to receive this teaching may contact the church office (219-874-7293) and register them. Pastor will contact the parents and arrange for instruction that will meet everyone’s schedule.



Easter is late this year (April 17), which means that Ash Wednesday does not fall until the beginning of March (March 2). As we have in the past, we will mark this most solemn Day of the year with two services of The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.

**New this year will be the offering of a morning service at 10:00 a.m.** It will still be dark by the time of the evening service, and there are a good number of people who either cannot or do not wish to drive and be out at night. In order not to prevent them from participating in this important beginning to our Lenten renewal, it was decided that we would hold a service also during the day.

This will *not* be a “Senior Communion” service as we have held during Advent and on Maundy Thursday. The service will be mostly spoken except for the hymns, and The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion will be offered. Worshipers will be asked to come forward to receive both the ashes and Communion as we regularly do at Saturday and Sunday services. Those who are unable to come forward may remain in their pews, and I and the assisting minister will come to them with either the ashes or the bread and wine. The evening service will begin at 7:00 p.m.

An important part of the service that is often overlooked is the Confession which precedes The Imposition of Ashes. Careful attention to the service will reveal that *there is no Absolution given.* Nor is it pronounced during the Saturday and Sunday services of Lent. It is only offered on Maundy Thursday when Lent has ended and the forty-days of repentance, self-examination and reflection upon our sinfulness has been completed.

Last year we were unable to gather in-person for Ash Wednesday and had to settle for The Imposition as people drove up in the parking lot (it was *cold* on that Day!!!). This year, unless there is a dramatic shift in COVID cases from what we are seeing now, we will once again be able to be together for worship.

That is the intent of the service: we make our confession not only personally and individually but also *communally.* We acknowledge how we as the *People* of God have turned from Him and one another and the hurt, separation, and damaging division that has caused.

We invite and encourage you to join us as together we begin our Lenten journey of renewal and refreshment that leads us to the cross, the empty tomb, and new, resurrection Life.



**MID-WEEK WORSHIP**

As mentioned above, we will utilize five of the twelve Easter Vigil readings as the basis for our mid-week services of Evening Prayer. Once again, the musical setting will be Marty Haugen’s beloved “Holden Evening Prayer.” Since normally there is no sermon at the Vigil because of the sheer number of lessons, each week there will be a short homily on the chosen text to further flesh its promise out and locate it within the story of God’s relentless seeking out of humanity to rescue it and restore it from the powers of sin, evil, and death.

**All services begin at 6:30 p.m.** The dates and themes of the services are as follows:

Wednesday, March 9 “Creation” Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Wednesday, March 16 “The Flood” Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13

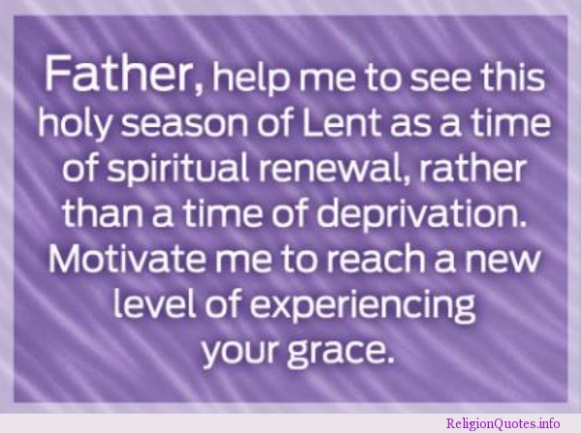
Wednesday, March 23 “Deliverance at the Sea” Exodus14:10-31; 15:20-21

Wednesday, March 30 “Salvation Offered Freely to All” Isaiah 55:1-11

Wednesday, April 6 “The Valley of the Dry Bones” Ezekiel 27:1-14

There is a risk in offering these sometimes lengthy readings. Those who attend the mid-week services often also attend the Vigil, and to hear some of them twice within a short time may seem excessive. Hopefully, with the aid of the homily each week, a deeper understanding of the texts will come through the repetition and make the worship at the Vigil even more meaningful. For those who have not attended the Vigil before, perhaps hearing these beautiful and defining stories will be enough to encourage them to hear them within the context of this beautiful liturgy.

We hope you will join us for both our mid-week examination of these readings and the fuller worship of the Easter Vigil.



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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Red Cross blood drives have been scheduled for **Thursday, April 28,** and **Tuesday, July 26*,*** in the St. Paul Room. There is a critical shortage of blood right now, and one pint of blood can help up to three people. Please consider donating if you are able to do so. More information will be available as these dates draw near.

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**SENIOR COMMUNION**

Last year we did not offer an Advent or Lenten Senior Communion because of the pandemic, **but we will hold it this year on Maundy Thursday at 10:00 a.m.** As before, the service will be spoken except for hymns; and Communion will be offered to worshipers remaining in their seats.

Usually, this service is followed by a delicious lunch prepared and served by the Altar Guild. Because of continuing restrictions about food prepared at home and brought to another location, we will not have a full lunch; but there will be coffee and cookies served afterwards in the St. Paul Room to allow for fellowship time. As for worship, masks and good distancing will be required.

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Although the April newsletter will be published before the end of Lent and Easter it might be helpful to have an early preview of Holy Week and Easter worship services:

**April 9—4:00 p.m. Saturday of the Passion/Palm Saturday**

Procession with Palms; Holy Communion; the Passion according to St. Luke

**April 10—9:00 a.m. Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday**

Procession with Palms; Holy Communion; the Passion according to St. Luke

**April 14—10:00 a.m. Maundy Thursday Senior Communion**

**April 14—7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday**

Foot Washing; Holy Communion; Stripping of the Altar

**April 15—12:00-3:00 p.m. Good Friday**

Tre Ore worship on “The Seven Last Words of Christ”

**April 15--7:00 p.m. Good Friday**

Service of the Word; the Passion according to St. John

**April 16—7:00 p.m. Holy Saturday**

The Great Vigil of Easter; the lighting of the new fire; Holy Communion

**April 17—9:00 a.m. Easter Sunday**

The Resurrection according to St. Luke; Holy Communion



**March Birthdays March Anniversaries**

2 Dave Sutor 23 Wayne & Suzann Dolson

4 Andrew Hahn 24 Marvin & Diane Dirks

5 Madeline Henderson 25 Larry & Judy Litchford

Jedediah Ottersen

6 Devin Devereaux

Gail Leffew

11 Judy LaBorn

Casey Neulieb

12 Thomas Thomas

14 Jean Warner

15 Lora Brooks

16 Brian Summa

17 Dale Prybylla

24 Megan Osowski

25 Mary Bennett

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**Daylight Savings Time begins**

**Sunday, March 13.**



**IN MEMORY OF RUTH LUBS**

**General Fund** from Jim & Bernadette Krueger, Susan Bagby, Andrew & Laura Tiebert

**IN MEMORY OF SUE BIGGS**

**General Fund** from Jim & Bernadette Krueger

**IN HONOR OF JOYCE MANNING**

**Capital Improvement Fund** from her daughter, Bethany Manning

**IN HONOR OF CLINT POWELL’S BIRTHDAY ON JANUARY 18**

**Capital Improvement Fund** from Maxine Powell

**IN MEMORY OF JOAN COUGHLIN**

**General Fund** from Jm & Bernadette Krueger, Bob & Karen Kiser, Carol Radke, Kay Peglow,

Donna Ottersen, Diane Gielow, Beverly Johnson, Jim & sandy Galinowski

**Capital Improvement Fund** from Richard & Karen Fleming

**Quilting Fund** from Charlie & Carol Thomas, Jr.; Charles & Jana Thomas, Sr.; Maxine Powell

**Soup Kitchen Fund** from Janet Bakken

**WELCA** from Virginia Murray, Brad & Chris Kiser, Brad & Kelly Neulieb, Patricia Ioannacci, Geisen-Carlisle Funeral Home, Stephen & Lauretta Hapke, Dave & Nancy Squires, Ivye Benson, Muriel Jacobi, Cheryl Hancock, Barbara Reed, Colleen Taylor

**IN MEMORY OF PRISCILLA LADWIG**

**General Fund** from Susan Bagby



We would like thank everyone so much for your love, concern, generosity, and prayers during this difficult time. It is so comforting to know that so many people are pulling for us as we transition into this new chapter of our lives. Our church family has always been very important to us, but we have been overwhelmed by your demonstration of love. We can actually feel the prayers! There is an old song entitled *They will Know We are Christians by Our Love.* Indeed, this the case at St. Paul’s. We love you all so much, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Sincerely, Mark and Jary Tannehill



**Long-Term Prayer List**

Robert Atwood Audrey Beyer Irene Bohnstadt

Donna Bostaer Sherry Brotsky Laura Dovey

Laura Eilers-Straight Marta Furness Diane Gielow

Jim Gleason Ed Gustum Dolores Hackett

Heidi Happel Patsy Humbers Terry Hygema

Jess Kalvaitis Christine Kiser Ryan Krueger

Tom & Larry Leuth Pastor Al Lorentzen Bethany Manning

Christian Martinez Gene Marty Laura Moore

Ken Mulder Shane Nevels Duane Ormsby

George Ottersen Jan Paholski Kay Peglow

Cameron Rackard Ed Riddle Annette Scoggins

Knox Shepherd Ryan Sirk Wally & Betty Tarliff

Erik Tannehill Jary Tannehll Kathy Thielman

Jean Thomas Lee Timm Linda Utley

Venia Wendt Chris Weninger



Monday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

**St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Staff**

Pastor Mark Reshan

Organist John Remmel

Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

Choir Director Lori Zylstra

Office Secretary Libby Pollock

Custodian Mark Kloess

School Principal Tracey McCay

School Office Coordinator Lisa Heddens

School Custodian



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Thank$ for $haring

This month,we will see you at Swingbelly’s! We’re giving you two coupons so you can invite a friend and give them their own coupon. Remember, the coupon is required for the Give-Back bucks.

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