

March, 2025

**MARK: MY WORDS**

 Occasionally, there is a method to the madness 😏. In last month’s newsletter, it was announced that the theme for the mid-week Wednesday services of Holden Evening Prayer would be “Continuing in the Covenant of Baptism.” The title is taken from part of the Baptismal/Affirmation of Baptism liturgy in which the parents and sponsors of the child or the candidate who is able to answer for themselves are asked a series of questions about their intentions to live out the call the Sacrament places upon us.

 To quote the title from a resource to instruct persons into the basics of Lutheran teaching, “Baptized, We *Live.*” We are drawn *into* the Body of Christ through water and the Holy Spirit in order to *be* His Body for the life and good of the world. The questions are meant to remind all who are gathered around the font that Baptism is not a “once-and-done” but a life-long way of bearing witness to the Jesus to Whom we have now been irrevocably joined.

 The reason this theme was chosen is because on every first week in Lent the Gospel reading from either Matthew, Mark, or Luke is their account of Jesus’ own Baptism, followed immediately by His temptation in the wilderness by the devil. We begin the six weeks that make up the Lenten journey by being assured that we do not face our own temptations or times in the wilderness alone.

 We constantly need to hear that promise. In Luke’s account that we will hear, Jesus fasts for forty days during His time in the wilderness; and at the end of that time, we are told that “He was famished.” Jesus is as empty as the desert in which He has been “tempted by the devil” the entire forty days.

 We have noted before that the Hebrew word for “wilderness” literally means “the place of no words.” The danger, the hunger, the thirst that abounds in such a place can leave one speechless in the face of its assaults on the body and the spirit. The flip-side can also be true. Not only may the one in the wilderness find it impossible to articulate their suffering, but there is *also* no Word from *God.* For, as also previously noted, it was believed that the wilderness was devoid of God’s presence.

 So, Jesus’ only weapon against the hunger and thirst and danger and the relentless temptations is the *last* Word that He heard before being “led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” It is the Word of His Baptism. In Luke, that is “You are My Son, the Beloved; with You I am well-pleased.” That was all Jesus had to bring with Him against the temptations, but it was enough. It sustained Him all the way through His life and ministry, even into His death on the cross.

 It is the same Word from *our* Baptism that we take into the daily temptations and trials and suffering that living in the wilderness of this world brings. It sustains and strengthens us when those times and circumstances can make us feel anything *but* God’s “beloved, well-pleasing” sons and daughters.

 That, in turn, enables us to serve as companions to others as they struggle through their desert times. We walk with them; we encourage them; we pray with and for them; sometimes we are simply present when neither we nor they have any words for what they are experiencing. That is what “living in the covenant of Baptism” means and involves. That is what we will explore through Scripture and song and brief homilies in our mid-week services of Evening Prayer.

 Who knows? Maybe just *being* there is a way to begin to fulfill that Baptismal calling. Come join us.



**ASH WEDNESDAY JOINT WORSHIP**

 As you know, the good people at First United Methodist have been displaced from their building for a number of months as it is being thoroughly cleaned from a spill of oil from their elevator pump. They have been worshiping on Sunday mornings at Rittenhouse. Pastor Nichols asked me when our Ash Wednesday services were to be held because she believed that Rittenhouse had activities on Wednesdays that would preclude them using their normal space.

 So, we invited her and the congregation to join us for worship on that Day. Since she believes that most of her people will attend our evening service at 7 p.m., I have invited her to preach at that service. She may also participate in some way at the 10 a.m. service depending on what she is able to do with her folks at Rittenhouse.

 We have worshiped before with people from First Presbyterian, but to my recollection, not with the people from First United Methodist Church. I know what you will warmly welcome them and make them feel at home as we begin our Lenten journey together.



 As noted last month, here are the dates and themes for the services of Holden Evening Prayer:

**Wednesday, March 12** “To Live Among God’s Faithful People”

**Wednesday, March 19** “To Hear the Word of God and Share in the Lord’s Supper”

**Wednesday, March 26** “To Proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through

 Word and Deed”

**Wednesday, April 2** “To Serve All People, Following the Example of Jesus”

**Wednesday, April 9** “To Strive for Justice and Peace in All the Earth”

 **All services will begin at 6:00 p.m.** and will conclude by 6:30 p.m. As always, we hope you will attend these liturgies as part of your Lenten discipline and preparation for Holy Week and Easter.



**HOLY WEEK WORSHIP**

It is not too early to post the times and services of our Holy Week worship services so that you may get them on your calendar. We will remind you of them again next month.

You may recall that last year the Worship Committee eliminated the 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday service because of continued poor attendance over the last several years. Most of the people attending worship on that day have been coming to the morning service. There is no reason to assume that trend will change, **so again this year there will be no Maundy Thursday evening service.**

 Last year we also canceled the Good Friday Tre Ore service since it was becoming increasingly difficult to find seven pastors available and willing to take one of the “Seven Last Words from the Cross.” A number of them either ignored my invitations or promised to come but then did not show up.

 So, once again this year on Good Friday **there will be only one service at 7:00 p.m.** The Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday will also be at 7:00 p.m. and our Easter service will be at the normal 9:00 a.m. time on that Sunday morning. Here is a list of the Holy Week liturgies:

**Saturday, April 12** 4:00 p.m.

Palm/Passion Saturday

**Sunday, April 13** 9:00 a.m.

Palm/Passion Sunday

**Thursday, April 17** 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday Senior Communion

**Friday, April 18** 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday

**Saturday, April 19** 7:00 p.m.

The Vigil of Easter

**Sunday, April 20** 9:00 a.m.

The Resurrection of the Lord



**BAPTISM**

We have been honored over the past several months by the presence of Jonathan Fort, an adult seeking to be baptized. I have been meeting with him for a number of weeks, and we have settled on Sunday, March 9, the First Sunday of Lent for his Baptism. The Gospel reading for that Day is Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness that immediately follows His Baptism, which seemed like an especially appropriate time to welcome him into the Body of Christ.

At coffee hour following the service, we will honor Jonathan and rejoice with him on this special day. Please keep him in your prayers as he prepares to join us in the community of saints.



**FIRST COMMUNION INSTRUCTION**

First Communion classes for students of any age whose parents feel they are ready for instruction will begin following Ash Wednesday. There will be three sessions on Sunday mornings following worship: March 16, March 23 , and a third session to be determined with Mrs. Schacht to help bake the communion bread for our Holy Week Worship. The classes on the 9th and 16th will begin at 10:15 in the Luther House. Please contact the church office to enroll your child.

In the past we have celebrated their First Communion at the Maundy Thursday evening service; but because that will not be held this year, we will check with parents and find an alternate time for them to join us at the Table for the first time.

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**KATIE’S PURSE**

 Just a reminder that we have a fund meant to help those within our congregation with utility bills, groceries, medical costs, prescriptions, or other needs that might arise for which they do not have sufficient funds. The process for applying is simple: contact Pastor Reshan (630-450-1894 or seniorpastor@stpaulmichigancity.com). Everything is held in the strictest confidentiality.

 Once a request is received, the Executive Team meets to discuss it and decide on how much to give. In fairness to others who apply, we can only grant one request per person/family; but the money is there waiting to help someone. Please feel free to contact Pastor Reshan if there is a need for help.

 Please also remember to help replenish the fund with your donations. Through your generosity, blessings are given.



**MONTHLY MISSION**

 We will be supporting The Social and Learning Institute as our mission for March.  The Institute has been serving LaPorte County since 1976 by helping individuals with developmental disabilities expand their minds, learn important life skills, and recognize their worth through a structured balance of socialization and learning activities.  If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make checks out to St. Paul, mark it for the March mission, and place it in the offering plate.  The noisy coin offering will also go to support the monthly mission.  The Institute has an Amazon wish list of classroom supplies.  When ordering from the wish list, select Abby Hinsch, LaPorte, IN, as the shipping address; and items will be delivered directly to the Institute.  If you prefer to shop in person, items can be placed in the bin in the Narthex.

**Wishlist URL** (also available on our Facebook page; <https://shorturl.at/xg0f0>

**Items Needed:**

**Personal Care:** Facial tissues w/ lotion, 2-ply toilet paper, band aids, first aid kits

**Cleaning:** Sweeper wet mopping pad refills, Lysol disinfectant spray or wipes, 30 gallon and kitchen sized drawstring trash bags, nitrile gloves

**Games/Toys:** Magnatiles, board games, stress balls or squishy toys, Montessori learning toys, sensory toys

**Classroom:** Colored cardstock paper, construction paper, crayons, Elmer’s liquid glue or glue sticks, retractable permanent markers, Post-It pop up notes, bulletin board supplies (paper, boarders, letters, mounting tape)



**EASTER PLANTS**

A variety of spring plants will be available to order for decorating St. Paul’s Church on Easter Morning! The varieties and colors available are Lily; Daffodil; Hyacinth in purple, pink, or white; Tulips in yellow, red, white, or pink; Florist Mum (Daisy like form) in pink, white, or yellow; Hydrangeas in pink or purple/blue; and the 10” Hanging Fern Basket.

Cost per plant is as follows:

 Lily - $10.00

 Daffodil - $9.00

 Hyacinth - $9.00 (purple, pink, or white)

 Tulip - $9.00 (yellow, red, white, or pink)

 Florist Mum - $11.00 (pink, white, or yellow)

 Hydrangea - $15.00 (pink or purple/blue)

 Hanging Fern - $15.00

Please specify your choice of plant and your choice of color when applicable.

Orders MUST be placed by Monday morning, March 31.

Your order may be placed ‘In Memory or Honor of a Loved One’. Please call the Church Office, 219-874-7293, or place your order in an envelope and title it ‘Easter Plants.’ REMEMBER, you must specify what type of plant and color, if applicable!! All checks should be made out to St. Paul Church.

 Please plan on picking up your plant after the Easter Morning Service by 11:00 a.m.



We extend our sincere gratitude to your team for generously hosting an Angel Tree to benefit the Salvation Army's toy shop this holiday season, and for all you do to support our mission of serving those in need. This year, The Salvation Army of Michigan City served 2,599 individuals who received food and toys for Christmas. This kind of impact would not be possible without the wonderful community support we have here in Michigan City. On behalf of those we serve during Christmas and throughout the year - THANK YOU!

Wishing you God's blessings in 2025,

Majors Dale and Becky Simmons

Corps Officers/Administrators

The Salvation Army of Michigan City



**FEBRUARY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

February Council minutes have not been approved at publication time. Watch the narthex for full copies of the minutes when available.



 **March Birthdays March Anniversaries**

 2 David Sutor 9 Mike & Barbara Fulkerson

 5 Madeline Henderson 23 Wayne & Suzann Dolson

 Jedediah Ottersen 24 Marvin & Diane Dirks

 6 Gail Leffew 26 Larry & Judy Litchford

 11 Judy LaBorn

 Casey Neulieb

 14 Jean Warner

 15 Lora Brooks

 18 Michael Greenlaw

 22 Nancy Zummak



**Long-Term Prayer List**

Laura Dovey Russ Fischer Jess Kalvaitis

Christine Kiser Bethany Manning Shirley McCarty

Jan Paholski Grace Romine Danielle Schnell

Martha Schroeder Jeanie Boatman Shepple Joyce Stark

Kathy Stein Mark Tannehill Kathy Thielman

Brian Wiseman



 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 Staff**

 Pastor Rev. Mark Reshan

 Secretary Libby Pollock

 Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

 Custodian Mark Kloess

Thank$ for $haring

This month, we will see you at Holly’s on Tuesday, March 11.  Here are two coupons—one for you and one for a friend.

