

GoodShepherd2.0

The Voice

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“Jesus was transfigured
before them”

Good Shepherd Lutheran Ministries, GSLM 2.0



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Good Shepherd Lutheran Ministries, GSLM

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Pastor's Epistle

²After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” ⁸And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. ⁹And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (Mark 9:2-9)

Beloved of God,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We sure need his grace and peace. The Great news is through

Christ Jesus and his victory we have it.

This month we begin Lent soon. Sunday the 11th we celebrate the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Then on the following Wednesday we will have Ash Wednesday, and then the Sundays of Lent leading up to Holy Week. So if you think about it, what an appropriate thing it is to celebrate Christ Jesus' transfiguration as a doorway entering into the purple season.

Soon after the incredible event of the Transfiguration, our Lord Jesus Christ will approach Jerusalem and make his Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday, and then a few days after that will be the Night in which Jesus is Betrayed, and the next day, the Crucifixion of our Lord, and the third day, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

The pace is seemingly rushing along. But our Lord is not rushing. He is steady and faithfully carrying out his work to proclaim the Good News, to heal the sick, cast out demons, to raise the dead, and to lay down his life and take it up again to save the world.

But as said a moment ago, the transfiguration of our Lord is so appropriately appointed first. It shows us something incredible about Jesus. Think on this a moment— our Lord has come into the world, Conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin in a stable in Bethlehem, laid in a manger. Then with Herod trying to find him and kill baby Jesus, baby Jesus was taken to Egypt for his safety.

With Jesus being returned with Mary, and Joseph, Jesus continued to grow up. And with the start then as a man, having been baptized by John at the Jordan, he began his ministry we described on the previous page. But notice this— we know the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures with their testimony about who Jesus Christ is, that he is the Son of God, that he is the Divine Son co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit as One God, the Creator who also became incarnate.

What? Yes, God the Second Person of the Holy Trinity also in the fullness of time became flesh, and made his dwelling among us. And with his incarnation, his becoming man was fully man, according to his human nature, body, mind, spirit and soul! He was God and Man, the God-Man, but without sin as his own.

What we benefit from regarding this knowledge is a couple of things. For one, we have the benefit of the close of the Canon of Scripture, meaning that the New Testament is fully written in our day, and the first coming of Jesus Christ is fully come to pass for us and revealed in the Scriptures, also showing the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament prophecies of who the Savior/Messiah would be is all done. We also have the benefit of the time of Pentecost, and the outpouring the Pentecost era of the Holy Scripture helping us even more in the area of faith and understanding.

But when the events of the Transfiguration are taking place in our reading, and all of what

was yet to come such as Jesus' Passion and Suffering, death, burial, and resurrection ahead, the witnesses of these things did not have our position for the benefit of understanding. They were experiencing these events without looking back at a clear and explained picture. They were living it out.

Thus with all of that, they would face serious trauma, mentally and spiritually. They would suffer. They would be gravely afraid. They would see their world burst. Burst? Well, to them. You see their lives had been transformed powerfully and incredibly unlike anyone else in history to their time. They actually met the long promised Savior of the world, promised back at the very fall of man itself in the garden at the beginning.

He transfigured their lives. They knew the prophecies about the Savior our Messiah. This man surely must be the One! They heard him proclaiming like no other in his authority the Word of God about the Kingdom of heaven being at hand. They found forgiveness of their sins, they found hope, or should we say hope found them.

They saw what would bring about their rescue from sin, death, the devil and everlasting condemnation. They saw the end time prophecies coming to pass about the time when there would be the end of sickness, the blind receiving their sight, the deaf their hearing, the mute their speech, the paralytic their feeling, the lepers cleansed, the demonically possessed delivered, the dead raised! They saw the feeding of the thousands with a few morsels. They saw this Jesus with mastery over creation— walking on water and stilling storms.

Ad the outcasts, the lesser ones, the rejected ones, the normal person and the abnormal and the sinner was called by him, follow me. Life and hope came from him. He took their world and raised them up from ashes.

Thousands were following him. They awaited the end of Roman occupation, the end of terror, the end of wars, the end of crime, the end of abuse. All of their hopes they had tried to hang on to over the decades of their lives. It was dizzying.

And they had left everything behind. They followed him, literally, forsaking all, picking up their cross and following this Jesus. This is huge. We do not know how hard life was at their times. If you became ill, it was many times more likely you would die. There were no modern medicines, no hospitals. There was no governmental safety net, so to speak.

Food in today's abundance they had never seen. We walk into a super store for groceries, and it can overwhelm a person who came from knowing only a land of famine all their days. What we know we can at times take for granted. We have no idea the shock a person can feel seeing the abundance we have as normal everyday life.

They could only dream, but now the hope is in front of them. So what if when they come to the time of the Passion of the Christ, and they see the horror of his betrayal, his unspeakable suffering, and the sun growing black for three hours, the world turning upside down in its sinful insanity and the death of their Lord?! What would happen to them?

Jesus knew exactly what was ahead. It is the reasons he came, to suffer, be rejected, despised, harmed so gravely, crucified and shed his blood unto death— but to save the world. And not only would their be such shock for his disciples, but they would have to have the event of his transfiguration for their understanding when he would be risen the third day, and they would see him, touch him, and receive the Holy Spirit from him— and with this event their knowledge would be so bolstered about who he is.

But this knowledge is not just for that, it is also though to understand regarding who he is and what that means for their redemption, the salvation of the world. This is the Son of Man, the Son of God.

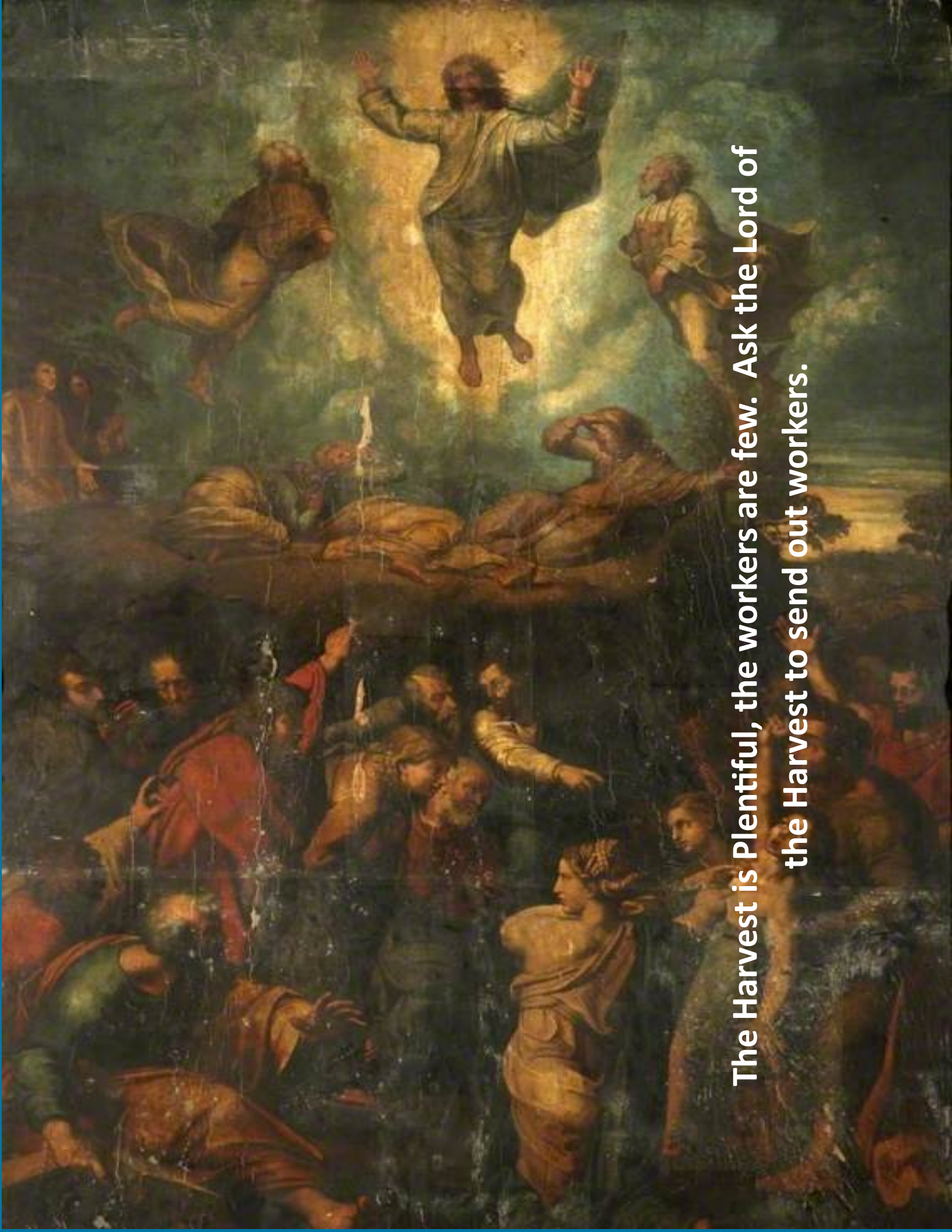
So Jesus goes up on the mountain. He takes with him Peter, James, and John, the inner three. When they are on the mountain, all of a sudden something happens which cannot happen in the realm of what man thinks is so-called nature. Jesus before their eyes is transformed, he is transfigured. His mortal nature is transformed, transfigured. His clothing even is transformed.

The glory of the eternal Divine nature of the Son of God is allowed to glimpse through to human eyes, just a bit. And yet even that ;little bit is overwhelming. It is too much. And on tope of that, something else impossible happens. Tow visitors from heaven, Moses and Elijah, long gone for many centuries from the earth have appeared by the wonder of God's power and they are there— talking to Jesus Christ!

Then after the fumbling effort to understand by Peter, ***a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."***

God the Father, from heaven in his glory, speaks to them! This does not happen. When was the last time you saw such a thing and saw and heard God speak from a cloud? Of course you never have. Neither had they. They have seen the manifestation of God, as much as they are capable of surviving in frail, fallen human flesh.

And for us, this month leading into Lent, we have this incredible reminder of this wonderful, mind boggling event. Jesus really is Lord! This is a Jesus different which even most of Christianity in the U.S. thinks he is today. The knowledge of the Natures in Christ is lost in



The Harvest is Plentiful, the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers.

Among most Christians, when for instance upwards toward about 70% percent of Christians in the United States currently poll as thinking that Jesus is just a created being. God says different!

So how small at times is our Lord to us? What about events which try to transfigure us spiritually? I mean suffering events, sin events, temptation events.... How is our confidence at such times when we are really tested? Are we certain and sure our Lord Jesus is listening? Are we certain and sure that our Lord Jesus is caring? Are we certain and sure that he loves us? Or are our sins perhaps overwhelming us in our conscience and causing us to think perhaps I am too sinful for him to even want to hear my cry for help? Or do we think he is detached from us, like the world is adrift and without a prayer?

We live at a crucial time for the world and the nation we live in— the US. As we near the return of the Lord for instance, the trickery of the devil will try to deceive even the church about a false Christ. We need to be reminded about the true Christ. And with that knowledge, for what we as Christians will face, we need to be reminded about the reality of who Jesus is for our salvation, to know that the atonement he has provided for our sins is indeed totally sufficient for our salvation.

And even if Jesus' return were another century away, our own temptations we face, our hurts, our fears, our worries, our sins and guilt and shame, we need to know the great wonder of why our salvation is so assured through this Jesus the Christ. His sacrifice is indeed sufficient!

The one who became flesh is also true God, the life he lived truly Man, the righteousness he fulfilled for us is perfection for he was and is sinless— fulfilling the law completely for us. And the suffering agony showing us his love was indeed fully human, but he also could have turned aside from going through with it. Yet his love is perfect holy love— and he willed to fulfill the Father's will, to lay down his life for us and take it up again for our eternal life. And the price of his shed blood, while true human blood, his suffering and sacrifice has the incredible value for our atonement because he shed blood which was also holy and divine as the God-Man. Jesus is Lord.

There is no doubt with God about the efficacy of Jesus his Son's sacrifice. Thus when Jesus said, "It is finished!" it was and remains so, forever! And to further evidence this, the third day he rose from the grave! Death and the grave could not hold him.

And interesting thing about the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that when you look at all of the passages about it, and examine them carefully, each person of the Holy Trinity gets credit for his resurrection. But thinking about that, Jesus literally also raised himself.

No mere human being can raise themselves from the dead. They are dead! And further, that is something relegated to the authority of God alone. It is a prerogative of God, and authority of God, the power of God. I cannot raise myself from the dead. I would be dead. You cannot raise yourself from the dead. you would be dead.

And we cannot atone for our sins. I cannot atone for my sins. You cannot atone for your sins. The world cannot atone for its sins. But Jesus could. And he did. It is finished.

This news transfigures us! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God changes us. For instance, in the Scriptures we find that by the power of the Holy Spirit using the power of the Gospel, in Baptism for instance God co-crucifies us with Jesus and co-rises us with Jesus, too! And he does this in that our old self is put to death, and a new self is risen above the waters of Baptism.

What was is gone, the New has come. And though until we are with the Lord and at the Resurrection to come the old sinful nature still struggles against our reborn spirit, yet by the Lord Jesus, who is the God— Man, we are reborn, and the best is yet to come!

This month, we have a world to begin telling the Good News with its power to change us from death to life. Together, we follow our Lord Jesus in his calling us. Fear not. Just look at him, transfigured. Wait till you see him in full glory! For this is our Lord and our God!

Amen.

Pastor. ILYCD



Lutheran
Women
in Mission



LWML

Saints in Christ, in this newsletter we are reproducing the following items for the work of the LWML.

Happy February to Everyone!

Here are a couple of reminders from Judi Minto:

On February 10th we will have our LWML Mtg... Look forward to our KITCHEN SHOWER (our Feb Mission Emphasis)...new or gently used items for our church kitchen. (Towels/linens, silverware, serving pieces, mugs, baking trays, etc)

We will also Prep for our Valentine Day/Super Bowl Bake Sale February 11th, And we will Finalize items for our 3/17 Congregational Dinner.

Look forward to the February 11th... SUPER BOWL + VALENTINE DAY BAKE SALE!!! Let's make it SUPER!

On February 14th we will have our Ash Wednesday worship service, and our Ash Wednesday Soup Supper.

WE NEED 2 SOUPS + Bread for the meal... VOLUNTEERS?

Judi also shared- "I have a meeting with the Zone LWML on the 12th regarding the Fall Rally... church council gave permission for us to use the church and parking lot for 11/2... hopefully our Elders will serve the lunch and middle/high school students will assist in the set up. Pastor Davis has offered to assist as needed. "

There is a lot going on, for we are blessed so wonderfully!

God bless all! See you in Church and at the next LWML meeting!

LWML MINUTES

Meeting opened at 10:10 a.m. President Judy M. thanked Judy W and Pat Martin for providing the refreshments. We began with prayer by Judy M.

The group then read the league pledge. Judy M then gave the devotions on Forgiveness. Secretary Peggy F. was absent and Judy W. read the minutes from the previous meeting. The meeting date needed correction and also that Pat Martin would help with the refreshments.. The report was accepted as corrected.

Sharon Z asked about Mary Harrell and the Gormleys. We also asked for prayers for Judy Hover.

Treasurers Report. We made \$76 at the December meeting. At the Dec meeting we received \$29 for home and \$32.85 in mites. We also received \$135 Christmas donations for Portals of Prayer. Our ending spending balance is \$1318.22, blessing bag balance is \$773.58 giving us a final balance of \$2091.80. Additionally we have \$19.12 in petty cash. Pat made a motion to accept the treasurers report, 2nd by Judy w. Motion carried.

Old Business. Judy thanked members who met and assembled the candy cane ornaments for the Christmas Eve service. Also a thank you for supplying food for the Advent Service dinner.

Discussion about attracting young women to our group. Judy M will attend PTL meetings to talk to women and parents.

New Business: Pat Martin made a motion 2nd by Teresa to give \$25-\$50 to school in the form of a gift card to replenish needed student school supplies at the end of the month. Motion passed.

Our Feb meeting is a Love Our Kitchen Shower. We need towels, flatware, potholders, cups etc.

We need to get teachers to return kitchen items back after their use. Judy W. made a motion 2nd by Teresa to have this kitchen shower. Motion passed.

Our school is now 100% state funded. We could use blessing bag money to bless our students in May. Sharon Z made a motion 2nd by Joyce to use the money from our blessing bags to bless our students.

January bake sale is set for January 21. The car show will be held Jan 20. Should we have a table for baked goods? No.

Fund raiser: It will be held March 17. Take Me Out to the Ballgame is our theme. We would like to hold it outside at the airnasium. The menu will include Hot dog, baked beans, potato chips and brownie for dessert. Coffee and Lemonade will be served.

Our next meeting will be held Feb 10. After the meeting we will be making caramel popcorn balls and Chex Mix for our Feb. 11 bake sale.

Feb refreshments : Judy White and Joyce Horos. Becky Williams will do the devotions.

The group then discussed the Fall Rally. It has been suggested to combine with Trinity . A motion was made by Judy W 2nd by Sharon Z to accept hosting the Fall Rally. We will go to Council to see if they will okay it. The motion passed.

Teresa made a motion 2nd by Pat M. to adjourn motion passed. Meeting ended at 11:40.

Respectfully submitted;

Judy White (Peggy Fjelsted)

Κατα Ματθαιον
According to Matthew



“Matthew”

A study of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew,
drawing from the original languages
of the Holy Scriptures.



Wednesdays at 10:15 am, all are invited as we continue with a new series on the Gospel According to Matthew. This incredible Gospel account is full of the deepest and most wonderful of meaning for our faith and salvation and our lives as we follow Jesus. Join us! And on Sundays at 9:00 am, we have started a new series, “Prophets and Kings” It has some definitely thought provoking things for our times. Join us for this as well, and you will find Jesus throughout! This series is rooted with a video supplement.

And Elder Russ has a new series: *Who never died but went straight to heaven riding a fiery chariot? Who fed himself, a widow and her son for three years with one jar of flour and one jug of oil? Who raised that widow's son from the dead? Through the power of God, Elijah did all of this and much more. God does display Himself in mighty works of power and judgment, such as wind, fire and earthquakes. But God also relates to us intimately and personally, such as a quiet whisper. Elijah alternately demonstrates victory and defeat, followed by recovery. He knew exultation and depression – human, like us. We will usher in the new year with a new Bible class on Elijah on Thursday, Jan. 4 at 10:15 a.m. in the back of the church. Elder Russ Brown will be the discussion leader. All are invited.*

Ladies of Good Shepherd - including Teachers and Staff,

You are invited to participate in our Ladies Luncheon that takes place every 3rd Saturday of each month, at a new location each time. Bring a dollar that will be collected, and a name will be drawn, from the group of ladies. The person's name that is drawn will receive the money that will go towards their meal and will choose the next location. A fun way to get to know each other.

If interested, please sign-up on the provided sign-up sheets in the back of the church, so we know how many will be going and we can reserve a table.

Hope to see you there!

LADIES LUNCHEON

February 17th at noon
the Blue Dog Bar & Grill
4597 Pine Island Rd., Matlacha

Please remember our Food Pantry if you know of someone with an emergency need. They may contact pastor or the church office by phone at 239-995-7711, or email pastor at pastordavis@goodshelopnfm.com. Also, if you have food to donate, please let us know.

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

(Matthew 25:40)

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY NEXT WEEK! ROUTE ON YOUR FAVORITE TEAM BY FEEDING THE NEEDY! NEXT SUNDAY, BRING FOOD GIFTS TO FEED THE HUNGRY AND PLACE IT IN A BASKET FOR YOUR TEAM BEFORE THE SERVICE. WE WILL HAVE A BASKET FOR THE 49ERS, AND ONE FOR THE CHIEFS! THANK YOU!

SCHOOL NEWS

This month we celebrated National Lutheran Schools Week.

Did you know our school is part this incredible ministry of our Lutheran Church Missouri Synod?

We are. As you can see on the right, we are part of 180,000 strong student family of four Synod.

We are part of the 1,677 Early Childhood Centers, and 191 Elementary Schools, 625 Middle Schools, 103 High Schools, for a total of 2594 school ministries of the LCMS!

Last Sunday in our combined service, we together with 132 people. We enjoyed a wonderful service!

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

- Experiencing and celebrating God's lavish gifts of love, grace and mercy
- Sharing those gifts with others
- Being transformed by God's Word
- Clinging to the cross of Jesus

EARLY CHILDHOOD > 1,677
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS > 191
MIDDLE SCHOOLS > 625
HIGH SCHOOLS > 103
TOTAL > 2,594

PROVIDING EXCELLENT ACADEMIC PREPARATION

- Developing love for and excitement about learning
- Excelling at reading, writing and effective communication
- Training minds for success at the next academic level
- Creating a strong work ethic, critical thinking skills and the ability to relate well with others

LEARN MORE

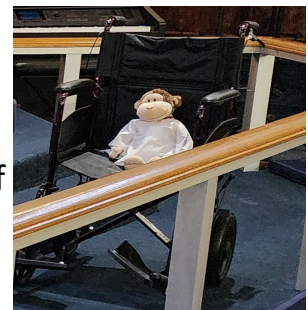
888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
lcms.org/school-ministry





SCHOOL CONTINUED

Along with the essentials of the reason we are here— to teach the children the Word of God and therein the Good News of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the Great Commission, part of that is teaching the children for life in this world, such as good citizenship, every day with the reciting of our pledges. And the making of disciples we also carry out by the Lord's grace.



Our Outreach of the Church also works together in One Voice. And it can be fun. This past month we had a Car Show here, and the children could even visit Petey from chapel's entry in the show!

And this month, we are praying for the many needs of healing, which includes Mrs. Vedrine who is having difficulties with her health and undergoing more tests. Please include her in your prayers! The children also pray for another school staff member, Mr. Manfred, who is starting treatments for his cancer. Please include him in your prayers, and all our members who have health needs!



Did you realize that every day of the week, hundreds of children worship in our church? And they receive the Word of God, the Good News of Jesus, and the Holy Scriptures, and they join together in prayer and singing to the Lord.

It is an amazing thing to behold. If you want to ever join in, give pastor a call.

CHURCH ELECTION NEWS

The following officers/chairs were elected at the January 2024 Voters' Meeting., and/or are returning in Office

President: Manfred Cholodewitsch

Vice President: Carol Bledsoe

Treasurer: Becky Williams

Secretary: Barbara Stevens

Financial Secretary: Sharon DeVore

Trustee: Joe Davis

Stewardship: Jeff Brooks

Board of Social Concerns: Teresa Herrin

School Board: Russ Brown

January Stats:

te	Day	Attendance 1st	Attendance 2nd	Total Attendance	Giving 1st	Giving 2nd	Giving Total
01/07/2024	Sunday	54	23	77	\$2,911.00	\$535.00	\$3,446.00
01/14/2024	Sunday	54	30	84	\$3,407.39	\$52.00	\$3,459.38
01/21/2024	Sunday	71	20	91	\$1,894.01	\$82.00	\$1,976.01
01/28/2024	Sunday	132	0	132	\$3,389.81	\$0.00	\$3,389.81
al	1/31/2024	77.75	18.25	96	\$11,602.21	\$669.00	\$12,271.20

Our Average for Attendance combined services was 96 persons per Sunday. Our Total Offerings for the month came to: \$12,271.20.

Worship Information: The following below contains the February 2024 Sunday Worship Info, including the liturgical colors of the day, what Sunday it is, and the Appointed Readings.

	Feb. 4	Fifth S. a. the Epiphany	Is. 40:21–31	Psalm 147:1–11	1 Cor. 9:16–27	Mark 1:29–39
	Feb. 11	The Transfiguration of Our Lord	2 Kings 2:1–12 or Ex. 34:29–35	Psalm 50:1–6	2 Cor. 3:12–13 (14–18); 4:1–6	Mark 9:2–9
ASH WEDNESDAY	Feb. 14	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12–19	Psalm 51:1–13 (14–19)	2 Cor. 5:20b–6:10	Matt. 6:1–6, 16–21
LENT	Feb. 18	First S. in Lent	Gen. 22:1–18	Psalm 25:1–10	James 1:12–18	Mark 1:9–15
	Feb. 25	Second S. in Lent	Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16	Psalm 22:23–31	Rom. 5:1–11	Mark 8:27–38

\Matthew 15:27–28 – “She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’ Then Jesus answered her, ‘O woman, great is your faith!’” Faith says “Yes” to all that the Lord gives us. The Canaanite woman trusted Jesus, and so she knew there was a blessing for her in everything the Lord says — even when His words seemed difficult or harsh. We all need a faith like that!

February 4 – Epiphany 5: 1 Corinthians 9:25 – “Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.” Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, for the desires of the flesh are at war with the desires of the Spirit. Having received new life in Christ by His grace, He now calls us to follow Him deliberately, with self-control and intention.

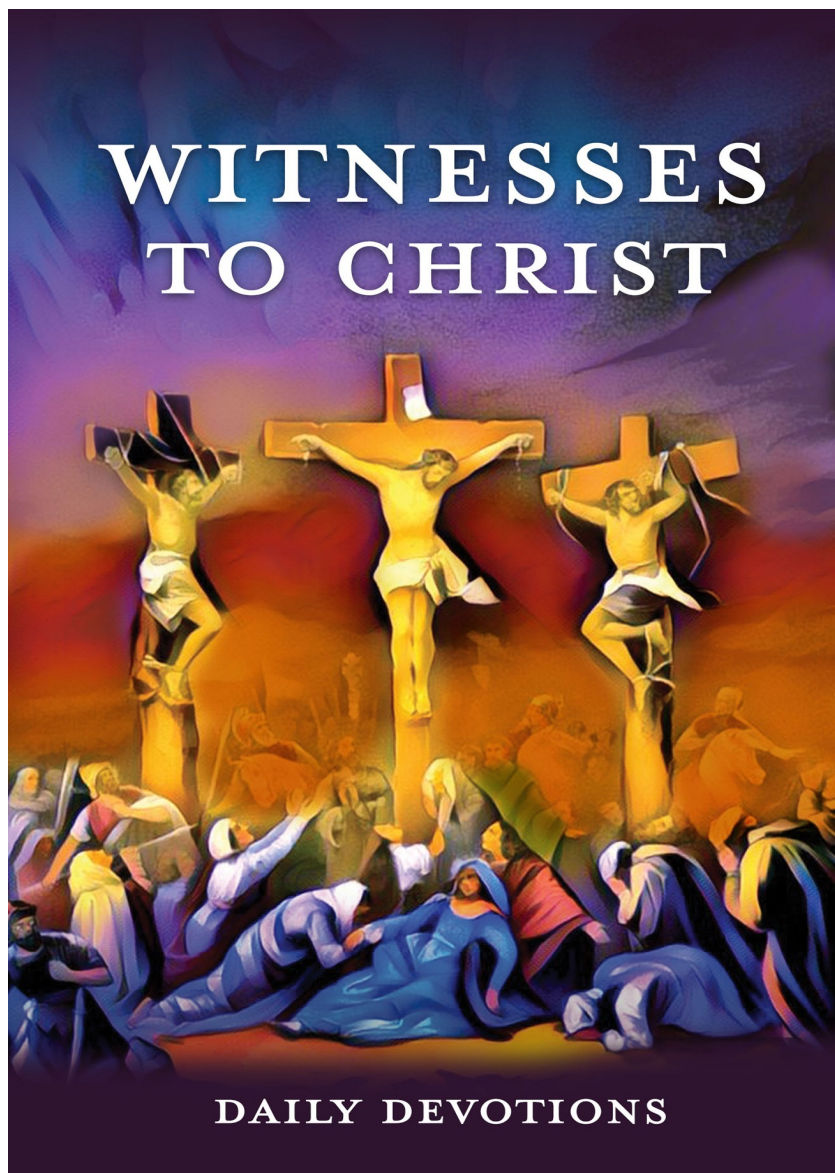
February 11 – Transfiguration: Mark 9:6 – “For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.” Soon enough, the disciples’ terror turned into joy, for when Jesus is with us, there is no need to fear. He loves us and cares for us and will never abandon us. That assurance is the basis of all generosity — for only those who are set free from worry can learn the joy of giving.

February 18 – Lent 1: Mark 1:13 – “And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.” God the Father cares for Jesus even in the midst of His temptation in the wilderness. God cares for us in every situation as well. Jesus realized this and always acted from the basis of trust in God the Father’s provision. This is likewise the basis for our life lived in Christ: God cares for us, so we need not act out of fear or greed.

February 25 – Lent 2: Mark 8:32 – “And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.” Anytime we sin, we are acting like Peter, thinking we know better than the Lord. But as Jesus says, such acts stem from Satan. So let us repent. Let us trust our Lord Jesus and follow Him. For certainly He has earned our trust with His gracious sacrifice for us.

CHURCH NEWS

ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICES AND SOUP SUPERS BEGIN THIS MONTH!



WE WILL BEGIN OUR SERIES ON February 14th with a Soup Supper at 5:00 pm, and worship will follow at 6:00 pm.

About the Theme

This year's series paints a stunning portrait of Jesus through the eyes of the witnesses of His Passion in St. John's Gospel. John tells us he wrote his Gospel: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30–31).

This Lent, strengthen your faith with the witness of those who were present as part of Jesus' journey to the cross.

Our series will begin through the eyes of John the Baptist!

Please join us. This is a wonderful time for fellowship, too, and to make new friends. So, bring a friend to church with you. Though they may have a church they attend on Sundays, we have a chance to share our church on Wednesdays this season, too.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship Newsletter Article – February 2024

Caring for My Neighbor

If any of the Ten Commandments might tempt us to think that keeping the Law is easy, it would be the Fifth Commandment. After all, how hard is it to get through life without murdering somebody? The vast majority of people can handle that!

But Jesus famously blows up this notion by pointing out that the command, “you shall not murder,” goes much deeper — down to the heart.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:21–22)

Hatred and disdain come from the same sort of crookedness of heart as murder. With both murder and hatred, you look down on another person and think them of little worth.

In the Small Catechism, Luther also points out that every “do not” in the commandments also includes a “do this:” “We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body but help and support him in every physical need” (SC, Fifth Commandment, emphasis added).

We are not called merely to avoid evil; we must also do positive good.

So when Jesus drew near to us and became our neighbor by taking up our humanity, He came not only to avoid harming us, but He came to positively help us, bless us and serve us.

We are now called to show the love to our neighbors that Christ showed to us. Your neighbor is yet another gift that God has given you that requires your stewardship. We are called to show mercy, to be kind, to love and serve our neighbor. One aspect of this stewardship is financial: our neighbors need us to support the church’s work so that they can hear the Gospel and come to faith. Our neighbors need the church’s alms and mercy work. Our neighbors need our faithful service in all we do in the name of Christ

From the LCMS

Stewardship Under the Cross

Considering Our Giving in Light of God's Word

Each year our congregation takes the time to consider what God's Word has to say about our stewardship of the gifts He gives us. Rather than basing our giving on what we think the church and school need, or on what we think we ought to give, we look to God's Word for guidance. This week, consider these words of Jesus and how they apply to this question, "What percentage my income is God calling me to give to His work in the Church?"

Jesus speaks about stewardship as trust in God's provision.

Matthew 6:19-33 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. 25 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "

Jesus speaks about giving in proportion to what God has given us.

Mark 12:41-44 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."



Good Shepherd and the World

Did you know that the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd is represented in the South China Sea amidst serious global tensions, such as China's tensions regarding open sea lanes and concerns over its actions against Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and more? Yes, one of Pastor and Mrs. Pastor's sons is literally in the foreground in the picture above taken earlier this week.

You have probably heard about tensions going on around the world. There is still a war in Europe centered around Ukraine and Russia, with concerns of encroachment into NATO. We are also connected to that war. Recently this past month a student became enrolled in our school. He and his mother are war refugees from the Ukraine. They were sponsored by a man in another state who sought our help for his education. They left everything behind to be safe, and his own father was lost in this war.

We have another student this year with family in Israel. This student has direct relatives and contact in the war torn section of Israel, and he, his mother and families can use our prayers, too. The boy and his mother are Messianic Jews. We are thankful to be able to minister to him every day and to minister to the student from the Ukraine, too.

We are so blessed to be here. Let us raise our prayers to the Lord daily for his help for the war torn places in the world, and the threats still out there.

CALENDAR: FEBRUARY 2024

*** SUNDAYS, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25 WORSHIP**

9:00 am _____ BIBLE STUDY/SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:00 am _____ FIRST SERVICE OF WORSHIP

11:30 PM _____ SECOND SERVICE OF WORSHIP

****SUNDAY, 2/25 WITH BIBLE STUDY AT 9:00 AM, AND ONE COMBINED WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM, FOLLOWED BY POTLUCK**

***WEDNESDAYS MATTHEW BIBLE STUDY at 10:15 am, on
2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28**

***Wednesday, 2/14 Ash Wednesday, Soup Supper at 5:00 pm, worship at 6:00.
Midweek Services, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28 with Soup Suppers at 5pm, and worship at
6:00 pm.**

***THURSDAYS ELIJAH BIBLE STUDY WITH RUSS, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22, 2/29 AT 10:15**

***THURSDAY**

- 2/15 Church Council at 5:30 pm

***SATURDAY**

- 2/10 LWML 10 AM
- LADIES LUNCHEON AT 12:00 PM