

The Witness

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

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March 2022

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Volume 7 No. 3

MIDWEEK SERVICES IN LENT

In the seasons of the Church year when the weight of sin and death are most emphasized and we are most poignantly called to penitence, the Church would have us receive even more of Christ and His gifts.

“How much Jesus is too much Jesus?” It is the question a seminary professor asked of all of his students throughout his many years of teaching. It is a question worthy of our consideration.

In Scripture, the Church is called the “Body of Christ.” Paul uses such imagery many times. And anyone who’s taken not more than a middle-school level biology class knows the basics of how the all the parts and processes of the body are equally needed to keep the body healthy and strong and functional. They also know that if any part of the body is denied the nutrients that come from breathing and blood-flow, that part of the body will die. And when the body becomes sick, those systems which deliver such nutrients work all the harder in the areas affected by illness or injury in order to bring healing.

So it is that the Body of Christ, in seasons such as Lent (and Advent), which are often called “The Penitential Seasons,” is right to keep the tradition of mid-week Church services as a source of an extra dose of the holy-healing medicine of Christ and His Word.

Granted, there is no biblical mandate for midweek services in Lent (or Advent), or any time for that matter. But given that the penitential seasons are designed to remind of our sickness in sin, it is indeed “good, right, and salutary” that the Church create more time for us to ponder the source of our healing.

Lent reflects upon the darkness of our sin, and so Lenten themes tend to focus upon Christ’s passion and move us toward the observance in Holy Week of his betrayal, suffering, and death. As a people sick with sin, Lent points us to the one by whose wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). As the human body receives special medicines and activates certain processes (such as the work of white blood cells) to aid in healing when part of all of the body is ill or injured, so too it is good that the Church sees to it that the Body of Christ is given even more of the good gifts in Christ and His Word in such seasons of the Church year as Lent and Advent.

The question is often asked, “How often MUST I go to Church?” But this is a question asked from a desire to meet some minimum requirement for being a Christian and misses the whole point of Christianity. It isn’t a formula for getting right with God. It is all about Christ for us who makes us right with God by His death and resurrection. So how often should the Christian go to Church? As often as he is able and as often as the opportunity is present. It goes back to that same great question, “How much Jesus is too much Jesus?”

I’m looking forward to seeing you at Church on Wednesdays this lent. Ash Wednesday is March 2nd.

In Christ,
Pastor Matthew Uttenreither

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Saint of the Month: St. Patrick, Missionary to Ireland (March 17): Patrick is one of the best-known of the missionary saints. Born to a Christian family in Britain around the year 389, he was captured as a teenager by raiders, taken to Ireland, and forced to serve as a herdsman. After six years he escaped and found his way to a monastery community in France. Ordained a bishop in 432, he made his way back to Ireland, where he spent the rest of his long life spreading the Gospel and organizing Christian communities. He strongly defended the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in a time when it was not popular to do so. His literary legacy includes his autobiography, *Confessio*, and several prayers and hymns still used in the church today. Patrick died around the year 466.

LSB 604 is attributed to St. Patrick, called "St. Patrick's Breastplate."

I bind unto myself today
The strong name of the Trinity
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever,
By pow'r of faith, Christ's incarnation,
His Baptism in the Jordan River,
His cross of death for my salvation.
His bursting from the spiced tomb,
His riding up the heavenly way,
His coming at the day of doom,
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today
The pow'r of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need,
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,
The Word of God to give me speech,
His heav'nly host to be my guard.

Against the demon snares of sin,
the vice that gives temptation force,
The natural lusts that war within in,
The hostile foes that mar my course;
Or few or many far or nigh,
In every place and in all hours,
Against their fierce hostility,
I bind to me those holy pow'rs.

I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three,
Of whom all nature has creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word.
Praise to the Lord of my salvation;
Salvation is of Christ the Lord!



Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Lutheran Women
In Mission

Where Mites Go

Training Pastors to Serve the Church in Russia

Grant: \$100,000

Through the efforts of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the pastoral training provided by the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Siberia, the Word and Sacraments are again making their way to the long-repressed Russian people. With this grant, Lutheran Women's Missionary League will partner in training pastors and deaconesses and in helping the seminary continue its efforts to restore the Lutheran Church in Russia. The Novosibirsk seminary's goal is to prepare workers to spread the true Word of God to the Russian people. This grant will fund some of the operational expenses of the seminary and allow it to continue providing a solid theological education to those seeking to serve as pastors and deaconesses within the Siberian Lutheran Church.

Testimonies from Around the World

Ghana

Praise be to God, He is doing wonders through the village ministries and the prayerful use of the materials you've given to us. God is wonderful. Many souls have been saved in these villages. I am an eyewitness. I saw 6 Muslim families come to Christ when they were given Bibles to read. The pastors distributed a lot of Christian literature in those villages where I went. Each week new members are joining their church. I am shocked.

At times, we go out to hospitals, clinics, prisons, communities, schools to share with them God's amazing grace and to preach about His wonderful love. Your free literature is helping meet today's problem of false teaching, occultism, idolatry, alcoholism, fornication, teenage pregnancy, divorce, and other sinful likes.



God in Man Made Manifest

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, signs, and wonders of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking enactment of God’s Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts but also to trust in God in word and deed. As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith:

Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them.

He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace.

And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor – in church, in the family, and society – with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry



Joy is a term that appears many times in many translations of the Bible; but what does joy really mean? In the *Winter 2022* issue of the

Ministry Update, we bring to light the joy we see as members of the LCMS Northern Illinois District.

Let us go forward with Joy! We asked Congregational Chairpersons from around the District to share with us the Joy! they have in serving their congregations. You will find their responses as diverse as their ministries:

Over 100 years ago, my great grandfather, along with other area pastors, started our church and school. He became our first pastor. In turn, my grandparents and my parents were faithful role models as they served at Trinity in various leadership and ministry roles. I feel great joy in looking back and realizing the ways the Lord has guided me to this place and time, to serve in this way. I pray that I can fulfill His purpose for me and joyfully serve to His glory. As my life verse says in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord ...".

Brenda Connolly,
Trinity Lutheran Church, Roselle

Time & Talent

Deacons

March 2	7:00 pm	Jim Jenne
March 6		Jonathan Schultz
March 13		Tom Friedewald
March 20		Jim Jenne
March 27		Jonathan Schultz

Greeters

March 6	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
March 13	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten
March 20	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
March 27	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten

Altar Guild

March:	Linda Bauschke Lilian Konozsi
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Ash Wednesday: March 2nd at 7:00 pm

Lenten Midweek Worship: Wednesdays, March 9—April 6, at 12:00 Noon & 7:00 pm



We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in March.

March 7	Pam Hrajnoha
March 8	Judy Darville
March 14	Nancy Joseph
March 20	Michael Fleck
March 21	Linda Bauschke
March 27	Kayla Gregorio Sarah Lindahl
March 28	Janice Fleck
March 29	Pat Zyskowski



We also congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in March.

March 8	Charles & Hedy Schwenn
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These are the **birthdays** and **wedding anniversaries** recorded in our church records for the coming month. If any birthday or anniversary was omitted, please notify the church office.

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What to Give Up for Lent

Giving up some small pleasure for Lent, like chocolate or coffee, can be a nice way to remind ourselves throughout Lent that it is Lent. This isn't meant to please God or gain His favor. Nor can such a small denial make Lent more meaningful or increase faith. It is simply an attempt to keep ourselves mindful throughout the day that it is Lent. That is a valid Christian desire and discipline.

But Lent isn't ultimately about giving things up. Its purpose is not self-improvement in the conventional sense. Instead Lent is a season of preparation. We are preparing to celebrate Easter and the Church is always prepared in the same way: by repentance.

True repentance means turning away from sin in sorrow and also turning toward God in joy. That is to say, that true repentance is *faith*. It expects forgiveness. It trusts in Christ to give it. Judas was not truly repentant (Matthew 27:3-5). He was only remorseful. He did not think he could be forgiven. He did not trust Jesus to love him. In contrast, St. Peter was repentant (Mark 14:66-72). He was more than remorseful. He was sorry for his sins and ashamed of what he had done, but even more than this, he trusted in Christ to be merciful.

Lent is therefore not so much a time of "giving things up" as it is a time for adding things that increase our awareness of God's mercy in Christ Jesus. When Lent leads us to repentance, it isn't to make us sad or to somehow get God's attention. It is to strengthen our faith. Part of that strengthening includes an increased awareness of our great need — and yes, that often means a stern preaching of the Law. But that is not the real mark or purpose of Lent. For Lent also includes, and is mostly focused on, the solution to that need: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our redemption. Nearly all of our churches will add midweek services during Lent and also Holy Week services, not for the primary purpose of preaching the Law but rather that we might have more opportunities to receive God's forgiveness, hear His Word and receive His Sacrament.

So if you're looking for something to give up this Lent, I suggest you give up a few hours each Wednesday evening and go to Church. Don't do it to make yourself sad. Do it for the joy of hearing God's Word and receiving His gifts. That is what Lent is meant for.

Rev. David H. Petersen, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Ft. Wayne, Ind.

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OFFICIAL ACTS

None on record

Do you have an announcement to share about your family such as a birth, death, engagement, graduation, etc., **let us know! We'd love to hear from you!**

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