

ADVENT NEWS

ADVENT EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD



BEHOLD THE MAN!

Ash Wednesday, March 6th, is the first day of the season of Lent. Lent is a time of prayer, repentance, and renewal. This day has been called "Ash Wednesday" since the beginning of its observance in the seventh century. The name comes from the practice of placing ashes on the forehead as a sign of sorrow and repentance. Throughout Scripture, ashes are a sign of God's wrath and condemnation and were thusly seen as a sign of penitence, sorrow, and mourning. The sign of the cross is made with the ashes, along with the words, "Dust

you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). Those words are part of the curse given to Adam and Eve following their fall into sin. The words keep us mindful of God's judgment upon sin, our subsequent mortality and need for a Savior. The cross, however, serves to remind us that Christ has conquered sin, death and the devil for us. Though we will all someday die, yet we shall live!

As part of our Ash Wednesday Divine Service at 7:00pm, we will be including the imposition of ashes for those who desire. If you would like to receive the sign of the cross from the ashes, please come forward before our service begins, down the center aisle. Before our service begins, please spend the time in quiet meditation and prayer. Please meditate on the Small Catechism (LSB p.321), Psalm 32, 51, or 90 (in the front). Christian Questions & Answers is also excellent (LSB p.329ff).

- The ashes come from the Palms that were used for last year's Palm Sunday service!
- Olive oil was commonly used in Jesus' time to moisturize & protect the skin, in addition for the sacred use of "anointing". Don't worry, it will all come off with a little soap and water!
- **Our focus this Lenten Season is "Behold the Man!"** A devotional booklet is provided for each member household and located in your member mailbox. If you are a guest or visitor, we have one available for you free of charge! We will gather each Wednesday and "Behold the Man!" in a chronological reading and meditation of the Passion account.
- Some people "give something up" for the Lenten season (which consists of 40 days, not counting Sundays, before Easter). You may do this if you wish, in order to help focus on the many gifts that God gives us. Fasting was common in OT & NT times and many still do so today (Jesus fasted in the desert). Ask one of the Pastors if you have questions or concerns!

Our theme and devotional booklet have been written by Rev. Jeff Hemmer and published by Concordia Publishing House. I leave you with these wise and winsome words from Pastor Hemmer:

(continued, pg. 2)

February, 2019

As part of our **Ash Wednesday Divine Service on March 6 at 7:00pm**, we will be including the imposition of ashes for those who desire to participate.

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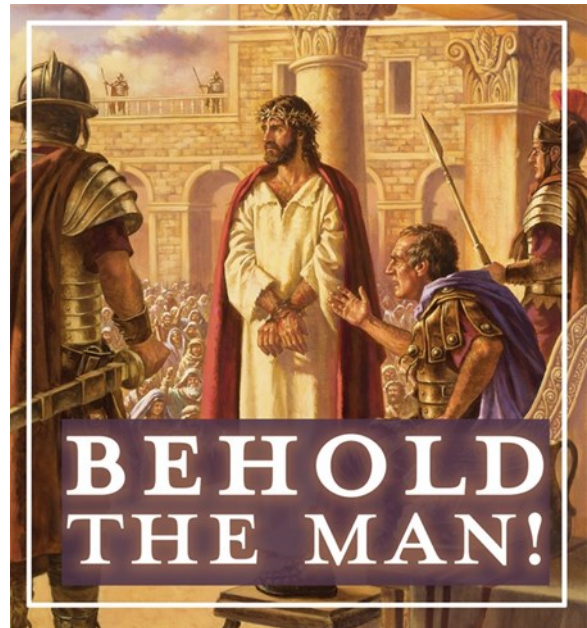
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Pastor's Pen (continued from pg. 1)

"Behold the man!" proclaimed the unwitting preacher Pontius Pilate in one of the shortest yet most profound sermons ever recorded. This will be our endeavor this Lententide and Easter Sunday. Behold the man, God in human flesh, Jesus. His incarnation will provide the basis for our meditation and proclamation on His Passion. And His real bodily suffering and death will provide the basis for our full-throated proclamation on Easter morning of a bodily resurrection, not just of Jesus but also for His saints. Real bodies that have suffered, wept, bled, prayed, eaten, hoped, and more will be those raised incorruptible from their graves on the day of Jesus' return.

We will fix our eyes and our preaching on the man Jesus, contemplating the inescapable fact—indeed the most important fact in the course of human history—that God became man. The Second Person of the eternal triune God, whom we confess in the Nicene Creed as "God of God, Light of light, very God of very God . . . of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made," became a living, breathing, flesh-and-blood human being, a man.

In some ways, you can understand that the first heresy the Christian Church had to contend with was that of Gnosticism, the hyperspiritual religion that held that because no man could be God, the Christ could not be God. Gnosticism is alluring because it tidies everything up, gives Christianity a more attractive spiritual veneer, and pulls its adherents out of the mire of this world and gives them something otherworldly to strive for.



Considered correctly, it becomes pretty hard to spiritualize Christianity—a religion that bases its existence on the enfleshment, the incarnation, of God—into the mess of disembodied, matter-rejecting, hyperspiritual Gnosticism. When God has flesh and blood, skin and teeth, cells and nuclei, DNA and RNA, it's difficult to contend for the disembodied spiritual against the material. If God has a body, bodies must matter.

In case you aren't convinced of the pervasiveness of the second-century heresy of Gnosticism, even in our twenty-first-century context, attend a funeral. If you hear talk only of heaven with nary a word of a bodily resurrection, you've witnessed firsthand modern-day Gnosticism. If the preacher doesn't deal with the body in the casket as the real person whose death has assembled the mass of grieving relatives and friends, if he talks only about the bodiless soul in heaven, he hasn't preached a genuinely Christian funeral. In other words, if he gives preference to the spiritual over the material, he succumbs to the Gnostic heresy the earliest generations of the Church sought to guard against by preaching the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus.

This Lent, we will consider what it means that God became man. In preparation for the celebration of a real, bodily, flesh-and-blood, bone-and-sinew resurrection, the resurrection without which our faith and our preaching are all in vain, consider the body of Jesus that exists in order to be nailed to a cross. The spiritual, bodiless Son of God became the embodied, enfleshed, incarnate Son of Mary. In Jesus, God has human flesh, a body, just like you. What could be more profound?

Behold the Man!
Pastor Mackay

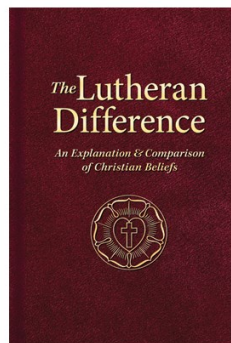
Save the date! VBS 2019 will be held mornings, Monday June 17 – Thursday June 20.

The VBS committee is working hard to put together fun, learning experience for the children. More information to come! Also—please prayerfully consider volunteering this year.

Book of the Month

This month's book of the month is *The Lutheran Difference*.

As Lutherans interact with other Christians, they often find themselves struggling to explain their beliefs and practices. Although many Lutherans have learned the “what” of the doctrines of the Church, they do not always have a full scriptural foundation to share the “why.” This book was written entirely for the lay person but may also serve well as a high school or college religion class text.



Advent Publications now online!

Advent is in the process of making available all future member communications – announcements, bulletins, weekly prayer guides and newsletters – in electronic format via e-mail or posted on our website. If you have signed up for emails from Advent, you will receive an e-mail each Friday with links to the content. *Printed copies will still be available in the narthex.*

To sign up to receive emails from Advent, go to the Advent website and complete the form here: <http://www.adventlutheran.org/contact/>



Another Fabulous Valentine's Dinner!!

On February 16th everyone enjoyed a wonderful, fun evening--record attendance and proceeds, delicious meal, fun activities for the children, great entertainment by the school children, Phil Lehman on piano with dinner music and Biru Bar, Lithuanian Folk Band providing after dinner music and dancing. A very BIG thank you to all who helped with the event and all who attended!!

Enrollment for 2019-20 (next fall) is in full swing. Some classes have filled and others are very close to full. Even our AM Kindergarten has filled, so we are planning to open an afternoon class. If you or anyone you know is interested in our Kindergarten, please let me know. We have 3 on the waiting list for the new afternoon class, but need a couple more to officially open it. Also, contact me soon if you are interested in enrolling a younger child--only a few spots left for those ages too!

The 3rd-12th graders will be singing the anthem and the tract in both services on Sunday, March 24th. Please mark calendars and plan to attend the early service and beginning of the second so we have all voices for each service.

The preschool--6th grade will begin work soon on their Palm Sunday Processional hymn. Continuing the tradition, they will sing and process with palms that day--April 14th. Again, they will participate in both services that morning.

Deb Trewartha, School Director & Assistant Music Director

Higher Things Summer Conference

This summer we would like to take our confirmed youth to the Higher Things Conference held at Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon July 16-19th.

The theme of the conference is "Concordia." Families with high school and/or college age students should have received registration information via email. **This conference is nearly full, we should act this week!**



College students may be eligible to attend for free if they are accepted as CCVs and assist with the operation of the conference. We also need parent chaperons to attend. The cost is \$400 per person and includes meals and housing at for the conference on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin.

Higher Things is a very good Lutheran conference where nearly 1000 Lutheran youth gather to worship, learn more about their faith and have a great deal of fun in the process. It offers worship daily, starting with Matins or Morning Prayer, followed by Vespers in the mid-afternoon, and ending the day together with Evening Prayer. Time for Individual Confession and Absolution is also offered following Evening Prayer, and small groups are encouraged to gather for Compline before lights-out.

Between these services there are many breakout sessions, led primarily by LCMS pastors, on topics of interest to the youth. They are truly excited about these and find it difficult to attend all the ones they often desire to be a part of. Most gravitate to the issues of dating, marriage and living one's life as a Christian in our crazy, anything goes, world.

Call or email Pastor Grady if you need a registration form.

"The Word of the Lord endures forever." (1 Peter 1:25)

"Concordia." It literally means "with one heart" in Latin. The Church is unified around the confession of Jesus as our Lord and Savior like a congregation singing together in many different parts but singing the same song together in perfect harmony. Concordia isn't just a feeling that we are one. It's not only something that we strive to have. We don't sacrifice what we believe in order to be unified. True Concord is always centered around the confession of Christ and Him crucified!

God speaks. We receive His words into our ears. He gives our tongues the words to say to Him and to those around us. We repeat, together, His Words back to Him. We sing them, we confess them, all agreeing together, "with one heart and voice" our confession of Jesus! In a world where youth are tempted to compromise, Higher Things is excited to plan our 2019 Conferences centered on the theme of the Church and Unity.

“Remember, That You Are Dust...”



“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

For nearly a thousand years, these words have been spoken to young and old alike as the sign of the cross is traced on their foreheads with ashes—the **Imposition of Ashes**, as it has come to be known. During the last half of the 20th century, Lutherans have also begun to make use of this ancient rite, and indeed, it has been approved for use in the Lutheran Service Book. And so, as our catechism is prone to ask: “What does this mean?” Where did this rite come from, and how can it be used meaningfully in LCMS congregations today?

Ashes in the Bible

The Bible contains a number of references to ashes and dust. In fact, the Lord's curse on Adam, “dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19) is echoed in the Imposition of Ashes formula. In the New Testament, Jesus declares: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Matt. 11:21). Thus, in the Bible, ashes carry a two-fold meaning: as a sign of human mortality (Gen. 3:19) and as a sign of public repentance (Matt. 11:21).

Ashes in Church History

This understanding carried over into the early and medieval church. Originally, ashes were reserved only for public penitents—those who had fallen away from the church because of grave public sin but desired reconciliation. Reconciliation could occur at a variety of times during the year, but by the medieval period, the beginning of Lent became a primary season of the church year for that reconciliation to take place.

By the 12th century, ashes became specifically associated with the beginning of Lent, thus providing the first day of Lent with its name, Ash Wednesday. However, by this time, everybody—pastors and people alike—had ashes either sprinkled on their head or traced on their foreheads in the sign of the cross. **By the time of the Reformation, the imposition of ashes was a regular mainstay of Lenten piety and practice.**

Worship Library

However, Lutherans at the time of the Reformation did not choose to retain the Imposition of Ashes. The reasons for this are not entirely clear since there is very little written for or against this practice by Luther and his colleagues. Thus, although Lutherans began Lent with Ash Wednesday, they did not retain the use of ashes as part of their Ash Wednesday order of service.

Ashes Today?

A contemporary Lutheran appropriation of the Imposition of Ashes should begin with the two-fold biblical understanding of ashes: **a sign of our mortality** and **a sign of our repentance**. Likewise, the traditional formula, “Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” is most appropriate, since it paraphrases the words of God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:19). By receiving the ashes, the worshipper acknowledges that God's judgment against our sin is right and just. But the ashes are also made in the sign of the cross—the very instrument by which our Lord took upon himself the punishment for our sin, in our place. Thus, the cross of ashes serves to remind us that we are sinners, and that Christ died for us sinners. This is exactly what the rite in Lutheran Service Book calls for.

So what happens after you leave Ash Wednesday with those ashes on your forehead? The first thing that happens is that you go out into the world where others will see that cross on your forehead. Although reactions may vary, your silent witness has been given: **you have been marked as one redeemed by Christ the crucified!**

Published by: LCMS Worship

Upcoming—Midweek Lenten Calendar



Wednesday evening services:

March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

April 3rd & April 10th

6:00 p.m. – Fellowship Dinner*

7:00 p.m. – Worship Service

****Menus posted on bulletin boards.***

Welcome!

Pastor David and Jenny Preus welcomed the newest addition to their family this month: **Lars Jacob Preus, born February 14th**, baptized February 17th. Currently the family is in Montana but will soon return to their home and mission in Santiago, the Dominican Republic. **CONGRATULATIONS!**



NOTE TO
MEMBERS:

Please stop by
your hymnal box
and pick up your
“Behold the Man”
booklet and while
there, please dis-
card outdated
items.