



## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION: THE THIRD SACRAMENT

*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*

—John 20:23

You probably have noticed that Confession and Absolution has changed in the Divine Service lately. We are no longer using the left-hand column on page 184 in the hymnal but have rather switched to the other option on the right. For the last few years, we've been doing this during the season of Advent, but for the foreseeable future, we will continue to do so.

The left-hand column, which I will now refer to as the "General Absolution," has been a staple among Lutherans ever since it was first introduced in the Lutheran Hymnal in 1941. We are so accustomed to this rite that to lose it seems quite jarring and just plain wrong. My goal in the next few newsletter articles is to explain why I, as your pastor, have made the difficult decision to no longer use the General Absolution but instead have opted to use the right-hand column, which is normally called the "Declaration of Grace."

At the get-go, please know that I did not make this decision in haste. For the last couple years, I have taught on this topic in Bible Study, preached about it from the pulpit, wrote on it in a previous newsletter article, discussed it with area pastors and our Board of Elders. After much study and prayerful consideration, my conscience is bound, as I believe that this change is most faithful to God's Word. I am more than willing to discuss my reasons for making this change with anyone who desires it, but for right now, here is the main reason:

As our Lutheran Confessions teach us, Holy Absolution is the "third sacrament" (Large Catechism, IV: 74), the other two being Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Along with the Word of God, these three sacraments are the means of grace, that is, they are the ways in which God conveys his grace towards sinners, the avenues by which he delivers to us that which Christ accomplished in his atoning death on the cross. Without these means, we aren't able to receive the forgiveness of sins which was won for us by Jesus over two thousand years ago.

The first and primary means of grace is God's Word. The Word of God is "the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16), for "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Simply put, without God's Word we cannot believe in Jesus and be saved. Also, without the Word of God, the sacraments would do us no good, for Baptism would be just plain water and the Lord's Supper only bread and wine. The Word of God makes the sacrament a sacrament. It gives it the power and ability to deliver the forgiveness of sins through visible means.

One of the key differences between the Word and the sacraments is to whom they are given. The Word is given to all people, but the sacraments are only for Christians. Think of the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-8). Jesus says that the sower threw his seed all over the place, on both bad soil and good soil. He didn't care where it landed, just as long as it landed everywhere. As our Lord teaches us, the seed is the Word of God and the sower is the preacher. The preacher is to proclaim God's Word to all people, whether they will believe it or not, because the Word of God has the power to change the hearts of men, to soften hardened hearts, and to turn unbelievers into believers. Therefore, the seed of God's Word can be thrown everywhere.

But handing out the sacraments is parallel to taking one seed and planting it into one heart. Or another way to put it, the preaching of the Gospel is like a person telling you, “Your wife loves you,” while the sacraments are if your wife stood in front of you and said, “I love you.” A sacrament takes what the Gospel proclaims to the whole world and applies it you personally.

Both the Word and the sacraments offer the same benefit—the forgiveness of sins, but they offer it in different ways and to different people. Again, the Word is given through preaching and teaching to both a group or an individual, whereas the sacraments are only given to individuals through water (Baptism), the pastor’s voice (Absolution), and bread and wine (the Lord’s Supper). The sacraments aren’t meant to be given to all people but only those who have heard the Word and believed it. Faith is needed to receive the benefits of any sacrament.

For this reason, we shouldn’t baptize an atheist or commune a Muslim. This would not only be an irresponsible use of God’s gifts but also harmful to the recipient. This also means that we shouldn’t give Absolution to those outside of the faith, as Luther’s Catechism teaches that pastors are to “withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.”

The sacraments require pastoral oversight. They aren’t to be administered willy-nilly to whomever walks in the door. This is why Christ instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry, so that pastors could serve as “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1). Sure enough, the means of grace are God’s gifts, his mysteries, but he has called pastors to be the ones to oversee the administration of these gifts, so that they are given to those in faith for their benefit and not their detriment, as our Lutheran Confessions teach: “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted” (Augsburg Confession, Article V). We will discuss more about the Office of the Ministry and the pastor’s role in the administration of the sacraments, particularly Holy Absolution, in a future newsletter article.

For now, this is the main reason why I have decided to forego using the General Absolution, because the sacrament of Absolution is never “general,” that is, it can’t be handed out to a group of people. The Sacrament of Holy Absolution, like Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, can only be delivered to an individual.

The Declaration of Grace on page 184 in the hymnal is more or less a mini sermon, in which the promise of the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to the whole congregation: “Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins.” By means of this declaration, the forgiveness of sins is delivered to all who believe. And yet, so that we might be more certain of this forgiveness, our Lord instituted the sacraments, in which a person can receive this forgiveness for himself as an individual, as he hears it said: “I baptize *you*” and “I forgive *you*” and “The body of Christ for *you*.”

I am no longer comfortable speaking the words of Absolution to a group of people: “I forgive you all your sins,” just as I would not be comfortable splashing water over a group of people and saying, “I baptize all of you.” Such words are reserved for Private Absolution, as the Christian Church has historically practiced it and as our Lutheran Confessions, including the Small Catechism, teach us.

As I stated before, I am more than happy to discuss this further with whomever wishes. I didn’t make this change without prayerful consideration and much study. May God continue to guide us by his Word that we would be ever faithful with his gifts, the means of grace, whereby he forgives us our sins and reassures us of his mercy. The next newsletter article will look at what Luther teaches about Confession and Absolution in his Small Catechism.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Haller". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name.

Pastor Haller

# WHY?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LITURGY

### What is Gesimatide?

The two major feast days in the Church Year are Christmas and Easter. These two celebrations shape and form much of what we do on a Sunday morning. Often times, we are either preparing for one of those special days or looking back on it. For example, Advent prepares us for Christmas, whereas Epiphany looks back on Christmas. On January 21st, we completed our look-back on Christmas with the observance of our Lord's Transfiguration. Now, we begin our preparations for Easter.

We prepare for our Lord's resurrection in four steps: Pre-Lent, Lent, Passiontide, and Holy Week.

On Sunday, January 28th, we began the season of Pre-Lent, also called Gesimatide. This is a time to transition our hearts and minds away from the celebration of Christmas and Epiphany and into the penitential season of Lent, our forty-day journey to Jerusalem, where we will see our Savior suffer and die and rise again.

Gesimatide gets its name from the Sundays of the season: Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima. These names give us a rough countdown until Easter. Gesima means "days," and what comes before it is a number: Septuagesima (70 days), Sexagesima (60 days), Quinquagesima (50 days). Ash Wednesday can also be called Quadragesima (40 days).

The main theme of Gesimatide is focused on the grace of God, a wonderful theme to prepare us for Lent and for the grace we will see in our Lord's passion. Septuagesima teaches us that God's grace is undeserved, as we hear of the goodness of the landowner who gives the same paycheck to all of his laborers, even if they only worked one hour (Matthew 20:1-16). Sexagesima shows us that God's grace can only be received and not earned, just as the sower's seed is received by the soil and, from it, produces a harvest a hundredfold (Luke 8:4-15). And finally on Quinquagesima, we see that God's grace is not easily understood, just as the disciples can't seem to grasp it, and yet a blind beggar from Jericho does, as he cries out to Jesus: "Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:32-34, 46-52).

The grace of God is what leads us to recognize our sin and repent of it, that we might receive such grace through his Word and Sacrament, rejoicing that our Lord who once was dead now lives.

**SEPTUAGESIMA**  
septem = 7 | Within 70 days of Easter  
\* 63<sup>rd</sup> day before Easter

**SEXAGESIMA**  
sex = 6 | Within 60 days of Easter  
\* 56<sup>th</sup> day before Easter

**QUINQUAGESIMA**  
quinque = 5 | Within 50 days of Easter  
\* 49<sup>th</sup> day before Easter



## Hymn of the Month

*In anticipation of our congregation's 75th anniversary in November 2024, we will have a hymn chosen for the month that will be used during the Divine Service. The hymns of the church give God's people the words to sing his praises and to confess what he has done for them in the saving death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.*

### **Kyrie! God, Father LSB 942**

"Lord (Kyrie) have mercy (eleison)." It's something the sick would often cry out to Jesus, as they begged for his help. When we as Christians ask for God's mercy, we acknowledge that we also are beggars who are in continual need before our Creator.

We pray the Kyrie every Sunday after the Introit and before the Gloria in Excelsis. For the month of February and throughout the season of Lent, we will replace the normal Kyrie with this version, which has been used by Christians since the 9th century.

This Kyrie addresses each person of the Trinity beginning with the Father who abounds in gracious love. God the Father not only made us, knitting us together in our mother's womb, but he continues to preserve us by giving us what we need every day at the proper time.

Next, we cry out to Christ, our king, who has brought salvation to all through his death and resurrection. And now, seated at the Father's right hand, he continues to intercede for us as the mediator between God and men.

The Holy Spirit's job is to take what the Son has done and give it to each of us personally by faith. We pray that he would guard our faith, for without the Spirit, we would lose it. Through the means of grace, we are indeed kept in the faith until our life's last hour. As those who die in Christ, who die with saving faith, we can leave this sinful world with gladness.

Kyrie eleison! Lord, have mercy!

Kyrie! God, Father in heav'n above,  
You abound in gracious love,  
Of all things the maker and preserver.  
Eleison! Eleison!

Kyrie! O Christ, our king,  
Salvation for all You came to bring.  
O Lord Jesus, God's own Son,  
Our mediator at the heav'nly throne:  
Hear our cry and grant our supplication.  
Eleison! Eleison!

Kyrie! O God the Holy Ghost,  
Guard our faith, the gift we need the most,  
And bless our life's last hour,  
That we leave this sinful world with gladness.  
Eleison! Eleison!

**Kyrie Eleison**  
LORD, HAVE MERCY

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Charles Bender
- 5 Erwin Reinbold  
Michael Starkey
- 12 Nicole Seeley
- 14 James Burnison  
Tracey Reinbold
- 16 Noah Reinbold
- 20 Heather Reinbold
- 21 Emily Spencer
- 22 Sandy D'Addezio
- 25 Olivia Hargash
- 28 Michael Reid

**February Divine Services**  
*(services with Holy Communion)*

*Sunday, February 4, 2024*  
Sexagesima  
Luke 8:4-15

*Sunday, February 11, 2024*  
Quinquagesima  
Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

*Wednesday, February 14, 2024*  
Ash Wednesday  
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*Sunday, February 18, 2024*  
The First Sunday in Lent (Invocabit)  
Matthew 4:1-11

*Sunday, February 21, 2024*  
The Wednesday of Invocabit  
Matthew 12:38-50

*Sunday, February 25, 2024*  
The Second Sunday in Lent (Reminiscere)  
Matthew 15:21-28

*Sunday, February 21, 2024*  
The Wednesday of Reminiscere  
Matthew 20:17-28

**NEXT VOTERS MEETING:  
SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024 @ 11 AM**

**SHUT-IN ADDRESSES**

Continue to pray for those who can't be with us on Sunday mornings.

Jean Adams  
8678 W. Deckerville Rd.  
Reese, MI 48757

John & Ruth Ann Kajjala  
6004 Gilford Rd.  
Fairgrove, MI 48733

Marge Montgomery  
8039 Massoll St.  
Reese, MI 48757

**CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION**

Private Confession and Absolution is available throughout the season of Lent every Saturday morning from 9 to 10 am.

It is also regularly offered every first Wednesday of the month at 11 am and every third Saturday of the month at 9 am.

It is always available by appointment.

**OFFICIAL ACTS**

**Christian Burial**  
Lorna Jane Bills, January 20, 2024

**STEWARDSHIP**

February Coffee Money  
Youth Trip

Ash Wednesday  
Grace Lutheran Church

Lenten Boxes  
Seminary Students

The Stewardship Board's quarterly mission for January through March will be to our two adopted seminary students: Ian Habicht and Nathan Bublitz. We supported Ian last year in his first year at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. This year, we've added Nathan who began his studies this fall at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Nathan is also the brother to our very own Joseph and Daniel Bublitz. Special offering envelopes can be found on the back table of the narthex.

# CHRISTIAN TRAINING

## SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY

	Sunday School	Adult Bible Study
11 am to 11:40 am	Lesson (preschool—4th grade)	Acts (also 5th—8th grade)
11:20 am to 12 pm	Music (preschool—8th grade)	Explanation of Common Service

**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHOIR WILL BE SINGING FOR PALM SUNDAY (March 24th)**

## THE MEN'S STUDY

February 17, 7:30 to 9 am  
every 3rd Saturday of the month  
prayer + breakfast + the Lutheran Confessions



## WEDNESDAYS AT GRACE

9:30 am Matins  
10 am Bible Study

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

—Romans 1:16-17

## DEVOTIONS IN LENT



We will be making use of Rev. William Weedon's devotions this Lent, as we have in the past. Be diligent in devoting time out of your day for yourself and your family to meditate even more on God's Word throughout the week. Extra devotion books can be found on the back table of the narthex.

## WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

During the season of Lent, as we fast from worldly pleasures, we also devote ourselves even more to the heavenly treasures. Such an opportunity is given every Wednesday as we hear and receive more of God's gifts in his Church.

February 21st	Matthew 12:38-50
February 28th	Matthew 20:17-28
March 6th	Matthew 15:1-20
March 13th	John 9:1-38
March 20th	John 10:22-38

Dinner at 6 pm  
Divine Service at 7 pm

# Thank You

Greetings members of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church!

I am so grateful and thankful for the support and prayers, as I have walked this new and exciting road that is college.

Your support is never taken for granted. I especially want to thank you for the scholarship money I have received to help me and my family financially. I cannot thank God enough for the family I have been graced with through this church.

God bless!

Gabriella Rienbold

Dear Christians,

Thank you so much for the generous gift to the radio program "The Lutheran Hour" over WLEW 1340 AM. Your gift will cover the cost of another month of broadcasts locally. We do not know who will hear the Word and grow in Christ. Blessings to you all in helping to spread the "Good News."

Yours in Christ,  
Arnold Koehn

Dear Saints at Grace:

Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society is very thankful for the gift of \$1,199.05 for work with the deaf. It will be used to support the students at St. Martin Lutheran School for the Deaf in Dearborn, Michigan. We thank God for faithful stewards who share their gifts for the benefit of the church and its projects. Please keep us in your prayers as we provide a Lutheran Education for deaf students. Thanks again for your generosity and God's continued blessings for all you do in His Kingdom.

In Christ's Service,  
Rev. Brant A. Engel  
President

Dear Friends of Life,

Thank you for your partnership and generous stewardship gift of \$375 toward our Gospel-motivated, life-affirming ministry. Your fellowship and uplifting encouragement are a blessing and an honor to receive, and we are humbled by your support. Together, working side by side, we are changing hearts and lives forever through the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

For over 45 years, our Lutherans For Life community has enabled Lutherans For Life to carry out its mission to equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices for Life. Bolstered by your prayers, stewardship offerings, and ministry partnership, we are ready to boldly equip and educate others with our message that all people are "Blessed For Life."

In truth and love,  
David Probst  
Development Director, Lutherans For Life

Dear Friends:

Thank you for supporting Wellspring Lutheran Services through your generous contribution of \$769.75. Donations, such as yours, are very important and enable us to provide the many programs we provide and help us meet many specific needs of the children, families and seniors we serve. Each day Wellspring impacts the lives of literally hundreds of people, young and old, who are in need of one, or more, of our many services. By making this donation, you help equip our staff with the tools they need to renew hope and restore troubled lives.

Thank you again for helping Wellspring reach out to those in need. Your generosity takes on a very special meaning in their lives and to our staff who serve and support them.

Sincerely,  
David M. Gehm  
President and CEO

# THE DAILY READINGS

“God’s Word is the treasure that makes everything holy. By it all the saints have themselves been made holy. At whatever time God’s Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or pondered, there the person, the day, and the work is hallowed, not on account of the external work but on account of the Word that makes us all saints.”

—Martin Luther, The Large Catechism, 91-92

<b>Thursday, February 1st</b>	Psalm 28	Zech. 11:4-7	2 Tim. 4:1-18
<b>Friday, February 2nd</b>	Psalm 75	Zech.12:1-13:9	Titus 1:1-2:6
<b>Saturday, February 3rd</b>	Psalm 47	Zech. 14:1-21	Titus 2:7-3:15
<b>Sunday, February 4th</b>	Psalm 127	Job 1:1-22	John 1:1-18
<b>Monday, February 5th</b>	Psalm 31:1-2, 23-24	Job 2:1-3:10	John 1:19-34
<b>Tuesday, February 6th</b>	Psalm 77:1-12, 15	Job 3:11-26	John 1:35-51
<b>Wednesday, November 7th</b>	Psalm 4	Job 4:1-21	John 2:1-12
<b>Thursday, February 8th</b>	Psalm 122	Job 5:1-27	John 2:13-25
<b>Friday, February 9th</b>	Psalm 23:1-5	Job 6:1-13	John 3:1-21
<b>Saturday, February 10th</b>	Psalm 38	Job 6:14-30	John 3:22-4:6
<b>Sunday, February 11th</b>	Psalm 147:1-11	Job 7:1-21	John 4:7-26
<b>Monday, February 12th</b>	Psalm 99	Job 8:1-22	John 4:27-45
<b>Tuesday, February 13th</b>	Psalm 95:1-7a	Job 9:1-35	John 4:46-54
<b>Wednesday, February 14th</b>	Psalm 136:1-9	Genesis 1:1-19	Mark 1:1-13
<b>Thursday, February 15th</b>	Psalm 81:1-6, 9	Gen. 1:20-2:3	Mark 1:14-28
<b>Friday, February 16th</b>	Psalm 9:1-9	Gen. 2:4-25	Mark 1:29-45
<b>Saturday, February 17th</b>	Psalm 12:1-6	Gen. 3:1-24	Mark 2:1-17
<b>Sunday, February 18th</b>	Psalm 79:5-9	Gen. 4:1-26	Mark 2:18-28
<b>Monday, February 19th</b>	Psalm 2	Gen. 6:1-7:5	Mark 3:1-19
<b>Tuesday, February 20th</b>	Psalm 104:1-9	Gen. 7:11-8:12	Mark 3:20-35
<b>Wednesday, February 21st</b>	Psalm 74:10-17	Gen. 8:13-9:17	Mark 4:1-20
<b>Thursday, February 22nd</b>	Psalm 107:23-32	Gen. 11:27-12:20	Mark 4:21-41
<b>Friday, February 23rd</b>	Psalm 73:25-28	Gen. 13:1-18	Mark 5:1-20
<b>Saturday, February 24th</b>	Psalm 32:1-5	Gen. 15:1-21	Mark 5:21-43
<b>Sunday, February 25th</b>	Psalm 139:7-10	Gen. 16:1-9, 15-17:22	Mark 6:1-13
<b>Monday, February 26th</b>	Psalm 91:9-16	Gen. 18:1-15	Mark 6:14-34
<b>Tuesday, February 27th</b>	Psalm 126	Gen. 21:1-21	Mark 6:35-56
<b>Wednesday, February 28th</b>	Psalm 66:8-15	Gen. 22:1-19	Mark 7:1-23
<b>Thursday, February 29th</b>	Psalm 28:6-9	Gen. 24:1-31	Mark 7:24-37





# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Voter's Meeting January 07, 2024

Executive Director, Aaron Reinbold called the meeting to order. Pastor Haller opened with a reading and devotion from 1 Corinthians 1 and closed the devotion with prayer.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT ~ Mary Masker

- Roll call was taken with 28 members present and 3 excused.
- Minutes reviewed from October 2023 Voter's meeting. Motion to accept minutes by Joe Bublitz and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joanne Hills. Motion carried and approved to accept the meeting minutes.

### TREASURER'S REPORT ~ Mary Masker

- Handout showing checking account balance as of December 31, 2023 at \$12,651.44 and current balances of Designated Funds and Church Extension accounts.
- Second handout showing final budget balances for 2023. Steve Reinbold made a motion to approve the line item overages in the Elder's Budget totaling \$625.80 (overall Elder Budget still had \$13,710.77 remaining budget balance overall). Dan Reinbold 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Motion carried and approved.

### CHURCH PROPERTIES ~ Tom Reid ~ No Report

### ELDERS ~ Steve Reinbold

- Parted out or saved old organ parts and disposing of the rest.
- We had 80 RSVPs for the Holy Conversation held on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> with Pastor Bennett being the speaker and also preaching on Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup> and presenting during Bible class hour. Youth served the luncheon catered from Norm's Market. The videos of the classes are uploaded on the church's website.
- Supplies ordered including baptismal candles. Also ordered 65 Advent devotions for members.
- Decision made to pay for Lutheran Witness subscriptions again this year for those members wanting it. Elder's advent dinner proceeds to help pay for this.
- Working on 2024 schedule. January elders are Tom Reid and Joe Bublitz. Joe Bublitz and Dan Reinbold for February.
- A special voter's meeting was held on December 31<sup>st</sup> prior to Bible Class approving the excess funds in the tuition fund budget to be distributed to our seminary students this year, as well as to Concordia Ann Arbor towards Gabi Reinbold's tuition. The remaining balance was approved to be donated to St. Martin's School for the Deaf.
- Elders would like to invite the men of the congregation to join them for the Men's Bible Study on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month at 7:30am.

### EVANGELISM AND MERCY ~ Leslie Reinbold

- The soup sale brought in \$265 with proceeds to purchase school supplies to give away at the Clothing Drive this summer. Donations for the Clothing Drive always welcome any time of the year.
- Giving Tree will be up until this Wed. night, with items going out to Orphan Grain Train and Positive Alternatives.
- Served the Advent dinner on 12/13/23.
- Hosting a Family Game Night on January 26, 2024 at 7pm with a weather back-up date of Feb 2, 2024. Will take free will offering and have popcorn and a hot chocolate bar. Bring a game and family and friends to join us.

### LADIES AID ~ Diane Spencer

- Had many beautiful Poinsettias ordered for Christmas.
- Served the first Advent dinner and planning to host the February 21<sup>st</sup> Lenten dinner.
- Thinking of putting together a church cookbook
- Next meeting will be held on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

### FELLOWSHIP ~ Tracey Reinbold

- We had turkey for our Harvest Dinner held in October which raised \$549 given directly to Orphan Grain Train.
- Served Jesus' birthday cake in December.
- Will be meeting to plan 2024. We have 3 Lenten dinners available: 2/28, 3/6 and 3/13. Ladies Aid is hosting on 2/21 and the Youth are hosting on 3/20.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK ~ Tracey Reinbold**

- Still determining a date for a Pizza and Bowling outing in Caro and would like to plan a sledding outing if we get some snow.
- We have 3 definite and 1 maybe for Higher Things 2024 and will need to get deposits sent in.
- Maybe making caramel popcorn for a fund raiser.

### **STEWARDSHIP ~ Joanne Hills**

- Coffee money for January will go to Thumb Area Assault Crisis Center. February coffee money designated to the Youth Trip and March coffee money will go to the Good Samaritan Fund.
- Special Missions during the first quarter: Epiphany envelope goes to Orphan Grain Train, Ash Wednesday collection will go into Grace's general fund as well as Easter Sunday collection. February and March Lenten Boxes will go to our seminary students, Maundy Thursday envelope goes to Thumb Area Assault Crisis Center, Good Friday collections go to Lutheran World Relief and Easter Vigil goes to Wellspring Lutheran Services.

### **PASTOR'S REPORT**

- We have six Junior High Catechumens meeting Wed. nights and High School Catechumens meeting once a month.
- Sunday bible study continues in Acts and Wednesday morning in Romans following the morning Matins service.
- We currently have five acolytes as well as Hunter as our senior acolyte.
- Men's Study meeting the 3rd Saturday of every month, with January 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am for our next meeting. All men of the congregation are welcome to join us as we study our Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord.
- November 10<sup>th</sup> set for our church anniversary service at 9:15am. Pastor Weedon will be preaching. Working on music for this special service and a possible hymn written specially for Grace by Rev. Steve Starkey.
- Our shut-in: Ruth Ann Kaijala fractured her spine and is in rehab. Lillian Wheeler had a stroke before Thanksgiving but was recovering nicely until a 2<sup>nd</sup> stroke yesterday. Please keep them both in prayer.
- Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> will start the Lent season, with Easter Sunday on March 31<sup>st</sup>.
- For the Divine Service, Pastor Haller will be using the right hand column on page 184 in the hymnal, which offers a Declaration of Grace instead of a General Absolution. Confession and Absolution is a Sacrament, which should be for individuals and only for Christians. Pastor Haller has discussed and counseled with other pastors of our circuit and feels uncomfortable to offer absolution to all attending services when he doesn't know every individual's true confession and repentance. We are absolutely assured of the forgiveness of our sins through the preaching of the Gospel, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, but we should also seek Private Confession and Absolution with our pastor. Pastor is available for Confession and Absolution every first Wednesday of the month from 11am to noon and every third Saturday from 9am to 10am. Any other time may be made with Pastor Haller by appointment.
- Pastor Haller will be attending Symposia from January 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The Hallers are now fully licensed to foster.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Kitchen remodel: looking for a contractor. Let Tracey Reinbold know of any referrals.
- 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Pastor Astrowski will be our first alumni pastor preaching in May for our anniversary year.
- Carillon repairs: Aaron Reinbold still trying to meet with Greg Carnes about repairs.
- Front sign: Most agreed that the cost of a digital sign is too much and Steve Reinbold and Tom Reid will head up a committee to update our front sign.

### **NO NEW BUSINESS**

Next Parish Planning Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Next Voter's Meeting will be on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 11am.

Motion to adjourn made by Dave Weber and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Reinbold.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and singing of the Doxology.

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Mary Masker, Secretary/Treasurer

# FEBRUARY 2024

Church Office: (989) 693-6322 Pastor Haller's cell phone: (248) 794-3703

Executive Director: Aaron Reinbold (989) 233-5105

Elders of the Month: Joseph Bublitz (989) 528-9120 & Daniel Reinbold (989) 670-9048

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10 am Ladies Aid	2 <i>The Purification of Mary &amp; Presentation of Our Lord</i> Pastor's Day Off	3
4 <i>Sexagesima</i> 9:15 am Divine Service 10:45 am Sunday School & Bible Study	5	6 7 pm Elders	7 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 11 am to 12 pm Private Confession 7 pm Catechesis	8 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 11 am to 12 pm Private Confession 7 pm Catechesis	9 Pastor's Day Off	10
11 <i>Quinquagesima</i> 9:15 am Divine Service 10:45 am Sunday School & Bible Study	12	13 7 pm Elders	14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 7 pm Divine Service	15 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 7 pm Divine Service	16 Pastor's Day Off	17 7:30 am Men's Study 9 to 10 am Private Confession
18 <i>The First Sunday in Lent</i> 9:15 am Divine Service 10:45 am Sunday School & Bible Study 6 to 8 pm H.S. Catechesis	19	20	21 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Divine Service choir practice	22 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Divine Service choir practice	23 Pastor's Day Off	24 <i>St. Matthias, Apostle</i>
25 <i>The Second Sunday in Lent</i> 9:15 am Divine Service 10:45 am Sunday School & Bible Study	26	27	28 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Divine Service choir practice	29 9:30 am Matins 10 am Bible Study 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Divine Service choir practice		

# Serving Our Lord in the Month of February

## **Elders for February**

Joseph Bublitz & Daniel Reinbold

## **Ladies Aid for February**

Pamela Ill & Hannah Haller

## **Sunday, February 4, 2024**

*Refreshments:* Renee Hecht, Joanne Hills, Beth Hoppe

*Propers Choir:* Alberta Reinbold, Daniel Reinbold, Winston Reinbold

*Acolyte:* Noah Reinbold

*Bible Study Babysitter:* Chelsea Worden

*Youngers' Sunday School Teacher:* Steven Reinbold

## **Sunday, February 11, 2024**

*Refreshments:* Pamela Ill, Susan Pfund, Sarah Reid

*Propers Choir:* Joanne Hills, Mary Masker, Susan Pfund

*Acolyte:* Erwin Reinbold

*Bible Study Babysitter:* Melinda & Isabella Reinbold

*Youngers' Sunday School Teacher:* Hannah Haller

## **Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

*Acolyte:* Erwin Reinbold

## **Sunday, February 18, 2024**

*Refreshments:* Joanne Reinbold, Leslie Reinbold, Tracey Reinbold

*Propers Choir:* Hannah Haller, Hunter Reid, Sarah Reid

*Acolyte:* Winston Reinbold

*Bible Study Babysitter:* Alberta Reinbold

*Youngers' Sunday School Teacher:* Laura Starkey

## **Wednesday, February 21, 2024**

*Dinner:* Ladies Aid

*Acolyte:* Winston Reinbold

## **Sunday, February 25, 2024**

*Refreshments:* Diane Spencer, Laura Starkey, Bev Voss

*Propers Choir:* Aaron Reinbold, Amelia Reinbold, Leslie Reinbold

*Acolyte:* Brandt LaPouttre

*Bible Study Babysitter:* Chelsea Worden

*Youngers' Sunday School Teacher:* Pamela Ill & Alberta Reinbold

## **Wednesday, February 28, 2024**

*Dinner:* Evangelism

*Acolyte:* Brandt LaPouttre

\*\*If your name is not on the refreshment list and you would like to serve, please contact the church office.

\*\*If you're not able to serve on a particular Sunday, please call someone to replace you.

For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

—Psalm 84:10