

Pastor Janneke's Page

Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

March 11-12, 2017

March Madness

Have you filled out your NCAA bracket this year? I'll admit, I'm not much of a basketball fan. I prefer the sport with the little white and red ball, rather than the big orange ball, yet there's something special about the NCAA Tournament. Maybe it's seeing these young men and women performing in the national spotlight. Maybe it's the excitement of the fans, especially the thousands of college students in attendance. Maybe it's the "win or go home" pressure of the tournament.

It's so easy to get drawn in to a good game. The most recent World Series and Super Bowl were ones to remember, and no doubt, March Madness will be the same. Some sports fans get drawn in to the extreme: naming your children after your favorite players, wearing nothing but your team's gear, getting a constant stream of sports notifications on your phone ... Sound like you? (I'll admit, my devotion to the St. Louis Cardinals once bordered on obsession!) But here's a thought: **What if we applied that same energy and devotion to our relationship with Christ?** Why not have a little "March Madness" in your prayer life? Why not go a little overboard in your generosity? Why not make time for being in God's Word in the same way that we make time for the big game?

Lent once again puts *Jesus'* "madness" on full display. Jesus, of course, wasn't "mad" with mental illness or the like. Instead, He was madly devoted to doing *whatever it took* to rescue you and me from sin and eternal death! Aren't you glad He's "mad about you" in this sense?

Pastor Aker and I are both passionate about a cause that we would like to invite you to join us in this Lent. This year, Faith is participating in **40 Days For Life**, along with 39 other area churches (and with Christians around the world). 40 Days For Life is a peaceful prayer vigil, specifically praying for those who are considering an abortion, for abortion providers, for those who carry the pain of having had an abortion, and for national repentance over such sins against God's gift of life.

Faith Lutheran will be leading the prayer vigil on Saturday, April 8. Throughout that day, from 7am-7pm, we are asked to provide twelve prayer teams (of two or more people) who will spend one hour in peaceful prayer outside of Planned Parenthood in Sioux Falls. Would you consider coming and praying? Please see the Welcome Center for full information and please start praying now:

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your great gift of life. Thank you for our neighbors, both those born and unborn, young and old. Help us to boldly defend and cherish each human life, for each person is precious in Your sight. Amen.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Kory Janneke

Pastor's Page: Part Two

Throughout this Lent, Pastor Aker and I are writing brief daily Lenten devotions online. You can find links to these on our church Facebook page. **Just search for "Faith Lutheran Church – Sioux Falls" on Facebook.** While you're there, please click "like" so that you can continue receiving updates, devotions, and more. You can also read these devotions on Pastor Aker's blog, "Armor of God" (www.coreyaker.wordpress.com). Here is a sampling of our devotions:

Reclaiming Truth

"By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

The truth behind these words spurred the Reformation. Yet over the past 500 years since Luther's 95 theses, the truth is being lost once again. Fallen human nature apparently sends us searching out ways to subsidize our salvation. The logic is sound: I made the mistake, I need to fix it.

Not so! There is no fixing it. If you've tried, you know. Don't get me wrong, you can do such a good job faking it that you've got everyone fooled. You can even fool yourself sometimes. But in your truly honest moments, ask yourself if you're certain you've done enough.

The answer is always "NO". But that's also not how we're saved. Trust Jesus' words. He saves you. His grace covers the multitude of your sins. You've messed up; Jesus alone cleans you up. Best of all, it's a done deal!

Jesus, thank you for your free grace. Amen.

Walking Together

"[Stand] firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents" (Philippians 1:27b-28a).

Synod isn't an common word. In the Greek language, it means "walking together." God's Word calls His people to walk together. We "Faith Lutherans" walk together with fellow Missouri Synod Lutherans and with our sister church bodies around the world.

However, St. Paul isn't just talking about these formal partnerships. He's reminding us that no Christian is meant to be a lone ranger! God brings us together in His Church so that we'll strive side by side for the Good News of Jesus, we'll provide and draw support for one another, and we'll live fearlessly, knowing that our Lord and our fellow members of Christ's body are walking with us.

God's people and God's truth will always have their opponents, but don't focus on them! Focus on the support God provides through fellow believers walking with us! Look around you this weekend in worship – see that you are not alone. God puts people at your side.

Lord Jesus, thank You for the blessing of Your Body, the Church. Amen.