

# Pastor's Page

By Senior Pastor, Corey Aker

Palm Sunday kicks off a very special week in the church year. Jesus entered Jerusalem and set in motion His final week before the resurrection. Turning over money changers' tables, telling about the end of the age, being tested by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes, instituting the Lord's Supper, being betrayed by Judas, turned over and accused falsely, beaten, and finally led out to His crucifixion – Jesus changed the world in one single week!

Because this is the final week of Lent, Pastor Janneke and I would like to offer set days and times for you to confess your sins privately and receive the Lord's absolution. Although this can be a difficult activity to decide to do, please remember that we pastors have taken a solemn ordination vow that everything confessed to us is entirely confidential and will go with us to our graves. Thus, you will take comfort in knowing your confession is between you and the Lord only. Your Lord then speaks to you His freeing words of forgiveness. Individual Confession and Absolution is intended for those sins that especially trouble you. It's not meant to be scary, but freeing! Here's the schedule:

**Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup> from 6am – 9am**

**Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 2pm**

**Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 4pm – 7pm**

\*\*If for some reason none of these times work for you, please give one of us a call and arrange for a different time. (Aker – 214-3343; Janneke – 359-5657)

As the week marches on, we set aside some time to remember and celebrate the specific events that took place in Jesus' life. We do so with a *Three Day Worship Service*, or the *Triduum*! I know what you're thinking, "I can't spend three days in church!" Of course not! But it would be good to spend a small portion of each day, from Thursday thru Sunday, in worship. By worshipping each day, you get a fuller sense of the last days of Christ (before His resurrection) and a deeper appreciation for the message of Easter. The three-day worship service includes: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil. All three of these services are actually one service that begins on Thursday and ends on Saturday night.

Here are the details of each part of the three-day service:

**Part 1, Maundy Thursday:** On this day, Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples for the final time. At the meal, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body given for you". Afterwards, He took the cup and said, "This is my blood of the new covenant shed for the forgiveness of your sins". He took the posture of a servant for each of them by washing their feet and drying them with His own garment. He gave them the command (Latin = *Maundy*) to love one another as He has loved them. It was later this night that Jesus was turned over to the soldiers and abandoned by all His disciples. Our service will start out as a standard Divine Service with Holy Communion. Upon reception of the Sacrament, however, the members of the Altar Guild will come forward and strip the altar and chancel area, reminding us that Jesus was completely stripped of everything. The evening concludes not with a benediction (this is only the end of part one), but with the reading of Psalm 22 as the congregation leaves in silence. This is a visual reminder that Jesus was left alone.

**Part 2, Good Friday:** Over the course of Friday, Jesus is accused and found guilty of blasphemy and sent to Pilate for punishment. Pilate never seems fully convinced that Jesus is guilty of anything, but after mounting pressure from the crowd, he relents to their will and has Jesus turned over for flogging and execution by crucifixion. The soldiers beat Him within inches of His life and pound a thorny vine, twisted to represent a crown, into His head. To the top of Golgotha, Jesus and Simon of Cyrene alternate, carrying the cross, where Jesus was then nailed and hoisted up for all to see and mock. From His cross, Jesus is recorded to have spoken seven powerful words or sayings. We will explore each as part of our worship. Part two of the *Triduum* concludes with a rough-hewn cross being lifted up and slowly removed from the sanctuary, a moment of silence, and a loud crash, or *strepitus*, representing the closing of Jesus' tomb. One candle is brought back in to the sanctuary reminding us that the Light of the World is not snuffed out. The congregation again leaves in silence.

**Part 3, Easter Vigil:** On Holy Saturday, when our Lord rested in His tomb, we remember the promises of the Lord. This service begins outdoors with a bonfire and the dedication of a new large candle, the *Paschal* candle. The Paschal Candle is lit during the Easter season, during Baptismal services, and during Funeral services. This is a constant reminder that we are connected to the death and resurrection of Christ. Each worshipper lights a candle from the Paschal candle and makes their way into the dark sanctuary. Once situated, we begin our vigil liturgy. We will have a service of readings in which we hear many Scripture passages that tell the history of God's plan of salvation. Next, we have a service of the remembrance of our Holy Baptism. We then spend some time together in prayer and vigil. Our evening, and the Three Day worship service, concludes with the Easter Acclamation: "Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" The hymn of praise "This is the Feast", long omitted from our worship, is brought back in with loud and powerful vibrancy! All the lights are turned on and we begin redecorating the chancel with some of the paraments and the communion ware. As you come up to receive the Sacrament, you will bring a lily that will be placed around the altar. We then receive the Sacrament together and enjoy remembering that our Savior has been raised from death, never to die again! We conclude this service and the *triduum* with the benediction. After worship, I would love to spend some time together eating *hors d'oeuvres* and enjoying some fellowship in the narthex.

I know that's a lot of church. We encourage you to attend as much as you are able and assure you that each will be meaningful and faith-building for you. If you are able to attend the entire *Triduum*, you will enjoy a unique experience that will make Easter Sunday all the more powerful!

## Schedule of Events

April 8 – 40 Days for Life – Planned Parenthood

April 8 & 9 – Palm Sunday Worship (Communion at 5:30 and 8)

April 10 – Confession and Absolution – 6am – 9am

April 11 – Confession and Absolution – 11am – 2pm

April 12 – Confession and Absolution – 4pm – 7pm

April 13 – Triduum, Part 1 – Maundy Thursday  
Noon and 6:30 with Holy Communion

April 14 – Triduum, Part 2 – Good Friday  
Noon – Service of Readings and Hymns  
6:30 – Service of Seven Words from the Cross

April 15 – Triduum, Part 3 – Easter Vigil  
5:30 – Worship with Holy Communion  
Following – Fellowship time with *hors d'oeuvres*

April 16 – Celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord  
7am – Worship with Holy Communion  
8am – Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt  
9:30 – Worship with Holy Communion