



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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www.hopelutheranstl.org



✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

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February 2023

A Holy Season of Prayerful and Penitential Reflection

On Ash Wednesday—February 22 this year—we hear these words as we begin the season of Lent:

"...on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ" (LSB Altar Book, 483).

These opening words to our Ash Wednesday liturgy present us with two main themes for the season of Lent: (1) "prayerful and penitential reflection" and (2) "the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, when Lent comes, we turn our attention (1) to prayer and repentance, and (2) to our Lord's suffering and death for us.

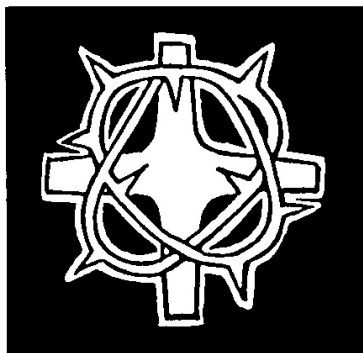
The Ash Wednesday exhortation continues:

"From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope" (LSB Altar Book, 483).

We need this ancient practice of Lent in order to draw our hearts and minds to our need for salvation from sin and death, and to our Lord's work of suffering and dying for us.

For "special devotion," we make time for prayer at home and at church. It might even take special efforts to schedule prayer time at home. It might take some juggling of the schedule to attend Lent Evening Prayer at church. But it's well worth it! For prayer time—

"devotions"—at home, I highly recommend using *Treasury of Daily Prayer* (CPH). It gives Scripture readings, meditations, and prayers for each day of the year. During the season of Lent these readings draw our attention to our need for salvation and how our Lord suffers and dies to rescue us from sin and death.



For "self-denial," we learn how to say "No" to our self-centeredness. We learn, instead, to trust God and love our neighbor. If/When we fast, we learn to tell our stomach, "You're not the boss of me!" When we practice "almsgiving" (giving money to charities or the needy), we deny our own selfish desires in order to help other people in their needs. That's what Christians are called to do in all of life.

Lent gives us an annual "spring training" to live as God has created us to live.

For "humble repentance," we learn how to confess our sins and be comforted by Jesus' forgiveness. According to our Lutheran Confessions, these are the two parts of "repentance." The Augsburg Confession says:

"Now, strictly speaking, repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance." (AC XII.1-6)

During Lent we learn to view our sins with a different mind: they are that ugly, that wretched, that repulsive. Our sins ought to bring terrors to our conscience. Our sins do go against God's will; they do anger Him. Yes, we should sorrow over our sins, because they show just how sick and ugly we have become because of that "infection" called original sin.

But let's not forget the second part of "repentance," that is, faith that receives the forgiveness that Jesus won for us on the Cross. During Lent we learn to be comforted, not by our struggles against our sins, but by Jesus Himself. Everything that Jesus suffers, before and on the Cross, is for us—to forgive our sins and make us right with God.

Some think that Lent is "such a downer." They hear the music in minor keys, and they are unsettled by all the talk of "repentance," confessing sins, and "self-denial." Some people would rather look for a constant emotional high of joy and elation—such as we have when we celebrate Christmas or Easter.

However, we cannot have "good times" or "up times" all the time. Lent calls us to be honest with ourselves. We live in a fallen world. We are fallen sinners. We need to be rescued from sin, from death, from Satan, and even from ourselves. That's the great blessing of Lent! Our Lord Jesus comes to rescue us. Lent gives us a "repentant joy"—a healthy joy that comes only by confessing our sins and relying on Jesus Christ, and Him alone, for our true joy in all of life.

Far from being "such a downer," during Lent we hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that bestow comfort and peace that that strengthen our faith. We do not take perverse pleasure from wallowing in our sins. Instead, "penitential reflection" is all about being comforted when we hear our Lord's Absolution. As the Apology of the Augsburg Confession says:

"When the Gospel is heard and the Absolution is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives comfort.... Therefore, the voice of the one absolving must be believed no differently than we would believe a voice from heaven. Absolution can properly be called a Sacrament of repentance.... So faith is conceived and strengthened through Absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the Sacraments, so that it may not give in to the terrors of sin and death while it struggles." (Apology XII.39-42)

May our Lord Jesus Christ grant you a blessed and holy season of Lent!

BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, ON ENTERING THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT, MEDITATE ON THE SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST

EXHORTATION

*For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in Him we might become the righteousness of
God. 2 Corinthians 5:21*

Among the early Christians the holy season of Lent was a season of devotion and prayer, and it was spent in special meditations on the sufferings of Jesus. This custom is observed among Christians to this day. While Satan has induced the children of the world to enter the season of Lent not with prayer and devotion but with all the drunkenness and follies of Mardi Gras, showing that they care nothing for crucified Lord Jesus and trample His blood underfoot, the children of God have a very different spirit. They regard this worldly revelry with horror.

The children of God begin this season with prayer and singing, preparing their hearts to contemplate the suffering of their Lord. They place before their eyes the entire account of the Passion: from Gethsemane to the council, to Pilate, to Golgotha and the cross. And as they contemplate each detail, they say: "All this He did for me."

While they participate in these sacred meditations at home or at church, they are not satisfied merely to recall the history of these events, nor does their devotion vanish with the passing of Lent. Since they intend to draw comfort from the wounds of Jesus throughout the days of their life, and most especially at the hour of their death, they remember the crucified Lord Jesus as long as they live. Such remembrance prompts them to crucify their sinful desires, so that they live no longer in the manner of the lost world with its purposeful sinning, but they die to sin and rise to new life in spirit. God blesses such diligence, zeal, and desire for the sanctification of their lives. (*Starck's Prayer Book: Revised Concordia Edition*, CPH 2009, p. 77)

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Notes from the Kantor

This month we look at how our series of Luther hymns for January and February are intertwined in multiple ways.

During the month of January, we spent a significant amount of time singing the hymn, “To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord” (LSB 406). This hymn speaks to baptism, both the baptism of Jesus and our own. My personal favorite verse is stanza five, as it reminds us of the great commission.

*To His disciples spoke the Lord,
“Go out to every nation,
And bring to them the living Word
And this My invitation:
Let everyone abandon sin
And come in true contrition
To be baptized and thereby win
Full pardon and remission
And heavenly bliss inherit” (LSB 406:5)*

In previous years we sang this text by Martin Luther to the modern hymn tune ELVET BANKS. This year we took on, and mastered, the traditional tune CHRIST, UNSER HERR, which first appeared in a 1524 hymnal edited by Johann Walter. The tune CHRIST, UNSER HERR was originally paired with Luther’s paraphrase of Psalm 67, the hymn “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” (LSB 823), which also happens to be our hymn for the Gesima Sundays during February. Interestingly, “To Jordan Came the Christ Our Lord” was originally set to a third tune, one that was replaced withing a few years with CHRIST, UNSER HERR.

During February we will spend time learning the hymn “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” in the Sundays leading up to Lent. This text is a one of several Psalms that Luther paraphrased to create, “as many songs as possible in the vernacular which the people could sing during [Divine Service].” The tune ES WOLLE GOTT UNS GNADIG SEIN is of conflicted origin. The only thing known is that the hymn likely was paired with this tune originally, then later became sung to CHRIST, UNSER HERR!

So, we have two hymns with seemingly interchangeable historic tunes that also have modern tune, which was written specifically by David Lee in 2002 to fit both hymn texts!

Two quick notes of interest regarding the hymn “May

God Bestow on Us His Grace”. First, on May 6, 1524, a man was arrested in Magdeburg for singing Luther’s setting of Psalm 67 and selling copies. This is possibly the earliest existing copy of the hymn, as well as an early prosecution for copyright infringement. Second, German musicologist Eduard Emil Koch notes that Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden encouraged his armies to sing both “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” before battle, accompanied by trumpets and kettledrums, in 1632.

*May God bestow on us His grace
With blessings rich provide us;
And may the brightness of His face
To life eternal guide us,
That we His saving health may know
His gracious will and pleasure,
And also to the nations show
Christ's riches without measure
And unto God convert them. (LSB 823:1)*

In the first stanza of “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” we sing “That we His saving health may know...” We know what that saving health is! It is eternal life that we receive through baptism. We also sing, “...to the nations show Christ’s without measure....” This is the great commission! In fact, this hymn has been called the first missionary hymn of the Reformation.

With both “To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord” and “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” it is interesting to note various ways these hymns are related. Not just with the three various tunes, but with their complimentary texts by Martin Luther.

We will sing “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” three times during February 2023. It is the appointed Hymn of the Day for Sexagesima, but it is fitting for the entire season leading up to the penitential season of Lent.

In CHRIST,
Kantor Janssen

Upcoming Musical Events at Hope

Sunday, February 5 | 4:00 PM

Hymn festival featuring the hymn texts of Lisa Clark. Several of the settings for choir and congregation are newly composed. The choirs of Hope and Ascension Lutheran will combine to lead, with the Jacob Weber at the organ.



SERVING IN GOD'S MISSION UPDATE on PLANNING WORK to DATE

On Sunday, January 22, the Voters Assembly convened for a special meeting during the Bible Class hour. The topic for this meeting was another update on the work to date in the “Serving in God’s Mission” planning process. The Voters Assembly unanimously approved the following Purpose Statement (*not* to amend or replace the one in our Constitution), Mission Statement, and Planning Categories. These all now become the foundation for our ongoing work of planning and carrying out the ministry that our Lord Jesus gives us here at Hope. The Church Council now takes the lead in continuing work on our Vision Statements and S.M.A.R.T. Goals.

PURPOSE

(Why has the Lord put us in this place, at this time, with these people?)

Hope Ev. Lutheran Church exists to know and make known the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in our congregation and communities and throughout the world, through the faithful ministry of His Word and Sacraments. Christ is the source and goal of our life together. We know Him from the Holy Scriptures. We recognize His presence in the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and in our congregation members’ loving care in works of mercy directed toward people inside and outside of the congregation. As one family growing in His discipleship, we are committed to providing a gracious and welcoming place for all and to support His mission to extend God’s Kingdom, so that forgiveness, life, and salvation might flourish in the hope of Christ alone.

MISSION

(What is the Lord calling us to do in our current context, i.e., people, place, and time?)

Share life and hope in our Savior Jesus.

PLANNING CATEGORIES

(For planning purposes, how do we arrange/characterize areas of the congregation’s life, activities, and work?)

- I. **Worship and Music** (including Altar Guild)
- II. **Spiritual Care** (including Pastor, Board of Elders)
- III. **Witness and Outreach**
- IV. **Education**
- V. **Life Together** (including mercy work, member connections and engagement, families)
- VI. **Stewardship** (including leadership, governance, planning, communications, Voters Assembly, Church Council, Board of Finance)
- VII. **Facilities**

LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – January 2023

Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

New Year's is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it's over), and we look to the future in hope and anticipation, and perhaps with some worry, for what it holds.

The point is that New Year's celebrations remind us of who we are as opposed to who we would like to be, what we have done in comparison to what we want to do. It reminds us of our accomplishments, but mostly it reminds us of our failures. What we've lost. Who we've lost.

New Year's is our own version of Charles Dickens' classic, *A Christmas Carol*. And we all play Scrooge. We are visited by the ghosts of our pasts, presents and futures.

St. Paul writes: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:6-15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord will both supply and increase what we need to give to the church for its work in the world. He tells us that this work God does in us will enrich and bless us in every way, and through this, will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving in years past and change what needs to be adjusted, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. If you've not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word, to receive forgiveness and feast on the

rich food of our Lord's body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you—all of you (Matt. 22:20-22).

Second, pray for the Lord's help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1-16).

Third, consider what the church is and what the church does. The church is a place of mercy. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. It exhales this mercy in love toward neighbors. You are a member of the church, of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for the life of the world. You spread that mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the church in the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Lev. 27:1-34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what's left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, or ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

So, don't let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God's gift to you for this body and life.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry
lcms.org/stewardship

LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – February 2023

Don't Replace "And" with "Or"

We've all heard that stewardship means giving to the church of our time, talents, and treasure. This alliterative trinity helps us see that giving is not just about money, but about our whole lives. As we confess in the Small Catechism's explanation of the First Article of the Apostle's Creed, God gives us everything we have and enjoy. First we confess that God gives us "our body and soul, our eyes, ears, and all our members, our reason and all our senses" (SC II). Then we confess that He gives us material things. The time, talents, and treasure trinity places before our eyes the fact that we are to give something of all three of these things toward the mission of the church in thanksgiving for what God has provided. For everything we have, and indeed, everything we are, comes from God's fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

The problem with this alliterative trinity comes when we replace one little word with another little word – when we replace the word *and* with the word *or*. It is always written with the *and*, but when we read it, we read it with the *or*. Thus this quite helpful trinity, which extolls that everything that we have and are is a gift from God, to be given back in service of His church, turns into a trinity that we can pick and choose from when we serve God. The giving of our time, talents, *and* treasure turns into the giving of our time, talents, *or* treasure.

Then the question arises: Can we give of our time and talents instead of our treasure? Or perhaps it is the other way round: Can we give of our treasure and not of our time and talents? But these are the wrong questions. The right question is, can we give of our time and talents in addition to our treasure? Yes, indeed, we are

called to give of all three. The things that God gives us are not to be pitted against one another. Rather, they are given to us, and we are to press them all into God's service for benefit of His church and our neighbors in need.

Thus, we give all three. We give our treasure in the form of a generous, first-fruits proportion of our income. We give of our time in generosity for the benefit of Christ's holy church. We give of our talents in the same manner. Since God gave us all these things, we are called to give generously of all these things in faith toward Him and in fervent love to our neighbors.

For God has provided all these things for us. Out of His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, He gives us each time, talents, *AND* treasure as a means to bless those around us. We serve our neighbors with these things, blessing them with the blessings with which God has blessed us. We give of our time, talents and treasure to our families, our society, our church, and our local congregations. And we do this because we know that we are not our own. Rather, we belong to God. We have been bought with a price: the holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave everything – His time, His talents and His treasure – to have us as His own and to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. We have these things as gifts and blessings from God. Let us then press them all into service for the sake of His love – time, talents, and treasure together.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry
lcms.org/stewardship

“All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ” (Augsburg Confession, 24:3). We have been in the Epiphany season and hearing God’s Word on how Christ is the Savior for all nations. As we go through February, we will approach Lent, the time of preparation for our Lord’s Crucifixion (Good Friday) and Resurrection (Easter Sunday). The month of February brings us to this “time of transition.” This month we come to a time called “Pre-Lent” – the so-called narthex in which we Christians pause for three Sundays before we begin our spiritual pilgrimage to Calvary in the great 40 days of Lent:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
February 5	Septuagesima (“About 70 Days”)	Matthew 20:1-16	Wages and Grace – The laborers in the vineyard and the grace of the Father, who calls unworthy sinners and makes them rich. The “wages” of those in the vineyard is but a gift of <i>grace</i> , not of their own earning.
February 12	Sexagesima (“About 60 Days”)	Luke 8:4-15	The Fourfold Field – The parable of the sower and the four kinds of ground on which the good seed is cast. God sows His vibrant, life-giving Word in various “soils” of people who receive it in different ways.
February 19	Quinquagesima (“50 Days”)	Luke 18:31-43	Up to Jerusalem – Christ opens our eyes to see Him as God’s Lamb on the way to Jerusalem. As the blind man begged for Jesus’ mercy, we also learn to beg for and rely on His mercy.
February 26	First Sunday in Lent	Matthew 4:1-11	Temptation – Our Lord’s temptation. Because our Lord rejects the means of “victory” that Satan offers Him (bread, miracle, power), His way leads to the cross. But by His cross Jesus conquers Satan and temptation for us.

AFTER ALMOST 50 YEARS

After almost 50 years, many of us never thought we would see it in our lifetime—the end of Roe vs. Wade—the end of abortion on demand across the country. Now that the abortion issue has been returned to the states, many lives are being saved and there are many ways for Christians to support mothers and their babies. Missouri and other states have taken measures to protect unborn children. One of the ways that we can help at Hope is to help pregnancy resource centers as they help mothers and babies. ThriVe is one of those ministries that does that. In addition to pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and helping with

various needs, they have Parent University to teach parenting skills. Mothers who attend “earn” points to “purchase” supplies they will need for their babies. They host this at Hope every Thursday night. We need Hope volunteers to help serve dinner one Thursday each month. Please contact Judy Maichel if you are interested in helping with this.

**YOU HAVE APPEARED, O CHRIST, THE
LIGHT OF LIGHT! TO YOU THE MAGI
BRING GIFTS! ALLELUJA·ALLELUJA!**



Phone: 314-352-0014

February 2023

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Elder: 5 – Scot Kinnaman 12 – Jim Frost 19 – Scot Kinnaman 22 – Chad Rolland 26 – Kevin Robson	Altar Guild: 5 Spyers/Truebe 12 Asburry/Bergdolt 19 Brown/Patton 26 Keller/Janssen		1 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	2 6:00 ThriVe Parent University	3 7:00 English Country Dance	4 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
5 Septuagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/SS 11:30 Youth Catechism TBD Choir rehearsal 4:00 Hymn Festival	6	7	8 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	9 6:00 ThriVe Parent University	10	11 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
12 Sexagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ Sunday School 11:30 Youth Catechism 11:30 Choir rehearsal	13 7:00 Board of Elders	14	15 NO Kantorei Rehearsal	16 6:00 ThriVe Parent University	17	18 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
19 Quinquagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Youth Catechism NO Choir rehearsal	20	21	22 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal 7:00 Divine Service	23 6:00 ThriVe Parent University	24	25 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
26 Lent 1 9:30 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Youth Catechism 11:30 Choir rehearsal	27	28				