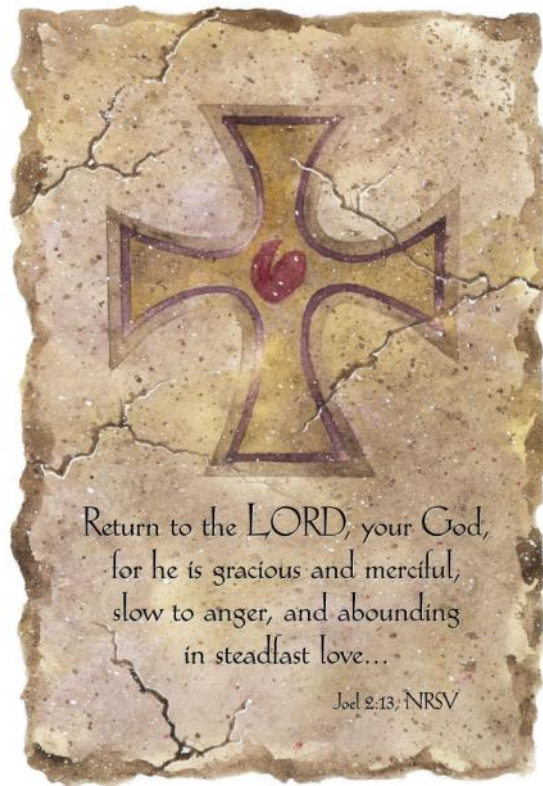




Unless You Repent... by Pastor Glenn Huebel

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." —Luke 13:1-5

We could all make a large list of people who need to repent today. On the top of the list would probably be cruel Muslim extremists who exercise their power by brutal oppression and violence. We would also include sexual predators, child abusers, human traffickers, drug lords, and a host of other obvious servants of Satan. Coming down the scale of evil, we would finally include those closer to home, like our control freak supervisor, the ambitious co-worker, the bully at school, and so forth. Give us a week or a month to compile the list and we could present to the Lord a fairly large phone book-size list of worthy targets of wrath. The world is full of bad people.



Then we read the text above by Dr. Luke, and we realize that the Lord looks at things a little differently than we do. The disciples were thinking that catastrophes were signs of God's judgment and that they come upon people who deserve it. Actually, Jesus doesn't disagree with the idea that catastrophes, whether natural or man-made, are signs of God's wrath. Neither did Luther or the other confessors of the 16th century. They were not the least bit hesitant to attribute plagues, pestilence, war, famine and other afflictions to God's wrath against sin – even specific sins of a people or nation. Jesus is warning the disciples against the spiritual complacency of thinking that they are somehow **LESS** deserving of judgment than those suffering such afflictions. "Do you think that these Galileans were **worse sinners** than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? do you think that they (victims of the tower collapse) were **worse offenders** than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?" When we see the temporal signs foreshadowing God's eternal wrath upon sin, we should not thank God that we are "not like other men – sinners" (Luke 18:11). Rather, we should take note that God is warning us. Jesus says to His disciples, "Unless YOU repent, you will all likewise perish."

The call to repentance is universal. Paul preached this message in Athens, saying, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands **all people everywhere** to repent, because he has fixed the a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

Repent, cont.

he has appointed" (Acts 17:30). The Church is not a self-righteous Pharisee, preaching repentance to others while ignoring our own violations of God's holy law. We know very well that in preaching the law to others, we condemn ourselves. We do not suppose that when judging others for evil we will escape God's judgment (Rom 2:1-3). This realization does not prohibit us from proclaiming and applying the law of God, but it reminds us that we, too, need to repent, every day. We know, in fact, that God's judgment "begins with the household of God" (1 Peter 4:17). When God calls the world to repentance, we have plenty enough to be concerned about in our own lives than to be focused on others.

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 18 this year. This is a 40 day period of repentance. It is a

time for us, as individuals, to do some introspective evaluation in the brilliant light of God's law. St. Paul challenges us to "examine" ourselves rather than to compare ourselves with others. We do not do this self-examination with the hope of overcoming sin with our own strength. As the service of Corporate Confession and Absolution says, "when we examine our hearts and consciences, we find nothing in us but sin and death, from which we are incapable of delivering ourselves." We discover our sin so that we may humbly bring it in confession to our Savior and find refuge and healing in His mercy, as the Psalmist teaches, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Ps 32:5).

During the season of Lent we see the enormity of our sin in the heavy burden borne by Jesus who

was delivered for our offenses (Romans 4:25). As the famous hymn says, "Ye who think of sin but lightly, nor suppose the evil great, here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate" (LSB, Hymn 451, vs. 2). During the season of Lent we also see the enormity of God's forgiving love, for we know that the blood of Jesus "for our pardon cries" (LSB, Hymn 433, vs. 4b).

Without repentance we shall surely perish, but "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that **whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.**" (John 3:16)

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

MLCA Celebrates Lutheran Schools Week



MLCA Update by Erika Mildred, Headmaster

With the publishing of this newsletter, we just finished celebrating National Lutheran Schools Week. It was a wonderful week, and the scholars had a great time with our week and special activities each day. Here's a re-cap:

- Sunday: MLCA scholars made butterflies for a thank-you display in the narthex. (Thank you, Mrs. Carter, for putting the beautiful display together!) MLCA ringers played in the 8 a.m. service.
- Monday: "Texas Day" with a special music presentation by Brian Burns
- Tuesday: "Community Outreach Day" where we loaded food for the Community Storehouse, made valentines for the homebound and local nursing homes, and made bead crosses for the hospitalized.
- Wednesday: "Latin Day" – Scholars from Faith Lutheran, in Plano, along with some scholars from our church who home school, joined together for a special chapel, lunch, and Latin games and activities. Please see your boxes for your Latin "thank you"! :-)
- Thursday: "MAC Day" – Kindergarten and 1st graders went down to the Messiah Activity Center (MAC) and sang to our JOY Bible Study Group, and later in the day, 7th – 8th graders served in the Braille Center.
- Friday: "Happy Scholars Day" – We enjoyed ice cream treats in our classrooms in the afternoon.
- Sunday: Kindergarten – 6th grade scholars sang for the 10:45 a.m. service.

We are now enrolling for the 2015-2016 academic year! Classes are already beginning to fill, and space is limited to the first 18 scholars per class. This year, our program includes 2-year-olds through 10th grade.

At the end of February, MLCA K – 8th grade scholars will be taking the ITBS. Please keep them in your prayers.

God's blessings to all of you in 2015! Thank you for all you do for YOUR Lutheran day school with your prayers and support. MLCA truly is a mission about which we can all be excited here at Messiah!

Rejoicing in the Lord,

Erika Mildred
Headmaster





Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K—8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Steven Cholak, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Erika Mildred, MLCA Headmaster

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mrs. Shirleen Simek, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

Swaddling Clothes



The mission of Swaddling Clothes is to share the mercy of Christ with our neighbors through the gifts of clothing, food, friendship, and the forgiving Word of God.

“shopping day” where moms can look through our collection and take what they need, up to a certain number of items. The moms are encouraged to re-donate items they no longer need to provide for another family in like circumstances. We will work with Pregnancy Help4U, providing them a place to send their young clients in need of baby and maternity items.

How can I help?

- **Donations are needed to open our Swaddling Clothes “store.”** We will gladly accept all new or gently used clothing in excellent condition in sizes preemie/newborn through 5T, and maternity clothes in modern styles. *(Please do not donate anything you would not wear or put on your child).* We need diapers in all sizes, blankets, crib sheets, new baby bottles, formula, child-sized hangers, and other infant and toddler items. We are also looking for larger items like cribs (no drop-side), crib mattresses, unexpired car seats, strollers, etc. All items must be in good repair. *We cannot accept toys, expired car seats, or drop-side cribs.*

Donations can be left in the baby bassinet in the narthex. Later, tags will be posted on the wall by the bassinet to indicate items are needed.

Larger items, like cribs and strollers, should be taken directly to the Activity Center. Please call Carolyn Harris or Brittany Newton to arrange a time. If

necessary, these items can be picked up from your home as well.

Monetary donations are also welcome! You can give to Swaddling Clothes through our new online giving system, or by writing a check to Messiah Lutheran Church, and writing “Swaddling Clothes” in the memo line.

- **Volunteers** are needed for a variety of activities:
 - This month, we will be hanging shelving, clothing rods, etc. in our store.
 - As clothing donations arrive, they need to be sorted, washed, and put away.
 - Donations of larger items (car seats, cribs) need to be inspected to make sure all parts are present, expiration date, etc. and stored.
 - Drivers will be needed to pick-up some larger items from donor homes.
 - When we open in April, volunteers will be needed each 2nd Saturday from 9:00am—12:00pm to assist the young women coming in to “shop.” A training session for these volunteers will be held in March.
 - Families in need of other items (food, assistance with older children, etc.) will need a volunteer to help them find other resources for those items (The Storehouse, NEED, etc.)

For more information, contact Brittany Newton, Stephanie Cholak, or Marcia Huebel. For donation information, contact Carolyn Harris.

Swaddling Clothes was developed by Pastor Hans and Katie Fiene, who opened the first store in April 2013 as a pro-life ministry of River of Life Lutheran Church in Channahon, IL, benefitting moms-to-be in the Channahon/Minooka communities. Their plan to expand this ministry to other LC-MS congregations is beginning to bear fruit. On April 11, 2015, Messiah will join River of Life, St. John Lutheran of Marengo, IA, and Redeemer Lutheran of Golconda IL (opening Jan. 31) by opening the 4th Swaddling Clothes branch in our Activity Center. We are excited to be a part of this valuable ministry as a practical extension of our belief in the sanctity of life and our commitment to be “centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.”

How does “Swaddling Clothes” work?

We assemble a collection of items associated with pregnancy and motherhood—maternity and baby clothes, diapers, formula, bottles, etc. Then, on the second Saturday of each month, we will host a