



Repentance by Pastor Glenn Huebel

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Matt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. —Martin Luther

With these words Martin Luther began one of the most famous documents in history, the Ninety Five Theses. They were written in 1517, before he despaired of bringing the Papal system to acknowledge the Scriptural teaching of salvation by grace for Christ’s sake through faith. Luther could easily see that the common people were misunderstanding the Scriptural concept of repentance and that this

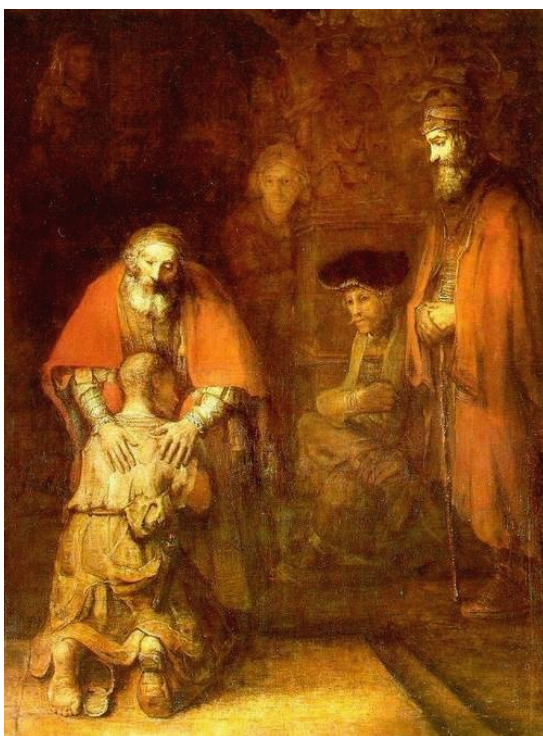
misunderstanding was leading them to a false understanding of the Gospel. Instead of hearing the Scriptural imperative, “Repent!,” the people heard the church’s imperative “do penance.” The church was offering them a legalistic ritual to substitute for genuine repentance. They had to DO something, and on the basis of their DOING, God would remit their sins. The “doing” included the rite of confession which the

church regarded as a sacrament. Included in this rite was the necessity to orally confess one’s sins to the priest. Most of the “sins” confessed were those concerning the breaking of church traditions such as breaking a required fast. The priest would absolve sins only under the condition of the penitent making certain

“satisfactions.” These satisfactions were required to be “extraordinary works” called “works of supererogation.” These consisted in pilgrimages, rosaries, and other observances that had no divine command. The people were led to believe that the mere performance of these rituals merited forgiveness. Luther was greatly disturbed by the introduction of indulgences by which satisfactions could be purchased. This was nothing but a rank buying of God’s forgiveness with money. It was not leading the people to genuine sorrow and new life, but to complacency and spiritual indifference. People could get drunk, fornicate, cheat and steal, and fix it all by going to confession and buying indulgences. Everyone was happy and Rome was getting filthy rich.

But there are always “whistleblowers” like Luther who will not play the silly games people play. He recognized that Jesus’ command to repent (the Greek word, *metanoete*) was not the same as the Latin translation, “do penance.”

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Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) The Return of the Prodigal Son. c. 1662. Oil on canvas. 262 x 206 cm. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

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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

Repentance, cont.

The Greek word has the sense of changing the mind, not of doing a ritual. It meant that those whose minds were set on earthly things had been transformed by renewal of the mind. Luther referred to it as the recovery of one's senses. This is the way repentance is described in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:17). Luther says, "By this recovery of one's senses it happens that the sinner has a change of heart and hates his sin." In other words, repentance is not a work that we do, but an attitude toward our sin. Luther goes on to say that this attitude of self hatred should involve one's whole life (Matt. 5:4, 10:38-39). In other words repentance is not a ritual that one does monthly, weekly, or even daily, but a constant dying to sin and rising again in Christ. This constant tension of self loathing and freedom in Christ, self renunciation and confession of Christ, dying with Christ and rising with Christ, is a daily cross that Christians bear in this world. As long as we retain the flesh, we bear this cross. Only in heaven will repentance no longer be a part of our existence.

In 1530, when the Augsburg Confession was presented to set the Lutheran doctrines before the Emperor, the article of Repentance was rejected by the Roman Catholic Church. Theological distinctions had become a little clearer by then. First, Rome was insisting that every single sin had to be confessed before a priest before the sinner could be assured of forgiveness. Lutherans simply noted that this was an impossibility because of the nature of sin itself. What do we do that is NOT tainted and corrupted by sin? But the Roman scholars made a distinction between "concupiscence" and actual sin. They insisted that

thoughts of the heart such as greed, lust, evil desire, etc. was NOT sin so long as the believer did not ACT upon these desires. Lutherans agreed with Jesus rather than the Pope on this one (Matt. 5:21-30). Second, Rome continued to affirm that contrition itself merited forgiveness. This was and is a doctrine that can only torment honest hearts, for it creates the treadmill of making self atonements by intensifying sorrow. If my degree of sorrow is a condition of my forgiveness, how will I ever know whether I am sorry enough? It leads the sinner to looking inwardly for forgiveness rather than to the cross and empty tomb.

Compounding this error, Rome reasoned that our contrition must be motivated by love for God, not by fear of God's wrath. This seems to be what originally drove Luther to despair as a priest. He could not figure out how he was supposed to love God when He could only see God's fierce wrath in the law. The more he feared damnation, the less he loved, and the more he deserved damnation. It was a hopeless spiral of death. Finally, Rome believed that the absolution only transferred eternal punishments to temporal punishments which can be redeemed by satisfactions and eventually purgatory. This part of the Roman doctrine was especially lucrative for the church which alone possessed the power to relieve these temporal judgments. When Martin Luther challenged this error, he was treading on sacred ground.

Sometimes even we Lutherans fall into the error of turning repentance into a work which merits God's forgiveness. We can get caught up in the circle of despair that results when we make contrition or

quality of contrition a condition for forgiveness. When we wonder if we are contrite enough, or worry that we might die before we have opportunity to confess our sins of the day we fall into this trap. But God does not forgive us BECAUSE we repent or on the basis of our repentance. He forgives us on the ground of Christ's substitutionary life and death.

We Christians must live in the agonizing tension of being, at one and the same time, both sinners and saints. There is not an instant of time, much less a long period of time, that we believers are only one or the other. It is not as if I am a sinner until I confess and receive absolution, and then I am a saint until I sin again, and then a sinner until I confess again, and then a saint until I sin again, etc, etc. When Luther says our "entire life" is one of repentance he means that we live in a state of repentance even as we live in a state of grace.

The Scripture uses the word repentance in a wide and narrow sense. In the narrow sense repentance refers to contrition only. In the wide sense it refers to both contrition and faith. God's law ALWAYS accuses me, always exposes my sin, and always threatens me with God's just wrath. There is never a time in my life that the law does not condemn me, for the flesh is always with me. Like St. Paul, every Christian cries out from the heart "Wretched man that I AM" – not "Wretched man that I WAS" (Rom. 7:24). That is because "when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand" (Rom. 7:21). We must not think that the tax collector in the back of the Temple who went home "justified," was able to come

(Continued on page 3)

Repentance, cont.

back at the next hour and stand with the Pharisee at the front of the Temple (Luke 18:9-14). In this life we are always saying, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” This is what Luther meant when he wrote in the Catechism that “the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires.” This is what Jesus meant when He said, “if anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Self denial, self renunciation, self crucifixion, mortification of the flesh, and self hatred all refer to repentance. This is not a single act, but a constant state of humility worked by the Law in our hearts. It is the recognition that we have sinned and fallen short of God’s approval. It is the terror that results from the knowledge that the law has rendered the verdict of death upon us. If ever we find a way to excuse our sin or evade the verdict of the law – by indulgences, formal confession, superficial tears, trusting in our good works, etc. - we have

entered the state of impenitence. It is a state that makes faith impossible.

But contrition alone doesn’t save us. Judas was contrite, but he was not saved because contrition does not merit forgiveness. Contrition is the spiritual condition which enables us to hear the Gospel, for the Gospel is offered to the contrite. That’s why Jesus blesses the “poor in spirit” and those who “mourn.” That’s why Jesus specifically calls the hungry and thirsty to Himself. Proud and self righteous hearts will not receive the Gospel, but will utterly reject it. The Gospel is an insult to those who have not repented – and for those who do not remain in the state of repentance. But for all who are repentant, the Gospel is the most welcome message in all the world. The Gospel declares that Jesus lived a perfect life under the law as our substitute. The Gospel offers the full credit of His active obedience to us by grace. The Gospel declares the Jesus suffered the full payment for the guilt of the sin of the world in our place. The Gospel offers this

payment as the cancelled debt for all sin. The proud man sees no need for this grace. The contrite sinner flees for refuge to God’s pardon with all his heart. This is called faith, the second part of repentance. Just as we remain in a state of contrition because of the flesh, so also we remain in a state of grace through faith in Christ. The flesh is continually terrified by God’s wrath, but the new man created in Christ is continually comforted by God’s forgiveness in Christ. Thus Luther writes that the Old Adam should be drowned daily in baptism, but also that “a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” Every day the flesh is crucified through the terrors of the law and every day the new man rejoices in the security of God’s forgiveness in Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel. This painful and agonizing tension is the life of repentance. Welcome to Lent.

Pastor Huebel

The Paschal Candle

During the Easter Season you will notice another large candle appearing. It is called the Paschal Candle pronounced (PASS-kel). If you look in the Lutheran Service Book in the Glossary, page xxv, you will see the description.

A large candle used during Eastertide and at baptisms and funerals to signify the presence of the risen Christ among His people.

The candle is placed on the Gospel side of the altar with the baptismal font during the Fifty Days of Easter (Easter through Pentecost). It is also used at baptisms as it is placed near the font, and at funerals it stands near the casket. *Paschal* comes from the Greek work for Passover and refers specifically to the celebration of Christ’s resurrection.

Messiah received the Paschal Candle in memory of William Goedecke from the Goedecke family. It is a beautiful gift to our church and a powerful reminder of our Savior’s gift to us, His resurrection and victory over death.

Paul Kohlmeier
Board of Evangelism



The Messiah Evangelist: *God So Loved the World*

If there was one thing the Board of Evangelism could get every member to say to the un-churched in our community it is this message. This is the information people need to know and understand about our God. He loves us all so much that He gave a precious gift and if they could just believe in Jesus we could live with Him in heaven.

When I was young my father taught me "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine". It went on with verses: "Won't let Satan blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine, Hide it under a bushel, no! I'm gonna let it shine, Let it shine till Jesus comes, I'm gonna let it shine, and Let it shine, all the time!"

Before the famous verse in John 3:16 Christ spoke to the need of being born again and now He has prepared the listener for the discussion on the puzzling rebirth and how it is accomplished. God the Father in His unsearchable wisdom determined to send us a Savior, who would forever break the shackles of spiritual death and would restore spiritual life and light to the sin-darkened souls of men. Faith in this Savior, who would suffer and bleed and die for the sins of the world, is the divine method of the rebirth that would change the children of men into the children of God. In the text Jesus is telling Nicodemus about the person and the work of this divine Redeemer; about Himself.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to

condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." John 3:16-21

The text above is from the ESV which omits begotten from "His only begotten Son". I will not debate the ESV choice but what does begotten mean? Hilary of Poitiers(1) stated that "the phrase does not mean a perfect creature of God: Only-begotten being equivalent to perfect, and Son a synonym for creature. But John described the Only-begotten Son as God, "Which is in the bosom of the Father". . . .He did not just offer a perfect creature or a special child raised in privilege. Gifts of price are the evidence of affection, the greatness of the surrender of greatness of the love. God who loved the world gave His own, His Only-begotten. Here is personal interest, true Sonship, sincerity; not creation or adoption or pretence. Herein is the proof of His love and affection in what He gave."

Can we ever sufficiently Thank God for the healing streams of comfort that come into our lives through the divine assurance of the text? When challenges are all bout us and our faith is contested, or when

death haunts our thoughts, how often have the troubles and anxiety vanished before the warmth of this divine assurance of Gods immense love. At the foot of the cross all problems find the solution. For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so that they who looked at it might live, so must the Son of Man be lifted up on the cross that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Christ, and Christ alone, is the Christian's only hope. But in Christ, his every hope is fulfilled. In Christ, he is born again, is accepted into the Fathers family. In Christ, he will not perish. In Christ, he is assured of everlasting life.

Evangelism is telling people this news that do not know Jesus or need to be reminded. Tell people of this great gift of everlasting life. Don't hide that gospel light, let it shine, all the time!

Please Pray

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.

*Paul Kohlmeier
Board of Evangelism*

(1) Bishop, born in that city at the beginning of the fourth century. Belonging to a noble and very probably pagan family also studied the Holy Scripture and found truth which he sought so ardently, he renounced idolatry and was baptized.

Making Disciples Begins Here

Before our Lord ascended into heaven, He gave instructions to His chosen Apostles to "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Many of us know this as "The Great Commission." And while it certainly the case that spreading the Gospel to the utter ends of the earth so that it may do that for which it is intended, namely, the generating of faith in human hearts, ought to be our concern, so also it should be our concern that this making of disciples happens right here, under our own noses, and amongst our own children, as well. To that end, we bring our children to the waters of holy Baptism, in which God forgives them, regenerates them, and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. To that end, we bring them to the Divine Service, where the Word is read and proclaimed, where the Lord's Supper is given so that we may receive our Lord's body and blood for the forgiveness of sin and the strengthening of our faith. To that end, we tell them Bible stories, and teach them to pray, and have family devotions.

A question arises, then, at least in my own mind. Why risk compromising or undoing all of those things by allowing our children to be educated in a system that is, at best, indifferent to, and at worst, overtly

hostile to and contradictory to the faith in which we want our children to be raised? Why, indeed, given the fact that we have a blessed alternative, the possibility of having them educated in an environment that is in harmony with all these other things that we do to disciple our children? Surely it is preferable to have our children educated in an environment that supports and reinforces what they taught in the Divine Service, in Sunday School and VBS, and by us, as their parents, than to have them educated in an environment in which their faith is made to seem essentially irrelevant simply by virtue of never being mentioned.

We are truly blessed to have a Lutheran School as part of the ministry of Messiah Lutheran Church. And that is precisely what it is, part of the ministry of the congregation. It serves both to assist in discipling our own children, raising them in the nurture and admonition of the LORD, and to provide an avenue by which we may bring the Gospel to those who may have never heard the Gospel at all. I would not think it amiss to regard our teaching staff as evangelists, as ambassadors Christ right here in our own community. It happens that I have opportunity to serve on the Board for Mission Administration for the Texas District. One thing that has been made clear to me is that the LORD is working in a remarkable

way to bring the world to our very doorstep. We have communities of people from all over the world, from Asia, from Africa, from the Pacific Islands, from South and Central America, and from Europe living among us in the DFW metro area. Every family that brings its children to be students in our ECC and MLCA is providing us with an opportunity to speak the very Gospel which "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:17) to those children, and eventually to the rest of the family as well. Can the LORD make it any easier for us to be His witnesses?

The ECC and MLCA are important parts of the ministry the LORD's congregation in this place. It is of great importance that all of us be in prayer on their behalf, interceding for them and seeking God's blessing upon them. As the Psalmist says, "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." All depends on God's providential hand, on His blessing of our endeavors. Please join me in praying for the ECC and MLCA, imploring the LORD of the Church to bless both the teachers and the taught, and all who labor in or on behalf of this ministry, that through it God's Word go forth, and accomplish that for which He sends it.

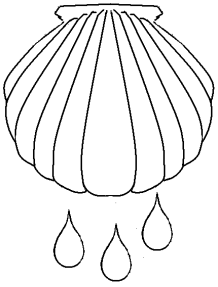
Stephen Inglehart
School Board Chairman

Accreditation of MLCA

Both the Early Childhood Center and the Grammar School are in the process of becoming accredited through our National Lutheran Accrediting Agency which is recognized by the State. Bill Brandt

has agreed to be the chairman of the Accreditation Steering Committee and has now organized several sub-committees to start work on the extensive self study. This self study, which is the main portion of the

process, is targeted for completion in October of 2011. This is an aggressive pace. Please include this important effort in your prayers.



The Water of Life: *One Church, One Faith*

The people of Jerusalem had heard of Jesus and his following was growing. They were starting to ask "Can this be the Christ?" Authorities were fearful of arresting him. On the last day of the seven day feast Jesus proclaims "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" (See this article's title). Jesus continued to discuss his purpose and identity with the people through a moment when he declares that "before Abraham was, I am." (See John 8:48-59) They did not like that comparison to Abraham at all nor did they understand what Jesus was referring to.

In "Loci Theologici" (*Loci Theologici or loci communes, are the common topics of discussion in theology from Luther's day*) Martin Chemnitz (1) speaks of the forgiveness of sins in the Old and the New Testament. The salvation of Christ is seen very early.

For there is one and the same church, one and the same faith,

There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:4-6)

. . . and one way of being justified by which all who would be saved have been justified from the foundation of the world. Therefore the Epistle to the Hebrews

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday

and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

. . . does not limit the work of Christ only to the time of the New Testament but extends it also to the Old Testament, for this "Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hence in John

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. (John 8:56)

Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced. In Romans Paul carefully adduces (presents) the example of Abraham and David in this discussion of the article of justification to show that all, as many as have been justified from the beginning of the world, have been justified in no other way than through faith in Christ.

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" Romans 4:1-5

But if anyone carefully looks at the speech of God to Cain in Genesis

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." Genesis 4:7

. . . he will come to understand that even before Moses, the moral law,

and before the birth of Christ, the doctrine of free remission of sins had been taught. For in regard to curbing lusts God said, "Your Lust shall be under you" (Vulgate)(2). In regard to the free remission of sins He says, "If you do righteously," that is, by faith in the Messiah who is to come, "there will be a lightening or remission of your sins."

We receive the remission of our sins because of our Savior. What a gift. A gift that God has bestowed from the beginning, realized at Calvary and received as the foretaste of the feast to come through the sacrament. **One Savior, one church, one faith.**

Please Pray

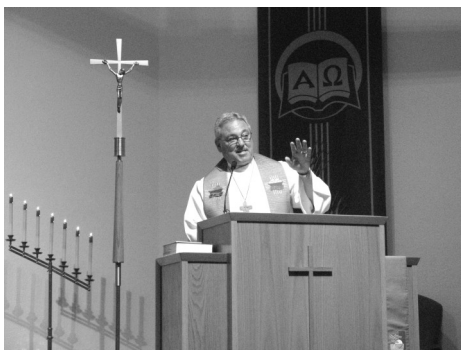
Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen!

Paul Kohlmeier
Board of Evangelism

(1) Martin Chemnitz was a German Lutheran theologian who lived from 1522-1586 was born in Treuenbrietzen, Brandenburg.

(2) Vulgate - the Latin version of the Bible, prepared chiefly by Saint Jerome at the end of the 4th century a.d., and used as the authorized version of the Roman Catholic Church.

Thirtieth Anniversary Celebrations



We are spending this year in our congregation by reflecting upon and giving thanks to God for the blessings that He has richly and graciously provided us during the past three decades. On February 20 we celebrated the kindness and support God provided to our congregation through the foresight and planning of Peace Lutheran Church in Hurst. Before any of us were here the members of Peace recognized that Keller was an excellent place to plant a Lutheran

congregation. By their request and through their support the Texas District called seminarian Glenn Huebel to be a missionary at large for the Keller area. Pastor Huebel was installed at Peace in July of 1980. Peace generously supported the tiny group of Lutherans gathered with a generous gift of \$30,000. They also eventually donated the baptismal font we still use today, and a fine organ that we are still using today.

On March 6 (Transfiguration Sunday) we celebrated God's gift of a school (ECC and MLCA). A little

pictorial history of both ECC and MLCA is displayed in the foyer. Our ministry has reached out to dozens of families in our community through this ministry. Hundreds of children have heard the Gospel and received many other blessings through our school, and many families have taken the Pastors' Class and become Lutherans through their association with our school. This fruitful branch in our ministry has great potential to bring many more blessings to people in the future. Thanks be to God for all His kindness and mercy!



Uganda Lutherans Remembered

Seven members have taken up the challenge to be pen pals for individual church workers in Uganda. Most of the workers in Uganda have access to email, and are eager to tell their stories to American Christians. In the course of time some of these stories will be told in our Newsletter.

Pastor Huebel has received news that the Lutheran congregation in Kampala (the tent church) has purchased a small piece of property and is raising money to build. They hope to complete this move in about one year.



Seder Meal 2011

Our bi-annual Seder Meal is scheduled for Maundy Thursday, April 21st. This meal is a re-enactment of the last Passover in which the Lord's Supper was

instituted. The rich Christ-centered symbolism of the Jewish meal is explained as a context for receiving the Lord's Supper. Once again we plan to use the MLCA unfinished

portion of the second floor as our "upper room." We will begin taking registrations shortly. Please mark this date on your calendar.



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. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Natalie Anderson, Principal, Classical Academy

Mrs. Heather Heitmann, Director, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Music Director

Mrs. Kathy Blaschke, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

1981 ✠ 30th ✠ 2011



here at Messiah was first done on Palm Sunday in 1986.

1991: Our first portable building, given to us by Peace Lutheran, was dedicated as an educational unit on March 17, 1991.

1992: We were running out of room, and the Elders decided to try two services beginning on Sunday, March 8, 1992. It was not a good solution for that time though, and was abandoned in early July and tabled for a few more years.

2003: Our fundraiser for a school building, *If HE Builds It, They Will Come*, begins.

2006: Our Academy wing was dedicated on March 5, 2006, and students joyously moved into their new classrooms mid-year.

March Events in our History

1981: Our sanctuary building was dedicated. Dr. Robert Sauer, First Vice President of the LCMS was the guest preacher. The choir from Peace Lutheran in Hurst sang in the service.



1986: The dramatic reading we use annually



For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever and His faithfulness to all generations. --Psalm 100:5



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

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