

Volume LV
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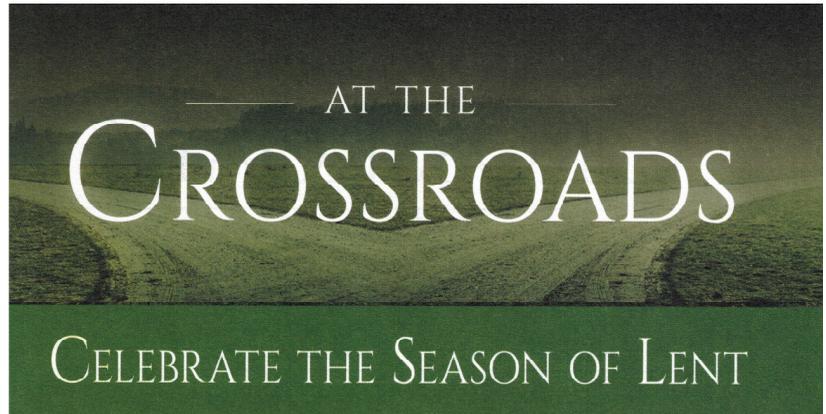
March 2017



Messenger

MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

7301 North 28 Avenue Omaha, Nebraska, 68112 402-455-8700 www.mountoliveomaha.com



Many of those involved in the story of the Passion of Christ came to a crossroads and had to decide which way to go. Some chose well, some did not, and the stories of each of these experiences at various crossroads help us to know what to do and what not to do when we encounter similar crossroads in our own lives. Join us each week during Lent as each service in the series will reveal how Christ and his cross lead us to decide the path of God's will for us.

Confession based on *Psalm 32:1-5*

Wednesday, March 1, at 7:00 P.M. Ash Wednesday

Betrayal based on *John 13:21-30*

Thursday, March 9, at 7:00 P.M.

Judgment based on *Matthew 27:11-26*

Thursday, March 16, at 7:00 P.M.

Compassion based on *Luke 22:47-51*

Thursday, March 23, at 7:00 P.M.

Declaration based on *Luke 22:54-62*

Thursday, March 30, at 7:00 P.M.

Obedience based on *Matthew 26:36-46*

Thursday, April 6, at 7:00 P.M.

Forgiveness based on *Matthew 26:26-29*

Thursday, April 13, at 7:00 P.M. Maundy Thursday

Questions. A good question, a real good one, alters things. It ignites thought; it can demand commitment, reveal depth or shallowness in a person's soul, disclose hidden agendas, and rearrange priorities.

Consider: "Cain, why are you angry?" "What is that in your hand, Moses?" "What must I do to be saved?" "Why have you forsaken me?"

Consider the questions Jesus asked as he mentored the Twelve into apostolic maturity. He wasn't seeking information; he was performing surgery on the soul. "Where is your faith? Why do you doubt?" "Who do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am?" "What good is it if you gain the world and lose your soul?" "You don't want to leave (me) too, do you?" "Would you really lay down your life for me?" "Could you not watch with me for one hour?" "Do you love me?" (Asked of Peter three times.)

A wise friend once told me the key to unlocking any appointed Scripture reading for preaching is looking for the question (if there is one) and following its lead.

As a pastor, I do a lot of listening to people. I'm always looking for ways to get people to reflect on their life and think about what God might be saying to them. Too many times people are avoiding a thoughtful consideration of their situation before God. It is so easy to busy ourselves with work, with family, with entertainment, with distractions in general. What can cut through this "fog" and get us to consider our eternal destiny and our current course in life? A good question that

makes us stop and think. That is what I am looking for in my conversations with people. That is why I often ask God for the wisdom to know what questions to ask that cause people to probe their soul.



Suffering, disappointments, grave illness and death are conditions in life that cause people to pause from their daily routines. We need to be there with people at such times. We can ask questions to help others realize that there is more to life than meets the eye. There are ultimate matters we dare not overlook until it is too late. We need to help people ask questions about their purpose in life and where they are heading.

As God's people, we have biblical answers to tough and eternal questions. Helping others to find God's answers is part of our baptismal-given responsibility. How is that going in your life right now?

Lent is the time God asks us: What are you doing with your life? How are you measuring up to my directives? How much do Jesus' suffering, dying, and rising again mean to you? Is repentance your daily routine? How are you growing into the disciple of Jesus you say that you want to be?

Let us ask ourselves these questions and help each other to ask these questions too.

—Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr.



Lenten Dinners

Lenten meals will again be served beginning with Ash Wednesday, March 1. Ham and Cheesy Potatoes are on the menu as we celebrate Nebraska’s 150th birthday!

Meals will be served from 5:30—6:30 p.m. for a cost of \$5 per person or \$15 per family. Kid’s meals of hotdogs or macaroni and cheese will be available.

Each Sunday, the menu for the current week will be posted. The following people/groups will be serving our meals:

(Continued on page 8)

Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, is the first day of Lent in Western Christianity. It occurs 46 days (40 fasting days, if the six Sundays, which are not days of fast, are excluded) before Easter and can fall as early as February 4 or as late March 10.

According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus Christ spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by Satan. Lent originated as a mirroring of this, fasting 40 days as preparation for Easter. Every Sunday was seen as a commemoration of the Sunday of Christ’s resurrection and so as a feast day in which fasting was inappropriate. Accordingly, Christians fasted from Monday to Saturday (six days) during six weeks and from Wednesday to Saturday (four days) in the preceding week, thus making up the number of 40 days.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of

(Continued on page 8)

Adult Bible Class

Continuing on Sundays through Lent during the Adult Bible Class, **Pastor Jank** will be discussing *At the Crossroads*. This six-week Lenten Bible study mirrors the theme of the midweek Lenten services. Each session will focus on a topic to consider during this Lenten season: Confession, Betrayal, Judgment, Compassion, Declaration, and Obedience.

Lenten Devotional

A special Lenten devotional book, *At the Crossroads: Devotions for Lent*, is available one copy/ family. Lent is the perfect season to consider the critical crossroads of life—losses, transitions, choices, uncertainties and disappointments—those times when faith and life intersect. This devotional book will help you to become

(Continued on page 8)

Please join us on Tuesday, March 14th, for Mount Olive’s Book Club. It will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the home of **Jill Clausen. Peggy Posey** will bring the dessert. We will be discussing *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* by Simon Wiesenthal.

While imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, Simon Wiesenthal was taken one day from his work detail to the bedside of a dying member of the SS. Haunted by the crimes in which he had participated, the soldier wanted to confess to—and obtain absolution from—a Jew. Faced with the choice between compassion and justice, silence and truth, Wiesenthal said nothing. But even years after the war had ended, he wondered: Had he done the right thing? What would you have done in his place?

In this important book, fifty-three men and

women respond to Wiesenthal’s questions. They are theologians, political leaders, writers, jurists, psychiatrists, human rights activists, Holocaust survivors, and victims of attempted genocides. Their responses, as varied as their experiences of the world, remind us that Wiesenthal’s questions are not limited to events of the past. Often surprising and always thought provoking, **The Sunflower** will challenge you to define your beliefs about justice, compassion, and human responsibility.

Next month, the book selection will be *Moonlit Garden* by Corina Bomann. We will meet April 11th, at 7:00 p.m. at **Peggy Posey’s** house. **Liz Matson** will provide dessert.



Lutheran Witness

It's time to order your subscription to *The Lutheran Witness* for 2017. This official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is published 11 times annually.

Features include:

- Current events
- Doctrinal, theological, and confessional stories

- Ways Christians can serve Christ
- Bible Studies ... and so much more!

The new subscription year begins June 1, 2017. Orders need to be in by March 20, 2017. The cost is \$15.96 per year. Subscription payments should be given to the church office or placed in the offering plate in an envelope marked “Lutheran Witness.” Questions? Contact the church office at 402-455-8700.

It is not too late to participate in the Women’s Bible Study *Bad Girls of the Bible*. This last session we studied the story of Potiphar’s wife. Mrs. P. was certainly not a stellar example of womanhood, but we could still learn a few things from her. We learned how important it is to keep our minds and hearts on God-pleasing things. We learned it is better to confess our sins than to try and cover them up. Join us Tuesday, March 7.

—**Dixie Gerhart**

Using Luther’s Catechisms For Lent

Spiritual Growth during Lent

Many people choose to give up something for Lent. Instead, you may want to take on something for your Lenten discipline. How about reading the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine from Luther’s Small Catechism each day according to the following schedule?

- Monday—The Ten Commandments
- Tuesday—The Apostles’ Creed
- Wednesday—The Lord’s Prayer
- Thursday—The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

(Continued on page 10)

In Ministry With God’s People

We remember in prayer

...**Ruth Benish, Carol Childers, Becky Day, Mary Hogue, Rod and Karen Lorang, Diane Schrader, Mary Seefus, Emily Standley, Don Weihe, Bud Witt and Janet Zulfer.**

...our youth confirmation class - **Aryanna Hogue, Robbie Mof-fett, Jr., Kailyn Townsend, Austin Wegner, and Isabella Wegner.**

...our congregational effectiveness in bringing the Gospel to the hurting of our community.

the ministry of **Emad and Shireen Tawadrous** in their work as POBLO missionaries in metro Omaha and at the Peace International Center at 44th & Grover.

During this year of Reformation 500, we are going to take a closer look at the Ten Commandments. In February, we started with the First Commandment. Each commandment encourages serious, thoughtful, and truthful self-examination so that you may heartily and sincerely confess, “God be merciful to me as a sinner.”



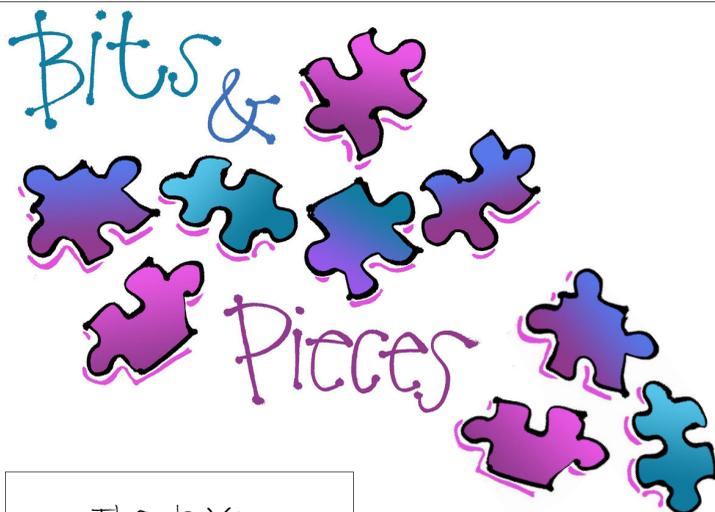
The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

My God has placed His name upon me in Holy Baptism and made me His dearly beloved child through my Lord Jesus Christ. In His name He has revealed Himself to me as the God of love that I might worship Him.

(Continued on page 10)



Thank You

Thank you to **Lorraine Irwin, Sharon McDonald, Barb Stacy and Bonnie White** for helping with the February Messenger.

Thank you to **Lorraine Irwin** for taking the finished newsletter to the downtown post office.

A special thank you to **Rich Wismont** who takes care of all of the church's recyclables.

Thank you to **Rosalie Soodsma** for weekly lending a hand in the church office.

- Teresa Kuti

Gathering of Alms

As part of your Lenten discipline, we encourage individuals and families to fast one meal each week during Lent. Bring the money you would have spent for that meal and put it into a special envelope that is available inside the Sunday bulletin during Lent. Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Lutheran World Relief and Concordia University, Seward, will receive the Lenten alms.

Mt. Olive Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call **Kristi Townsend** at 402-457-9611 or by email at townsend.kristi@gmail.com

Easter Lilies

Would you like to donate a lily to decorate the altar for Easter? The cost is \$10. You can either take the lily home with you after Easter services or donate the lily. Please sign up no later than April 2. The sign up sheet will be available in the narthex on the back table by March 12.

Daylight Savings

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 12. Be sure to "spring forward" and set your clocks one hour ahead on Saturday night March 11.

We have an excellent movie lined up for Friday Nite Flix in March. Not only is the movie in COLOR and from this century, it is even from this decade! Please join your fellow Mount Olive movie buffs on Friday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* is a 2012 film that stars Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Dev Patel, Tom Wilkinson and Maggie Smith. A group of British retirees decide to “outsource” their retirement to less expensive and seemingly exotic India. Enticed by advertisements for the newly restored Marigold Hotel and bolstered with visions of a life of leisure, they arrive to find the palace a shell of its former self. Though the new environment is less luxurious than imagined, they are forever transformed by their shared experiences, discovering that life and love can begin again when you let go of the past.



Free popcorn and movie candy!

—Dixie Gerhart (402-602-3252)

OUR MISSIONARIES ABROAD

Mt. Olive is helping to support two missionaries and their families who live abroad. We remember them periodically in our public prayer. We ask that you continue to support them financially with your regular gifts. Information about their work is shared on the north hall bulletin board and in our Sunday worship. May it serve as an encouragement for your continued interest and support. For the year 2017 our missionaries abroad are:

Julie Lutz
Box 803
Mt. Hagen,
Western Highlands
Province
Papua New Guinea
lutz.travel@gmail.com

**Rev. David & Mrs.
Barbara Bush**
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.
Attn: Amy Schaefer
St. Louis, MO 63122
david.bush@lcmsintl.org

Please join us for a fun, all-ages contest to see who can pick the winning bracket in college basketball.

All you need is an e-mail address! Send

your name and e-mail to paulandjill@cox.net by noon on March 12. Once the schools are announced you will receive a link to enter your choices of winners and losers before the games start. Then sit back and enjoy the games. The winner will be awarded a gift certificate to the restaurant of his or her choice. Even if you don't know the difference between man-to-man or zone defense, a free-throw or an alley-oop, we want you on our team! If you have any questions contact **Paul** or **Jill Clausen** at the email listed above or by phone—**Paul** (402) 650-0897 or **Jill** (402) 650-5962. Remember, it's not bragging if you can back it up!



(Continued from page 3)

- March 9—**Jody Wells-Padron, Dixie Gerhart**
- March 16—Mt. Olive Book Club
- March 23—Board of Evangelism
- March 30—Mt. Olive Choir members
- April 6—**Sarah Jank/Thrivent Financial**

We hope to see you there!

(Continued from page 3)

more keenly aware that our crucified and risen Savior navigated the difficult crossroads of this world for the sake of our salvation, equipping us to navigate the crossroads of our own lives.

(Continued from page 3)

blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on the previous year’s Palm Sunday, and placing them on the heads of participants to the accompaniment of the words “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Ash Wednesday will be March 1st this year.

101 Ways to Show Mercy and Compassion of Christ

And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

On Saturday, January 28th, eight members of Mount Olive met with other Omaha North Circuit churches at Atonement Lutheran Church to learn what this Bible verse means and how we can show it in our lives. The presenter was Timothy Hetzner, president of Lutheran Church Charities. Tim shared specific ways that we as individuals and congregations can follow Jesus’ example and touch those in need with His love. Some of the acts of service that were suggested were things we are already doing: handing out food or drinks at neighborhood events, hosting a neighborhood picnic. Other ideas are things we could do in the future: provide meals to fire or police departments, sponsor a community garden. We were reminded that as Christians we are called to be Jesus to anyone who needs Him, in any way they need Him. We may need to do things we have not done before or things that are uncomfortable to us. We need to treat others in a way that makes them wonder why we act the way we do and what it is about Christ that would lead us to treat others with mercy and compassion. We need to ask people what they need and really listen to their answers, not just give them what we think they need. When we serve others with love and kindness, we are serving Jesus Christ, shining His light in the darkness and making a difference in someone else’s life.

LWML Prayer Service

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church (5529 Leavenworth St.) is hosting the Omaha North Zone LWML Prayer Service on Saturday, March 4th, beginning at 9:00 a.m. This prayer service will be led by Rev. Andrew Gerike with the theme, *Celebrating 75 years of Commending Christ from One Generation to Another*. All women of the congregation are invited to attend.

Blessed to Be a Blessing

Making a difference in local communities.

Each year Thrivent Financial members make an impact in their local communities through *Thrivent Choice*®—Thrivent’s member-advised charitable grant program. Eligible members have the opportunity to recommend where Thrivent’s charitable outreach funds go, and many choose to give back to their own congregations.

Nearly \$51.3 million in *Choice Dollars*® charitable grant funds were distributed to churches and other nonprofit organizations in 2016. *Growing Home*, a nonprofit focused on breaking the cycle of generational poverty, helped a family in need using Thrivent Choice funds.

Seth, his wife, Amy, and their children were forced to live in their Jeep after their apartment was condemned. They stayed in *Growing Home*’s emergency shelter for 60 days until they were able to get back on their feet. “The very first night we were in the program, *Growing Home* was full of love for us,” recalls Seth. “My son Connor came in and told me that he had Spider-Man sheets and blankets on his bed. It was the little things that meant so much.”

While staying at the shelter, Seth got a new job. Seth and Amy also found an apartment, but didn’t quite have enough money for the

deposit and first month’s rent. With funds from *Thrivent Choice*, *Growing Home* was able to step in, and provide them with what they needed to make their transition.

Want to make a difference in the lives of others and live more generously? *Thrivent Choice*® is just one of the benefits of being a Thrivent member. There are thousands of organizations you can support, including Mount Olive. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to see program details and find charitable organizations to help.

This article provided compliments of Thrivent Financial and **Sarah Jank**, Financial Associate, 402.905.4229 sarah.jank@thrivent.com.





<p><i>(Continued from page 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday—Confession • Saturday—The Sacrament of the Altar • Sunday—Daily Prayers, Table of Duties, or Christian Questions with Their Answers <p>You can request a copy of Luther’s Small Catechism from the church office. There is also a free downloadable app of Luther’s <i>Small Catechism</i> from Augsburg Fortress.</p>	<p><i>(Continued from page 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I cursed? • Have I used God’s name cheaply for oaths that are frivolous or false? • Do I stand up and swear by God’s name when it is for the truth of the Gospel or the benefit of my neighbor in need? • Have I doubted whether God hears my prayer? • Do I seek my own glory or God’s glory? • Do I pray with fervor in times of trouble? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I bored and indifferent in prayer? • Am I unable to speak about God truly because I am bored with His Word and have neglected study of the catechism and doctrine? • Is my heart in the praise that I speak with my lips? • Do I speak praise with my lips? • Am I thankful for the blessings God showers on me? • Do I use my lips to complain?
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