

THE VIEW

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Note from Pastor

The Augsburg Confession: Article II – Of Original Sin

[Our Church] teaches that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason. (AC II)

If you were to ask someone to define what a sin is, you are likely to receive an answer that focuses on the wrong or hurtful actions that we do. While this is correct, in part, it does not get to the heart of sin, which is rebellion against God that comes from a corrupted nature. Yes. It is a sin to strike my neighbor in the face or to lash out at him in other ways, but these outward sins are a byproduct of a deeper inward corruption that places myself—my wants, my desires, my needs, my feelings, my opinions, etc.—above all things. This idolatrous self-love prevents me to love my neighbor with the Christ-like sacrifice that I should, and worse, it also prohibits me from loving God as I should.

In our generation, there is much thought and effort placed by our culture into loving oneself. We are demanded to accept and celebrate all forms of self-expression and self-love. To do otherwise is considered unloving and mortally threatening to someone's wellbeing. We too are encouraged to participate in these narcissistic tendencies under warning that if we do not, our self-esteem may be damaged, leading to all manner of internal emotional suffering. How many times do we hear the proclamation that we cannot love others until we learn to love ourselves. But where does all this self-love get us? Look at all the self-love and championing of declaring all self-expression as wonderful. Has

it made the world a better place? Or has it made us turned so inward that we can no longer truly look to the good of our neighbors unless it benefits us? All are corrupted by this. No one is immune.

We often look at sin as only truly bad if it has external actions, but the reality is that those actions are only an effect of the greater cancer that stretches its tendrils into every aspect of the human existence. I harm my neighbor because of my lack of love toward him. I do not love him as I should because I value my feelings above my neighbor's needs. I value myself above my neighbor because I have deified myself, even above God that I no longer fear, love or trust Him. In fact, I cannot because my self-love is all encompassing. The Lutheran Confessors in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession recognize that this goes beyond a personal action that expresses a lack of faith or fear of God; the very corruption of our natures as a result of Adam's original sin is in itself a condemned sin, since it not only distorts what God has created humanity to be, but it also is the root of all manifested sins that follow.

Original Sin is the total depravity of human nature. This is not a blemish or spot, but a complete corruption that afflicts every aspect of humanity and taints everything it touches and leaves mankind without the ability to fear or trust God. Therefore, the Confessors declare that Original Sin also accompanied by concupiscence, which is an inclination and desire toward more sin. Man's sinful nature is now driven to turn inward upon itself because of this hereditary disease inherited from Adam. Unless treated by the Great Physician with the life-giving medicine of the Gospel, the infection grows and spreads internally with even more intense narcissistic idolatry and externally with ever more repugnant thoughts, words, and deeds.

Only Baptism into Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins can cleanse us from the guilt of our sin. As St. Paul writes in the sixth chapter of Romans:

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

However, unlike their opponents, Lutherans recognized that while the guilt of sin, for which Jesus paid the penalty we owed at the cross, is completely forgiven and removed from us—including the guilt of Original Sin, the Old Adam in us seeks to resurface from his watery grave and his concupiscence remains. We are simultaneously saints and sinners. The Lutherans understand that this is a daily battle against our sinful natures and agree with St. Paul as he continues:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

The Lutheran Confessors' point in all this is to testify adherence to the ancient doctrine of Christianity concerning salvation by Christ alone. Since the fall, no man within himself has the strength, will, or ability to contribute anything in any way toward his salvation. If our very natures are corrupted by sin, then even

our best of intentions are impure. No action we do can save us; no desire, attitude, or intellectual pursuit can either. This obviously does not mean that good works are unnecessary, since a faith without works is dead. They are an essential component of the sanctified life that we are reborn into through Christ, but this, of course means that good works are a result of salvation, not the cause. It should also be clarified that “good works” does not imply moral or right actions, for if that were the case, even the most vile of unbelieving sinners would also be doing good works. No works can be called truly “good” unless they are done through faith in Christ. A Christian’s good works are not his own; they are Christ’s works done through us.

Again, this means that no human action derived from our own will, reason, or strength, apart from Christ, can be called truly good, for the concupiscence of our fallen nature toward sin makes even loving and charitable acts like filthy rags. Only the salvific work of Jesus Christ redeems us from sin and death. He has done it all; we simply look to him in faith and trust in the free gift of his grace. Thus, the Lutherans reject both the Pelagians, who taught that man was essentially good and could redeem himself by good works, and the Semi-Pelagians, who taught that a spark of goodness—whether inherent or implanted—could allow man to contribute toward his own salvation by adherence to the Law.

When we ponder the severity of sin and the condemnation that justice demands, most people begrudgingly admit that outward sinful actions deserve punishment. Some will even acquiesce to condemning the wickedness of sinful desires. Yet many have difficulty accepting that the inborn corruption of man, from the moment of conception, which is often interpreted as a sin we had no personal hand in committing, constitutes the penalty of death. Some even deny that original sin exists, preferring to see mankind as inherently good and then learns wickedness; hoping that if harmful influences are removed, a utopia could be constructed. Yet Scripture and the evidence of the observable world prove this undeniably false.

Original Sin, which is the Old Adam within us, who constantly rebels against God and seeks to elevate and deify himself, is not just a blemish on mankind; it is the beating heart of sin. The very argument that people have when they plead innocent because they are powerless against the guilt of Original Sin, is the precise reason why we must confess that it is, in fact, sin deserving of condemnation. It is the vile disease that corrupts everything else. It is the reason why we are drawn into other forms of sin. And since we can personally do nothing about it, it confirms all the more why salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, according to God’s Word and promise alone, for the sake of Christ alone.

President’s Article for The View

Dear Members of Mt. Pisgah,

Easter is near. As we raise our palm branches high we must take time to contemplate the suffering and death of our Savior and prepare to rejoice at His resurrection when we can shout, Alleluia, our Lord is risen!

At our March 13 church council meeting we:

- Reviewed the **financial reports** from the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- Received **reports** of the boards and committees.

- On recommendation of the Early Childhood Ministry Board, approved that the low bid from Plumbing Solutions for \$9,856 for work on the **remodel of classrooms** 7 and 8 be submitted to the congregation for final approval. Congregational approval is necessary because it will modify the structure of the building (not because of the cost, as I incorrectly stated last month).
- Heard that the Sunday school children will be coloring pictures to add to the **Easter poke bags** Parish Life is preparing for our shut-ins (12 bag—some double—for 17 individuals).
- Were told that the **Elders have been reassigned** and members should check their mailboxes for color coding to determine who their elder is.
- Heard from Outreach and Community Concerns that the **Souper Bowl of Caring** brought in \$383 and 218# of foodstuffs. We will be a \$500 sponsor for the **Open Arms Life Walk**, where we will have our logo on tee shirts and can place items in the “swag bags” given to approximately 150 walkers. Karen Lundquist is working on our **social media** and members who are on Facebook and/or Instagram are encouraged to “Like” our new pages and share them with friends.
- We’re reminded of the importance of **safety and security for church property**. Doors of the shed and garage must be fully closed and locked after use; drainage in the handicapped parking spaces is being repaired; and outdoor lights will now remain on all night.
- Received the update that contributions for the **new mattresses** for the cabin we sponsor at Camp Lynn Haven exceeded the \$2,000 cost, so the excess of \$1,252 was designated for the bridge replacement fund.
- Approved the recommendation of Outdoor Property Chairman Bill Paris to help us **be good stewards of our property** by identifying all church assets and developing current and long-range plans for their repair/replacement/upgrade. Many thanks to Bill for agreeing to spearhead this effort.

Pastor Jon and I are reviewing a program from Lutheran Hour Ministries called “Gifted for More,” which is designed to help church members discover, grow, and share their God-given gifts to make a difference in the church and community. I will let you know more as we determine how this can be used to uplift our members here at Mt. Pisgah..

If you ever have questions about anything we covered at the council meeting or any suggestions, please contact me (828-693-5692 or bgv@ioa.com). Our next meeting will be Monday, April 17, at 7:00 in the church library.

Barbara Volk

Outreach & Community Concerns



The mission of the month for April is Blue Ridge Prison and Jail Ministries. In addition to cell-to-cell ministry, they also provide Bibles and other devotional materials, mentor the children of inmates, and provide group therapy for other family members of inmates. They realize that being incarcerated doesn’t just affect the individual person, but their entire extended family as well.

Here is their mission statement taken from their website:

Blue Ridge Prison and Jail Ministries is a non-denominational, evangelical ministry with volunteers from 18 churches, whose purposes are:

1. To carry out the commands of the Lord, as set forth in Matthew 25:35-37. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me."
2. To minister to the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of inmates who are incarcerated or have been released from detention or prison, their families, and children, insofar as the volunteers (ambassadors) are able, according to the resources available.
3. To train and equip ambassadors to be able to disciple the broken and downtrodden.

Please consider giving to this worthy organization, since their only funding comes from local churches. What better way to celebrate our Savior's resurrection than to help spread that message to those who most need to hear it!



LWML Rummage Sale, Saturday, June 10th

The annual church rummage sale is coming up. This is a great opportunity to clean out your basement and garage for a worthy cause! All proceeds from the sale are used to financially support mission projects throughout the year.

Please start putting aside items now, **packed in a plastic tub**. Put your name on the tub if you want it back after the sale. If you have things packed in a plastic tub, you can bring it to the church any time prior to the sale. **If you do not have a plastic tub, please don't bring your donations until 1 week prior to the sale. We are not accepting clothing or large furniture.**

Contact Debby Zagone at (828) 891-2416 if you have any questions.

Ladies Tea

The Ladies Guild traditionally doesn't meet over the summer months, so we will be having a special luncheon during our June meeting on June 12 before the summer break. This will be open to all women of the congregation (as are all of our activities!), so make plans now to attend. More details will be available in next month's View and in Weekly Updates.

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Looking ahead to our April 9th Easter celebration, we will be preparing treat bags for our children and youth as well as planning an Easter egg hunt and other activities. If your Easter plans include

young family members and visitors, please provide us with their names and ages so that no one goes home empty-handed. We will gratefully accept offers to help supervise the activities. And...we will be happy to accept any contributions for the treat bags.

Looking a little further ahead, work days are scheduled at Camp Linn Haven to get the grounds and facilities ready for another summer of Christian fellowship and fun. Those dates are April 15, 22, 29 and May 6, 13, 20. Mt. Pisgah and two other congregations share the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining Cabin 17. Offers to help with this particular project will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Linda Licht if you would like first-hand experience with this ministry. In the meantime, we have contacted the Camp Manager to seek permission to paint the interior of Cabin 17 and will let you know what the board members decide.

Next up...summertime and Vacation Bible School. Remember those days? I do, and VBS was one of the highlights of my summer! Let's share that experience with our Sunday school and preschool children. So, we'll need all hands on deck to help teach, lead singing, and supervise recreation. Please contact Linda Licht so that we can get a head start on planning an exciting, Christ-centered adventure for our children.

Thank you!

Thank You LWML



Great job! A beautiful event that Lydia Cassidy & Debby Zagone & the rest of the Ladies' Guild orchestrated so well. Katherine Montgomery was amazed that all Preschool staff were able to be in attendance, even those who were not scheduled to work today, & those who aren't yet on the schedule. Everyone was impressed by the talent of the creative cooks in our Church. Some said things like, "You couldn't get a meal as good as this in a restaurant!" Others wanted the recipes for the

various offerings. The Ladies' Guild definitely outdid themselves today; it was a very special gathering. Thank you so much for all of your efforts. Others will be **green** with envy.

Leah Ryel
Chairman of the Board of Early Childhood Ministry

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LAOTCHIKIT

(FELCLA)

Headquarter: 99, Laotchikit, Hinche, Haiti
March 2nd, 2023



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Grace and peace to you from God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We pray that this mail from the ministry of First Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of Laotchikit finds you great. The purpose of this letter is to thank you and express your gratitude and thankfulness for all you are doing for Haiti and to talk to you about our situation in the country.

Haiti is still facing the same problems of insecurity. The situation is deteriorating day after day. People in many areas are leaving their houses and do not know where to go. The police officers cannot help them because they are afraid of the gangs too who sometimes have more materials than them. They are afraid of gang violence who take control of many parts of the country. Now, the population is facing a big poverty. In just one year the price of the gas quadrupled. The price of the rice and beans was quadrupled. Many companies are closed due to this situation. More people are not working.

We can say that these high levels of insecurity and limited access to fuel give many problems. So, the populations continue to be major challenges in the response to the cholera outbreak. With the cholera, Haiti becomes more in a precarious situation. We are facing the problem of cholera in Laotchikit. Nurse Riboul René helps many children. When he cannot anymore, he sends them to the hospital. I sent money last week for a child who needs to go to the hospital. I also sent money for his father who was sick with cholera and needed to go to hospital. Sometimes, the people who are sick with cholera need to go to the hospital. In Laotchikit, we do not have medicine for cholera anymore.

Our church and school is growing in Laotchikit. We have more members. More children. More youths come. We are more Lutherans in Laotchikit. We thank you very much for your love, your generosity and your money on behalf of us. You make a difference in the life of many children who would be home without your help. Now, all the members of our staff are paid in Laotchikit. They thank you very much!

Our children are growing with faith, ethics, morals, and civility. I believe that the Gospel and education can contribute to change this country for a better future. Our children will become good citizens for Haiti. They will contribute to change Haiti. They will contribute to bringing peace in the world because

some studies say that when a boy is going to school, that reduces his chance to become gangsters. When a girl is going to school, that reduces her chance to become pregnant early at 14, 15 or 16 years old. So, we are so blessed, so thankful to you and will continue to pray for you all.

Again, thank you for your past and continuing blessings.

May God continue to bless you!

In Christ,

Walta Clercius

For the staff

On March 3, 2023 the Mission Committee of Mt. Pisgah voted to send \$1,000 from the dedicated Haiti fund to Laotchikit to purchase medicine to treat cholera and help with the cost of hospitalizations of cholera victims. If left untreated, severe dehydration can lead to shock, coma, and death within hours. If left untreated, 25 - 50% of cholera victims perish.

On Monday, March 20, 2023 God called home the young daughter of Basil and Wilna Jeannite Clercius. The little girl was two years old when she died unexpectedly. Her mother, Wilna, is a dedicated church worker for the Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of Laotchikit. Wilna is the Lutheran school's principal, administrator, food service director, and preschool teacher. This



The little girl in the middle of the classroom is God's Hand Clercius, daughter of Wilna Jeanitte Clercius and niece of Pastor Walta. God's Hand was called home to heaven on March 20, 2023. God's Hand went to Lutheran seminary classes each Saturday with her mother who attends class remotely via the internet. The professors are in the United States and Canada. They teach future church workers in Laotchikit every Saturday.

is another unexpected and tragic lost for the people in Laotchikit.

Wilna attends seminary classes taught on line each Saturday at the Lutheran school in Laotchikit with many other adult Lutherans who are learning to be pastors, deaconesses, directors of Christian education and Lutheran teachers. Wilna's youngest daughter, God's Hand, always came with her mom to class. Wilna named her children God's Love – her oldest daughter, God's Shield – her son, God's

Child – her second son, and their last child God's Hand - a daughter now living in heaven.

Members of Mt. Pisgah are sending a memorial to the Lutheran School of Laotchikit. The money will purchase children's books for the Lutheran School's library. If you would like to contribute, please note on your donation – Haiti Children's Books Memorial. Thank you for sharing in their loss and praying for their family.

Praise be to God! We will see our loved ones again through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!
From the Mission Committee,
Your Sister - Wendy White

Mission Committee

April is call month for two of the seminary students who receive support from Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church. Please keep Scot Missling and Jacob Sipes in your prayers as they await their first call to the churches where they will begin their ministry as pastors.

Prayer List

Long Term Illness

Michael Terzian (Keeney)
Brian Keeney
Joyce (Kruse)
Stacy Olson (Ryel)
Brenda Ridgeway (Amato)

Gretchen Sweetser
(Mincer)
Mary Coffman (Coffman)
Mike & Suzie Characky
(Steen)

Annette & Jim Bodden
(Heaphy)
Judy Fuchs

Surgeries and Illness

Nona Schmook
Tricia Heiple
Patty Metcalf (Luecke)
Jan Tharp
Wally Rose Mincer

Joe Gabriel (Amato)
Agapia Dragan (Luecke B)
Joanne Blanchard (Clancy)
David Hawthorne
Vicki Fisher

Mary Hill
Louise Bauer
Betty Ude

Personal and Family Concerns

John Renick
Linda Rice (McAbee)
Karen Ude
Nancy Stang
Joann Kapugi
Kaufman Family

Debbie Leger
Sandi Rivers (Ryel)
Wayne & Karen Mathis
(Steen)

Melissa Shipman-Bates &
sons Will & Cooper
(Amato)
Teresa Fisher & children
Colby & Audrey
(Kaufman)

Homebound

Louise Bauer
Warna Berryman
Albert & Marianne Bugner
Kathleen Fox

Judy Fuchs
Joann Kapugi
Suzie Karnatz
Dianne Luecke

Jan Nelson
Sue Smith
Nancy Stang
Betty Ude

Compassion and Sympathy

Ministry Concerns

Our Preschool staff, children & families
Evangelical Lutheran Church & School in Laotchikit, Haiti
Pastor Dale Kaster (Missionary, Czech Republic)
Pastor Daniel Jastram (Missionary, Japan)
Pastor Daniel Conrad (Missionary, Mexico)
Jacob and Marie Sipes (Seminararian)
Scott and Veronica Missling (Seminararian)
Erik and Katie Saunders (Seminararian)

Praise God-- Adrienne Paris (daughter-in-law) of Bill Paris, God has given her a good recovery after her surgery. Thank you everyone for prayers. Bill Paris

Dear Reverend Jonathan Christensen and Members of Mount Pisgah Lutheran Church:

It is with great sadness that I share with you that Rev. Delwyn & Lenita Campbell serving in Gary, IN has ended his service with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Delwyn Campbell has accepted a call to Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd of Delta Township and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lansing, MI. His last day of employment will be April 29, 2023. Please keep Rev. Campbell and his family in your prayers.

Your Co-Worker in Christ,



Julie Loehring
Missionary Support Administrator
LCMS Mission Advancement

Birthday Blessings



04/03 Logan Clancy
04/04 Marilyn Pittman
04/05 Sue Oetting
04/08 Blenda Luecke

04/13 Ethan Lumley
04/15 Dailyn Rappley
04/17 Russell Rappley
04/17 Leah Ryel

04/20 David Martin
04/21 Marjorie Zell
04/21 Mary Rappley
04/27 Karen Ude

City celebrates parking deck

Decades in the visioning, ruminating and talking stages, the parking deck has been in the more focused conceptual, planning, design and construction phases for four years. To cover the debt service and ensure that it had not sunk \$12 million into a structure no one used, the City Council eliminated free parking downtown and adopted new rates for city parking lots. Visitors can pay for parking on the street and in lots via kiosks or the parkmobile app. Volk pointed out that parking consultants "all told us we were doing things backward by giving free parking on Main and charging for distant parking."

"We are so glad that this day is finally here. People have been waiting for it as has the rest of the city council,"



Volk

the mayor said. "We're tired of hearing about parking too. This is a wonderful turnout for something as mundane as a parking deck. It's really important for our town and for our businesses and for our citizens."



BILL MOSE/Hendersonville Lightning

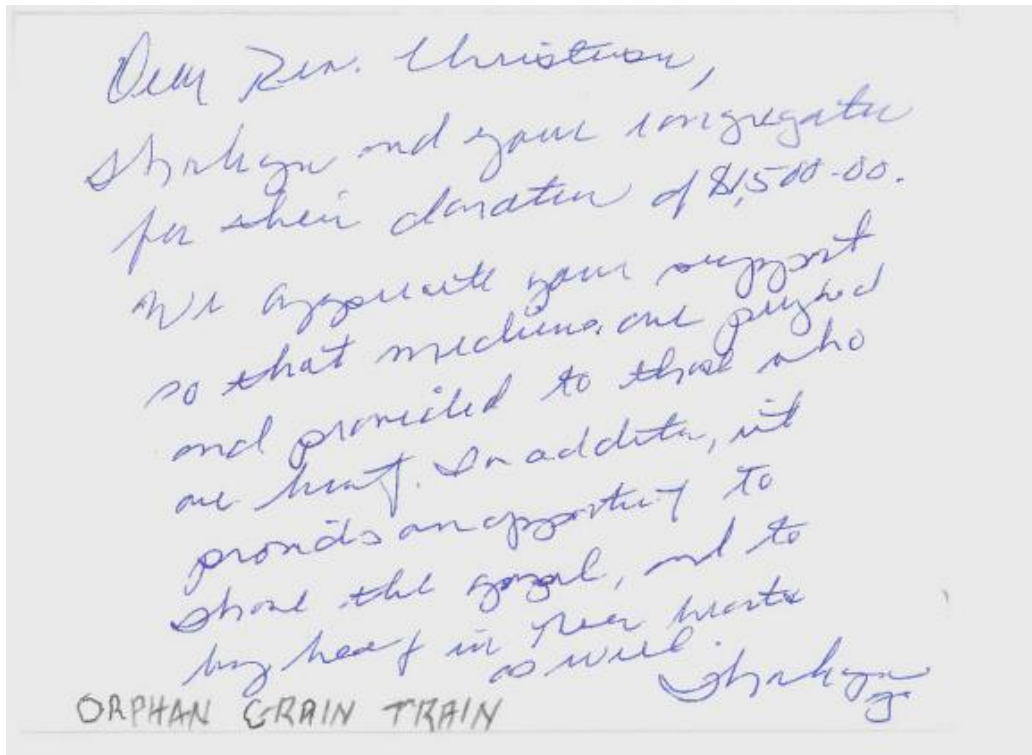
Council members Debbie Roundtree, Lyndsey Simpson and Jerry Smith look on as Mayor Barbara Volk snips the ribbon on the city's new parking deck. Not shown is council member Jennifer Hensley.

Have you noticed the table in the Narthex?

There are books on the table in the Narthex. One is a funeral guide that explains the procedures of a funeral. Inside of that booklet is a planning guide for members to give family or loved ones and a copy to be returned to the church office for members official record within the church.

The other booklet changes periodically with information about subjects within the church.

Please feel free to take both. Should you need more copies of the funeral guide leave a message with the church office. One can be placed in your mailbox for you to pick up at any time.

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The text is written in blue ink and is somewhat cursive. It reads: "Dear Rev. Christian, Thank you and your congregation for their donation of \$1,500.00. We appreciate your support so that machines are purchased and provided to those who are hungry. In addition, it provides an opportunity to share the gospel, and to bring help in your hearts as well." The note is signed "Thank you" at the bottom right. At the bottom left, the words "ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN" are printed in a simple, sans-serif font.

Dear Rev. Christian,
Thank you and your congregation
for their donation of \$1,500.00.
We appreciate your support
so that machines are purchased
and provided to those who
are hungry. In addition, it
provides an opportunity to
share the gospel, and to
bring help in your hearts
as well.
Thank you
ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

NEWS FROM THE QUILT GROUP

Our quilt group has been busy making quilts for various organizations to distribute to those in need. In 2022 we sent out 46 quilts to The Storehouse, The Foster Kids Program and to Pastor Brashier for his disaster relief efforts. So far this year we have 18 quilts that will be sent to Orphan Grain Train. As we finish our quilts we hang them in the fellowship hall. Please take moment to look at them.

We are in need of additional hands to help with our projects. The good thing is you don't need to know how to sew or quilt. If you can pin two pieces of material together, use a pair of scissors, embroider or even tie a knot we can use you. The Quilters meet on the first and third Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM.

If you have any questions contact Lydia Cassidy at 828-696-0588.

NO QUILTER'S MEETING APRIL 6th



*You're
Invited!*

to share your good news!

Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church

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CAMP NEWS - PERSONAL STORIES
and YOUR IDEAS!!



Send your story, photos, ideas to
Karen.Lundquist@yahoo.com

We can also record your story on video!

Dear members of Mount Pisgah Lutheran Church,

Happy Lent, everybody! I know this sounds kind of funny given the overall tone and tenure of the season of Lent. Yet, we can still say "Happy Lent" because at the end, we celebrate "Good Friday." Yes, this is a somber season of repentance and reflection on our own sins and our Savior Jesus' death on the cross, but, as believers of our Lord's resurrection, we also see the goodness in it all as well. SO, Happy Lent, everybody!

During this season of Lent, Marie and I have been reading through the devotional *Promised Treasures*. We try to read it every night before we try to say our prayers at the end of the day. Try. Sometimes, a devotional life can be tough. I admit that mine is not always perfect, but I do try. Marie is a wonderful encourager of prayer, and, more times than not, she is the one reminding us to say our prayers at the end of the day. Fasting is a common theme in Lent, but strengthening some aspect of the devotional life is also a common practice among Christians during Lent. It's often phrased in such a way to "strengthen your relationship with God." I've found that most of these devotional practices do just that. More often than not though, it's focused towards my neighbor in some way. I pray to God, but I pray for the people in my life who are sick or hurting. I might read a devotion that strengthens my own faith, then God puts someone in my life with whom I share that devotion.

During this particular season of Lent, Call Day is on the schedule and I'm trying REALLY hard not to think about it too much. It's so exciting, yet it's consuming as well. God has provided me with a much needed distraction! Not only am I really invested and interested in all my classes this semester, but I'm also leading Bible Class at Marie's home church—St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wood River, IL. The title is "Ordinary Virtue." My main focus is on how to lead a more virtuous life in this world. We're looking at the virtues that oppose the Seven Deadly Sins and applying them to everyday relationships and everyday activities. While becoming more virtuous certainly takes a deal of personal reflection, the actual goal is to be a better servant to those around you. The first class was this last weekend and I'm looking forward to the next 5 Sundays over the weeks leading up to Holy Week and Easter.

My family is doing well. Marie is still working at St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center in Des Peres, MO. She is full-time mom and full-time infant room teacher, so she gets to always be with babies! She is a super mom! I have Tuesday and Fridays off from classes this semester, so I get to stay home and watch the kids those days. It's a tremendous blessing to spend time with Andrew and Anna. Andrew continues to say more and more words. His favorites are "church," "Jesus," and "Anna." I know, he's going to be a pastor's kid soon! Anna has just started rolling over, babbling, and eating purees. It's remarkable how fast kids grow up!

We thank you so much for your continued support of my family—especially as our time at seminary comes to a close. Soon, Call Day will come, I will be ordained, then I will be installed as a pastor of God's flock. What a tremendous blessing this is. Your prayers and support have been so instrumental in this process. Thank you so much.



In Christ,


Jacob Sipes

CONSIDER THE FLOWERS

From the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the Tree and River of Life in Revelation, gardens are often mentioned in the Bible. Sometimes God uses plants to get our attention about our relationship with Him (see Psalm 1:2-3 and Matthew 6:28-34). Taking care of the many plants He has given to us at Mt. Pisgah can provide with us time to reflect on His will and care for us; and how we can care for each other.

That is just what 16 people did on March 16 and 18. With temperatures between 61° on Thursday and 25° Saturday morning, we worked together to revitalize the gardens around our church. Out with tree stumps, dead branches, over-growth, and weeds. In with new flowers, mulch, pine needles, and stones for a path. Some men also worked on repairing the shed ramp/steps/doors. And as we worked together, we shared about how God is working in our lives. Thank you to everyone who came out to help on those 2 days.

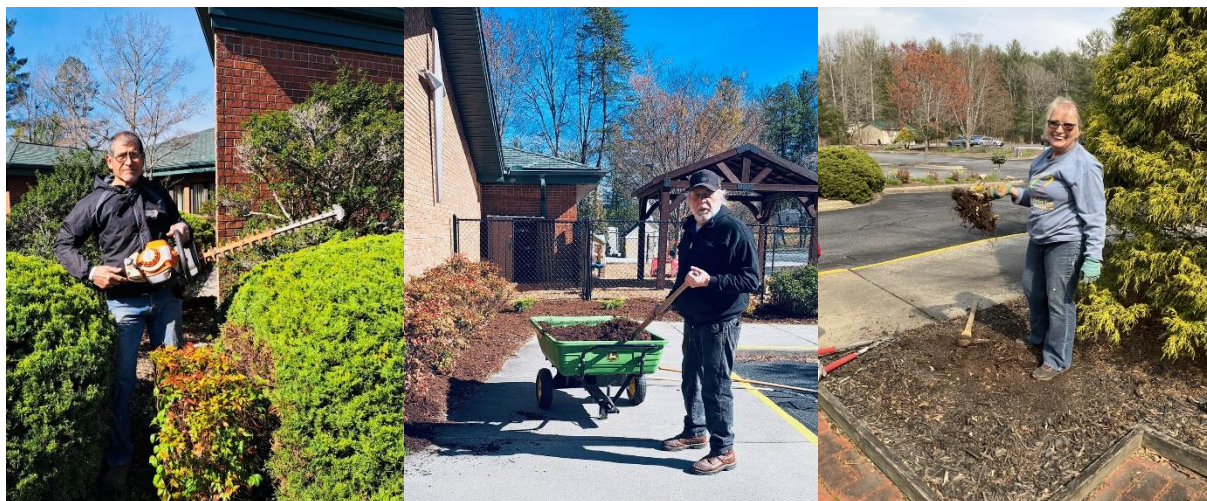
However, taking care of the church property is much more than plants and mulch. Work days will be schedule for minor repairs, painting doors, power washing, and other ongoing tasks. Major repair of the handicap parking area near the Fellowship Hall should happen in April. We hope to get the light for the church steeple working soon. The sanctuary windows are been looked at for resealing. The guardrails at the East driveway exit also need some attention, possibly replacement. Warmer weather is coming and then we can also plant annual flowers. Look for future announcements about projects and dates.

Finally, see more pictures and a video on our new church Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090364002915>

Bill Paris, Outdoor Properties





NO NEED TO MISS CHURCH SERVICES OR EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Information for accessing church service or evening Bible Study

Online: Video will be found on the home page at <http://www.mtpisgahlutheran.com>

The service bulletin will also be available on the homepage.

Phone: Service will begin at 10:45 am, dial in direct with no access code to (508) 924-5662 or call toll-free (844) 802-6666 and enter access code 889956

YouTube: Recording link will be published on the home page once it is available.

A DVD is available outside church door in the red box on the wall.

For complete information on church events, please visit the website:

<https://mtpisgahlutheran.360unite.com/calendar>

Lord Jesus,
You are my righteousness,
I am your sin.

You took on you what was mine;
yet set on me what was yours.

You became what you were not,
that I might become what I was not.

– Martin Luther