

Good News of Peace

March 2017 A.D.

A Caring Family ✦ Reaching Out ✦ Sharing Christ's Love ✦ Teaching God's Word!

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Lent Is Here!

With Ash Wednesday on March 1, the season of Lent is upon us once again. The Lenten season focuses our attention upon the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ for us and for our salvation and prepares us to celebrate His resurrection on Easter Sunday and in the Easter season following. Please take advantage of the special opportunities for worship which the Lenten season provides.

Our **midweek service schedule** this year is as follows:

Ash Wednesday – March 1: Service with Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes at 6:30 p.m.

Midweek Services – March 8, 15, 22, 29 & April 5 at 6:30 p.m.

This year's theme: The Ten Commandments

Soup Suppers served by the Youth at 5:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)

Our **Holy Week service schedule** this year is as follows:

Palm Sunday – April 9 at 9:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday – April 13 at 6:30 p.m. with Holy Communion

Good Friday – April 14 at 1:00 p.m.

Easter Sunrise – April 16 at 7:00 a.m. with Holy Communion

Easter Festival – April 16 at 9:30 a.m. with Holy Communion

Lenten Devotionals Are Here!

This year's Lenten devotional booklet from **Lutheran Indian Ministries** will be placed in your mailboxes for the start of the Lenten season. Extras will be available in the narthex.

A few copies of this year's Lenten devotional booklet from **Lutheran Hour Ministries**, entitled *From the Cradle to the Empty Grave*, will also be available in the narthex. Should we run out, additional copies will be available from the church office upon request. LHM devotions are also available on-line, for either reading or listening, at www.lhm.org. You may also subscribe to receive them via E-mail or listen to them via Podcast. You may also read or listen to them on your mobile device by downloading the Lutheran Hour Ministries app.

Our Pictorial Directory Is Here!

Hallelujah! (It is still safe for me to say that, as I am writing this prior to the beginning of Lent.) All members who were photographed for the directory will receive a complimentary copy of our 2015-2016 directory, which should have been placed in your mailbox by now. If you should have received a directory but didn't for some reason, please contact the church office. If you did receive a directory but have discovered a defect, please contact the church office for a replacement copy. Members who were not photographed may purchase a directory in the church office for \$7.

Thanks to all our members for your patience with what proved to be a far lengthier process than initially anticipated. Many, many thanks especially to Brenda Karsten and Linda Scranton for their time and effort in assisting with this project over the last couple of years!

Directory App: One nice feature of our new pictorial directory is that it is also available as an App on mobile devices. The Universal Church Directory App may be downloaded on the App Store or on Google Play. Once the App is installed, you will need a unique identifier code in order to access the App for the first time. This code will be available in the church office upon request. You may call or stop by during regular office hours to request your code, or send an E-mail to peace@peacecms.org. More detailed instructions for utilizing the App are also available in the narthex.

Stewardship Emphasis Is Here!

The theme for this year's stewardship emphasis is **Stewards Transformed by Grace, Faith, and Love**. We will begin this emphasis on Sunday, February 26, and continue on Sundays, March 26 and April 23. As God's people, we have been given the high honor of being His stewards. As His stewards, we are called to manage faithfully all with which we've been entrusted according to His will and benefit. Because of His generous gifts of grace, faith, and love, we can accomplish all that God asks us to do. He works in and through us as we become His hands, feet, and mouth. Each Sunday of this emphasis, we will be focusing on one of the three virtues, grace, faith, and love.

In February, our focus will be on God's undeserved kindness and love, which the Bible calls **grace**. God's grace comes through Jesus and His work for us. It is not something to which we have a right. Jesus obtained it

for us. We receive it freely because of the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus. This saving grace also enables and motivates us to be God's stewards. The power of God's grace in our lives compels us to use our time, talents, and money in ways that glorify God.

In March, we will be reminded that it is through **faith** that we have access into God's grace and a new relationship with Him. Through faith, God changes us, and we are born anew of Him. Not only does faith justify us and give us peace with God (Romans 5:1), we are told by James and other writers that faith produces works (James 2:18). Faith leads to action. Through faith, we are empowered to fulfill God's purposes. Our deeds as stewards are evidence of our faith.

In April, we will focus on the virtue of **love**. Love ought to follow faith. Love seeks the welfare of others. *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us"* (1 John 4:11-12). God's love in Christ compels us to do things that appear foolish to unbelievers. God's love prompts us to give freely of our time, talents, and treasures to help others and extend His kingdom.

Accompanying materials for each part of this year's emphasis will be provided in member mailboxes and made available in the narthex.

Our Annual Orientation Meeting Was Here!

Our annual Orientation meeting for Congregational Officers and Board & Committee Members was held on Tuesday evening, January 31. Handouts from this year's session are available upon request in the church office and can also be referenced on our web site (www.peacelcms.org) in the Handouts tab.

Slow Erosion Is Not Here – I Hope

The Planning Team is currently reading and studying a compelling and challenging little book entitled, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive*. As I mentioned last month, I'd like to start to use this space to share a few thoughts from the book with the entire congregation.

In Chapter 1, the author warns against what he calls *Slow Erosion*. He begins by describing a trip back to his hometown a number of years ago more than a decade after his mom's death. He was stunned by the deterioration that had taken place since his last visit, including a number of closed and vacant places of business. However, when he spoke with an acquaintance who had lived there his entire life and asked him what had happened to their hometown, it was obvious that his friend did not notice the deterioration.

In much the same way, the author explains that it is rare for long-term church members to see erosion in their church. While growth may come rapidly, decline is usually imperceptibly slow. The danger of this type of

decline is that members have no sense of urgency to change. The author comments:

"Often the decline is in the physical facilities, but it is much more than that. The decline is in the vibrant ministries that once existed. The decline is in the prayer lives of the members who remain. The decline is in the outward focus of the church. The decline is in the connection with the community. The decline is in the hopes and dreams of those who remain."

Finally, the author warns, "Decline is everywhere in the church, but many don't see it."

In our Planning Team discussion, we talked about some of the differences between our congregation 20 years ago and our congregation today. What differences, if any, do you notice? Do you notice any signs of "slow erosion" taking place here? I invite you to make the prayer at the close of Chapter 1 your own:

Prayer

God, please let me be part of the solution and not the problem. Show me what I need to see. Open my eyes to Your reality. And give me the courage to move forward in the directions You desire. Amen.

Chapter 3 of the book is entitled, "The Past Is the Hero." I will plan to share a few thoughts from that chapter in next month's column.

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

Here are some recent address changes for our members (in case you'd like to send them a card or note):

Bill Peetz
2155 E. River Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Joyce Peetz
c/o Laurel's Nursing Home
400 S. Crapo St.
2820 Brook Hollow Rd.
Mt. Pleasant

Art & Irene Radtke
c/o Suzi Engelking
2820 Brook Hollow Rd.
Clermont, FL 34714

If there are any other members you'd like an address for, please contact the church office. Thank you.

From the Board of Trustees: Our supply of church keys is currently running low. Former congregational officers who are not currently holding a congregational office, if you do not need to keep a church key for the time being, please consider returning your key to the church office or to one of the Trustees. Thank you!



From the Board of Evangelism: In the month of Feb. the hygiene pantry gave away 32 bags. This went into households where it serviced 52 adults and 49 children. In the bags we put a note (which is on the outside of the pantry door if you would like to read it). It has, among other things, the time of our service and Sunday School. We also put one of the devotions out of Portals of Prayer into the bag. This month we will be collecting **BAR SOAP**....we are thankful for any help you can give. Remember when we were born we all didn't start on equal terms....but God gave us all blessings, and for some of us it is taking care of and helping others. When I look around, I know God has given me more blessings than I deserve, and I hope I use them wisely. There will always be the poor and unchurched, and hopefully by our actions they will see Jesus through us. Please keep this mission in your prayers.



March 12

"The Power of a New Beginning"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Real help comes to us from the outside. In Christ, new beginnings and greater endings are still possible.

(John 3:1-17)

March 19

"A Well That Runs Deep Because You Need It"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Jesus is determined to meet you today with the water of grace only He can give.

(John 4:5-26)

March 26

"God's Got It In For Me"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

God can use our troubles and crosses for a higher purpose that we may not understand until we reach heaven.

(John 9:1-41)

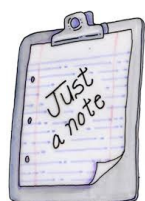
Stewardship Corner

Lent is a season of repentant joy. There is joy in repentance because in repentance, God, through His Word, turns us away from our sins — our failures of thought, word, and deed — to believe in the forgiveness and new life He has accomplished for us in the death and resurrection of His Son. For our God is our Father, and fathers discipline their children. He loves us enough to point out when and where we have erred, so that we are not weighed down by false belief, despair, and other great shame or vice.

Thus we do well to listen to God's Word, His own teaching, about giving. St. Paul exhorts: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary. In other words, everything else that we might give to during the year — laudable and worthy charities — are to be on top of what we give to our local congregation. For the local congregation is the place that serves us with the gifts of Christ's death and resurrection. The local congregation is where our spiritual needs are met when Christ's atonement is preached, when the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, when we were



Please note there will be **NO Choir rehearsal on the following dates:** February 28, March 7, March 14, March 21, and March 28. Choir will resume on April 4 at 6:30 p.m.



If you are interested in receiving the monthly **newsletter** electronically, please notify the church office and make sure that we have your current E-mail address on file. Please also note that both the monthly newsletter and the weekly News & Notes are available on our **web site** at www.peacelcms.org.

The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at www.lutheranhour.org. Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at www.lhm.org/apps/.

March 5

"A Savior Who Fights for You!"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Satan is a bully, but Jesus is the Savior Who fights for you.

(Matthew 4:1-11)

baptized into the name of the Triune God, and when we partake of the body and blood of the risen and living Lamb of God.

But how much are we to give to this local congregation? His instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1–2; 2 Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

Thus, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give it regularly, whenever we have income. We set it aside beforehand, before anything else is spent. From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. Tithing was a command for them. St. Paul never mentions a tithe. Since a tithe was the bare minimum for the people of Israel in the Old Testament, perhaps St. Paul had more in mind. That aside, however, ten percent is an easy way to figure out an amount. You simply move your weekly, bi-weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, or yearly income one decimal point to the left. And that's it. That's what you put in the offering plate to support your local congregation so that you may continue to be a hearer of God's Word by sharing all good things with those who teach it to you.

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

In repentant joy, then, do we hear God's Word on giving, and we let that Word dwell in us richly. We let that word wash over our ears and seep into our hearts, to turn us away from our

own selfish desires and toward Him in faith and love. We love the Lord and His Word. And we desire to do it. And when we have failed, that Word reproves and corrects, forgives and consoles. It calls us back to Him who is our God, our Savior, our Father.

Taken from www.lcms.org

Click on this hyperlink www.michiganintouch.com to view this month's Michigan in Touch supplement.

Visit us on the web at www.peacelcms.org



Peace Lutheran Church, Rogers City

The
Season
of
Lent

