

THE
VOICE
OF

ST. PETER'S

MARCH 2017

From the Pastor:

On March 1st, we will observe the solemn day of Ash Wednesday and again begin the penitential season of Lent. During this season, we confess our sin and guilt and throw ourselves entirely upon the mercy and love of God which we behold in the cross of Jesus.

When Martin Luther was a young monk, he felt tortured by his sense of sin. No matter how hard he tried to follow the monastic discipline, he never felt an assurance that God loved him and would be gracious and merciful. His Father Confessor, Johann von Staupitz, saw Luther's plight, and advised him to "look to the wounds of Jesus on the cross" in order to find a compassionate and forgiving God. Indeed, it is in the vision of Jesus dying for us upon the cross that we truly behold the love of God in its most perfect form.

In 1519, Luther wrote a short devotional tract, "A Meditation on Christ's Passion," as a Lenten devotion for the members of his Church. In this passage, Luther elaborates on the words of wisdom he received from Staupitz:

"You must no longer contemplate the suffering of Christ (for this has already done its work and terrified you), but pass beyond that and see his friendly heart and how this heart beats with such love for you that it impels him to bear with pain your conscience and your sin. Then your heart will be filled with love for him, and the confidence of your faith will be strengthened. Now continue and rise beyond Christ's heart to God's heart and you will see that Christ would not have shown this love for you if God in God's eternal love had not wanted this, for Christ's love for you is due to his obedience to God.

Thus you will find the divine and kind paternal heart, and, as Christ says, you will be drawn to the Father through him. Then you will understand the words of Christ, "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." We know God correctly when we grasp God not in God's power or wisdom (for then God proves terrifying), but in God's kindness and love. Then faith and confidence are able to exist, and then we are truly born anew in God"

During this season of Lent, we do well to follow Luther's guidance and focus our thoughts on the incredible love of God which we receive through the cross of Jesus, our Savior.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard

Highlights from the February 2nd Council Meeting

The meeting opened with the election of officers for 2017:
President Nancy Reichelt, Vice-President Dale Ferree, Secretary Nan Hoenich,
Treasurer Brenda Ferree, and Financial Secretary Ben Moyer

Pastor Richard reported that attendance in January was good, except for Sunday, January 1st.

The Property Committee reported that the track for the broken divider in the Social Hall has been repaired but some rollers are broken and need to be replaced. The heat is not working in the K-1 Sunday School room and will be checked.

The Anniversary Committee reported that many copies of the 200th Anniversary Booklets still remain and members are encouraged to take additional copies.

The Christian Education Committee reported that the Sunday School will spearhead a “Souper Bowl” collection of canned goods and money for the PGA food pantry.

The Youth Ministry Committee reported that an Easter breakfast will be held to benefit our Bear Creek campers. The Stew Zerbe Scholarship Fund spaghetti dinner will be held on April 1st. This year some of the proceeds will be used to help our campers. In conjunction with “Souper Bowl”, the Junior Youth Group will be shopping for food for the PGA food pantry, using VISA cards from Thrivent.

Under New Business:

Council members signed up for committees and plans were made for Council members to call meetings for their committees.

The Council prefers to keep Lenten services on Wednesdays, so Pastor will try to move “Wednesday Night Live” to either Tuesdays or Thursdays during Lent.

The Council approved the request of Amy-Jo Brixius to use the Social Hall on Sunday, April 9th for her annual music recital. It will benefit an autism charity this year.

The fund balances as of January 31st were:

General Fund -- \$ 2,018

General Savings -- \$ 145

Capital Improvement Fund -- \$ 12,099 (with \$ 6,869 designated for the video and \$926
for the Fellowship Committee to use for kitchen improvements)

Memorial Fund -- \$ 13,191

Savings Certificate (Stew Zerbe Scholarship Fund) -- \$ 6,982

The Treasurer reported that in January our expenses exceeded income. \$3,610 is needed each week to meet expenses.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

To begin celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, Pastor Richard is teaching an Adult Course on the History of the Christian Church. In February we studied the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the development of the Latin Church, including the monumental dispute between St. Augustine and Pelagius over human agency in salvation. We are ready to move forward to the spread of the Latin Church across Europe during the Dark Ages.

Lent begins on March 1st and the sessions will be held on **Tuesday** evenings, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM, during the Lenten season.

The schedule for March is: March 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th

Confirmation Class News

Our Middlers (Eighth Graders) and Seniors (Ninth Graders) are studying Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. We are finished with Luther's understanding of the Ten Commandments and have moved on to the Apostles Creed.

The Middler-Senior class will meet at 9:00 AM on March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th.

The Junior Class (Seventh Graders) met on February 4th for a session on baptism. They will meet again on March 4th at 10:00 AM.

LENTEN SERVICES

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls on March 1st, and we will have Ash Wednesday services with Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes at 11:00 AM and 7:30 PM. Our mid-week Lenten Services will be held at 7:30 PM on March 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, and April 5th.

This year's services will feature the series "Grace and Earnest Go to Church: Lenten Dialogues on Reformation Themes." These engaging dialogue sermons have been prepared by our Synod's Reformation Observance Task Force and will be used this Lent by many of the congregations in our Synod. So join us as we learn more about our Lutheran heritage in this 500th Anniversary year.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- ✠ Those who were hospitalized, recuperating, ill, or in any need in the month of February:
 Steve Yoder, Adam Kulbitsky, Floyd Ney, Joan Antonelli, Klara Burkle, Jean Bender, Norman Zimmerman, Dane Noecker, Lindsay Stroupbauer, Robert Lengel, Anna Wertz, Betty Miller, Lucille Christ and the families of Delphine Stump who passed away on January 26th and Marian Long who passed away on January 30th.

The Prayer Circle will meet on Wednesday, March 1st at 9:00 AM.

Memorial Gifts... To the Glory of God

(Stew Zerbe Fund)

\$50 in honor of my friendship with Stew Zerbe by Owen Brommer

(Fuel Fund)

\$200 in memory of Loved Ones by Linda Venzl and Vincent Kulbitsky

(Memorial Fund)

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Rene Boltz

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Audrey Wertz

\$75 in memory of Marian Long by Timothy Jr. and Karen Klawiter

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Jane Brommer

\$10 in memory of Marian Long by Mr. and Mrs. Victor Centeleghe

(General Fund)

\$20 in memory of Marian Long by George and Kathy Sorokach

\$20 in memory of Marian Long by Mattie Sue Tobin

\$50 in memory of Sue Gilbert's Birthday by The Gilbert Family

\$25 in honor of Harvey Hubler for his birthday by The Family

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Barbara and FR Grat

\$300 in honor of Randy Zimmerman by Dutch Valley Food Distributors, Inc.

\$50 in memory of Marian Long by Gerald and Elaine Long

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Robert Krammes and Shirley Fitzpatrick

\$25 in memory of Marian Long by Shirley Koenig

\$100 in memory of Marian Long by Jeffrey and Lisa Klinger

First Communion

Braydon Wolfe, the son of Lisa Geiger, received his First Holy Communion at the Worship Service on Sunday, February 5th.

New Church Secretary

On December 12th, 2016 Jeanette Seitzinger was hired as our new church secretary at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Her normal work hours are Monday through Friday from 9am to 2pm. Jeanette is a graduate of Pine Grove High School. She has previously worked in the medical field for over twenty years in various capacities. She lives in Newtown with her husband and two children. Jeanette brings her organizational skills, lighthearted humor, and deep love for the Lord to serve the members of our local body here at St. Peter's.