

# Friendship

Lutheran Church of



## *From the Pastor's Desk*

***The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts."***

***Zechariah 1:2-3***

The people to whom Zechariah brought this "word of the Lord" were probably a lot like us. They were, for the most part, believers who voiced their allegiance to God. They were a remnant of 50,000 Jews who had made the difficult commitment to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C. In 536 B.C. they had begun reconstruction of the temple that was destroyed in 587 B.C. But, due to some opposing points of view on how to move forward, the work that the Lord commanded was set aside for 16 years. How are we similar and how do we differ from that particular group? How often do we also fail to accomplish the tasks that the Lord has ordained us to do?

We, too, may find ourselves adrift or feeling somewhat dejected or even defeated in our faith walk. This often happens because we have allowed ourselves to be caught up in the busyness of this earthly life. This usually occurs without intention and maybe even without notice as we lose focus or perspective on matters of faith. For instance, it seems like it was just a few days ago that we were all caught up in the season of Advent and Christmas and now, as we turn the calendar to February, we see that we are entering into the season of Lent/Easter. What are the things we have left undone? So, let us once again, ***"Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Joel 2:13).***

"Return to the Lord" is the theme for this Lenten season. This particular Lenten season, we will focus on God's historic call to His people to repent and the things that might get in the way of us returning to God. That is the subject of our Lenten theme this year as we dive into God's Holy Word and consider the distinct difficulty experienced by the people we encounter in each biblical narrative. We will also explore how that particular difficulty might be keeping us from returning to God, and how God just may be using that very same set of difficulties to draw us to Him. Whatever the case may be, we know it is always God's desire to be our God and for us to be His people (**Jeremiah 31:33**).

In many ways, this is a very timely series after the whole world experienced a time of plague and social distancing last year during Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. That holy season was unlike anything we had ever experienced. It was a time when God, during the season of Lent, was clearly calling to us and shouting, "Return to the Lord your God." I think it will be interesting, and also challenging, for us to look back at the COVID-19 outbreak and see ourselves in the place of the biblical people we will be studying. How did we handle things when we didn't really understand what was going on? Did the event itself, and the challenges and complications it presented in our lives, cause us to draw further away from God or to "return to the Lord our God"? So, plan to join us (Wednesdays @7pm Live or Facebook Live) as we explore and try to answer these questions and many others through these mid-week sessions: A Call to Return; Prayer; Betrayal; False Witness; Denial; The Kingdom of God; and The Resurrection and You: Come and See. As we do, we remember in faith to **"Return to the LORD" (Joel 2:13)**.

Lenten Blessings!  
Pastor Glen



Please join us for

## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Service February 17 at 7:00 p.m.

## **L W M L**

There is just over a month left to reach our goal for the selected Mission Grants for the year April 2020 through March 2021:

1. Student Aid for Church Workers	-	\$30,000
2. Operation Mercy for Veterans in Danville	-	\$10,000
3. Food for the Children's Program in Danville	-	\$10,000
4. Large Print Bibles & Devotions in Effingham	-	\$10,000
5. MOST Ministries Filters for Drinking Water	-	\$ 5,000
6. Bringing Christ's Light with Lutheran Braille Workers in Peoria	-	\$ 5,000
7. Soldiers of the Cross LCMS Mercy Program for Church Workers	-	\$ 3,000
8. Train Up a Child Teen Camp in Alaska	-	\$ 5,750

To help reach this goal, Friendship's LWML will be collecting mites on the Sundays of February 28 and March 7. The big mite box will be out to receive your mites. Thanks for your help!

**The next LWML meeting will be on March 7 right after the service.**

# Greeters of Joy Needed!

We could really use a few more people to be greeters upstairs and/or downstairs! It's really easy and training can be provided. A list of duties is also available on the counter. A few of the duties include: arriving 15-20 minutes early, greeting everyone, count number of people, be available for any questions, dismissal. It's very easy and you get to talk with everyone. Please call the office or Lisa Hellmer if you would like to be added to the schedule.

## PTO (Pass This On) [ from CID-LCMS ]

"A new teaching with authority!" That is what people exclaimed after hearing Jesus.

What would make people today regard a spiritual message as authoritative or impressive? Many would make an assessment based upon how genuine the proclaimers of the message seem to be. There must be something to what they say, it becomes easy to think, if they seem sincere.

To be sure, Jesus was sincere. Yet people can be sincerely wrong. Jesus was not wrong, though.

What else might impress people today about a spiritual message and those who bring it? Perhaps it would be not only sincere belief but also broad-based investigation, consulting many others. Scientific research works this way. This appeals to Americans in particular, who can tend to think that the greater number of people must have the greater truth.

But this is exactly the opposite of what Mark reports that people found so impressive about Jesus: "they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who has authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes of Jesus' day were constantly citing the opinions of others, yet Jesus spoke with His own authority. As God's own Son from eternity, He needs no footnotes.

Jesus showed His authority over even demonic forces when he drove out an unclean spirit. Now, that's authority: He speaks, and things happen. This is the creative authority of God.

Yet Jesus did not ultimately deal with sin and evil in the world this way. He came to give His life, a ransom for many. He died bearing the sin of the world.

He rose from the dead, to defeat your enemies and be your Lord. Now, that's authority for you.

# LCMS Stewardship Ministry



"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:8-9)

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: "But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service. Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

# One Month Bible Reading Plan

Most people professing faith in Jesus have never completely read their Bible. Many people start reading the Bible but then become overwhelmed by the number of chapters (1,189) and verses (31,102) there are. What we don't realize is that we can read the Bible in a year by reading fewer than four chapters a day. Every month we will post the "reading schedule" in the Newsletter. This structured approach of reading Scripture brings a fresh approach to each day's reading, while providing a clearer understanding of the Bible's larger message.

## Tips on Reading the Bible Daily

1. Start reading the Bible today — there is no better time than now!
2. Set aside a specific time each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it. Feel free to use any time that works consistently for you. If you miss a day, just make it up (don't give up); habits both good and bad are formed easily.
3. Read the Bible for the sake of learning, not simply to accomplish your next reading. Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding, then be refreshed by the words you read!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> Leviticus 5-7	<b>2</b> Leviticus 8:1-11:8	<b>3</b> Leviticus 11:9-13:39	<b>4</b> Leviticus 13:40-14:57	<b>5</b> Leviticus 15:1-18:18	<b>6</b> Leviticus 18:19-21:24
<b>7</b> Leviticus 22-23	<b>8</b> Leviticus 24:1-26:13	<b>9</b> Leviticus 26:14-27:34; Numbers 1:1-41	<b>10</b> Numbers 1:42-3:32	<b>11</b> Numbers 3:33-5:22	<b>12</b> Numbers 5:23-7:59	<b>13</b> Numbers 7:60-10:10
<b>14</b> Numbers 10:11-13:16	<b>15</b> Numbers 13:17-15:21	<b>16</b> Numbers 15:22-16:50	<b>17</b> Numbers 17-20	<b>18</b> Numbers 21-23	<b>19</b> Numbers 24:1-26:34	<b>20</b> Numbers 26:35-28:31
<b>21</b> Numbers 29:1-31:47	<b>22</b> Numbers 31:48-33:56	<b>23</b> Numbers 34-35; Deut. 1:1-15	<b>24</b> Deut. 1:16-3:29	<b>25</b> Deut. 4:1-6:15	<b>26</b> Deut. 6:16-9:21	<b>27</b> Deut. 9:22-12:32
<b>28</b> Deut. 13:1-16:8						

# In Our Prayers

## *The Power of Prayer*



- ♥ Prayers of comfort and healing for Terry Howard's mother who has Covid-19. Also, prayers for the other residents and staff at her assisted living facility.
- ♥ LCMS Synod, Districts, Members and Pastors
- ♥ Church members
- ♥ Those who have yet to believe
- ♥ All who travel
- ♥ Country, state, and local governments
- ♥ All who serve (first responders, military, police, fire, EMTs)

# Celebrations



### **February Birthdays**

6	Devon Miller
7	Hazel Hutchison
8	Jon Fisher
9	Carol Mathis
10	Blanche Stoller
11	Tina Clark
14	Jean Hagen
15	Mia Drake
15	Bruce Paulsrud
19	Annabelle Pearman
22	Roger Clapp
25	Kristin Weatherford
26	Hugo Feugen
27	Brooke Miller



### **February Baptism Birthdays**

Beth Annin, Dee Blaine, Pam Chandler, Ryan Drake, Scott Johnson, Juliana Mehlan, Devon Miller, Lona Oostdyk, Layla Pearman, Peg Peterson, Ed Stoller



# February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9am Worship LWML Meeting	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Council 6pm	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 9am Worship	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Ash Wednesday 7 pm Worship	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9am Worship	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7pm Worship	<b>25</b> Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9am Worship						

Until further notice, communion will again be by appointment only.  
Please call the office.





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Church of** 

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**Pastoral Care**

Pastor Glen Triplett  
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**Staff**

Sally Nourie - Church Secretary  
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(Office hours 9:00-2:00  
Monday—Thursday)

**Visit us on the internet!**  
www.friendshiplutheran.com



“Today me will live in the moment.  
Unless it is unpleasant. In which  
case, me will eat a cookie.”

— Cookie Monster

OUR MISSION:

To *Joyfully* connect people to Christ and His family.