



The Messenger

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

FROM YOUR PASTOR...

February though the shortest month of the year it's also a very busy month this year in the life of the Church. St. Valentine is honored on Valentine's Day, which also happens to be Ash Wednesday this year. It's the beginning of the season of Lent. In which we as children of God reflect heavily upon our sinful state before God our Creator and Redeemer. To that end, for the next several weeks in our Lenten services, we will be reflecting upon the Suffering Servant Songs found in Isaiah.

There are four suffering Servant Songs in Isaiah's book of prophecy. They are 42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-11 and 52:13- 53:12. It is the last song that we will be focusing our attention on for the next several weeks in our Lenten midweek services. All four of the Suffering Servant Songs are prophecies of Christ. They show him to be Messiah, God's meek and gentle Servant. He is a royal figure, representing Israel in its ideal form; He is the high priest, atoning for the sins of the world. Isaiah predicts that this Servant of the Lord would deliver the world from the prison of sin. For now, though I draw your attention to the second Servant Song Isaiah 49:1-9:

The Servant, the Light to the Gentiles

49 "Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother, He has made
mention of My name.

2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver, He has hidden Me."

3 "And He said to me,
'You are My servant, O Israel,
In whom I will be glorified.'

4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD,
And my work with my God.'"

5 "And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,

*So that Israel is gathered to Him^{4a}
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
6 Indeed He says,
'It is too small a thing that You should be My
Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the
earth.'"*

7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
To Him whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers:
"Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"In an acceptable time I have heard You,
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;
I will preserve You and give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;
9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,'
To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'

"They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.
10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst,
Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;
For He who has mercy on them will lead them,
Even by the springs of water He will guide them.
11 I will make each of My mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.
12 Surely these shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north and the west,
And these from the land of Sinim."

(Please see **FROM YOUR PASTOR** Page2)

FROM YOUR PASTOR (From Page 1)

¹³ Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted ones.

Notice in verse the prophecy of Christ's birth and it is repeated in verse five. Beginning in verse six though God the father says, "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." In other words, it is not enough for Christ Jesus to only save the Jewish people. He is the savior of the world of all of mankind. With that, we will toward Easter and a time of victory joyous celebration. Amen.

Please bring your bibles to worship and Adult Bible Study along with a notebook and pen so that you can take notes and make notes in your Bibles. The youth will continue their study of adult instruction using the Lutheranism 101 materials. Our next Youth Sunday is February 4th at our home.

In Christ's service to you his beloved
Children,
Pastor Joe



THRIVENT ACTION TEAM

After New Years while we were in Florida, Paul & I were planning on a scheduled trip to deliver kitchen towels and bath towel packages to Pastor Karl Glander in Immoklee, Florida. Due to Paul getting sick we had to ship the items so I don't have any pictures of the delivery. The Pastor was very pleased that this project was able to help his people who lost almost everything in the Hurricane.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

The Maryland Branch of Orphan Grain Train has been busy shipping containers during the past few months.

The November 30th container left Maryland for Puerto Rico and arrived a couple days before Christmas. We praise God for the safe arrival of the contents which the people desperately need. There will be a future Puerto Rico container, but no date has been set.

A few months ago, a container was shipped to Sudan, due to the rainy season and the road conditions, the container was not received until Christmas Day. Over 3,000 Christians danced around the container praising God for this blessing of all the items they desperately needed.

The beginning of January a container was shipped with medical equipment to India. The equipment was desperately needed by the hospitals in India. A second container for India will contain school supplies, and much need school equipment. If anyone knows of school desks that are available for free, please let me know. The container can't leave till we secure additional desks and school supplies.

As we begin a new year, we look forward to ways that the people of St. John's can help. The first and most important way is to pray for these projects.

If you have a Thrivent Action team you would want to do, please contact me and I will work with you to get the school supplies, or health kit supplies which are in demand in these countries.

Blessings as we work together to help those in need in these countries.

Karen Ann Kowalczyk, Maryland Branch
Orphan Grain Train Disaster Coordinator

COMMUNITY MEALS



We continue to look for Thrivent members to sponsor luncheons by applying for a Thrivent Grant. If you are interested in helping us by applying for a grant, please contact Nancy Trovitch. February 24 is the date for our next luncheon beginning at 11am.

MITES—FEBRUARY 2018—Sharon Roegge



The next featured mission grant for national is Current Missionary

Need – LCMS

International Mission. Since 2003 Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, has been operating as the largest mission supporting agency. As a part of the LCMS World Mission global Gospel outreach they have been blessed by God to be the conduit helping to raise millions of dollars every year to send and keep LCMS World Mission Missionaries in the field.

Many of us don't realize the extra costs associated with sending a missionary to the field. Things we take for granted in our daily lives such as education of their children or a vehicle to travel to the people they serve. Other needs include: health insurance; housing expenses; office expenses; language training in the field; cost of orientation and training prior to leaving for the field. Exact costs are impossible to predict because of a different scenarios for each missionary and his or her family. All the needs are desired and highly valuable if not absolutely necessary. Mission Control seeks to serve and support new LCMS Missionaries throughout the world proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mission Central uses this blessed gift of money and awards it with prayerful discretion by the LCMS Mission Central staff. With the recommendations and endorsement of the LCMS Office of International Mission, it is given to the most current and urgent needs of our missionaries waiting to serve or already in the field. Jesus has called our LCMS missionaries to go into the entire world to proclaim Jesus Christ above all. For this and all

other grants go to www.lwml.org and click on Mission Grants on the home page for more information.

LWML SELC District: We have just one grant to pay for the SELC Mission Grants. Plans are well underway for our 16th Biennial Convention which will be held at Zion Lutheran Church in Norridge, IL. Our theme is Hope – God's Faithfulness based on Jeremiah 29:11. Debbie Larson, Vice President of Organizational Resources, will be our LWML representative and will let us know what is happening at the national level. Other speakers include: Phil Zielke CEO of Phil's friends, Tim Hetzner President and CEO of Lutheran Church Charities, Sharla Fritz Inspirational Speaker and Vocalist our banquet speaker, Rev. Hesham Shehab pastor of Salam Christian Fellowship, along with others. The invitation and forms will be out in a couple of weeks. The end of biennium is March 31st so if you would like to give toward our national and district mites, please let me know.

Serving the Lord with Gladness,

Sharon Roegge

PRAYERS FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



We pray Jesus' hand would rest on **Peter Panco, Anna Belko, Bob Gould, Lorraine and Jack Ross, MaryAnne and Frank Gilham, Alma Yale, Anne Goranitis, Gertie and Bob Mandak, Bob Onder, Pauline Onder, Sharon Roegge, Dave Trovitch** and all in need of His physical, emotional and spiritual care. If you have a prayer chain request, please call Gertie Ann Mandak, (570) 497-9361.

If Pastoral Care is required, please call Pastor Joe (570-459-6423) and the necessary arrangements will be made.

ELDER'S INCORPORATING INFORMATION INTO ST. JOHN'S DOCUMENTS

This is the fourth and final section of the information provided as a result of work completed by the Elders at St. John's in response to the information and directives provided by our Synod. This section is entitled "What we Believe with regard to Sexuality, the Sanctity of Human Life, and Marriage". If you have any questions about the information included here, please contact one of the Elders Dave Trovitch, Chuck Zschunke, or Don Roegge.

We Believe Re: Sexuality and the Sanctity of Human Life

Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of St. John's, as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the St. John's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by St. John's in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of [the organization]

Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps. 139).

We Believe Re: Marriage

St. John's marriage policy is and always has been consistent with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), as God created them and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32). *The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Res. 3-21 ("To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions"), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and "marriage." Our pastor will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.*

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BONANZA
All Day! Lunch or Dinner
September 15, 16, and 17, 2015
Help support Aubrielle Marsicano

It has been a year since Aubi was diagnosed with meningitis. Since then she has had both her legs amputated at the knees and her finger tips. She is 14 months old.

Let us make this a successful fundraiser for this little trooper. A coupon is attached, but more can be obtained from Karen Ann Kowalczyk or Nancy Trovitch. You don't have to cook and Thrivent Financial will supplement the funds raised. Donations will be accepted if you cannot attend and want to help. Thank you.

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St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church

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Our Mission and Vision Statement:

We are to be growing people in our faith and helping others to come to faith and grow in it.

YOUTH NEWS

The next Youth Gathering will be a Pre-Super Bowl party held Sunday, February 4, from 12:30-4:00pm at the Pastor's home. Bring your L-101 books, favorite team memorabilia. We will be doing chapters 4-8, so please review ahead of time.



SNOW PLOWING



If you can help with snow removal around the church, let Kevin know.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Paul Kowalczyk

As we begin 2018 we can look back to 2017 and see all the marvelous things God has accomplished. Our Annual report soon to be published will list all the activities and outreach projects that St. Johns' did in 2018 with the help and grace of our Lord and Savior. We had Ordination and Installation of Pastor Leech. We had a Spanish Bible outreach project that was very successful. We continued our monthly Community Luncheons. We have seen our weekly attendance at services increase from 30 to 45-50. Our Youth participation and activities have also increased. We had much to be thankful for in 2017.

In 2018 we hope to continue this increased trend of activities and involvement. We are looking at a renewed effort in Evangelism and Stewardship. Our 2017 Financial picture was much better than it had been in the last few years. Our expenses have leveled off and our member contributions have risen. In 2017 we only had to borrow \$7,000 from our LCEF Savings Account to balance our budget. In years past we had to borrow about \$25,000 annually to meet our expenses. Our Annual Report will detail our income and expenses for 2017 and highlight the 2018 Budget which is less than the 2017 Budget.

There is always room for growth in St. Johns' ministry. Let us look to 2018 as a renewed effort to expand our faith, our Christian love for one another, our ministry to spread the Gospel message, worship service participation, attendance at Sunday School, Adult Bible Class, Youth Group. These things are all possible with the help of our Lord and our commitment as disciples to Spread the Good News. Let us begin by worshipping during the upcoming Lenten season as we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross to take our sins away.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)