

St. Paul's Lutheran Church ELCA



The Church Door



Who needs Lent?

Pulled from the Archives

Dear friends in Christ, One of my favorite teachers, Dr. David Lose of Luther Seminary, recently wrote an article on why on earth we continue to observe the season of Lent in the Church. He notes that some denominations have just done away with the Lenten season entirely. After commenting on how countercultural Lent is, Dr. Lose lifts up some thoughts about Lent. His words really spoke to me and I want to share some of them with you, in case you are also wondering why we continue to observe the Season of Lent.

“Who needs Lent? ...you know what? Each year, whatever my feelings approaching Lent may be, the same answer comes whispering back: I do. Just maybe...I need Lent. Just maybe I need a time to focus, to get my mind off of *my* career, *my* social life, *my* next writing project - and a hundred other things to which I look for meaning - and center myself in Meaning itself.

Just *maybe* I need a time - is forty days really enough? - to

help clear my head of the distractions which any involved life in this world will necessarily bring and re-orient myself towards the Maker of all that was given for my pleasure and which I have let become merely distracting.

Maybe I need the opportunity - and perhaps deep down I crave the chance! - to clear my eyes of the glaze of indifference and apathy which comes from situation after situation where I feel nearly helpless so that I can fasten my eyes once more on the almost unbearable revelation of the God who loves God's children enough to take the form of a man hanging on a tree.

And maybe, just maybe - and this takes the greatest amount of imagination of them all - just maybe Lent really isn't mine to do with whatever I please. Perhaps Lent isn't even the Church's, to insist upon or discard at will. Maybe Lent isn't any of ours, to scoff at or observe. Maybe Lent is God's. Maybe Lent is God's gift to a people starved for meaning, for courage, for comfort, for life.

If it is - if we can imagine

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Pastor Leif Espeland

From The Pastor's Desk

Not available at printing

Prayer

From the archives 2017

Prayer is the greatest privilege of our lives It's not something we *have* to do: it's something we *get* to do. Are you longing for a deeper, richer, more dynamic relationship with God?

One of the most important, most life-changing prayers a person can ever utter is : "Lord teach me to pray." Jesus' disciples asked "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1) Knowing about prayer is not enough; learn how to pray as individuals who are in an intimate, dynamic personal relationship with God. There are principles of prayer that apply to everyone, however we are individuals. God will lead each of us in our prayers.

We do not learn how to pray simply by becoming a Christian or by going to church. We learn to pray over time, as we develop a personal relationship with God. Jesus loves to teach us, He also loves to work with us as individuals. He takes us just as we are and helps each of us discover our own rhythm of prayer and helps us develop our style of prayer that maximizes our personal relationship with him. He wants prayer to be an easy, natural, life giving way of communication with him as we share our hearts with Him and allow him to share His

heart with us. Prayer is so simple; It is nothing more than talking to God. It also includes listening to what He has to say.

The most important Key to effective prayer, Is approaching God as His friend. When we are friends with God, that friendship not only benefits us, it also benefits those around us. When we are friends of God, we know that He has the power to intervene in people's circumstances. We cannot control other people with our prayers, but approaching God boldly on behalf of others opens the door for God to work in their lives in strong and powerful ways.

We learn to pray more and more effectively over time as we develop a personal relationship with God. He has made each of us uniquely and he teaches us to pray in ways that celebrate and express who He has created us to be. He wants us as individuals to relate to Him through prayer in uniquely personal ways.

He wants us to draw near to Him, to trust Him, to love Him, to share our hearts with Him, and to listen as He shares His heart with us.

Prayer:

It's easy.

It doesn't have to be long.

It doesn't have to be complicated.

It doesn't have to be Eloquent.

You don't have to be perfect.

It can be done anytime, anywhere.

Submitted by

Tammy Harding

**ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE**

Imposition of Ashes

5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 14th
at St. Paul's



Donations help meal programs ,personal need items, the elderly and youth

Missions Lutheran Social Service

Support LSS with your gift - either financially or through donations of wish list items - to assure the youth have shelter, older adults have nutritious meals and companionship, and people with disabilities receive respectful community-based care.

The LSS staff of 2400 support one in 65 people in Minnesota through a comprehensive range of innovative services and networks, active in 87 Minnesota counties.

Housing is a first priority in our lives. People without stable housing can make a connection to the county Coordinated Entry System which will assess needs and make a connection to a provider that can help.

Submitted by Sharon Schwegel

February Birthdays

Myrna Turner

Lee Bray

Ralph Bjorgaard

Sharon Haskin

Deen Swart

Caroline Lyngen

Richard Salzwedel

Tamara Harding



St. Paul's Lutheran WELCA Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024, 9:30 am

Hostess: Laura Ristow

Bible Study Leader: Diane Zaske

Number attending: 9

President Laura Ristow opened the meeting by leading the group in the Statement of Purpose and the Mission Statement.

Treasurer's and Secretary's Reports: MSP

Quilts: We gave 5 quilts to the Christmas families. We gave two to HLACF on line auction.

Prayer Shawls: No report

Old Business:

1. We delivered 18 cookie packages that we had made at our December meeting.
2. We gave out about 2 dozen treat bags after the Christmas eve service.

New Business:

1. Easter Brunch, March 31 – tabled.
2. Passed around sign-up sheet for 2024 bible study leaders and hostesses.
3. Sharon Schwegel discussed the new Adult/Teen Challenge Center in Brainerd. It is a temporary residential center for women recovering from addiction. The center needs to be furnished with household and personal care items. There are flyers in the narthex describing the needs. There is a bin there, also, for you to put your donated items in.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 9:30 am

Hostess: Lorelee Torkelson

Bible Study Leader: Diane Zaske

Respectfully submitted:

Diane Zaske, Secretary

Mission Statement: To mobilize women to boldly act on their faith in Jesus Christ.



Tech Team checking out UCC Streaming equipment . Pictured Alice, Don and Tim

“ Don’t worry about anything, Pray about everything”

Outreach/Social Ministry Committee Responsibilities

From the Archives 2014

We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m.

We provide advertising for the annual paper put out by Hackensack Chamber and the Church Guideline put out by the Walker Pilot. We also pay the Chamber dues.

We provide the coffee mugs, coffee packs, and inserts handed out to first time visitors. We pay for the brochures that have our services and other activities listed.

We plan and decorate the float and buy the favors we hand out at the Sweetheart Day parade.

We host the blood drive in July.

We are not budgeted so our main fund raiser is selling the wreaths at Christmas time. This year we also sold 2 year planners.

Our function is to help proclaim Christ in the heartland and to make St. Paul’s known in the community.

We are always looking for new members.





Church Council

Meeting minutes

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 17, 2024 - Fellowship Hall and Zoom

Present: Pastor Leif, Ron Wedin, Laura Ristow, Russ Torkelson, Alice Knowles, Chuck Forsgren, Shirley Johnson, Steve Hoopman, and Tonia Kahler

Absent: None

Council President Chuck Forsgren convened the meeting at 09:04 a.m.

Devotions: Shirley Johnson

President's Opening Prayer

Mission Statement: "Proclaiming and serving Christ in the Heartland and beyond"

Additions to Agenda – Lawn Care contract, SST Law, and Spring Retreat

Secretary's Minutes – MSP to accept as printed.

Treasurer's Report – MSP to accept as printed.

Pastor's Report – Pastor has been meeting with the Fellowship Committee and Pastor Torri to plan the upcoming Lenten Services which will include services with UCC Church. Services will be at 5:00 beginning on Ash Wednesday. More details to come. Four Chaplains Sunday will be commemorated on February 4, 2023.

Committee Reports:

Property Report – included in the newsletter.

Tech team report – included in the newsletter.

WELCA report – included in the newsletter.

Old and Ongoing Business:

1. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday February 4, 2024, following the service in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom. President Chuck will send the Zoom meeting link prior to the meeting. Printed copies of the annual report will be available by 1/21/2024. In addition, Tammy will send to the congregation via eblast. The agenda was reviewed and approved.

2. Reviewed council terms that are expiring in 2023 that will need to be voted on at the Annual

Meeting. Chuck and Ron have both agreed to serve an additional 2-year term in their respective offices. The council unanimously approved an additional 2-year term for Laura Ristow (Treasurer) and Tonia Kahler (Secretary).

3. New pictorial directory to be created using Instant Church Directory. Ron Wedin has volunteered to chair/coordinate this project. More information to come. Tabled until Spring 2024
4. Membership Survey – tabled until Spring 2024.
5. Ron Wedin continues to work on updating the privacy policy.

New Business:

1. Treasurer Laura Ristow presented the 2024 Budget. MSP to accept the 2024 Budget.
2. MSP to approve the Property Committees recommendation for the siding estimate. Congregational approval will be needed as the project is > \$5000. Money will be taken from the savings account to pay for this project.
3. MSP to accept the 2024 Lawn Care Contract with Brian Schultz.
4. President Chuck has built a wooden tabletop podium which can be used for meetings. Thank you Chuck!
5. Discussion was held on the new Minnesota State SST Law (Sick and Safe Time) and how it may affect St. Paul's staff.
6. The council's Spring Retreat and Potluck will be held on Wednesday May 15th at the home of Shirley Johnson beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Devotions for next meeting – Tonia Kahler

Next Council Meeting Date – February 21, 2024

Meeting adjourned with The Lord's Prayer at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tonia Kahler,

Council Secretary

Property Committee

Meeting minutes



Property Committee Report

January 9, 2024

Members Present: Deloris Ressen, Jim Madland, Dan Knicely, Dave Kahler, Russ Torkelson, Dick Ristow, Russ Torkelson, Lewie Schrupp, Pastor Espeland, Chuck Forsgren (Zoom) Shirley Johnson

Members Absent: Terry Bergstrom, Jim Jacobsen

Foundation on East and South Side of Sanctuary: Property members reviewed the quotation from Gill Construction. Discussion followed with the unanimous vote to recommend to Council we proceed with the project. Quotation of \$8,324.71 to include labor and materials. We will also need a Congregation Approval at the Annual Meeting due to cost. Thank you to Terry and Chuck for securing the quotation.

Snow Shoveling Agreement: Chuck has arranged a temporary agreement with Brian Schultz to clear the sidewalks and entry whenever we receive 2 inches of snow at the rate of \$25.00/hour. He will also spread Snow Melt. Dick Ristow will purchase two more pails of Snow Melt for his use.

Summer Lawn Services: Property members reviewed a draft agreement Chuck Forsgren has prepared. Motion made and seconded to hire Brian Schultz for 2024 Lawn Services per agreement. Chuck will contact Brian Schultz to sign the agreement. Thank you, Chuck!

Boiler: Samuelson Laney has corrected the boiler tripping situation.

Retiring the Greens: Some members helped removed the Christmas decorations along with members of the Congregation.

Adjourn

Next meeting: To be called if necessary.

Lent from Pg.1

that Lent is not ours at all but is wholly God's - then maybe we'll also begin to recall, at first vaguely but then more strongly, that we, too, are not ours at all, but are wholly God's - God's own possession and treasure.

Seen this way, Lent reminds us of whose we are. The "sacrifices," the disciplines, these are not intended as good works offered by us to God; rather, they are God's gifts to us to remind us who we are, God's adopted daughters and sons, God's treasure, so priceless that God was willing to go to any length - or, more appropriately, to any depth - to tell us that we are loved, that we have value, that we have purpose.

Yes. I need Lent. I need an absence of gifts

so that I might acknowledge the Gift. I need a time to be quiet and still, a time to crane my neck and lift my head, straining to hear again what was promised me at Baptism: "You are mine! I love you! I am with you!" I need Lent, finally, to remind me of who I am - God's heir and Christ's co-heir - so that, come Easter, I can rejoice and celebrate with all the joy, all the revelry, all the anticipation, of a true heir to the throne.

And so yes, I need Lent. And to tell you the truth, I suspect that you do, too. You see, if Lent's in trouble, it's only because we're in trouble, so busy trying to make or keep or save our lives that we fail to notice that God has already saved us and has already freed us to live with each other and for

Lent: Continued Pg. 8

St. Paul's Lutheran Church ELCA

Our Congregation is centered upon the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, Head of the Church and of this congregation. As members of Christ's Church, we seek to be His disciples as we serve each other, members of our community, and His Church throughout the world.

Lent from Pg. 7

each other all the rest of our days. And so we have Lent, a gift of the church, the season during which God prepares us to behold God's own great sacrifice for us, with the hope and prayer that, come Good Friday and Easter, we may be immersed once again into God's mercy and perceive more fully God's great love for us and all the world and in this way find the peace and hope and freedom that we so often lack."

I need Lent, my brothers and sisters. I think we all do. It is so easy to forget the Living God to whom we all belong, and what God in Christ has done. Holy Week is just around the corner, and together we will continue our Lenten journey through the darkest of days, and travel from death to the new life in Christ which shines forth from that empty tomb!

Blessed Easter to you all! God's peace !

Pastor Judy

Lent from Pg.1

St. Paul's Lutheran Church ELCA

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PLACE
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