



THE INFORMANT is published monthly by St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 417 Main Avenue – Suite #401, Fargo, ND 58103. Published on February 28, 2019, this is the March 2019 Informant, Issue No 3.

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. **Isaiah 58:6-9***



Pastor Joe's Lenten Message...

Martin Luther once defined sin as “incurvatus in se”—which in Latin means “being curved in on oneself.” Luther knew from personal experience what happens when you focus on only yourself and your sense of sinfulness. You can end up concentrating on your own failings. That was Luther's early struggle with faith.

When I was a teenager, I remember feeling guilty and shameful, even about things I had never done. I thought that's what repentance meant. I believed the season of Lent was a time to focus on my own sinfulness and unworthiness before God.

Today's culture certainly encourages us to focus on ourselves. You post a photo of yourself on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram, and hope that you get a lot of likes. You know right away what people think. Psychologists tell us that many younger people suffer poor self-esteem, social isolation, and depression because they constantly compare themselves to other friends' posts. Sometimes, they even experience online bullying.

But being turned in on oneself can leave little room for thinking about other humans and God. Some call it “navel-gazing,” an excess of self-contemplation. A lot of Christians consider Lent as a time to turn inward.

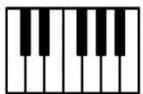
This reading from Isaiah 58 challenges that notion. In the verses listed above, God seems to be mocking the people's fasting, because it seems to only focus on the one who is fasting. Surprisingly, God redefines their definition of fasting as personal reflection and repentance. The prophet Isaiah tells us that God is more concerned with feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and clothing the naked. That's the kind of fast that God is looking for. That's the kind of Lenten practice God is suggesting. To focus not just on my personal problems, but on the needs of the less fortunate of our world.

I love that our Lenten tradition at St. Mark's includes Wednesday evening worship at Churches United for the Homeless. If you have never attended one of those services, I encourage you to join us. We do it right in the dining room, where homeless and low-income individuals and families come to be fed. We do it to offer an opportunity for them to know that we care about them. We do it to share bread and wine with people who may feel like they are unworthy of God's grace. We do it to see God present in that community and in our neighbor.

That kind of grace is for all of us. We all need to hear that God loves us just as we are—with all our individual flaws and failings. But God does not want us to only see that. God wants us to see others like us who long to hear about that grace and acceptance. That is the Lenten journey God calls us to travel together.

When we do that, God promises that we will see the dawning of a new light. That God will come and dwell among us. That we will see Christ in the faces of our fellow humans. That when we cry for help, God will say to us, “Here I am.”

Peace to you this Lent,
Pastor Joe



MUSIC NOTES*

Thy Holy Wings #613, is the chosen Hymn of the Day for March 17th. No, it is not Irish! But it is Swedish as it appears to be a folk melody from the province of Sweden called Skåne.

The text was also written by a Swedish girl, Carolina Sandell Berg (1831-1903) that was known as L.S. (a Fanny Crosby of Sweden). She began writing hymns early in her life and had a thick notebook of them by the time she was thirteen. She favored themes about nature and creation. After she was confirmed, her theme changed to salvation and the life in Jesus Christ and a longing for heaven.

Many hardships were in her life including being ill as a child, seeing her father fall and die from a boat, and losing her mother two years later. She did eventually marry but lost a child at birth and her husband was accused and imprisoned for illegal bookkeeping practices. Though she had considerable illness and suffering, she produced a large number of hymns. She wrote two thousand hymns by age of seventy-one, of which 650 were published in three collections.

It is interesting to note that this hymn was originally called "Children's Evening Prayer." It suggests that the passage from Deuteronomy 32:11,

"As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions,"

along with Psalm 36:7b,

"All people take refuge in the shadow of your wings,"

were images to stir her creation of the words.

Another observation made by Per Harling is that in Matthew 23:37 where 'Jesus speaks of desiring to gather Jerusalem's children as a hen gathers her brood under its wings,' may have stirred Sandell's choice of words. Her first version went like this:

Thy holy wings, O Savior
Spread gently over me,
And let your little chicken
Be hiding there in thee.

It was later translated to English and had other verses added by Gracia Grindal but stayed with the theme she had originally.

Alpha Roeszler
Music Director

**Excerpts from ELW Hymnal Companion*



Gospel Readings for March

Mar 3 – **Transfiguration**
Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]
Jesus is transfigured on the mountain

Mar 10 – **Lent 1**
Luke 4:1-13
The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for forty days

Mar 17 – **Lent 2**
Luke 13:31-35
I have desired to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers her brood

Mar 24 – **Lent 3**
Luke 13:1-9
Unless you repent, you will perish: parable of the fig tree

Mar 31 – **Lent 4**
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
The parable of the prodigal father and the repentant son

WELCOME TO NEW OFFICE RENTERS

Amanda Vivier has signed a lease to share one of our offices at Suite #401. She is the Director of Native American Christian Ministries, which meets at Golden Ridge Lutheran Church. She also is a member of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force. Welcome, Amanda!

Tammy Lanaghan has also rented space for her work on the Red River Rainbow Seniors LGBTQ Oral History Project. She is transcribing multiple interviews of LGBTQ people in the "Northern Plains." Eventually these interviews will be available to the public through the NDSU archives.



In Memoriam

We give thanks for the life of **Fern Wagner**, who passed away on February 1, 2019, in Crookston, MN at the age of 97. She was active in many church activities including the quilting group. Her funeral was at Boulger Funeral Home in Fargo with Pastor Joe presiding. We pray comfort for her family, friends, and loved ones.

Dwight Bireley lived in Lisbon, ND, for almost 20 years at the ND Veterans Home. He passed away on February 5, 2019, at age 95. He was a long-time member of St. Mark's. Many of you may remember his sister, Dolores Rath, also a member of St. Mark's, who died in 2009. Our sincere condolences to his extended family.



CHOIR NOTE

The choir will be singing on March 17th. Alpha will have a rehearsal at 9:15 that day and will be available for early preview on March 10th at 9:15. Thank You!

March Schedule

USHERS

3: Stan Franek
10: Brian Buteyn
17: Amelia G. and Stan F.
24: Charlie Jordan
31: Bill Roeszler

LECTORS

3: Linda Graf
10: Jansen/Ware
17: Leiseth
24: Marianne Garvey
31: Brian Buteyn

CANTORS

3: Tammy Lanaghan
10: Jon and Phoenix Leiseth
17: Jansen/Ware
24: Elna Solvang
31: Becky Barry

ALTAR GUILD

3: Tammy Lanaghan
10: Naomi Franek
17: Mary Jane Haugen
24: Elna Solvang
31: TBA

BREAD

3: Linda Graf
10: Open
17: Amelia & Carly Gaddie
24: Open
31: Helen Beth Kuhens



DATES TO REMEMBER

Mar 3: Food Pantry Sunday
Mar 3: Intergenerational Education Series, 11:15 am
Mar 6: Ash Wed. Service, 5:45 pm
Mar 10: Intergenerational Education Series, 11:15 am
Mar 13: Lenten Service, 5:45 pm
Mar 17: Intergenerational Education Series, 11:15 am
Mar 20: Lenten Service, 5:45 pm
Mar 21: Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm
Mar 24: Intergenerational Education Series, 11:15 am
Mar 27: Lenten Service, 5:45 pm
Mar 28: Newsletter Mailing, 9:30
Mar 31: Intergenerational Education Series, 11:15 am



FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

Sunday, March 3, 2019, will be the next Sunday for collecting items for the Emergency Food Pantry. In February we collected 33 lbs. which was up from the 28 lbs. we collected in January.

In my February article I suggested we see if by the end of the year we could have collected the weight of 6 average 5-year old boys, which is 292 lbs. We have collected 61 lbs. so far this year which is just a little over 1 boy. We are on track to collect the weight of 6 boys.

Current needs include the following: Canned Tuna, Peanut Butter, Canned Fruit, Rice (one-pound bag white or brown rice, Pasta/noodles, Toilet Paper, and Bar soap.

They also accept other non-perishable items, basic hygiene items, and egg cartons (must be 1 dozen carton and prefer large size).

If you wish to make a monetary donation, please make the check out to St. Mark's Lutheran Church and notate Emergency Food Pantry on the memo line.

Thanks!

Jane Radig

Did You Know...

...that Bethany Retirement Living offers Basic Care in the Towers at Bethany on University? Basic Care offers services similar to Assisted Living but is available to those with limited financial resources, and qualified for Medical Assistance. Falling between Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing Care, Basic Care could be the perfect option for many people who are trying to determine what level of care is right for them. To find out more, contact Bethany Retirement Living at 701.239.3439.

Community Activities Coming Up...

Horizon Middle School Theatre's Production of "Li'l Abner"

Dates: March 1 & 2 @ 7 pm
March 3 at 2 pm

Place: 3601 12th Avenue So., Moorhead

Contact: Phoenix Leiseth

Fargo Human Rights Film Festival Discussion

Date: March 6, 6:30 pm

Place: Fargo Downtown Library

Contact: Barry Nelson

bnelson371@cableone.net

Red River Rainbow Seniors

AARP-RRRS Lounge and Learn:

Speaker on home care services in the community

Date: March 6, 5:30 pm

Place: Delta Hotels by Marriott, 1635 42nd Street SW, Fargo

Contact:

RRRainbowSeniors@gmail.com

International Potluck

Date: March 14, 2019, 6pm

Topic: Zoran Mojsilov's "Time Machine" exhibit

Place: Plains Art Museum
704 1st Avenue North, Fargo

Contact: International Potluck
Fargo, Facebook Page

Query Book Discussion

Book: "Fried Green Tomatoes" by Fannie Flagg

Date: Tuesday, Mar. 26, 5:30-7 pm

Place: Front Street Taproom

Contact: Pastor Joe or Tammy L.

Note: Please let us know of local groups/activities that may be of interest to our congregation.

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
BEGINS MARCH 10**



TURN CLOCKS FORWARD

“Make Me an Instrument of
Your Peace”



Lenten Worship Services

Churches United for the Homeless
1901 1st Ave North
Moorhead, MN
5:45 p.m.

March 6

Ash Wednesday

March 13

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

March 20

“Doubt/Faith”

March 27

“Despair/Hope”

April 3

“Darkness/Light”

April 10

“Sadness/Joy”

April 18

Maundy Thursday

“Sowing Love”

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church of Fargo will begin Lenten Services on Ash Wednesday, March 6, at Churches United for the Homeless in Moorhead. Worship is held at 5:45 p.m. in the dining room throughout Lent. Holy Communion is celebrated at each service.

Singing + Praying + Scripture + Stories

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi*

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.



*This prayer is often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, but the identity of the author of this prayer is still a mystery! It was first published anonymously in a small religious magazine in 1912 in France.

One reason it may have been linked to St. Francis is that it was printed on the back of an image of him by a French Franciscan priest in the 1920’s.

The prayer began to circulate in Europe and eventually was translated into English.

Also known as the “Peace Prayer” it has had a broad appeal over the years and is popular in several faith traditions.

St Francis of Assisi lived from 1181 – 1226.

Crosswalks



A Journey to ComPassion

“During Lent we should ask ourselves: what should I have done that I did not do? What risk should I have taken that I was afraid to take? When did my sense of self-preservation take precedence over my sense of courage?”¹

You are invited to participate in an intergenerational education series that will be devoted to an (re)examination of the biblical texts that have been read during the service. During this education series, we will wrestle with the themes of the biblical passages and how they lead us to better understand our situation and provoke us to raise questions about our own lives. In particular the focus will be on the notion of privilege – how one experiences and benefits from the structures of privilege as well as the demands privilege makes in acting toward those who are marginalized. As we consider the intersection between the stories and our lives, we will journey toward an understanding of how deepening our relationship with the stories of the Bible brings us into closer relationship with one another, the world, and God.

This journey, led by members of St. Mark’s, will take place over six Sundays and address the following texts:

- March 3: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]
- March 10: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2. 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13
- March 17: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35
- March 24: Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9
- March 31: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
- April 7: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

The culmination of the series will occur on Passion/Palm Sunday, April 14th during which we will address the core idea of ComPassion as we reflect upon what we have learned over the course of our engagement with these texts and look forward to Holy Week and the Passion of Our Lord.

The journey will be reflected in the artwork on the chapel walls which will change over the course of the series to reflect the conversations that the participants engage in. In this way, all members of the community of St. Mark’s will be invited into the ongoing conversation through the dimension of the visual.

The education event will take place following the worship service. You are invited to get coffee and cookies and then return to the sanctuary for the 45 minute activity period. The intention of the series is to bring people of ALL ages together to learn from one another. Let us reflect with one another how we might continue to be reconciled in Christ.

¹ Amy-Jill Levine, *Entering the Passion of Jesus* (Abingdon Press, 2019), p. 9.

