**The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Lindy, Nebraska**

**Pr. Thomas E. Jacobson: Email, tjacobson001@luthersem.edu; Home phone number in Menno, SD, 605-387-5196**

**The Rod and Staff**



**February 2019**

**Groundhog Day!**

***“[The Lord’s] mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.”***

**- Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV**

Aside from Valentine’s Day on the fourteenth of this month, February is known more than anything for an odd holiday at the beginning. February 2 is Groundhog Day, where the legend says that the groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil from the tiny hamlet of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania has the power to predict the weather. If he sees his shadow, we are in for six more weeks of winter.

The town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania became famous because of a 1993 movie titled *Groundhog Day* starring actor Bill Murray. To summarize briefly: Murray plays an arrogant, self-centered weatherman named Phil Connors, who is sent to Punxsutawney to cover the Groundhog Day festivities for the local news broadcast. He goes reluctantly; he thinks he’s far too important to spend time covering a corny celebration in a backwater town.

Little did he realize that he wouldn’t be leaving Punxsutawney anytime soon. The next morning, he woke up only to find himself repeating the same day as yesterday. The next day was the same. Phil Connors was doomed to spend what seemed like an eternity reliving February 2 in Punxsutawney. Each morning, he had an opportunity to do things differently, knowing that there would be no consequences from his actions. No one but himself would remember what happened on the previous day. How would he spend his time?

At first, he used the opportunity to serve his selfish interests, and he wasted his time manipulating the people and developing odd skills. But over time, his eyes were opened. He began to see deeper meaning in life, and he was filled with compassion for the people of Punxsutawney. When he finally realized the importance of looking out for people other than himself, the cycle was broken, and he was able to move on to February 3.

Unlike Phil Connors, we do not have unlimited time to learn from our experiences. We know that our time on this earth is limited. However, we do have the promise that each new day can be an encounter with God’s goodness. The Old Testament book of Lamentations is filled with sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem, but God promises His people a new beginning. God is good and forgiving, and they can experience that anew with the rising of the sun: “[The LORD’s] mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.”

God is patient with us, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and each morning we have a new opportunity to live in the forgiveness and freedom that God provides. Christian life consists of being grounded in the good news of Jesus Christ that was given to us when we were baptized. Daily, we are called to live in that relationship, to repent of our sinful nature and failures. When we are filled with regrets, God picks us up, dusts us off, and sends us forth as renewed and forgiven people, called to show forth the love that we have been given.

The promise that God’s mercies are new every morning is part of the reason why we have the practice of weekly worship. God knows that we continually need to be reminded of his Word for us. Let us remain committed to hearing His Word weekly and being renewed in His love for us.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not pray to special people called “saints.” Our Lutheran confessional documents speak against that practice. However, those same documents that prohibit the veneration of saints encourage Christian people to look to the lives of significant Christians of the past as a source of encouragement for our lives in the present.



This month, we look at the life of **Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna**. He is commemorated on February 23, and he died in the year 156 AD.

Little is known about this man named Polycarp. It is said that Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John, who was one of Jesus’ original twelve disciples. For that reason, Polycarp and other Christian leaders of his generation are known as “Apostolic Fathers.” They bridge the gap between the time of the New Testament and later church history. Eventually, Polycarp was appointed as bishop (pastor) of the Christian community in Smyrna, a city in modern-day Turkey. We only possess one written work from Polycarp, which is a letter from him to the Christian community in the city of Philippi. It shows him to be uneducated, yet direct and humble. Also interesting is that evidence suggests that Polycarp was a Christian from a young age, possibly having been baptized as a child.

With so little information about his life, why is this man famous? More than anything, Polycarp is famous for his martyrdom; he was killed by the Roman Empire simply for being a Christian. At the time, the Christian faith was not legally recognized, and Christians were sporadically, yet at times severely, persecuted. As an old man of 86 years, Polycarp was arrested and led away to be burned at the stake because of his faith. He is the earliest example of a Christian martyr outside of the New Testament, and he therefore served as an example of faithfulness for later Christians.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for February 2019**

***Oh, Worship the King***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 32*

1. O worship the King, all glorious above,

O gratefully sing his power and his love;

our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,

pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

2. O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,

whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,

whose chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form, and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3. The earth with its store of wonders untold,

Almighty, your power has founded of old;

established it fast by a changeless decree,

and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.

4. Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?

It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;

it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

5. Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,

in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;

your mercies how tender, how firm to the end,

our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

* Robert Grant, 1779-1838

*Note: Grant was born in India, but moved to London with his family when he was six. He wrote this hymn, based on Psalm 104, the year before he returned to India and became Governor of Bombay.*

**Monthly Watchword for February 2019**

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

* Romans 8:18 ESV

**Ushers for January:**

* Head Ushers:
	+ Travis and Shauna Kauth
* Ushers:
	+ Galen and Jamie Guenther
	+ Scott and Paula Veldhouse
	+ Don and Bonnie Paulsen
	+ Jamie Doerr
	+ Patience Teboe

**For Further Information on LCMC and the NALC:** You can download and read the newsletters of both organizations at the following addresses:

* **http://www.lcmc.net/newsletters**
* **http://thenalc.org/newsletter/**

**Website:** The web address is as follows:

* **www.gselclindy.weebly.com**

**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

**The Lord’s Prayer: The Fourth Petition**

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*What does this mean?*

*God indeed gives daily bread to all, even the unbelievers, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that he would help us to recognize this so that we would receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.*

*What is meant by daily bread?*

*Daily bread means everything required to meet our earthly needs, such as food, drink, clothing, home, property, employment, necessities; devout parents, children, and communities; honest and faithful authorities, good government, seasonable weather, peace, health, an orderly society, a good reputation, true friends and neighbors, and the like.*

**Birthdays for February**

*Note: This list of birthdays is a work in progress, as we are currently trying to gather membership information from the old congregational record into an electronic form. If your name is not listed in the appropriate month, please let pastor know your birthday so that it can be added in the future. If you would not like your name to be listed, simply let pastor know. The birthdays are provided here as a way of giving thanks for the lives of members of the congregation. Happy birthday to all!*

* February 5: Cecilia Eckmann
* February 7: Beth Barger
* February 14: Don Paulsen
* February 19: Stella Branstiter
* February 20: Gene Eckmann

**Baptismal Anniversaries for February**

*Note: Just as it is important to acknowledge the beginning of our earthly lives with our birthdays, it is even more important for us as Christians to remember the day when God has given us a new birthday, a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Lutherans confess that baptism is the means by which God gives us as a part of sinful humanity a new relationship with him, a promise that our faith can look to all our lives. In turn, we are called to a life of repentance and faith that trusts in Christ as our salvation. As with the birthdays, this list is a work in progress. Blessed baptismal anniversaries to everyone!*

* February 8: Tyler Guenther
* February 9: Tatum Olson
* February 10: Callie Olson

**Worship Schedule**

February 3: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany with Holy Communion, altar rail (Green)

February 10: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (Green)

February 17: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany with Holy Communion, continuous (Youth assist) (Green)

February 24: Seventh Sunday after Epiphany (Green)

**Important Announcements**

* We will continue, once a month on the fourth Sunday of the month, having a time of adult education during the Sunday school hour, starting at 9:30 AM.
* The Church council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 13 at 7:00 PM.
* The WOW/WNALC women’s meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 20 at 10:00 AM.
* This year, the season of Lent begins on March 6 (Ash Wednesday). As in the past, we will have evening Lenten worship services throughout the season. Pr. Tom and Pr. Theresa will alternate also as in years past, and evening suppers will be offered on at least some of the Wednesdays. Please make use of this time for worship and fellowship.

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**February 2019**

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| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |   |    |  | 1 | 2 |
| 3Sunday School, 9:30Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (altar rail)Green | 4 | 5 | 6Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10Sunday School, 9:30Worship, 10:30Green | 11 | 12 | 13Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class, 5:15-6:45Church council, 7:00Youth meeting, 7:00 ? | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17Sunday School, 9:30Worship, 10:30; Holy Communion (continuous)Green | 18 | 19 | 20Pr. Tom in LindyWomen’s meeting, 10:00Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24Sunday School, 9:30Adult education, 9:30Worship, 10:30Green | 25 | 26 | 27 28 Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation Class, 5:15-6:45 |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

89039 539 Ave.

Bloomfield, Nebraska 68718



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