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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**March 2017**

**A Series on the Lutheran Reformation: Martin Luther’s Younger Life**

We continue in this month of March with our series on the Lutheran Reformation. This year, 2017, marks the five hundredth anniversary of the movement that began in 1517, when Martin Luther and his colleagues began the work of refocusing the Church of their time on the central message of the Christian faith: the righteousness of God given to us through Jesus Christ, received through faith.

Martin Luther is a complex figure. That his life and its significance are open to interpretation is shown by the fact that books upon books have been written about his life. This does not mean that all interpretations of his life and work are equally valid. Rather, it demonstrates that he played an important role in history, even among non-Lutherans. Protestants of various shades, even though they might disagree with him about a number of issues, still consider themselves a part of his legacy. Today, even many Roman Catholics have a renewed appreciation for him.

Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben, Germany. At the time, there was no such thing as a unified country of Germany like today. Back then, what we now call Germany consisted of many little “Germanies,” independent states and cities ruled by princes and city councils.

Infant mortality rates were very high back then, and so his parents took him to the local church the very next day, November 11, for baptism. Because that day was set aside to commemorate St. Martin of Tours, their son was named Martin. His father and mother were Hans and Margaretta Luder, which was later changed to “Luther.” Hans was a copper miner. He wanted his son to have other opportunities, so he saved money for his education.

At the age of four (younger than my son is now!), Martin was sent to boarding school in Mansfeld to learn Latin, the academic language of the day. Discipline was harsh, and if a student failed to memorize the Latin grammar for the day, he was often beaten. Luther did well, however, and he continued his education in Magdeburg and Eisenach. He then went to the University of Erfurt to obtain his law degree.

But the legend says that in 1505, Luther was returning home from Erfurt when he ran into a thunderstorm. The storm was so severe that he feared for his life. Having received harsh discipline from others as a child, he feared the wrath of God and doubted his salvation. He vowed to St. Anne, the patron saint of miners, that he would become a monk if allowed to live. Luther survived the storm, and keeping his word, he entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt.

In reality, it is possible that this “thunderstorm event” never actually happened. The story bears resemblance to the story of St. Paul in the book of Acts in the Bible (Acts 9:1-19). Jesus appeared to Paul on the road and changed his life. It is possible that Luther or someone close to him invented the story of Luther on the road from Erfurt as a way of dramatizing his life, making it parallel to a biblical story.

Regardless, Luther did enter the Augustinian monastery, much to his father’s disappointment. Having saved money for Luther to become a lawyer with status, Luther chose to become a lowly monk. Like his other endeavors, Luther excelled at his religious vocation. He carefully observed the required fasting, praying, self-denial, and confession (penance). The way people were taught to think of salvation in that time was by the metaphor of a staircase. Sin brings you down on the staircase, and good works bring you up on the staircase to heaven. If your good works outweighed your sins, you would achieve salvation. Luther once remarked, “If ever a monk could have reached heaven by monkery, then it was I.” But Luther never felt that he had attained the level of righteousness that God demanded of him.

In 1507, Luther was ordained as a priest. He celebrated his first mass with much fear and trembling. In 1510, he was selected by his father superior, Johann Staupitz, as an official representative to visit the holy city of Rome, the center of the medieval Western Church. There were many relics in Rome, which were said to possess special powers of holiness for pilgrims. But Luther was appalled by the lack of morality shown in Rome, even among other priests. He was told at one point that if he climbed the Holy Stairs (said to be the stairs to the palace of Pontius Pilate in the Bible), saying the Lord’s Prayer with every step and kissing each step to the top, he would be granted pardon and a reduction of time in purgatory upon his death. But Luther never did find peace with God while in Rome. He returned to Germany in spiritual despair. We will continue next month with the beginning of Luther’s work of reform of the Church.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

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**The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls this year on March 1. The season of Lent lasts for forty days (with the exception of Sundays), which symbolizes the forty days that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. During the season of Lent, we will have Wednesday evening worship at 7:00 PM. As in the past, Pr. Theresa from Menno and I will switch back and forth every other Wednesday. There will be no confirmation class during Lent, but students can use these Wednesday evenings as opportunities to fulfill their worship note requirements. The theme of each Wednesday night will be based on a familiar hymn and what it says about our faith.**

**March 1st:  Ash Wednesday Pastor Theresa**

**Featured Hymn: *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me***

**March 8th:  Pastor Tom**

**Featured Hymn: *Just as I Am, without One Plea***

**March 15th:  Pastor Theresa**

**Featured Hymn: *What a Friend We Have in Jesus***

**March 22nd:  Pastor Tom**

**Featured Hymn: *Holy, Holy, Holy***

**March 29th:  Pastor Theresa**

**Featured Hymn: *How Great Thou Art***

**April 5th:  Pastor Tom**

**Featured Hymn: *He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought***

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not venerate (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.



For March of 2017, we remember **Patrick, missionary to Ireland**.

We know of “St. Patrick’s Day” on March 17 each year. Yet people often forget that there is an actual historical person known as Patrick. Born in Britain, he was captured by Irish pirates and enslaved. Later, he escaped and returned to Britain. Upon becoming a Christian and being named a bishop, Patrick returned to Ireland and began the work of converting the island to the Christian faith. He established churches and worked toward proclaiming Christ to the Irish people for forty years.

He is said to have composed the following poem, known as "The Breastplate," Patrick's poem of faith and trust in God:

"Christ be within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ inquired, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

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**Worship Schedule**

**March 1 (Wednesday):** Ash Wednesday: Purple

**March 5:** The first Sunday in Lent: Purple

**March 8 (Wednesday):** Purple

**March 12:** The second Sunday in Lent: Purple

**March 15 (Wednesday):** Purple

**March 19:** The third Sunday in Lent: Purple

**March 22 (Wednesday):** Purple First session of first Communion instruction for fifth grade, 5:00 PM

**March 26:** The fourth Sunday in Lent: Purple

**March 29 (Wednesday):** Purple

**Featured Hymn for March 2017**

***Softly and Tenderly***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 177*

1. Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me; patiently Jesus is waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.
2. Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me?
3. Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me; though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me.
4. Refrain: Come home, come home, ye who are weary, come home. Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, come home.

* Will Lamartine Thompson, 1847-1909

*Note: Thompson wrote many Gospel hymns that Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey used in their revivals. This remains one of the most popular. It is appropriate during the season of Lent, as we remember God’s continual call of repentance to us, our way of life as people baptized into Christ.*

**Monthly Watchword for March 2017**

“You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.”

* Leviticus 19:32 ESV

**Ushers for March:**

* Head Ushers:
  + Keith and Donna Nielsen
* Ushers:
  + Duane Barnes
  + Norman and Margo Poppe
  + Troy and Paige Poppe
  + Kash Poppe

**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**

**Youth Group Events:** The youth will have ice skating in Yankton after church on Sunday, March 12.

There will be a youth crock pot supper on Wednesday night, March 15 at 6:00 PM. This will be before evening worship that night.

**First Communion Instruction:** For fifth graders of the congregation, instruction for receiving first Communion will be held on Wednesday nights of March 22 and April 5. First Communion will be held on Sunday May 7.

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

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

***How can the bodily eating and drinking produce such great benefits?***

*It is not the eating and drinking alone, but also the words that accompany it: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, together with the eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and those who believe them have what they say and declare, namely, the forgiveness of sins.*

**March 2017**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  | 1  Ash Wednesday  worship, 7:00 PM  Pr. Theresa Jacobson presiding | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (altar rail)  Purple | 6 | 7 | 8  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM  Church council, 8:00 PM | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12  Sunday school, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Youth ice skating after church in Yankton  Purple | 13 | 14 | 15  Women’s meeting, 10:00 AM  Youth supper, 6:00 PM  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM  Pr. Theresa | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (continuous line)  Purple | 20 | 21 | 22  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship, 10:30  Purple | 27 | 28 | 29 30 31  Lenten evening  Worship, 7:00 PM  Pr. Theresa | | | |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

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