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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**March 2019**

**Lent**

***For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.***

**- Ecclesiastes 3:1 ESV**

When teaching my confirmation class, I spend a good amount of time educating the students about the cycle of the church calendar. There are different festivals and seasons: Advent, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, just to name a few. The colors in church change, and those colors represent different things about our faith. For Christians in non-liturgical traditions (e.g. some Baptists, “non-denominational” churches, and others), all of this is confusing. Why bother with all of this changing of seasons and colors?

To be sure, the cycle of the church year is not something that is a requirement for someone to be a believing Christian. It falls in the category of what Lutherans call *adiaphora*, meaning “indifferent things.” These *adiaphora* are things we do in the church that, while not being necessary for the true unity of the church, might nonetheless be useful.

Indeed, though an “indifferent thing,” our Christian calendar is a helpful tool in teaching people about our faith. The Bible verse quoted above comes to mind: *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.* Different seasons of the year emphasize different parts of the life of our Savior Jesus Christ, but the different seasons also emphasize different attitudes that we are called to express in our relationship with God.

With the beginning of March this year, the season of Lent is upon us. It is a more somber time of the year. We begin on Ash Wednesday by hearing about our mortality and our sin. We remember throughout the season of Lent the importance of the attitude of repentance, turning around from the wrong directions in our lives and turning toward the grace and mercy of God. Because of this focus on repentance, our churches often avoid the word “hallelujah” (praise the Lord) during Lent.

But some object to this. I remember when I was in college, someone criticized our campus pastor for insisting that music during Lent not focus on praise of God and instead focus on repentance and on the gift of Jesus’ suffering. She claimed, “I can praise God anytime.” That is true. The seasons of the church year are not meant to legalistically prohibit us from expressing our faith in different ways. But he pointed out to her that while we can praise God anytime, there is a time and a season to focus on other aspects of our faith. Each year as Lent arrives, it is a helpful reminder of our need to refocus our lives on the one who is the ultimate source of life. Most of all, it is a time to focus on the good news that God, through the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, is gracious and merciful to us, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. This is true all year round, but there is value in the intentional reminder that comes with this season. The color purple reminds us of Jesus’ kingship, which is expressed in his suffering and life given for us.

Sometimes, Christians practice the spiritual discipline of fasting during Lent. They choose to “give something up” for Lent. The point behind such fasting is not that we make ourselves righteous by abstaining from meat, chocolate, soda, or whatever. Rather, when we crave such things during fasting, it is meant to be a reminder to pray.

During this season of Lent, I hope that our congregation will take seriously the call to refocus our lives. Life is busy, and it is easy to lose focus on the most important things. A big part of this refocusing is committing to hearing God’s Word in church. To that end, we not only have our regular schedule of Sunday morning worship, but we also have extra opportunities for worship on Wednesday evenings during this season. I will also be providing Lenten devotional books for the congregation as well. Come, and let the Word of God wash over you, calling you to repentance and faith, and filling and renewing you with the message of God’s steadfast love for you, which remains a burning fire even when our own love grows cold. Let the Holy Spirit rekindle the fire of faith within you this season.

* 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 **Hans Nielsen Hauge**. He is commemorated on March 29, and he died in the year 1824 AD.

Hans Nielsen Hauge is one of the most significant figures in Norwegian history, and his work is widely considered to have launched Norway as a modern democratic society. His humble beginnings make his contribution all the more remarkable.

He was born in 1771 on a farm south of the capital city of Christiania (Oslo). In accordance with Norwegian naming customs, the child Hans was named as the son of his father, Niels. He was also given a second surname, Hauge, as that was the name of the farm on which he was born. His home life was devout, rooted in the Norwegian Lutheran tradition. Growing up, he developed many manual skills and became a talented farmer, carpenter, and repairman. Though he lacked formal education like most people of his time, he nonetheless showed himself to be highly intelligent and creative.

He had lingering doubts about his salvation, however. He feared the judgement of God. While working on his father’s farm in April of 1796, he had a mystical experience that assured him that God had taken away his sins. Thenceforth, even though he was a layperson, he felt called to preach and encourage others in repentance and faith. He viewed plowing fields as a good analogy to God’s work in human life: God wants to plow our lives, uprooting sinful habits, just like weeds and tree stumps, so that his love might grow in us.

As an effort to restrain fanatical religious movements, Norwegian law at the time prohibited the convening of religious meetings without the presence of an ordained minister. When Hauge convened prayer and preaching meetings, he was arrested, even though he never encouraged anyone to separate from the Church of Norway. He simply viewed his work as a supplement to the established church. The pattern of his arrest and release continued as Hauge traversed Norway. Many people experienced spiritual renewal because of Hauge’s preaching.

But Hauge did more than preach. The example of his life revealed his emphasis: God calls us to live our faith in our daily life and work. Wherever he went, he assisted with farm chores at places where he stayed. He knitted as he walked across Norway so as to avoid idleness. He also encouraged the development of small businesses, such as paper mills, bone mills, saw mills, fishing operations, tanneries, and other endeavors. Because this work threatened the power of large monopolies, the secular authorities also despised him. He was accused of violating vagrancy laws. In 1804, he was arrested and imprisoned for ten years, charged with a list of offenses, notably convening illegal religious meetings and establishing businesses without the proper licenses.

Though Hauge languished in prison, his work continued to transform Norwegian society in his absence. His influence by then had reached every corner of Norway. Even some of his opponents recognized his value. At the time, the kingdom of Denmark-Norway was an ally of France in the Napoleonic Wars. As a result of the British blockade of Norway, basic necessities were in short supply. There was not enough salt to preserve food, and so Hauge was released from prison to establish a system to extract salt from the ocean on the Norwegian coast.

Hauge’s case was finally resolved, and he was found guilty of the two offenses listed above. Even though he was released, his health was ruined from his imprisonment. He returned to his farm and was married. He was remarried upon his first wife’s death. One of his sons would also go on to be a significant figure in Norwegian life. He died on his farm in 1824 at the age of fifty-three. Curiously, the following year was the beginning of Norwegian immigration to North America. Many immigrants to our part of the world from Norway drew their courage from Hauge’s influence and example. Norwegian Lutheran church organizations in North America considered Hauge an essential part of their heritage.

Some people continue to dislike Hauge even today. They claim that his followers have left a legacy of harsh legalism in Lutheran churches that many have reacted against. Yet Hauge is also remembered by many as a hero of the Norwegian people, perhaps the first modern Norwegian. One biographer considers him “Norway’s greatest man.” Perhaps the best way to remember Hauge is to remember his faith and his example. God is constantly at work plowing the fields of our lives, uprooting our sin and changing our focus. God plants within us the good news of Jesus Christ, and we are called to carry that good news with us as we go about our life and work. God needs faithful people in all vocations, and may our life and work be to His glory.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for March 2019**

***What Wondrous Love Is This?***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 254*

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this That caused the Lord of bliss To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!
2. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, When I was sinking down, sinking down, When I was sinking down Beneath God’s righteous frown, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul for my soul, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.
3. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; To God and to the Lamb I will sing; To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great I AM, While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, While millions join the theme, I will sing.
4. And when from death I’m free, I’ll sing on, I’ll sing on; And when from death I’m free, I’ll sing on. And when from death I’m free I’ll sing His love for me, And through eternity I’ll sing on, I’ll sing on, And through eternity I’ll sing on.

* Text: S. Mead’s *A General Selection,* 1811
* Tune: William Walker’s *Southern Harmony*

*Note: The origin of this American spiritual is not known, but its poetry and music make it one of the classics of American hymnody with its marvel and wonder at God’s love and grace.*

**Monthly Watchword for March 2019**

“Put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only.”

* 1 Samuel 7:3 ESV

**Ushers for March:**

* Head Ushers:
  + Cecilia and Reed Eckmann
* Ushers:
  + Duane Barnes
  + Troy and Paige Poppe
  + Kash Poppe
  + Leah 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**

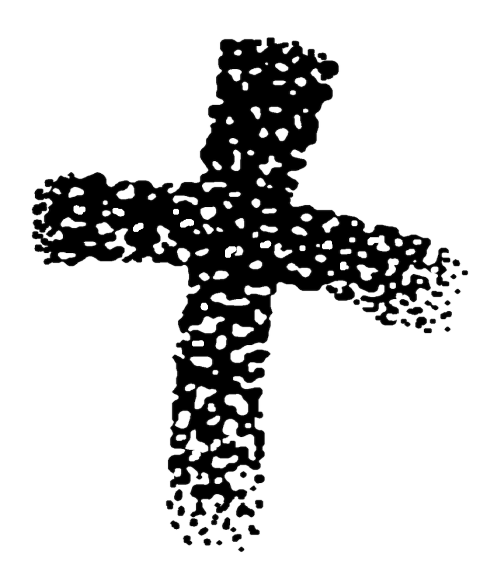
**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

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

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*What does this mean?*

*We pray in this petition that our heavenly Father would not hold our sins against us and deny our prayers because of them. We know we have not earned, nor do we deserve those things for which we pray. But we ask that he would grant us all things through grace, even though we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment. And so we, too, will heartily forgive, and gladly do good to those who sin against us.*



**Birthdays for March**

*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!*

* March 3: Ciera Petersen
* March 8: Ryker Guenther
* March 12: Lyle Scott
* March 18: Melvin Barger
* March 18: Stran Sage
* March 20: Del Cross
* March 27: Leah Poppe
* March 29: Hudson Barger
* March 31: Trenton Guenther

**Baptismal Anniversaries for March**

*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!*

* March 6: Kris True
* March 8: Jett Sucha
* March 12: Carsten Barger
* March 21: Sandra Ziegler
* March 25: Keith Nielsen
* March 30: Jakob Eisenhauer

**Worship Schedule**

March 3: The Transfiguration of our Lord with Holy Communion, altar rail (White)

March 6: Ash Wednesday worship, 7:00 PM, Pr. Theresa Jacobson (Purple)

March 10: First Sunday in Lent (Purple)

March 13: Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM, Pr. Tom Jacobson (Purple)

March 17: Second Sunday in Lent with Holy Communion, continuous (Purple)

March 20: Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM, Pr. Theresa Jacobson (Purple)

March 24: Third Sunday in Lent (Purple)

March 27: Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM, Pr. Tom Jacobson (Purple)

March 31: Fourth Sunday in Lent (Purple)

**Lenten Evening Suppers**

During the season of Lent, Good Shepherd will once again hold evening suppers before worship. The meals will begin at 6:00 PM, and worship will begin at 7:00 PM.

March 6: No supper (Ash Wednesday)

March 13: Indian tacos, served by youth

March 20: Soup, served by women

March 27: Lasagna, served by women

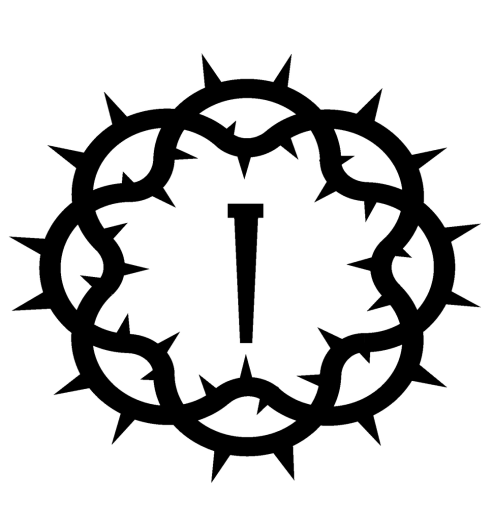
Other suppers will be held in April

**Lenten Theme**

The Wednesday evenings during Lent provide us with the opportunity to explore certain parts of our faith in greater depth. This year, as in years past, Pr. Tom and Pr. Theresa will trade off every other week. When not at Good Shepherd, Pr. Tom will be leading the Lenten worship at Grace Lutheran in Menno. This year, the Wednesday Lenten evening sermons will be based on the Apostles’ Creed. In addition to Sunday worship, please make use of this opportunity to learn more about our faith. Confirmation students may also count Lenten evening services toward their worship note count.

**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. This month, it will be on March 24.
* The Church council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13 at 7:00 PM.
* The WOW/WNALC women’s meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13 at 10:00 AM. This is a change from the usual date of the third Wednesday of each month.
* This year, the Holy Week worship service will be held on Good Friday (April 19) at 7:00 PM. This is a change from the previous few years, when it was held on Maundy Thursday.
* Lenten devotional books will be made available for use from the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), beginning on Ash Wednesday.
* Confirmation class will not meet during the season of Lent.



**March 2019**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 |
| 3  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (altar rail)  White: Transfiguration | 4 | 5 | 6  Pr. Tom in Menno  Ash Wednesday worship, Pr. Theresa  Purple | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Purple | 11 | 12 | 13  Pr. Tom in Lindy  WOW/WNALC meeting, 10:00  Evening supper, 6:00  Lenten evening worship, 7:00  Church council after worship | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30; Holy Communion (continuous)  Purple | 18 | 19 | 20  Pr. Tom in Menno  Lenten evening worship, 7:00, Pr. Theresa Jacobson | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24  Sunday School, 9:30  Adult education, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Purple | 25 | 26 | 27 28 29 30  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Lenten evening  Worship, 7:00 | | | |
| 31  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Purple |  |  |  | | | |

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