

NATIVITY NEWS – MARCH 2014



Pastor's Ponderings

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Those words, accompanied by the imposition of ashes, signal the beginning of Lent. Just so you know, the word “Lent” which means “spring,” was adopted by the church in the Middle Ages as a replacement for the Latin word *quadragesima* translated “forty” as in Jesus’ forty days of temptation in the wilderness, but enough with the etymology. Lent is a source of mystery for people both within and without the church. Most Christians who observe Lent think of it negatively as a time of “giving up” something important to them. Of course one can think of Lent positively seeing it as a time do something helpful for somebody else. While both negative and positive self-discipline has its place, the danger is that we original sinners can become proud of our self-chosen acts of piety. Jesus had much to say about that and I encourage you to read his words in the Gospels or better yet attend worship on Ash Wednesday. To combat sinful pride both in Scripture and the worship service you will encounter a word about you, actually three words. The first word is that you are dying (dead actually but that’s another story). God gives us a stark reminder that as the result of sin we are not going to walk this earth forever. Sin then is the second word that you will encounter. We all are sinful both by nature and by action and our death is the direct result. God is true to his word and when he told Adam and Eve not to eat of that forbidden tree or he would kill them he wasn’t kidding. We’re proof that God means what he says. The third word that you will encounter is Satan. He delights in pointing out those first two words. He delights in reminding you that you’re dead because of your sin. Taken together then the three words truly focus the mind and prick the heart which is quite fitting for Lent. It is a season of law and no amount of spiritual discipline will change the truth we hear about ourselves. Of course we are not left without hope. Even the ashes on your forehead are in the shape of the cross signaling the fact that the pain of being dust and returning to dust is simply the prelude to those shouts of “Alleluia, Christ is risen” that ring out Easter morning. Yes the evil one is quite right in his accusation that we are dead sinners but what of it. Christ died for people like us and so we are his. Christ took our sin, died with them and they are no more. God raised Christ from the dead and he sits at the right hand of the Father and believe me when I say to you; your sin is forgiven, though you die yet shall you live, and the accusations of the evil one against you are simply noise.

Peace
Scott

Dianne Echols shared the following article with me. I found it most helpful and wanted to pass it along to you. The author points out some things that we've been talking about in the Wednesday Bible study. Speaking of Wednesday Bible study, we've taken a break for Lent but when we resume after Easter you have a standing invitation to join us. The class is given at noon and again at 7pm for your convenience. Our next topic is a comparison of Lutheranism with the other major Christian denominations. Please consider making Bible study a regular part of your week.

How to Raise a Pagan Kid in a Christian Home



By: Barrett Johnson

We end up teaching the wrong thing because we have the wrong objectives.

This sentiment was stirred in me afresh when I read an interview with Veggie Tales creator Phil Vischer. He was reflecting on how the “Christian message” he was trying to teach wasn’t Christianity at all...

“I looked back at the previous 10 years and realized I had spent 10 years trying to convince kids to behave Christianly without actually teaching them Christianity. And that was a pretty serious conviction. You can say, “Hey kids, be more forgiving because the Bible says so,” or “Hey kids, be more kind because the Bible says so!” But that isn’t Christianity, it’s morality. . .

And that was such a huge shift for me from the American Christian ideal. We’re drinking a cocktail that’s a mix of the Protestant work ethic, the American dream, and the gospel. And we’ve intertwined them so completely that we can’t tell them apart anymore. Our gospel has become a gospel of following your dreams and being good so God will make all your dreams come true. It’s the Oprah god.”

So what is your objective?

Do you teach your kids “be good because the Bible tells you to” or do you teach your kids that they will never be good without Christ’s offer of grace? There is a huge difference. One leads to moralism; the other leads to brokenness. One leads to self-righteousness; the other leads to a life that realizes that Christ is everything and that nothing else matters.

I want my kids to be good. We all do. But as our kids grow up, the truth of the gospel can easily get lost somewhere between salvation (where we know we need Jesus) and living life (where we tend to say “I’ve got this”). My experience is that the vast majority of parents are encouraging moral behavior in their kids so that God will bless their (usually self-centered) pursuits. It’s the American Dream plus Jesus. And it produces good, moral pagans.

Consider the key objectives you have for your kids. Seriously, take a minute to think about what would deem you a successful parent. If your goals are focused on your kids' behavior, their happiness, or their accomplishments (but don't include a dependence upon Christ and a submission to His will and work), then you might want to make some adjustments.

Because the world has enough pagans. Even plenty of really nice ones. What we need is kids who fully grasp the reality that they have nothing to offer, but who intimately know a God who has everything they need.



A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT

Do you suppose that it is possible that people who were involved in our Lord's Passion ever had the opportunity to talk with one another about it? Perhaps right then, while the events were happening? Can you imagine what they might have said? At the Wednesday night services during Lent you are invited to listen in on the conflicts and concerns of two people whose lives were touched – and changed – by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Come at 7:00 PM and hear again this popular series from several years ago.

BASKETS OF PROMISE



"[Jesus answered] As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." – John 9:5

Once again this Lent we will walk with people around the world afflicted by war, displacement and poverty by collecting and assembling LWR personal care kits. Each week please bring in the featured kit item so that we can reach out as Christ's healing hands in the world.

Here's our collection schedule: March 9, bars of soaps (4 to 5 oz. any brand, in original wrapping); March 16, bath towels (light-weight, maximum 52" x 27", dark color recommended); March 23, toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging); March 30, combs; April 6, nail clippers (metal, attached file optional).



KEEP US IN STITCHES

In March we resume work assembling quilts for Lutheran World Relief on Wednesday, March 26 from ten until noon. No special sewing skills are required for the quilts - just be able to use a needle and tie a knot.

Making LWR Mission Quilts provides an opportunity for Lutherans in the U.S. to answer God's call to love and serve our neighbors in need. To those that receive them, they are a tangible symbol of God's love and compassion. And to our partners, they provide an opportunity to reach out to communities with important information and services.

For those and many more reasons, Mission Quilts are LWR's most requested items. LWR strives to provide as many Quilts as possible but the supply is limited.



COLLECTION FOR CVP

March is a month with five Sundays so we will be collecting paper products and cleaning supplies for the Center for Violence Prevention in Pearl. Please remember to bring your items by the 30th.

Thrivent & Habitat

Habitat for Humanity is going to need Lutherans-lots and lots of Lutherans- in the coming weeks to help build a home that is being funded by a partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Thrivent Financial. More than 2,700 Habitat homes across the country and around the world have been built since 2005. Thanks to the 2.5 million members who own financial products in the organization, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is able to contribute to the improvement of communities like Jackson, MS. Thrivent Financial contributed \$60,000 and is also engaging local volunteers who are members of Thrivent Financial, members of area Lutheran churches and members of the community at large.

The Rosalyn McGowan family is more than a little eager to finish construction of their new home. They will complete hours of "sweat equity" helping to build it, a basic tenet of Habitat for Humanity. They will also repay the no-profit mortgage, illustrating Habitat for Humanity's objective to give families a "hand up" rather than a "hand out."

The build begins, **Saturday, April 12th at 8:00 AM** 20 volunteers are needed per day. The remaining workdays are: **April 24 and 26, May 1 and 3, 8 and 10, and Saturday the 17th.** You can volunteer for morning or afternoon shift, no skills required; on the job training is provided.

To volunteer contact Cindy Namanny by email: dce@orlcms.org Or phone: 601-842-9865.

Evangelism Report

New Sign Progress:

Wow. What more can be said about the generosity and enthusiasm of you Nativity Lutheran congregants? We opened a 10 week fund drive to get an additional \$3000 needed to purchase a new sign. We already had about \$2500 in the account, but that had taken almost 2 years to build that up. We announced this thing on January 19. As of March 2; only eight weeks into the 10 week drive, we are within just a few hundred dollars of reaching the goal! This is an incredible achievement and illustrates your enthusiastic generosity as well as your sincere desire to help bring Nativity Lutheran's message of sharing the gospel to all of the surrounding community.

In summary, we have almost the entire \$5500 needed for the new sign and will be placing the order very soon. To expedite the process, on Sunday March 9, you will be invited to help select the color of the sign itself. Once this is resolved, it will take the sign company about 90 days to get it manufactured and installed. We already have approval from the City of Brandon regarding the sign itself.

Ambassadors/Pew Buddies:

We still need more folks to help out as Ambassadors and Pew Buddies. This is especially crucial during the Easter Season. We again invite anyone who would like to join this cadre of devoted Evangelists, to please contact anyone on the Evangelism committee.

Evangelism Committee



March & April Birthdays

Joe Hunt	3/01
Pat Schnell	3/03
Renate Hunt	3/10
Debbie Pruett	3/13
Ryan Edwards	3/15
Pastor Scott	3/24
Derek Stevens	3/27
Cathy Mills	3/29
Bud Weisser	4/01
Barb Balsley	4/02
James Thatch	4/02
Carol Gallagher	4/04
Kathy Lewis	4/10
Makaila Gregory	4/11

Anniversaries

Keith & Pat Anderson	3/10
Tommy & Lynn Templeton	3/25
Joe & Renate Hunt	4/06
Dan & Jan Behringer	4/22

If you wish to participate, please look for the sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex and provide your birthday and/or anniversary **month & day only** by your name so we can **wish you a Happy Day!**

Happy Birthday & Anniversary to All !!!!!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2	8 AM & 10:30 services with Sunday school at 9:15 6 PM Carnival Spaghetti Supper & Men's Bake Sale
March 5	12 Noon – AI-non 7:00 Pm Ash Wednesday Service
March 6	7:00 PM Social Ministry Meeting
March 9	8 AM & 10:30 services with Adult Bible Study at 9:15
March 12	12 Noon – AI-non 6:00 PM Light Supper – 7:00 PM Lenten Service
March 16	8 AM & 10:30 services with Sunday school at 9:15
March 19	12 Noon – AI-non 6:00 PM Light Supper – 7:00 PM Lenten Service
March 23	8 AM & 10:30 services with Sunday school at 9:15
March 24	7 PM – Church Council Meeting
March 26	12 Noon – AI-non 10:00 AM to Noon – LWR quilting 6:00 PM Light Supper – 7:00 PM Lenten Service
March 29	8:30 AM Brewed Awakening – coffee at Cups
March 30	8 AM & 10:30 services with Sunday school at 9:15

[illegible]

May 31 8:00 AM - Annual Rummage & Bake Sale
Bring sale items the week of May 25th



Nativity Prayer List

Please pray for:

Pastor David Mancuso, Pat Schnell, Ann Schultz, Bud Weisser, Trieu Lam, Carol Tucker, Bob Miller and Brian Johnson.

NLC March, 2014 Volunteer List – 10:30 Service & Ash Wednesday

March 2

Greeters – Debi Poole
Ambassador – Mitch Leavell
Pew Buddy - Clyde Hatten
Ushers – Bettiga Family
Lector – Joe Hunt
Comm. Asst. – Joe Hunt
Nursery – Pamela Kirby/Savannah Stevens
Counters – Sandy Bettiga/Renate Hunt
Acolyte – Wade Caldwell
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

March 9

Greeters – The Hatten's
Ambassador – Meade Entrekin
Pew Buddy - Clyde Hatten
Ushers – Tony Caldwell/Kathy Peters
Lector – Ruth Burgess
Comm. Asst. – Mitch Leavell
Nursery – Sue Caldwell/Haley Templeton
Counters – Tom Loland/Norma Swanson
Acolyte – Matthew Templeton
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

March 23

Greeters – Meade Entrekin
Ambassador – Ruth Burgess
Pew Buddy - Mitch Leavell
Ushers – J. Schnell/Renate Hunt
Lector – Keith Anderson
Comm. Asst. – Keith Anderson
Nursery – Pamela Kirby/Savannah Stevens
Counters – Lynn & Haley Templeton
Acolyte – Fred Braatz
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

If you cannot serve on the dates shown, please try to swap with someone and let the office know of the change. Thanks.

March 5- Ash Wed.

Greeters – The Schnell's
Ambassador – Linda Tucker
Pew Buddy – Dorothy Leavell
Ushers – Halverson Family
Lector – Alex Weisser
Comm. Asst. – Alex Weisser
Nursery – Lynn & Matthew Templeton
Counters – NA
Acolyte – Haley Templeton
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

March 16

Greeters – Cindy Braatz
Ambassador – Joe Hunt
Pew Buddy – Ann Starr
Ushers – Hack Walston/Mitch Leavell
Lector – John Halverson
Comm. Asst. – John Halverson
Nursery – Marcia Weaver/Alex Weisser
Counters – Cindy & Fred Braatz
Acolyte – Katie Mae Rials
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

March 30

Greeters – Joyce Stroh
Ambassador – Ellen Noble
Pew Buddy – Susan Landrum
Ushers – Keith Anderson/Tommy Templeton
Lector – Bart Bettiga
Comm. Asst. – John Schnell
Nursery – Ann Starr
Counters – Keith Anderson/Bud Weisser
Acolyte – Katie May Rials
Altar Care – Lauri Gregory

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Planned YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	\$ 12,837
Received YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	<u>\$ 11,034</u>

Difference	- \$ 1,803
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