



Zion Lutheran Monthly

March 2021

Pastor's Corner

Return to the Lord

“Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful.” Joel 2:13

Our theme for this Lenten season is a simple and direct one; *return to the Lord*. I'm glad it is so simple and direct because we need to hear that sometimes. There are plenty of reasons people may leave the church; *return to the Lord*. There are a lot of times temptations may trick us; *return to the Lord*. Our sinful nature may have us think we are doing just fine by ourselves without God; *return to the Lord*. To all of us God says, *“return to the Lord.”*

In addition to the “normal” spiritual challenges we all face, this past year we have faced a pandemic. The pandemic has prevented about 15% of our congregation from coming together to worship regularly and to be met by Christ in Word and sacrament. I pray as vaccines are more widely distributed that all of our members will feel comfortable to *return to the Lord!*

I realize that phrase “return to the Lord” could be taken as a strict command. You could beat people over the head with that phrase as an order! But I believe this verse is not so much a command as it is an invitation to you. Here is the verse in its entirety, *“Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful.”*

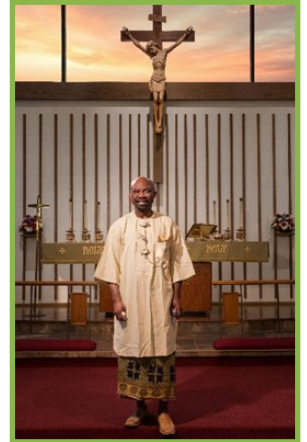
There are times when you may have wandered away from the church, you get to return to the Lord because *He is gracious and merciful*; He wants you to come back to Him. Temptation may get the best of you and try to drive a wedge between you and Christ's cross, you get to return to the Lord because *He is gracious and merciful*; He is not embarrassed by your sins and wants you to come back to Him. When your sinful nature has you believe the ancient lie that you do not need God, God Himself calls you to return to Him because *He is gracious and merciful*; He will always call out to you no matter where you may find yourself. For all of our members who have been separated from us because of the pandemic, we miss our fellowship with you greatly. When the time is right, return to the Lord. Come back into the arms of your church. Share once more our fellowship in the Lord's Supper. Let us all return to receive mercy from our God because He truly is *gracious and merciful* to all of us!



The Lord be with you,
Pastor Grimenstein

Mission Moment: Promoting Zion's Internal, Local, and International Missionary Efforts

Lenten greetings from JEM Lutheran Seminary! This year is exceptional in the history of our Seminary in Nigeria. Our total number of full-time residential students is 101, that is to say we have 101 candidates in the dorm. Thanks be to God our new CTS Fort Wayne graduates successfully passed their STM degrees and are here to help with the academic work, among other things! However, it is a Catch-22 because there are constraints with such a large number of students, especially with COVID, i.e. the rising cost of feeding the students and seminary administration, along with increased utilities. The Seminary is not much different than many institutions in the U.S., in that it costs more to educate each student than the fees can cover, so it is at a crossroad. Without subsidies, or outside support from donors, the likelihood is that there will be an increase in school fees and/or a reduction in the number of admissions. Our students are less able to come up with school fees than most U.S. students, so the burden for them would be almost impossible. We are always seeking parties interested in providing full/or partial scholarships for our students, and now this need simply increases.



Our Ash Wednesday service was successful, even with COVID protocol. Our traditional three tier service combined the Lutheran High School / primary / nursery school along with the JEM Lutheran Seminary students, and the staff of the LCN synod.

Recently I preached at the wedding of a student. This student had asked to be married on Transfiguration Sunday, but instead the wedding was fixed for the first Sunday in Lent. After informing the groom of my intentions, I used the opportunity to not only preach a fitting sermon for the bride and groom, but to gently teach those in attendance about the historic practice of the Church to abstain from holding celebrations, like weddings, during the season of Lent, but rather to use Lententide to walk with our Lord in the wilderness.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray that JEM Lutheran Seminary will not be at a crossroads as a result of limited funds and that qualified students will not be turned away.
2. Pray for me and other Christians, especially the seminary students, during this Easter season as that is when the Muslim fanatics attack/bomb churches and Christian organizations. May the Lord who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, fasting 40 days and 40 nights on our behalf, keep you from the snares of the evil one, not only this Lenten season but always. Amen!

Have a glorious Lent!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Wokoma.
1 Tim. [1:15](#).

Chairman's Report

The Lion and the Lamb

Will March come in like a lion and go out like a lamb, or vice versa? It's time for flying kites, welcoming spring, bidding winter goodbye and celebrating Lent as we "march" into the most important of all celebrations---Easter! Once again, due to the determination of your Pastor and Elders, Zion is going to be serving the Good News with the addition of 2pm Wednesday Lenten services to augment the usual 7pm Wednesday evening Lenten services as long as the attendance justifies it. Your church is a rock and the Gospel is alive in truth and purity, so enjoy it and rejoice. Check the web site or call the church office if you have any questions.

Let me shout out a big thank you to all who were able to attend the Voter's Assembly after the second service on January 31st. I hope you all found the meeting informative and will again attend the April 25th Quarterly Voter's Meeting. Stay tuned for more information as we near that meeting. The most important point of business we conducted in January's meeting was to officially get the wheels in motion to renovate the kitchen. We're restarting the fundraiser that was tabled due to the COVID situation. To the best of your ability please support the effort to remodel the ancient kitchen and bring it into the current century. Thank you all for being steadfast in your support for the ministries at Zion! We've come through nearly 12 months of virus-induced testing and tribulations -- and the fights are never really over, but with God's help we shall prevail regardless of what stumbling blocks the foe might place in our path.

Holy Week is coming. March has it's "lion and lamb" saying, but as Christians, we certainly have our own version of those symbols. In Revelation, John speaks of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" and a "worthy Lamb" who we all know in scripture is Christ Jesus. Each Lenten service is a lesson for us as we approach the Passion and Resurrection that leads to our celebration of Easter.

Enjoy the season; keep the faith of the Victory of the Lord over sin and death. Give thanks and praise to the Lord as you keep the church on Earth, the LCMS and Zion in your prayers.

~ Paul Klemash



"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and...
honor and glory and praise!"

Revelation 5:12, NIV

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday school check-in runs from 9:20-9:30 am. Classes begin at 9:30 am.

See the checklist below for what you need to know before, upon arrival, and leaving Sunday school.

March Lessons & Teachers

Dates	Lessons	Pre - K Room 205	1 - 2 Room 208	3 - 4 Room 207	5 - 6 Room 206
March 7	Jesus Heals a Man Who is Paralyzed	Megan Glasser	Megan Migyanko	Linda Kroeger	Mike Wallace
March 14	Jesus Calls Matthew	Megan Glasser	Megan Migyanko	Linda Kroeger	Mike Wallace
March 21	Jesus Calms a Storm	Megan Glasser	Megan Migyanko	Andy Weldon	Mike Wallace
March 28	PALM SUNDAY Lesson	Megan Glasser	Megan Meyer	Andy Weldon	Tess Carter

March Apologetics Lessons (Post-Confirmation Age)

March 7	Why do bad things happen?
March 14	Are we alone? What about demons and angels?
March 21	Are we alone? What about ghosts and aliens?
March 28	Is there a hell? Is there a heaven?

Teacher:
Michelle Wallace

Classroom:
Lower Conf Rm



Sunday School Checklist

We have been working hard to put appropriate safety measures in place. Information has been emailed to Sunday school parents with specific details regarding COVID-19 practices and requirements for Sunday school. Below is a Quick Checklist parents can use before arrival.

- Submit **Release Form regarding COVID-19 Matters** (www.zlcb.org/sunday-school)
- Submit the **COVID-19 Health and Safety Procedures Form** (www.zlcb.org/sunday-school)
- **Face masks** are required. Don't forget to send one with your child.
- All children will report to their designated **Temperature Check Station** before going to class.
- All children will **wash or sanitize hands** before entering and upon leaving their classroom.
- **No food or water** will be provided! Water fountains are closed. Parents can send a labeled water bottle, if necessary.

Virtual Sunday School Options

We will offer LIVE Sunday school lessons via Zoom to our students from 1st - 9th grades. Your teacher will email you requesting an RSVP to the virtual class. If you have not received an email and would like your child to participate, please contact Katie Gielarowski.



Save the Date!

June 21st-25th

9 am to noon



2:00 & 7:00 p.m.
Worship Services Each
Wednesdays in LENT
 Attend In-person, Broadcast Live on
 YouTube, (7:00 p.m. service only)
 and Podcasted later that day



Zion Lutheran Church • www.ZLCB.org

During this season of Lent, we will consider the theme “Return to the Lord” and examine how the call to return from the Old Testament book of Joel played out in practical ways for the people who walked alongside Christ as He demonstrated and carried out God’s grace and mercy on our behalf, taking God’s wrath upon Himself, setting the stage for God to “turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him” (Joel 2:14).

- Wednesday, March 3rd - 2:00 & 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 10th - 2:00 & 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 17th - 2:00 & 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 24th - 2:00 & 7:00 pm

Link to Zion’s YouTube Channel to view complete services: [VIDEO](#)

Link to Zion’s Sermon Page to listen to each services Readings and Sermon: [SERMONS](#)



Bridgeville Area Food Bank

This month’s collection for the Bridgeville Area Food Bank is Sunday, March 14. The “item of the month” is fruit (canned and dried).

You are also welcome to help at the food bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 am and 12:00 pm at Bethany Presbyterian Church.



In the Spotlight

Zion Lutheran Preschool Program

Greetings from the Preschool!

As you can see from the above pictures, our students are hard at work and play! As we approach the month of March we are getting closer and closer to the end of the year. In many ways, this year has flown by, and in many other ways it has been a long year, but all in all a fantastic year!

We have been so fortunate to have had in-person instruction since September... since July if you count our summer camps. But now its time for parents to decide whether or not to send their 5 year old child to Kindergarten. Each February we assess the children who are

being considered for Kindergarten so we can give parents an accurate picture of their progress and readiness.

We use an assessment from "Get Set for School" which is part of the Handwriting Without Tears program we use in all of our classes . It teaches developmentally appropriate pre-writing and pre-reading techniques for ages 3-5.

The assessment is divided into two sections: Language and Literacy and Numbers and Math. The Language and

Literacy sections include recognizing both upper and lower case letters, describing and comparing objects, rhyming, and language progression development. The Numbers and Math section includes naming shapes, rote counting, identifying numbers, object counting, positions (top, middle, bottom), ordinal numbers, size, patterning, and measuring.

Once the assessments are completed and scored, the results are then reviewed privately with parents to help them make the best decision for their child...to send to Kindergarten or stay another year at Zion for one of our transition classes.

As we continue to make preparations for the next school year, and as we evolve as a school to meet the needs of all children, please keep us in your prayers.

Blessings,
Tracey Harris





PASTORAL LETTER

LCMS.ORG

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent weeks, I have received a number of inquiries from concerned members of the Synod about the COVID-19 vaccines, as they seek to maintain their support for the sanctity of life and for religious freedom. These questions have come not in the interests of politicizing the matter, but out of sincere Christian moral convictions. Having consulted with our district presidents and other agencies of the Synod, I requested that the staff of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in collaboration with the Office of National Mission's Life Ministry, draft ["The LCMS and COVID-19 Vaccines: Facts and Considerations."](#) On the basis of this counsel, let me address a few of your most pressing questions.

1) Are COVID-19 vaccines related to abortion? The science regarding this is complex. The two vaccines currently approved by the FDA — Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna — were not designed, developed or produced using cell lines derived from aborted human fetal tissue. Other vaccine candidates — including the UK-approved Oxford/AstraZeneca — did use human fetal tissue, however. The Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines did perform laboratory tests using cells derived from abortions (one from 1972 and another from 1985) to confirm the final vaccine quality (as, surprisingly, do many other commonly used medications and vaccines). For more information on how the COVID-19 vaccines relate to abortion, I encourage you to consult the website of the [pro-life bioethicists at the Charlotte Lozier Institute](#) and the list they maintain there. According to their assessment, neither the Pfizer/BioNTech nor Moderna vaccines contain any substance derived from aborted human fetal cells.

2) Does the Synod have a position on the reception of vaccines using human fetal tissue? The Synod does not have an official position on such vaccines at this time. Official decisions of this nature come through the Synod acting in convention, and no convention action has yet been taken. However, our church body remains firmly committed to the sanctity of life, and we continually seek to advocate for pro-life positions in the public square.

3) Can I obtain a religious exemption for the COVID-19 vaccine? Religious or personal belief exemptions are based on conscientious objection and do not require official support from the denomination. The absence of an official Synod stance does not impact your ability to seek an exemption. Please consult your local lawmakers or public health officials for more information on how to proceed should the need arise.

Cont'd.

4) Should I take the COVID-19 vaccine? This is a question only you can answer. Some may choose not to take the vaccine because of concerns over its relation to abortion or fear of possible health complications. Others may take it in spite of such reservations out of concern for their own health or that of their neighbor. Since neither Scripture nor the Synod has explicitly addressed this issue, it remains a matter of Christian freedom where you must choose according to your individual conscience.

5) How should I talk about the vaccine with others who disagree with my view of it? In a sensitive issue of this nature, we remember the words of St. James: “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19). Listen carefully and openly to the points of others. Consider them. Share your positions patiently and objectively. Reflect upon your own penchant for error. Forgive others where they sin against you and ask for forgiveness where you wrong them.

In this contentious issue, we must respect the consciences of fellow believers who share our same commitment to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, as well as our life together as a Synod. As St. Paul urges us regarding matters of conscience, “let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” (1 Cor. 10:24), and “let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother” (Rom. 14:13). At a time of cultural upheaval, I would encourage you not to allow disagreement even over undoubtedly important matters such as this to take precedence over the faith that unites us in Christ. In all things, we should heed the call to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

[Please study the document linked here.](#) It provides a summary of what we know about the vaccines, their relation to the issue of abortion, and what we can (and cannot) say about these matters from the Synod’s perspective. I hope it proves useful to you as you wrestle with how to bear Christian witness in this world through your love of both God and neighbor. “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20–21).

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

P.S.: “The LCMS and COVID-19 Vaccines: Facts and Considerations” document is available online at [lcms.org/doc/covid19-vaccines-fact-sheet](https://www.lcms.org/doc/covid19-vaccines-fact-sheet).



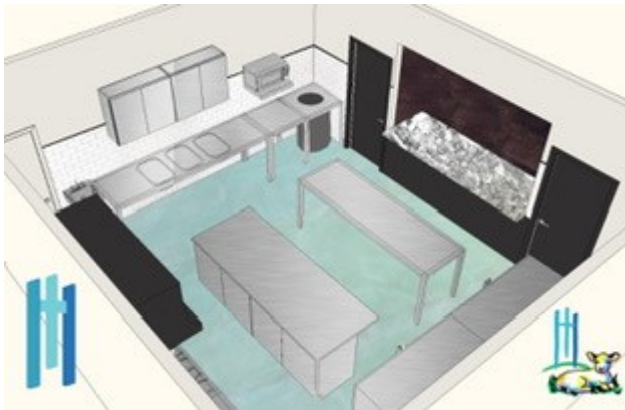
Zion's Forward in Faith Kitchen Campaign

Off to a Strong Start in February!

Since the restarting of the Forward in Faith Kitchen Campaign on 2/1/21, we're pleased to announce that during February we raised **\$10,297.29**. This brings the total kitchen fund amount to **\$35,840.29** as of 2/28/21. This is a strong start toward our goal of raising the \$100,000 needed to complete the kitchen renovation during the period from 6/28/21 through 8/6/21.



Thank you to all who have generously supported the campaign in this early stage! Please continue to support these efforts with your time, talents and treasure.



Zion Kitchen Aesthetic Design Plan

Aim: to create an aesthetically pleasing design that is functional, easy to maintain, affordable, durable, efficient, and timeless; Bright and appropriate for a windowless food-prep space; Coordinates with the design identity of Zion's Church and Preschool.



Logo Wall Art

- Personal to Zion; both church and preschool logos incorporated
- Sets foundation for limited color palette

Wall Color Above Tile

- Drywall above tile removes "basement" feel of cinderblock, easier to maintain, allows for visually appealing application of tile below (no contrasting/conflicting grout lines)
- Warm, neutral greige white keeps space bright and clean but sets off tile



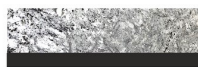
White Subway Tile

- Glossy white tiles, bright & easy to clean
- Exact white to be coordinated with granite
- Standard running bond pattern; classic and timeless
- Thin, grey grout lines easy to maintain & don't show dirt



Black Cladding on Hood, Trim on Fellowship Doors

- Appealing visual contrast
- Durable and resistant to scuffs/damage



Black Cabinets on Outer Pass-through; Granite Counter

- Cabinet color discreet & withstands wear
- Granite Counter black & white with large texture & movement
- Creates warmth & blends Fellowship Hall with Kitchen
- Coordinates well with floor color, stainless, and pulls in black & white



Stainless Counters, Prep Spaces

- Appropriate for large community kitchens
- Timeless, easy to clean, ideal for food prep



Polished Concrete Flooring

- Muted "Robin's Egg Blue" adds color without being too bold
- Bright for windowless room, coordinates with Zion Logo
- Blends very well with stainless, black & white
- Practical & efficient; Tranquil & airy color choice





ALTAR FLOWER & ETERNAL LIGHT SPONSORSHIPS

for dates in 2021 are available in the back of the sanctuary!

In Appreciation

Dear Zion friends,

Thank you for the beautiful Valentine's flowers. Hello to everyone at Zion. I miss seeing you all!

Tom Bicusky

Elmcroft Senior Living

Dear Zion,

I was really surprised when Valentine flowers were brought to my door! I couldn't think who would send me flowers until I opened the card. Thank you so much! They are beautiful! Also, thank you to all the kind people who send me cards. It's so very nice of them.

God bless you all,

Dottie Heslop,

Country Meadows



Synodical News

LCMS member congregations, including Zion, voted recently on the question of whether the Synod should postpone for one year the various district conventions, and the national Synodical convention due to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Member congregations voted overwhelmingly to allow district conventions to be held in either 2021 or 2022, and to move the Synodical convention from 2022 to 2023.



Dr. Patricia Annear, EdD
MSN RN CNE

Your Dream for Free:

Taking the First Steps Towards Earning a Debt-Free Nursing Education

Dr. Annear's 3rd visit to Concordia Lutheran Ministries

Dr. Patricia Annear, Dean of Butler County Community College's Nursing and Allied Health Division, and an admissions representative will be onsite to discuss the first steps – pre-requisites needed, application deadlines and transcript requirements. They will also provide an overview of the curriculum for BC3's RN program and offer an early look at their upcoming LPN program.



Registration is recommended for each session. Please call 724-352-1571, Ext 8482 or Ext 8372, to register through the HR department.

We're excited for YOUR future!

Concordia's BC3 Tuition Assistance Program offers the unique opportunity to become a nurse for free, but how do you get started? We understand that taking the first step can be overwhelming when you're not quite sure where to begin, so we have called back the experts!

Wednesday, March 10th

Session 1: **1:00 p.m.**

Session 2: **2:45 p.m.**

Haven I Dining Room
Concordia Cabot Campus

Deadline to Register:
Friday, March 5th



If you are unable to attend in person, please let HR know at the time of registration and they can provide you with a Zoom link.

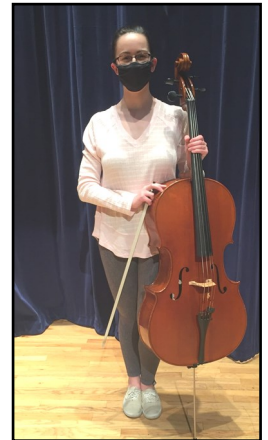
Please join us for this exclusive opportunity!



Shout Out to Students

Highlighting the academic awards, scholarships, and extra-curricular achievements of Zion's students in Kindergarten through College.

Anna Grimenstein, a junior at Westminster College, won the 2021 Westminster Concerto Competition playing Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor, 1st Movement. Due to COVID, Anna's concert performance has been delayed. She will perform the piece with the Westminster College Orchestra in the spring of 2022, and is looking forward to playing for a live audience!



Luke & Johnny Lemonovich earned excellent grades during the first half of the South Fayette school year. Luke received "Highest Honor Roll" for the 1st and 2nd quarters; Johnny received all "A"s during the 2nd quarter. The brothers attend SF Middle School.



Lexi & Lucas Meyer earned kudos in their club activities. Lexi, a first grader at South Fayette, took 1st Place with her ICE All-Stars Stardust cheer team in their first competition in York, PA. Lucas, in Pre-Kindergarten, received his Orange Level 2 Tiger belt at Steel City ATA in Bridgeville.





What About...

Confession & Absolution

Are we poor, miserable sinners?

Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14 confronts each of us with an important question: Am I a poor, miserable sinner?

The Pharisee in the parable is not alone. We too are often unaware of our sinfulness, or don't want to admit it. How easy it is for us self-righteously to compare ourselves with others. Thanks be to God, that the second man, the tax-collector, is not alone either! Jesus Christ is with him. When Jesus calls, sinners come. They receive His forgiveness, life and salvation. And thus, we too say, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," for Jesus is the friend of sinners. The precious gift of our Lord's absolution is what confession is all about.

In confession and absolution, Jesus Christ, who poured out his life-blood as the perfect and complete sacrifice for all sin, pours into our ears the life-giving promise of absolution, "My son, my daughter, go in peace, your sins are forgiven." Trusting that promise, we say "Amen. Yes, Lord, it is true."

What is confession?

Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, i.e., forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, by firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

It is hard to say, "I was wrong, I am sorry. Forgive me." God's Word makes it clear that the "wages of sin is death" (Rom.6:23). In confession and absolution, God's Word is moving us to confess the truth about ourselves and our need for His forgiveness.

Because of Jesus Christ, confession and absolution is a blessed, joyful, happy exchange! "For our sake He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor.5:21). When Jesus hung on the cross, He became sin—for us. He was the ransom for sin. God poured out His just wrath on Christ. Christ won peace between God and man. In confession, Christ takes the burden of our sin and gives us in exchange His complete forgiveness and love.

Absolution is the ongoing work of Holy Baptism, in which our old, sinful nature in Adam is drowned and the new man in Christ arises. Through Holy Absolution we receive "the gift of God," which is forgiveness of sins and "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:23).

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts. Which are these? Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything or done any harm?

Confessing our sins in the Divine Service, we hear the Lord's servant, our pastor, absolve our sins in the name of Christ. Privately, we go to the pastor for confession and absolution precisely for those sins we are most aware of and those sins that are particularly troubling to us. These we confess to our pastor and hear the words of Christ, "I forgive you."

By what authority does the church forgive sins?

The office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

After His resurrection from the dead and before His ascension into heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ breathed on His apostles and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (John 20:22-23).

Sometimes visitors in a Lutheran service of worship are surprised to hear in the general confession and absolution our pastors saying: "Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Our Lutheran Confessions help us to understand why our pastors speak this way: "It is not the voice or word of the man who speaks it, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin, for it is spoken in God's stead and by God's command." (AC XXV.3)

Absolution is the Lord's life-giving, sure and certain word that does for us what no surgery, medi



What About...

Cont'd

Confession & Absolution

cine, therapy, counseling, or advice can do for us. The Lord's word of absolution doesn't cover up or hide our sin. Nor does it give us only a temporary relief that soon fades away. Our Lord's word of absolution reconciles us to God the Holy Trinity.

What do you believe according to the promise of God?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ to deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

Burned and weighed down by sin, we are able to go to our pastor and confess our sins, knowing that by virtue of his office, he has been called to speak the word of Christ to us and in the stead of Christ to forgive our sins. Through the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ calls men to the office of the ministry He has given to His church, the office of the keys. Thus, our pastors carry out this office publicly, on behalf of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Christian congregation. Also, all Christians extend the forgiveness of Christ to one another privately as they console fellow Christians sorrowing over sin.

At times, our pastors, with considerable sorrow, may have to tell a person not to attend the Lord's Supper until he or she has repented of sin. If the situation continues without repentance, the pastor may have to declare to the person, on behalf of the congregation that has made this decision, that he or she is excluded from the church until there is repentance.

Excommunication is a last resort to help a person recognize the extremely dangerous situation he has placed himself in because he will not repent of his sin. It is a final attempt to win someone back from Satan's influence.

Is Confession and absolution a Sacrament?

Although Holy Absolution has no visible element, it definitely does have Christ's institution. The Lutheran Confessions refer to Holy Absolution as a Sacrament (LC IV.74; Ap.XIII.4). The Lutheran confessions also wisely point out that "No intelligent person will quibble about the number of sacraments or terminology, so long as those things are kept which have God's command and promises" (AP XIII.17).

Luther speaks often about Holy Absolution,

connecting it with the oral proclamation of the Gospel and with the ongoing living out of Holy Baptism. While it is customary in Lutheranism to speak of two Sacraments—Baptism and Holy Communion—we do well to keep in mind this important truth: "God is in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren" (SA III.4.1).

What is private absolution and what is its benefit?

Our Lutheran Confessions say, "It is taught among us that private absolution should be retained in the churches and not be allowed to fall into disuse" (AC XI). The founding father of the Missouri Synod, C.F.W.Walther, said that a pastor, in an evangelical way, through careful instruction and encouragement, and through praising private confession and absolution, should work toward the goal where private confession and absolution is used in addition to general confession and absolution.

Private confession and absolution is a very important tool in the practice of pastoral care. Pastors use confession and absolution in a variety of situations—for example, in the midst of marital and family difficulties — and in other such pastoral counseling situations. Private confession and absolution is used by pastors to bring forgiveness and healing into the lives of those who come to them with troubled and anxious hearts.

Our church's hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*, contains a suggested order for private confession and absolution (pgs.110-111). This order may be used in the context of a visit with your pastor. The order of private confession and absolution suggest that specific sins be confessed, but certainly does not require it. Another important point is that pastors are sworn at their ordinations never to reveal the sins confessed to them. As one Lutheran pastor put it, "The pastor's ear is a tomb. What goes in, never comes out."

Conclusion— Rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins, we pray that God gives us the strength to resist temptation and to live lives that glorify Him, seeking to please Him by what we do, in accordance with His holy and perfect will. And as we do, we always are aware of our sin and so we flee for refuge to His boundless mercy, seeking and imploring His forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God for the gift of confession and absolution!

Dr. A. L. Barry
Past President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

March Service Participants

Date	Time	Acolytes
March 7	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Decklan Pasquini Sam Bishop
March 14	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Noah Wallace Claire Lemonovich
March 21	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Christian Bonacci Sam Bishop
March 28	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Decklan Pasquini Elizabeth Lemonovich



	Elders	Altar Guild	8:00 am Ushers	10:30 am Ushers
Mar	Bill Bishop Mike Kroeger	Janet Oelschlager Marian Oelschlager	Brian & Megan Pasquini, Wayne & Barb Oechlein	John & Kari Gresh, Andy & Dwight Weldon
Apr	Roger Diederich Mike Wallace	Janet Oelschlager Marian Oelschlager	Bill & Ken Schrag, Tim Sheldon, Shane Bryant	Mike Kozak, Susie Bishop, Vince Kimberland, John Lemonovich

MARCH

Birthdays

5th — Jared Fitzgerald

5th — Sandy Hervert

5th — Deborah Sterba

8th — Leeann Golish

8th — John Reihner

9th — Lee Glasser

11th — Michael Sterba

13th — Tanner Wilson

14th — Susan Bishop

15th — Braeden Boyle

16th — Claire Schrag

17th — Greg Howcroft

17th — Max Ma

18th — Kara Garrubba

18th — Joe Gielarowski

21st — Faye Conner

21st — Tracy Yellig

23rd — Mark Killinger

24th — Bonnie Lewis

26th — Katie Gielarowski



MARCH

Anniversaries

3rd — John & Robyn Reihner

4th — Bill & Carol Schrag

21st — Charles & Kathy Kacvinsky

26th — Tim & Rita Sheldon

29th — Brian & Megan Pasquini



MARCH 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:00 pm 1st yr Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd yr Confirmation 7:00 pm Trustees 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	2	3 2:00 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Lenten Service	4 7:00 pm Elders Meeting	5	6 10:00 am Small Group Worship Service
7 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/ Teen Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	8 6:00 pm 1st yr Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd yr Confirmation 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	9	10 2:00 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Lenten Service	11 7:00 pm Council Meeting	12	13 10:00 am Small Group Worship Service
14 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/ Teen Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship FOOD BANK COLLECTION	15 6:00 pm 1st yr Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd yr Confirmation 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	16	17 2:00 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Lenten Service	18	19	20 10:00 am Small Group Worship Service
21 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/ Teen Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	22 6:00 pm 1st yr Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd yr Confirmation 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	23	24 2:00 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Lenten Service	25	26	27 10:00 am Small Group Worship Service
28 PALM SUNDAY 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/ Teen Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	29 6:00 pm 1st yr Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd yr Confirmation 7:15 pm Choir	30 7:00 pm Sunday School Mtg.	31			

Sunday morning worship at 8:00am and 10:30am



Zion Lutheran Church
3197 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017

