

The Gospel Gazette

March 2017

St. John Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
www.stjohnministries.net

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Office Hours: Mon-Thursday
9-3:00pm
office@stjohnministries.net

St. John Officers

Dan Vetter,
chairman Board of Directors

Dave Van Haften,
chairman Board of Elders

Worship

9:00 am - Sunday Worship
Communion every 1st & 3rd Sunday

10:15am - Fellowship
10:30am - Sunday School

10:30am - Bible Study
"Woman and Man
According to God's Plan."
led by Mark Petersen

Wednesday Bible Study

9:30 am
Study of 1st Corinthians
led by Al Eberle

Lenten Preparation: Midweek Services, Fasting and Charity

by David Petersen

The Church is always prepared in the same way: through repentance. Whatever else marks Lent, it is a season of repentance. It lasts for forty days, not counting the Sundays, reminding us of our Lord's fasting in the desert and the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, both austere events. As part of that repentance, Lent is a time of increased prayer, fasting and gifts for the poor. Yet even as true repentance is not simply feeling sorry but is turning from sin and toward God or is sorrow over sin and faith in Jesus, so likewise, Lent is not so much a time of giving things up as it is a time for adding things that increase our awareness of God's mercy in Christ Jesus.

That is why the majority, if not all, of our congregations add worship services during Lent. Lent is meant to be a time of increased opportunities to receive God's gifts won by Christ's death and resurrection. Midweek services could be thought of as giving up free time or leisure, but they are better considered as adding something valuable to our lives and as preparation for the life to come. Fasting can also be understood in this way. It doesn't have to be simply denying the body something.

It can be training for the body. That training can be good for the body's physical health, and it can serve as preparation for times of temptation or persecution. The same is true of charitable giving. We might be tempted to think that we are giving more of our money away, giving it up, but we do better to think of how God has blessed us with not only material

things but also salvation and that we are privileged to share with the needy.

In any case, when these traditions are taken on for Lent, whether it is giving something up or adding something, they are not salvific and no sin is committed if they are ignored. They do not impress God or merit His favor. We don't need to impress God. He is already pleased with us in the Son and loves us. These traditions have, however, proven beneficial to Christians over the centuries, and there can be no doubt that they will also be good for us.

The Rev. David Petersen is senior pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – JANUARY 2017

Minutes from February BOD were not available at press time.

Committee Reports

Public Relations : Dan shared that Kristi T. would like someone else to take this on.

Elder Report - Dave V. gave a report and submitted it to the church office.

Treasurer's Report - For December, our contributions exceeded our expenses by \$9,566.13. Year to date, contributions are below our expenses by \$1,051.07. Year to date both our contributions and our expenses are below our approved budget by roughly \$20,000. Full report submitted to Calli by Melanie.

Old Business

- Sign west of town - not being worked on due to weather.
- Front Steps - Bob talked to Paul about railing.
- Boiler - not broken but dealing with valves and continual adjusting.
- Pastor Weems apartment items: washer, sofa and loveseat are being stored in elevator room, until a suitable home can be found.
- Marty Miller fundraiser - Vicki J. is coordinating this fundraiser, a goal \$7,500 is needed for expenses. Dan will talk to Vicki for clarification on St. John's commitment for this amount. Are we trying to raise as much as we can to contribute to this amount or are we committing to raising money until this total is reached.

New Business

- Boiler - start making a plan for long term so we have a backup plan, if it fails.
- Mission Support Opportunities - Dan will reply to Zak's email or call him. While it was agreed upon that supporting missional opportunities is a good thing, the Elders will discuss the idea of adoption of this missionary by the congregation since it would be a budget item.
- Elders - will check on the policy for requesting or announcing for special offering and requests.
- Dave V. presented an idea that he discussed with Pastor Powers. It is the concept of the congregation adopting 2 goals for the year. One would be spiritual and One would be a physical goal for the church. Dan will discuss this further with Pastor Powers to get the details.

The next Board of Directors Meeting is Monday, March 13th at 7:00pm

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING – FEBRUARY 2017

Pastor's Report: N/A.

Call Committee: Dave provided an update of the committee efforts. The Congregational Self-Study has been submitted to the District office. The next step will be receipt of the preliminary list of pastors available for consideration of a call.

Membership Actions: No actions this month.

Worship Services and Spiritual Life: Ash Wednesday service will be held at St. John. Lenten services will be held at Hope Lutheran. Pastor Bill Volm will preach on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Old Business: The results of the fundraiser for Marty Miller were discussed.

New Business: The Board began identifying potential candidates for service as an Elder in the upcoming term.

The next Board of Elders meeting is scheduled for March 5 at 7:00 pm.



The Northwest District Office has received our Congregational Self-Study and congregational nominations. We expect a response in the next few weeks. Please pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom and insight to know and do his will.

A COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS GIFT

Just before Christmas St John applied and received a Thrivent Action Package for a community benevolence program. A small group of volunteers from St. John went out and raised donations and bought cleaning supplies for the Haven. In total, it was more than \$400! Thanks for the group that came out and helped buy items and distribute them to the Haven. The people at the Haven were truly surprised at the amount of items and the generosity of the St John. It was a great Christmas present for them. Here is a note the Church received from the Haven. Thanks to all and thanks to Thrivent for making this possible!

*Dear St. John,
Thank you so much to the members of St. John Lutheran Church for donating clothes, vacuum, mop, brooms, and so much more! It was greatly appreciated. It takes a lot of toilet paper to run this place and if I don't have to buy it, then I have the funds to buy work shoes or pants or pay for an abscessed tooth to be pulled.*

*Sincerely,
Anne Johnson, Haven Manager*

HOPE HOUSE UPDATE

It is hard to believe but Andrew has been at the Hope house for a year. This has been a very growing year for Andrew and for St John. Andrew has been an excellent guest at the house and the time has been very helpful in helping him learn to develop skills for a job and maintain a house. Andrew has been at St John for a number of activities. If you have not met him yet why not take the time to drop over and say hi? Thank you for all the people who helped work with Andrew this past year.

We are now going through the interviewing process for our next candidate. We hope to have the house occupied again in March. Also as a result for some generous donations, we will be looking into putting an escape window into the basement and making one of the rooms ready, so we can at some time, host two individuals at one time. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please call to talk to Zak or Jim.



Ash Wednesday
St. John Lutheran

Wednesday, March 1st
Soup Supper 6:00pm
Service 7:00pm
Imposition of Ashes

Wednesday Lenten Services

Hope Lutheran Church
2071 12th Street
March 8-April 5th
Soup Supper 6:00pm
Lenten Service 7:00pm

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return
Genesis 3:19

JOURNEY
in Lent





Save the Date for the upcoming VBS/Camp Perkins Day Camp. This year VBS is scheduled for June 12th - 16th. Whether you have or have not been involved, please consider serving in some way this year in this worthwhile outreach. We always need group leaders, help in the kitchen, help with registration and walkers to put out invitations in the neighborhood. Each year more families from our neighborhood are coming to be a part of this event. Many have come to the picnic. Maybe that is your gift to welcome people from the neighborhood. Please be in prayer for this important outreach.



Volunteers are needed to host the coffee hour on a Sunday. If you could help out, sign up on the calendar on the counter in the kitchen. If you need help with set up, call Vicki Johnson 521-0657. You are welcome to bring a snack, but it isn't required. Recently Jason S. and Tonya S. volunteered for coffee hour and put together this cute platter. Thank you Jason & Tonya!



LWML Spring Event: Faith Alone

All ladies are invited to the Spring Event sponsored by the Yellowstone Zone of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. It will be held Saturday, March 18, 2017 at Grace Lutheran Church, 1350 Baldy Ave., Pocatello, Idaho. Registration is at 9:00 am. We will have a Bible study, Communion service, time for fellowship, information from our District President. We plan to be finished by 1:00pm.

- bring a Bible
- you may bring a large bath towel to send to the National Convention
- your mites (pennies, nickels, dimes).

There will be carpooling from Hope Lutheran in Idaho Falls. Phone 208-522-1440, if you are interested.



SPRING CLEAN

Easter is coming and it is time to spruce up the church with our annual SPRING CLEANING. Saturday, April 1st (no foolin') we will attack all the nooks and crannies beginning at 10:00 am. Plan to bring good spirits, rags, buckets, scrub brushes, and anything else you may think of. Soap, polish, and water will be provided. If the day is nice you may also bring a rake and shovel for outdoor clean-up (garbage bags provided). Hopefully, we'll have enough people to be finished by noon and can share a pizza or two. Look for more details in March bulletins as we get closer to the date.



HUMAN CARE

- * NAMI which is the National Alliance on Mental Illness is offering a class for anyone wanting to learn more about mental wellness. The class starts on March 8th and meets on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 6:30-9:00pm for 6 weeks. If you would like to register, please call Jane Roberts at 757-8300 or online at namiuppervalley@aol.com. This class is taught by family members that have lived experience, they were a great help to me and my family. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, please contact Sheila at 524-6180.
- * Red Cross Blood Drive is on Monday, March 13th from 3:00-7:00pm. If you are unable to donate, please consider volunteering or making a healthy snack. To schedule an appointment, please sign the sheet at church or call me.
- * Fellowship Potluck luncheon is on Tuesday, March 14th starting at noon. Don't worry about bringing a dish to share, we just want you there!
- * Game Night is Friday, March 17th starting at 6:30pm. All ages are welcome!
- * Our church serves at the Soup Kitchen on Tuesday, March 28th from 10:30-2:30. If you can help during any of that time it is a great way to serve in the community.

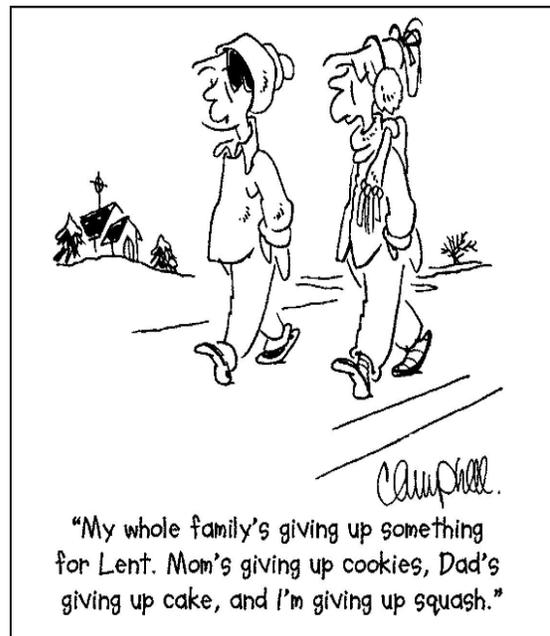


John 13:34-35 "A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

God Bless, Sheila



The choir is going to start preparing for Easter. Everyone is welcome to sing and no experience is required! We rehearse after the Sunday School classes at ~11:35 am on the first and third Sundays of every month. Contact Dave for more information or come the next rehearsal time.





Lent is a season of repentant joy. There is joy in repentance because in repentance, God, through His Word, turns us away from our sins — our failures of thought, word, and deed — to believe in the forgiveness and new life He has accomplished for us in the death and resurrection of His Son. For our God is our Father, and fathers discipline their children. He loves us enough to point out when and where we have erred, so that we are not weighed down by false belief, despair, and other great shame or vice.

Thus we do well to listen to God's Word, His own teaching, about giving. St. Paul exhorts: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary. In other words, everything else that we might give to during the year — laudable and worthy charities — are to be on top of what we give to our local congregation. For the local congregation is the place that serves us with the gifts of Christ's death and resurrection. The local congregation is where our spiritual needs are met when Christ's atonement is preached, when the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, when we were baptized into the name of the Triune God, and when we partake of the body and blood of the risen and living Lamb of God.

But how much are we to give to this local congregation? His instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1–2; 2 Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

Thus, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give it regularly, whenever we have income. We set it aside beforehand, before anything else is spent. From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. Tithing was a command for them. St. Paul never mentions a tithe. Since a tithe was the bare minimum for the people of Israel in the Old Testament, perhaps St. Paul had more in mind. That aside, however, ten percent is an easy way to figure out an amount. You simply move your weekly, bi-weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, or yearly income one decimal point to the left. And that's it. That's what you put in the offering plate to support your local congregation so that you may continue to be a hearer of God's word by sharing all good things with those who teach it to you.

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

In repentant joy, then, do we hear God's Word on giving, and we let that Word dwell in us richly. We let that word wash over our ears and seep into our hearts, to turn us away from our own selfish desires and turned toward Him in faith and love. We love the Lord and His Word. And we desire to do it. And when we have failed, that Word reproves and corrects, forgives and consoles. It calls us back to Him who is our God, our Savior, our Father.

