



# MARCH/APRIL 2023

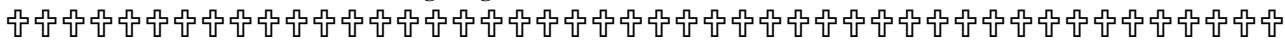


St. John's Lutheran Church  
Burt, Iowa 50522  
Phone: 515-924-3344  
[www.stjohnsburt.org](http://www.stjohnsburt.org)

He remembers **His** Testament forever,  
the **Word** he appointed for a thousand generations  
Psalm 105:8 (JP)

Rev. Thomas Cowell  
Pastor  
Phone: 515-924-3388

**'Telling the good News about Jesus-In Burt, Iowa, and the World'**



## Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

Much of the two months which cover the period of this Parish Messenger will be spent in the season of Lent. Lent is a season of the Church Year in which Christians pursue a life of repentance, self-denial, and reorientation toward Christ with greater vigor than other times of the year. Three spiritual disciplines that receive special attention during Lent are prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor (also called almsgiving).

Lutherans joyfully embrace the faith-building exercises of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving because this is the pattern of Christian life that has been given to us in Holy Scripture. Jesus teaches us in Matthew chapter six: "When you give to the needy [...]," "When you pray [...]," and "When you fast [...]." This tells us that Jesus assumes that charity, prayer, and fasting will be a part of our Christian life.

Jesus, and His apostles after Him, give us a number of specific instructions regarding how we pray, fast, and give alms. However, many of the details of how we practice these spiritual disciplines are left in the realm of Christian freedom. This means that we are free to pursue a life of prayer, fasting, and charity in ways that are most beneficial to our own congregations and our own personal faith.

I am hopeful that the following guide to the traditional Lenten spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving will help you explore how you might exercise your faith this Lenten season in a way which helps you grow in faith toward God and in love toward one another.

### PRAYER

*"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

**P  
A  
R  
I  
S  
H  
  
M  
E  
S  
S  
E  
N  
G  
E  
R**

*And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."* - Matthew 6:5-8

The benefits of prayer for your faith need little explanation. However, getting started in a habit of prayer can be difficult. Here are a few suggestions as you begin or seek to improve your practice of prayer this Lent:

- Join other Christians in prayer during the Lenten midweek and other special Lenten services offered at St. John's and Trinity.
- Make use of a Scripture and prayer devotional resource. Ask your pastor about the many daily prayer options our congregations offer.
- Use the Sunday bulletin as a prayer resource. Take the bulletin home and during the week pray for all the prayer requests, as well as for the other events and programs happening in our congregations and district.
- Schedule specific times for prayer throughout the day. Pray before every meal. Say a special prayer every morning or every night. Pick a time of the day to pray as a family.

## **FASTING**

*"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."* - Matthew 6:16-18

The discipline of fasting is typically less familiar to us than prayer or almsgiving, but it too is a beneficial tool for our faith. Fasting in any capacity helps you to fight the sin of gluttony and trains your self-control. The hunger that fasting produces also gives you the chance to reflect on your mortal nature, remembering that man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. Thus fasting helps us direct our hunger away from the bread of the world and toward the Bread of Life served at our Lord's Supper.

Here are a few options for you to consider for a Lenten fast:

- Skip breakfast before you eat the Lord's Supper as a way of remembering this heavenly food is more needful than any earthly food.
- Don't eat meat on Fridays to remember Good Friday when Christ sacrificed His flesh for us.

- “Give something up” for Lent such as dessert, soda, Facebook, Netflix, etc. and replace it with Scripture and prayer as a way of reprioritizing your faith in your daily life.
- The traditional Lenten fast consists of eating a small breakfast and lunch, which added together does not equal the amount you eat during supper. You would also avoid the types of foods you would eat at a party or holiday, such as desserts or expensive foods.

## ALMSGIVING

*“When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*  
 - Matthew 6:2-4

The three Christian disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving work well together because when you fast you have more time to pray and more money to give to the poor, and when you pray you are moved to show mercy to those for whom you pray.

The practice known as giving alms involves making a special point to give money or service to a person or charity in need in addition to your normal tithe to God in the offering plate. Rather than waiting for a special need to arise, try this Lent to seek out somewhere to direct your alms.

Here are some ideas of places toward which you could direct your alms:

- A sponsored evangelism or mercy project of our congregations, district, or synod.
- A local charity or a cause that you are particularly passionate about.
- Give alms through service: shovel a neighbor’s snow, babysit a friend’s child, cook a meal for an elderly person or a busy parent, volunteer at church, etc.

God be with you as these three spiritual disciplines given by our Lord of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving bless your faith in Christ alone whose death on the cross won for us forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Joy in Christ,  
 Pastor Thomas Cowell  
 Lententide, Anno Domini 2023

# Partnership Lent & Easter Schedule



We'd love for you to join us at either St. John's Burt or Trinity Algona as we observe both the Lenten season of repentance as well as the Easter season of joy in the resurrection.



## St. John's Burt - Schedule

|           |             |               |  |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|--|
| Tuesday   | February 21 | 6:00 p.m.     | Shrove Tuesday Prayer Service and Supper<br><i>Trinity Live Center Pancake Supper after Prayer Service</i> |
| Wednesday | February 22 | 5:30 p.m.     | Ash Wednesday Divine Service   |
| Wednesday | March 1     | 6:00 p.m.     | Lenten Midweek Prayer Service (At Trinity)   |
|           | March 8     |               | <i>Lenten Meal Served each week at</i>   |
|           | March 15    |               | <i>Trinity Live Center @ 4:45 p.m.</i>   |
|           | March 22    |               |  |
|           | March 29    |               |  |
| Thursday  | April 6     | 5:30 p.m.     | Holy Thursday Divine Service   |
| Friday    | April 7     | 12:00 p.m.    | Stations of the Cross Prayer Service   |
| Friday    | April 7     | 5:30 p.m.     | Good Friday Service  |
| Saturday  | April 8     | 10:00 a.m.    | Easter Egg Hunt  |
| Sunday    | April 9     | 8 - 9:15 a.m. | Easter Breakfast   |
| Sunday    | April 9     | 9:30 a.m.     | Easter Day Divine Service  |

## Trinity Algona - Schedule

|           |             |                   |  |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--|
| Tuesday   | February 21 | 6:00 p.m.         | Shrove Tuesday Prayer Service and Supper<br><i>Trinity Live Center Pancake Supper after Prayer Service</i> |
| Wednesday | February 22 | 7:00 p.m.         | Ash Wednesday Divine Service   |
| Wednesday | March 1     | 6:00 p.m.         | Lenten Midweek Prayer Service  |
|           | March 8     |                   | <i>Lenten Meal Served each week at</i>   |
|           | March 15    |                   | <i>Trinity Live Center @ 4:45 p.m.</i>   |
|           | March 22    |                   |  |
|           | March 29    |                   |  |
| Sunday    | April 2     | 9:30 a.m.         | Easter Egg Hunt  |
| Thursday  | April 6     | 7:00 p.m.         | Holy Thursday Divine Service   |
| Friday    | April 7     | 7:00 p.m.         | Good Friday Service  |
| Sunday    | April 9     | 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. | Easter Breakfast   |
| Sunday    | April 9     | 8:00/10:45 a.m.   | Easter Day Divine Service  |

# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

## *Merlin (Red) Jens Madsen*

*Merlin (Red) Jens Madsen* was born August 25, 1930 to William and Mathilda (Ostwald) Madsen in Whittemore, Iowa. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Cylinder, Iowa.

The Madsen family moved to a farm west of Burt in 1944. Red graduated from Burt High School in 1947 and then joined his dad in farming.

On November 18, 1951 Red was united in marriage to Doris Salisbury at St. John's Lutheran Church, Burt, Iowa. Pastor E Wittkopp was the officiant.

Red served two years in the U.S Army. After his return he and Doris began their partnership of farming and teaching. They were blessed with two children, Steve and Sandi.

Red became a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in 1944 and served as a trustee and elder for many years. His favorite hymns are *Amazing Grace*, *Just As I Am* and *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*.

Red enjoyed the life on the farm and what it offered him and took great pride in his crops. Long lasting friendships were made over his sixty years of clerking at the Algona Sale barn, and through the many household and farm sales. Red loved auctions and anything to do with farming. Red served on the Burt Elevator Board for many years and served for 12 years as a School Board Member for the Burt Community School.

Family came first with Red, he was only a phone call away if they needed him. When asked, "Who is your favorite?" His answer "I Love Them All!" Red's life was fulfilled by his faith, family, friends and of course farming!

Many of us remember Red for his collection of toy farm machinery, antique furniture, showing a championship steer with his brother, Bill, and also showing cattle with his son, Steve and daughter Sandi at the Kossuth County Fair.

As a youth Red played sports after the chores were done, setting in motion his love of basketball and softball. He loved following Steve and Sandi's basketball games and was an avid fan of the Sentral Community School and still has a great love for the Iowa Hawkeyes!

- Shirlee Alt



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 6 – Shannon Koestler
- 8 – Brant Karels
- 9 – Janice Reimers
- 16 – Kitty Bierstedt
- 17 – Evan Posey
- 18 – Jaelyn Rae Fox
- 18 – Jessica Parsons
- 19 – Amanda Heenan Heyes
- 21 – John Person
- 24 – Charles Christensen
- 26 – Kelsey Crosser
- 26 – Lucas Parsons
- 31 – Amy Bierstedt



## SPECIAL SENIORS

- Janice Reimers – March 9
- John Person – March 21
- Don Reimers – April 15
- Eugene Marlow – April 24

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 2 – Shayla Heetland
- 2 – Angie Thompson
- 4 – Caleb Christensen
- 5 – Kelly Fitzgerald
- 5 – Cameron Haase
- 6 – Jacob Christensen
- 7 – Christina Heyes
- 9 – Tony Hatten
- 11 – Michele Parsons
- 13 – Brenda Schutjer
- 15 – Don Reimers
- 16 – Shane Trunkhill
- 17 – Doris Blocker
- 17 – Cora Christensen
- 20 – Teresa Christensen
- 21 – Kuleen Smith
- 24 – Joshua Culbertson
- 24 – Justin Culbertson
- 24 – Eugene Marlow
- 26 – Vicki Briggs
- 28 – Aaron Bixby



## Funeral

### Ruth D Nerem

Born: April 1, 1922

Death: January 18, 2023

Funeral: January 21, 2023

Inurnment: Fenton Township Cemetery