



St. John's Lutheran Church
Burt, Iowa 50522
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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’



Jesus is God's Plan

The season of Lent is a time for us to remember that God has a plan for our lives. As generic and often unbelievable as it is to say “God has a plan for your life,” He does! From the beginning of time God has planned to create you in His image, and in the fullness of time to dwell with you forever in the person of Jesus. Nothing, not even sin and death, can distract God from His plan for your life. Therefore Lent is a season for remembering both all that we and the rest of mankind have done to destroy God’s plan for our lives, and also what God has done through the death and resurrection of Jesus to complete His plan for our lives. In fact the history of creation is the history of God gathering up from us all of the sin, suffering, betrayal, separation, shame, failure, death, and everything that gets in the way of God’s plan for our humanity and destroying it all on the cross.

One of the greatest sermons ever written is titled *On Pascha* (Easter), written by Melito of Sardis in just the second century. In the sermon Melito asks us to recognize that from the beginning God has been working through the failures of humanity to complete His plan for us in Christ. Here is a brief excerpt of this beautiful sermon; while much of the language and references might be foreign to you, try to follow Melito's train of thought as he traces God's plan of salvation through our broken history:

57. The Lord made advance preparation for his own suffering, in the patriarchs and in the prophets and in the whole people; through the law and the prophets he sealed them.

That which more recently and most excellently came to pass he arranged from of old.

For when it would come to pass it would find faith,
having been foreseen of old.

58. Thus the mystery of the Lord, prefigured from of old through the vision of a type, is today fulfilled and has found faith, even though people think it something new.

$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \vdots \end{array} \right]$$

59. Thus if you wish to see the mystery of the Lord,
look at Abel who is likewise slain,
at Isaac who is likewise tied
at Joseph who is likewise traded,
at Moses who is likewise exposed,
at David who is likewise hunted down,
at the prophets who likewise suffer for the sake of
Christ.

60. And look at the sheep, slaughtered in the land of Egypt, which saved Israel through its blood

whilst Egypt was struck down.

61. The Mystery of the Lord is proclaimed through the prophetic voice.

For Moses says to the people: "And you shall look upon your life hanging before your eyes night and day and you will not have faith in your life."

62. David says: "Why have the nations been haughty, and the peoples imagined vain things? The kings of the earth stood by and the rulers gathered themselves together against the Lord and against his anointed one."

63. Jeremiah says: "I am like a harmless lamb led to sacrifice; they planned evil for me saying: come let us put wood on his bread and let us rub him out from the land of the living. And his name shall not be remembered."

64. Isaiah says: "Like a sheep he was led to slaughter and like a silent lamb before its shearer he does not open his mouth; who shall tell of his generation?"

PARISH MESSENGER

65. Many other things were proclaimed by many prophets concerning the mystery of the Pascha, who is Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen.

[...]

69. This is the Pascha of our salvation: this is the one who in many people endured many things. This is the one who was murdered in Abel, tied up in Isaac, exiled in Jacob, sold in Joseph, exposed in Moses, slaughtered in the lamb, hunted down in David, dishonored in the prophets.

70. This is the one made flesh in a virgin, who was hanged on a tree, who was buried in the earth, who was raised from the dead, who was exalted to the heights of heaven.

71. This is the lamb slain, this is the speechless lamb, this is the one born of Mary the fair ewe, this is the one taken from the flock, and led to slaughter.

Who was sacrificed in the evening, and buried at night; who was not broken on the tree, who was not undone in the earth, who rose from the dead and resurrected humankind from the grave below.

[...]

100. The Lord clothed himself with humanity, and with suffering on behalf of the suffering one, and bound on behalf of the one constrained, and judged on behalf of the one convicted,

and buried on behalf of the one entombed, rose from the dead and cried out aloud:

101. "Who takes issue with me? Let him stand before me.

I set free the condemned.

I gave life to the dead.

I raise up the entombed.

Who will contradict me?"

102. "It is I", says the Christ,

"I am he who destroys death, and triumphs over the enemy, and crushes Hades,

and binds the strong man,

and bears humanity off to the heavenly heights."

"It is I," says the Christ.

103. "So come all families of people, adulterated with sin, and receive forgiveness of sins.

For I am your freedom.

I am the Passover of salvation,

I am the lamb slaughtered for you,

I am your ransom,

I am your life,

I am your light,

I am your salvation,

I am your resurrection,

I am your King.

I shall raise you up by my right hand,

I will lead you to the heights of heaven,

there shall I show you the everlasting father."¹

¹ Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

I pray this Lent and Easter that you are able to see that God's plan for you has been finished on the cross and in the empty tomb. Your sins and failures and trajectory toward death have all been destroyed by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. You are everything that God planned for you to be in Jesus, and in Jesus you do dwell with God forever. The Lord be with you this Lent and Easter season as we devote ourselves to receiving the perfecting death and resurrection of Jesus and living in Him forever – God's plan for our lives.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Thomas Cowell
Lent, Anno Domini 2019



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

6 – Teri Kathman
6 – Shannon Koestler
8 – Brant Karels
9 – Pam Madsen
9 – Allen Person
9 – Janice Reimers
10 – Jill Cherland
16 – Kitty Bierstedt
18 – Jaelyn Rae Fox
18 – Jessica Parsons
19 – Amanda Heenan Heyes
21 – John Person
24 – Charles Christensen
25 – Amy Marlow
26 – Kelsey Crosser
26 – Lucas Parsons
31 – Amy Bierstedt

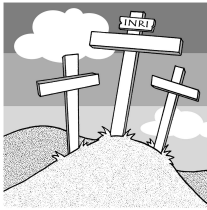


SPECIAL SENIORS

Janice Reimers – March 9
John Person – March 21
Ruth Nerum – April 1
Esther Christensen – April 12
Don Reimers – April 15
Eugene Marlow – April 24

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 – Ruth Nerum
2 – Shannon Griffin
2 – Angie Thompson
4 – Caleb Christensen
4 – Caela Jo Faber
5 – Kelly Fitzgerald
5 – Cameron Haase
6 – Jacob Christensen
7 – Tina Heyes
9 – Tony Hatten
10 – Brian Boyle
11 – Jessica Sherbondy
11 – Chris Hanna
11 – Michele Parsons
12 – Esther Christensen
13 – Brenda Schutjer
15 – Jennifer Cherland
15 – Don Reimers
16 – Shane Trunkhill
17 – Doris Blocker
20 – Teresa Christensen
21 – Kuleen Smith
24 – Joshua Culbertson
24 – Justin Culbertson
24 – Eugene Marlow
26 – Vicki Briggs
28 – Aaron Bixby
28 – Galen Gordon
28 – Shelley Haase



Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday Service -6:30 p.m.
(Holy Communion)

Midweek Lenten Services – 6:30 p.m.

March 24, 30, 37, Apr. 3, 10, 2019

Bible Study - 7:00 p.m. (each week)

"Blessing of Every Sunday Communion"

Palm Sunday – 9:00 a.m.
(Holy Communion)

"Morning Prayer" – 8:30 a.m.
Tuesday and Thursday mornings
March 12th thru April 18, 2019

Holy (Maundy) Thursday – 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 18, 2019

Stations of the Cross – 8:30 a.m.
Good Friday Morning – April 19, 2019

Good Friday – 6:30 p.m.
Friday, April 19, 2019

Partnership Easter Vigil - 7:00 p.m.
Trinity Lutheran Church
Saturday, April 20, 2019

Easter Resurrection Service – 8:00 a.m.
Sunday, April 21, 2019

Breakfast – 9:00 a.m.
Sunday, April 21, 2019

Baptism



Maverick Joe Smith

Born: December 18, 2018

Baptism: February 17, 2019

Parents: Kuleen & Alex Smith

Sponsors: Lucas & Jessie Parsons
Abby Smith
Teagan Smith

A changeless Christ for a changing world:
A look back at our *Parish Messenger* from March, 1931.

[The following articles written by Rev. Richmann were published in the March, 1931 edition of the *Parish Messenger* of St. John's Lutheran Church.]

LENT

Our word Lent is of Anglo Saxon origin and signifies Spring and refers to the lengthening days. In the Christian and Lutheran sense, it is that season of the ecclesiastical year which has been set apart for the special consideration of our Savior's passion. It comprises the forty-six days preceding Easter and is itself introduced by the three Sundays which precede Ash Wednesday.¹

The observance of Lent goes far back into antiquity. The character of Easter as one of the high festival days of the church year, called for a special period of preparation. Again, the times of persecution led Christians to have a more vivid remembrance of the Savior's sufferings.

At an early date special Lenten sermons were delivered as we learn from the writings of Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others.

To the Lutheran Church belongs the credit of restoring to the Lenten season its original, evangelical character. It was stripped of its formalism, its superstition and its work-righteousness. It was given its true place in the life of the church. It was shown not to be so much a matter of fasting and self-denial, but to hold up Christ, the Christ of the cross, as the only hope of a dying world.

PRAYERS AND MISSIONS

Evermore reason tells us, What good is prayer? And evermore God tells us that it availeth much. Do we really take the Lord's work to the Lord in prayer? Do we plead with Him for earnestness to perform His work? Why are so many indifferent? Prayer is lacking!

Why are hundreds of places beckoning to us to come over and help and we find that we lack both men and money to comply with this request? Prayer is lacking!

Why are we so willing to consider this and that necessary (if it concerns our convenience) before making a real sacrifice for Christ? Prayer is lacking!

Why is it so hard to convince ourselves to save on personal outlay, luxury, amusement, etc., in order to give more for Jesus? Prayer is lacking!

To bring about a better understanding of the Lord's work, prayer is necessary. Pray more earnestly for devoted workers. Pray earnestly for more liberal offerings. Prayer will do much. Why? Because if you pray, truly and sincerely, your heart will be in the matter, and you will be ready to do whatever the Lord shows you to be necessary.

¹ There are three "pre-Lent" Sundays in the historic one-year lectionary: Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima. St. John's currently uses the newer three-year lectionary that replaces these three Sundays with a longer Epiphany season.

[The following are announcements taken from the March, 1931 edition of the *Parish Messenger*.]

- Considering the ideal weather and road conditions this winter, the writer believes that the attendance of our Lenten services, conducted on Thursday evenings, could have been much better. It has always seemed strange to him that people, as a rule, can arrange to spend a social evening with friends and neighbors, but seemingly make little efforts to spend an evening hour with their Savior in church.
- George Leonard, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Bollinger, was baptized in church Feb. 22.
- Your pastor admits that the congregation “put one over on him” on the evening of his birthday several weeks ago. It WAS a surprise indeed, --- but one of those pleasant ones. He appreciates very much the honor conferred upon him in this manner, and wishes to express his thanks once more for the beautiful present, a private Communion set. The evening was enjoyed by all present.
- It was the pleasure of our Young People’s Society to have with them the Young People’s Society of the Fairville and Emmetsburg congregations last Tuesday evening. This joint meeting was arranged in order to present the cause of the Walther League to these societies. Pastor E. Grummer of Latimer, field-man of the League, was present to explain the aims and objects of this great organization of young people within our Lutheran Church. His talk was inspiring, and both societies are planning on joining the League. We wish them God’s blessing.