

FAITH NEWSLETTER

February 2014 / March 2014



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I recently came across the first Ash Wednesday sermon I preached, back in 2009. As we prepare for Lent, I thought you might appreciate reading it here. Lent is a special time to reflect on our sinfulness as well as God's grace. We hope that you will be able to join us this Lent as we remember who we are as our Lord's redeemed people.

**God's Blessings,
Pastor Birkholz**

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

Remember that Friday morning when Adam, your Dad was formed. Remember how God took two handfuls of red clay, shaping them into arms and legs, hands and feet, head, chest, tummy and back. Remember that the Lord knelt over Adam, took his head in His hands and gently filled his lungs with the breath of life. Remember how Adam's eyes blinked open and he looked his Maker in the eye. Remember how lonely Adam was by himself in the garden all alone. Remember how happy he was when the Lord made a wife for him from one of his ribs. Remember the peace and harmony of the garden. Remember how Eve, your mom, listened to the serpent and ate from the tree. Remember that Adam listened to his wife and turned his back on his Creator. Remember the horror when they realized what they had done. Remember how they hid in the bushes when the Lord came to find them. Remember how they blamed each other and pointed their fingers in anger. Remember the Lord's words to Adam, “Dust you are and to dust you shall return.” Remember the tears of sadness as the first family fled the garden to live among the thorns and briars. Remember the stern look in the angel's eyes as he drew his flaming sword and Adam knew he could never return. Remember...

Remember that you are dust. Remember that you are made from the same clay as your father Adam. Remember that the same breath of life fills your lungs. Remember that you, too, have listened to Satan's forked tongue. Remember that you have hidden from God in shame. Remember that you have blamed your mistakes on others, instead of confessing your sins. Remember that you are in exile, living far from home. Remember that you will return to dust. Remember that your body will fail, your heart will stop, and the breath will leave your lungs. Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return. Remember...

Remember that you have a brother. Remember that He was also made from the same dust. Remember that He breathed the same air and walked the same dusty ground. Remember that He came to bring all His brothers and sisters home, back to the garden. Remember His birth in a lowly manger, surrounded by shepherds and heralded by angels. Remember the close call and the late night flight to Egypt. Remember His baptism in the Jordan River, the dove, and the voice. Remember the forty days in the wilderness, striving with Satan. Remember the sick and the lame, the lepers and the blind, all healed by His touch. Remember the water turned to wine. Remember the boy's lunch that fed 5000. Remember His words to Lazarus, “Come out.” Remember the crowds on Palm Sunday. Remember His last meal with His disciples. Remember the prayers in the second garden, the agony, and the bloody sweat. Remember the kiss of betrayal, the arrest and the trial. Remember the voices screaming for His death, and Pilate washing his hands. Remember the beating and the mocking. Remember the death march to Golgotha. Remember the crown. Remember the nails. Remember the sound of the hammer. Remember the words: forgive, forsaken, mother, thirst, paradise, finished, spirit. Remember His broken body buried in the tomb. Remember that was not the end of the story. Remember...

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return. Remember that dust will not be the end of your story.

In and Around Faith Church

Ladies Aid

Yes, it has been a cold, snowy winter with a lot of illnesses. However, **Faith** has been there for us.

As spring approaches the ladies are thinking ahead to our Rummage Sale Fund Raiser. A definite date has not been reached, but once again we will be asking for your contributions of items for the sale. If at all possible we would suggest marking the clothing bags (men, women, children). This would help us tremendously. We also take jewelry and all other used items. Please consider helping us in setting up, working the day of the sale and also with clean up. Men, women and children can all lend a hand. Remember we share our proceeds with the church.

Our first meeting of the new year will be at 6:30 PM on Thursday, Feb. 6th. It will be a Valentine Party in the Parish Hall. All ladies of Faith are welcome. There is a yearly \$3.00 donation.

Lenten Devotional

Pastor Birkholz, along with members and friends of our congregation, are preparing a Lenten Devotional based on the Psalms. If you would like to contribute a devotion, it will need to be submitted by February 13th. These devotions will be available beginning on Sunday, March 2nd.

Lent Midweek

Our congregation continues our journey through the Psalms this Lent. Our Midweek services will be on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM, starting on March 12th. The order of Compline will be used, and the sermons will focus on the Psalm for the week. After the service, around 7:45 PM, we will have a series of brief studies on using the Psalms for your prayers and devotions. Please plan to make these special services part of your Lenten preparation for Holy Week.

Special Project Update

To date we have received \$ 3,206 towards our goal of \$15,000 for the Special Project. We especially thank Debbi Hochgesang and Joyce Stroh for their fundraising efforts during the month of December. The outside railings have been installed and we are now collecting for our new chairlifts. Please continue to give generously as you are able, and watch for other opportunities to help.

Ash Wednesday

This year Ash Wednesday falls on March 5th. We will celebrate with a Divine Service at 7:00 PM. The imposition of ashes will be available at the beginning of the service for those who desire them. The Lord's Supper will also be offered. This solemn service marks the beginning of the Lenten season.

Special Music

Two area choirs will be joining us for services in the coming months. On February 9th, Carl Lisius will be bringing the choir from Trinity Lutheran Church in Tinley Park. They will join with Faith's choir in singing several anthems as well as leading our psalms and hymns. The choir will be singing before the service, so be sure to come early! The junior choir from St. Paul Lutheran School under the direction of Jonathan Swett will participate in our service on March 9th. We will take a door offering after this service to benefit St. Paul School.

Sunday School

Faith's Sunday School reopened on January 5th. We currently have 9 students enrolled being served by 4 teachers. We will continue to meet on the first Sunday of each month through the end of the school year. On February 2nd our story will be the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and we will learn about the Transfiguration of our Lord on March 2nd. Please keep the students and teachers of our Sunday School in your prayers.

Schedule of Feb. / Mar. 2014 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>February Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
2	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
9	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
23	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

Sunday School First Sunday – 10:15 AM
 Bible Study Fri. - 11:00 AM
 Confirmation Class Thurs. - 3:30 PM
 Evening w/Jesus 3rd Thurs. - 6:00 PM
 AA Groups Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM
 Sat. - 8:00 AM
 Alanon Tue. - 7:30 PM

February Hymn of the Month

“Thy Strong Word” (# 578)

This was probably my favorite hymn when I was growing up. I loved the haunting minor melody and the unique rhythms in the music. I didn't understand all the words, but they had real depth. The text was written by Martin Franzmann, one of the few LCMS seminary professors who was never ordained as a pastor. He was especially known for his poetic use of the English language, which really comes through in this hymn. “Thy Strong Word” uses many references to light as a metaphor for salvation, which makes it particularly appropriate to sing during Epiphany.

Spaghetti Dinner & Bake Sale

Please join us on Mar. 1st from 4-7 PM. Tickets will be \$4 for children under 9 and \$8 for adults. There will be door prizes. All proceeds will go to the Special Project.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>March Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
2	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
5	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Worship / Communion
9	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Congregation Meeting
12	7:00 PM	Lenten Worship
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
19	7:00 PM	Lenten Worship
23	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
26	7:00 PM	Lenten Worship
30	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

March Hymn of the Month

“Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow” (# 428)

This Lenten hymn was first introduced in the LCMS with the 1998 Hymnal Supplement. It was written by an Anglican priest, William J. Sparrow Simpson in 1887 for John Stainer's Oratorio, “The Crucifixion.” The hymn contrasts Jesus' divine nature as true God with His suffering and death on the cross. There are ten verses to the hymn, of which we have the first three and the last in our hymnal. I find the original 9th verse especially poignant:

From the “Holy, holy, holy,
 We adore Thee, O Most High,”
 Down to earth's blaspheming voices,
 And the shout of “Crucify!”

Feb. / Mar. Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

February Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Feb. 2	Alden Ketchum Ed Neaves Ray Bennett Howard Johnson
Feb. 9	Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Katie Kampenga Mike Kampenga
Feb. 16	Ed Neaves Bob Green Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski
Feb. 23	Alden Ketchum Gene Osmanski Mary Slepki Howard Johnson

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

Feb. 2	Ray Bennett
Feb. 9	Katie Kampenga
Feb. 16	Mark Trojanowski
Feb. 23	Debbie Hochgesang
Mar. 2	Ed Neaves
Mar. 9	Ray Bennett
Mar. 16	Nick Trojanowski
Mar. 23	Mike Kampenga
Mar. 30	Gene Osmanski

Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry has been designated as a recipient of a Neighbors in Need grant from Thrivent Financial. Thrivent will be matching all monetary donations given to the Food Pantry from Dec 1st through Mar 31st with 50 cents for every dollar we receive. Please consider making a donation during this time so that we can take advantage of these matching funds.

We have also been receiving donations of baked goods from Panera and from Operation Blessing. Thank you to Lynne Trojanowski and Bob Green for picking up these items.

March Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Mar. 2	Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski
Mar. 9	Gene Osmanski Bob Green Howard Johnson Ray Bennett
Mar. 16	Frank Oslakovic Alden Ketchum Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski
Mar. 23	Richard Clark Ed Neaves Mike Kampenga Katie Kampenga
Mar. 30	Gene Osmanski Bob Green Mary Slepki Howard Johnson

Lenten Worship 7:00 PM Wednesday

Mar. 5	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski Bob Green Alden Ketchum
Mar. 12	Ed Neaves Richard Clark
Mar. 19	Alden Ketchum Howard Johnson
Mar. 26	Richard Clark Gene Osmanski

Volunteers Needed

Mt. Greenwood Lutheran church is looking for volunteers willing to help with a new program for mentally disabled children and adults for a few hours once or twice a month. For more information, contact Pastor Birkholz.