

MARCH
2023

St. John Lutheran
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Church Office Hours
Mondays and Fridays
10:00-3:00 pm
Sunday
Worship Service
10:00 am

LENT



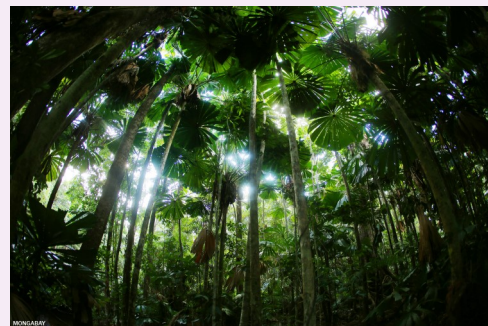
ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH COMES TOGETHER TO LOVE GOD AND ONE AN-
OTHER, SERVE OTHERS AND SHARE GOD'S WORD. WE DO THESE THINGS BY
GOD'S GRACE THAT COMES THROUGH THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF
HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST

A PASTORAL LETTER

Pastor Tim Swanson

Movies and books often are produced to reflect on the infringement of space by some-
one over another. The movie "Avatar" and its most recent second in a series demon-
strate such events. The mechanized world infringes on the space of a more natural
world that draws its life and breath from a system
of interconnected trees. Like Tolkien's "Lord
of the Rings" which has been popular for some time,
a story about how destructive the modern world
is in its advancement over space, particularly, the
space occupied by trees. We should know if we do
not, that trees are our best friend as a life-giving
source. We breathe out carbon dioxide (which
would kill us if we breathed in too much) and the
trees absorb this while giving off the oxygen which we need to breathe in as a source of
life for us. In the late 19th and early 20th century, tons of acres of forestry were indis-
criminately processed in the interest of profit without replenishing it. With regulation,
this was corrected. The present concern, however, remains today over the deforesta-
tion of the rainforest. What effect will this have on our future? James Fennimore
Cooper's leather stocking series (The Pioneers, The Last of the Mohicans, The Deerslay-
er, The Pathfinder, and The Prairie), one of America's first authors, wrote about the ef-
fects of what we call civilization's infringement on land and forests of Upper New York
State. Cooper spent many pages just describing the scenery which was being taken over
by these new settlers.



The Common Denominator in the stories and those like them would be the destruction
of the pastoral or life-giving tree population. With it, comes the threat to all of life in its
natural form. In the interest of gaining power and wealth for the few, comes the price of
so many lives by the high-powered machinery of its day and the ultimate demise of all of
life itself. The interest in saving and advancing the lives of a few are met by the destruc-
tion of so much both human and earthly.

In our Lenten journey, God infringes on our human space. As we celebrate Passion Sun-
day, we will celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry through the gates of Jerusalem, the seat of
Israel's power. Here, Rome, the occupier of the land by their infringement on the land,
holds power even over the Temple of God by appointing the priest. The Temple became
the bank of Israel. Those in power needed to occupy
the seat of the High Priest. Jesus infringes on this mod-
ern-day power of his time and challenges it with the
authority of God. For this, he was cast out of the city
and hung upon a tree; a stripped down, unleafed, bar-
ren, and lifeless symbol of Roman power over life and
death. death.



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There lies the ultimate struggle between life and death. While Jesus dies, it is the resurrection that proclaims the ultimate victory of God. It is God's statement that "you" have infringed on my world and threaten not only your own life but the whole creation, but I will ultimately win the victory with or without you.

We who are baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection live in this hope and promise. God offers the true vine of life in Jesus Christ; the tree of Life. We who are grafted to it shall feed off the fruit of God's righteousness, justice, mercy, and love. We are drawn into God's space rather than conquering it; living as a new creation within this old creation. The weapons we use are of the Spirit, that is, the Word of God; that Word is Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ is the people summoned to faith and to witness to the one who is "the witness" to faith in God.

This means we must be very much engaged within the created world. Otherwise, we diminish the authority of God, the Creator. Jesus did not so much infringe on our space but summoned us into the space he offered to us. He breathed new life into the disciples in the upper room after his resurrection. We are to take in the new life he offers us while, at the same time, breathe our dying self into him. He is the Lord of Life and Death; the Tree of Life. Without him, there is not any life in us; we simply belong to the walking dead gasping for air and fighting for what little space is left among so many vying for the same. This is our Lenten journey of the passage from the forces of death over into the Life. The space of death could not contain Jesus. It is God who opens the door to eternal Life and invites us to enter.

Ashes. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, when a cross of ashes is placed on the foreheads of parishioners as a sign that we are dust and to dust we shall return. But Lent reminds us that our bodies will one day be raised with Christ on the Last Day.

40

The color purple. Paraments, banners, and other items in the church are purple during Lent. Purple is connected to sorrowing and suffering over sin. The Bible tells us that Jesus wore a purple robe when he was mocked by the soldiers and crowned with thorns just hours before his death on the cross (John 19:2)

Forty days. The season of Lent lasts forty days leading up to the celebration of Easter Sunday. Forty is an important number in the Bible, associated with times of suffering, patience, and temptation. Therefore, Lent is a time to recognize the suffering our sin has caused, patiently wait for heaven through the sacrifice of Christ, and resist the temptations of the devil.

Penance, Fasting and Almsgiving. The Church has encouraged certain practices in Lent. Penance means acknowledging our personal sins to God. Fasting involves putting away anything that pulls our attention away from Christ. Almsgiving gives us a chance to selflessly offer something of ourselves to aid others.

Somber music. Hymnody during the season of Lent is often and intentionally written in mournful-sounding minor keys. The word alleluia is removed from all sung lyrics in many churches during Lent, making the return of alleluias in song on Easter even more powerful and joyous.

Thank You!

Thanks to everyone for the many cards, prayers, calls, and well-wishes during my surgery and recovery.

Cindy Dafler

Thank you all for the prayers, cards, texts, phone calls and thoughts as I recuperated from Covid, hospitalization, and the the horrible blood clot issue! I really appreciate each & every one of you!

Paula Schiml

Little Easters. The 40 days of Lent do not count the Sundays in the season. They are considered "little Easters" when we remember that the resurrection of Christ occurred on a Sunday.

Springtime. It is no coincidence that Lent occurs in the spring. The word Lent comes from the Old English lencten, meaning "springtime." Spiritually speaking, Lent is also a time for us to grow and be renewed in our faith in Christ.





The February, 2023 meeting of St. John WELCA was held on Feb. 9 with 8 members present. Chris presented the topic.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Treasurer reported a balance of \$986.66. Card report: 63 cards were sent. Carolyn reported Women's Council will meet on April 18 (bring your own lunch), and on May 16 for volunteer appreciation lunch.

Common Good in Eaton is again sponsoring "April Showers". They are asking for socks of all sizes except infants. St. John WELCA will be hosting World Day of Prayer, Mar. 3.

Earla shared some info regarding ice cream for the social. Ideas were shared regarding entertainment for Family Night. No decision yet.

The homeless meal will be provided this month by Chris.

Meeting closed with the Missionary Benediction.

Refreshments were served by Stephanie and Carolyn.

All women of St. John are invited and welcome to attend meetings the second Thursday of each month. Women of the ELCA seeks to be an instrument of Christian Mission in helping the Church to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ through:

- Learning of Christ and the mission of His church
- Witnessing in our daily lives to our Christian faith
- Serving the needs of others in the congregation and community

MISSIONARIES

Jon & Michelle Voge and family

CELEBRATE MARCH

Birthdays

Randy Ingram - 2nd
Earla Donaldson - 6th
Margaret Degler - 8th
Fulton Collins - 11th

Anniversary

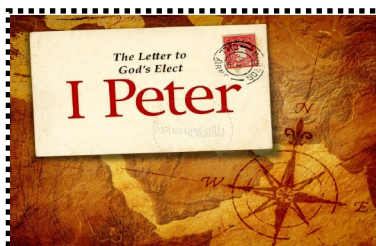
Scott & Janette Hittle - 15th

MEMBERS IN OUR PRAYERS

Patrick Collins	Janet Ferguson	Reenie Halsey
Bob Combs	Butch Spitler	Mark McKinley
Catherine Dafler	Marna Beneke	Bruce Sams & Family
Nancy Wright	Lynn Voge	Cindy Dafler
Judy Erbaugh	Amy Stockslager	Glen Behnken

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF OUR MEMBERS

Connie Coffman	Amy Leedy
Courtney Anderson	Dotty
Annie Presley	John DeVilbiss
Don Flory	Eric Walker
Rev. Jim Miller	Andrew Obst
Diane Harry	Maxine Ingram
Sue Johnson	Dolly Shelton
Terry & Connie Wysong	



Bible Study - Monday evenings at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. During Lent, a study of 1 Peter will begin.

MARCH 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
AG-Lorey C. CA-Earla D.	Ushers-Fred B, Mark M, Dave W, Buzz W		1	2	3 World Day of Prayer 2:00 pm Stephen Ministry 6:00 pm	4
5 M-Carol M. LR-Randy I. Lent 2	6 Bible Study 6:30 pm	7	8 Midweek Lenten & Healing Service 7:00 pm	9 WELCA 7:00 pm	10	11 Daylight Savings begins
12 M-Carol M. LR-Buzz W. Lent 3	13 Bible Study 6:30 pm	14	15 Worship/Music Comm. 3:30 pm Midweek Lenten & Healing Service 7:00 pm	16	17	18
19 M-Jenny D. LR-Earla D. Lent 4	20 Bible Study 6:30 pm	21	22 Midweek Lenten & Healing Service 7:00 pm	23	24	25
26 M-Mandy A. LR-Stephanie C. Lent 5	27 Bible Study 6:30 pm	28 Homeless Meal	29 Midweek Lenten & Healing Service 7:00 pm	30	31	