

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

March 2011

Saving Faith and the First Commandment

The very first sin ever committed was a sin against the First Commandment. Satan – in the form of the serpent -- came to Adam and Eve with this temptation. Satan charged that God was withholding incredible blessings from them, by not allowing them to eat from this singular tree. Satan was casting doubt on God's good intentions. Satan did this by suggesting that God's real reason for restraining Adam and Eve's appetite for the tree's forbidden fruit was borne out of selfishness and stinginess on God's part. According to Satan the tree and its fruit were off limits, simply because God did not want to share. "For God knows" said Satan, "that on the day you eat of it, you will become like God, knowing good and evil.

Most of what Satan says to bring God into disrepute he says by insinuation. He says it by innuendo based on half-truths which are really lies. And so Satan implies that God was keeping this fruit from them because God didn't want to share His place as God, or to have to relinquish His power or position over them. Hearing this made Adam and Eve desire the fruit, for they were growing to mistrust God and to assume that He was holding out on them. And so, by biting into this fruit, Adam and Eve were making the deliberate choice to exalt themselves by placing their own desires above God, and above God's own express word and will for their lives.

Due to their original sin, their idolatrous rebellion against God has become our idolatrous rebellion against God. Whenever we put ourselves and our own desires ahead of God, we make and worship an idol. For by doing what we want instead of what God wants we make ourselves more important than God. And thus, we cast an idol made in our own image, by worshipping what we want instead of the one true God. For when sinners turn away from God they turn all of their attention back onto themselves. For this reason, the more idolatrous we become, the more narcissistic we become. And so we become idolaters when our life and focus are on things other than God. You don't have to carve an idol made out of stone or wood in order to be considered an idolater. For as perpetual sinners we erect idols in our hearts as often as we seek to find our help, hope, or happiness in things other than God.

We become idolaters when we care more about created things, than we do about the God who created all things. For this reason, whenever we devote ourselves to the things that God has made instead of devoting our lives to the

God who made them, we are guilty of exchanging the truth about God for a lie. We end up worshipping the creation over the Creator (Please read Romans 1:18-24). God wants Christians to be good stewards of the earth and its resources. However, even this can be taken to idolatrous extremes. Many within the "Green" movement are little more than idolaters. For many within the Green movement ignore or deny the Creator, and make a new religion out of trying to save the planet. When people fail to trust in the God who they cannot see, they end up left with worshipping and serving only the things that they can see.

Luther referred to our dark and sinful hearts as "idol factories" for this very reason. For our sinful hearts can quickly make an idol out of almost anything. And yet idolatry isn't as obvious as some sins. Often our idolatry can be hard to detect. It's hard to detect because idolatry often occurs when we pay excessive time and attention on otherwise good and godly things. For example, our spouse and our children should be very important to us. After all, marriage and family are very important to God. And so our vocation as a husband and father, or as a wife and mother, should be high on life's list of priorities. However, if we put our spouse or our children "up on a pedestal" and elevate their needs, their happiness, or their status of importance above God, then we have created an idol out of an innocent thing. As our Lord Jesus says, if we love any of these relationships more than our relationship to God, we are not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37).

For its not always the thing itself that makes the idol but our obsessiveness towards it that turns it into an idol. If we over-exaggerate any gift from God and exalt its importance over God we get life out of balance. Whatever we take to an extreme, and obsess about can easily become an idol. For whatever we treasure in our life more than we treasure God instantly becomes idolatry. Luther explains in his explanation to the First Commandment found in his Large Catechism what it means to have a god. Answer: "A god means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in all distress. So, to have a God is nothing other than trusting and believing in Him with the heart. I have often said (Luther is speaking) that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust is right, then your god is also true. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God

(Hebrews 11:6). Now, I say that whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god.” (Large Catechism).

The First Commandment requires complete faith and perfect trust in God, so that our heart clings to God alone, and to nothing (and to no one else) in the same way. This requires that our confidence in God never wavers or is shaken -- even amid illness, adversity, great tragedy, or in our dying moment. This Commandment teaches us to look to God alone for all of our comfort and confidence, stability and security. Many people think that they are keeping this Commandment when their life is going well. But the Commandment demands that we maintain our confidence in God even when “every earthly prop gives way”. The First Commandment requires us to praise, thank, and trust in God – even when everything else has been taken from us. For First Commandment trust requires us to maintain our love for God and look to God for deliverance in life and in death, without grumbling, doubting, or complaining.

We create idols whenever we look to things other than God to feed the hunger and to quench the thirst deep within our empty souls. Anything or anyone that we substitute for God becomes an idol. For though God works through the people in our lives, through the skills and abilities He has given us, and through the possessions we have acquired from Him -- still we are not to credit our happiness, comfort, or success as having come from these things. Instead we are to look to God alone, who works in our lives through the people, the personal skills, and the possessions that God has provided for us. Otherwise, whoever trusts and boasts that he has great skill, or the friendship of important people, or amazing health, or has obtained great wealth or fame also has a god. Just not the true God. For our earthly strength and our eternal security must not depend on our need to possess material things. For otherwise we will become depressed and despair if these things that we worship and depend upon are ever taken from us.

People often wrongly assume that they have God and enjoy His favor when they have an abundance of money and possessions. And while it’s true that money can be a blessing from God, it can also just as easily become a curse. For in most cases, when a man has enough money his trust no longer resides in God, but in his money and possessions. This is what makes money the most common idol on earth. Having large amounts of money can make men feel fearless about what’s waiting for them in the future. Money creates a false sense of security in us sinners that often keeps us from repentance. This says Jesus is what makes it impossible for a rich man to enter heaven. For the love of money in almost every case crowds out a man’s love for God. Indeed, money and possessions often becomes our god unless faith makes a conscience effort not to let this happen. It is good spiritual training and a true test of faith to give a large

portion of our money back to God through our offering to the church. Then we will see whether our true faith and hope are in God’s provision for us, or in the size of our savings and investments.

The First Commandment is first – not by accident - - but because it is by far the most important of all the commandments. For our desire to keep all of the other commandments comes from our desire to keep the First Commandment. If we maintain a healthy relationship with God by keeping this commandment, then our obedience to all of the other commandments will naturally follow and flow from this First Commandment. But if we take our eyes off of God, and put other things ahead of God, then we soon lose our enthusiasm for keeping any of the commandments. So how is anyone ever saved, if we invent idols so easily? If it is impossible for any sinner to keep the First Commandment perfectly, then does any of us have any hope of making it to heaven? Answer: Any hope that we have of entering the kingdom of heaven must come to us in some way other than by keeping the Commandments.

And yet, the First Commandment doesn’t help anyone get to heaven. Far from it. This Commandment only highlights our sinful mistrust of God as why we deserve to go to hell. This Commandment wasn’t given so that we could save ourselves. This Commandment was given to expose our sin and to kill off any proud hope that we have earned or deserve heaven based upon how we have lived or what we have done. This Commandment, along with all of the other Commandments, were given to condemn such spiritual pride and human arrogance. And then, and only then, does God introduce a humbled sinner to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For in the Gospel God declares, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). For the Gospel is the good news proclaimed. It restores the sinner’s hope of going to heaven, but only because of the doing and dying of the Son of God.

For faith in what Jesus did by His dying on the cross is what allows each of you to return to God – even after you have committed a horrible sin like idolatry. For faith in the blood of Christ makes even idolatrous sinners unafraid and unashamed to stand before God knowing that they have been forgiven. And His resurrection is what resurrects hope in us, the certain hope of going to heaven. Such a hope does not come to us by knowing or by doing the First Commandment. But our Christian hope is built on Jesus Christ alone, who obeyed this Commandment – and all of the other commandments – in our place to atone forever for our disobedience to God. This is saving faith. But saving faith is different than the faith in God that the First Commandment requires. When we talk about faith, trust, and confidence in God under the heading of the First Commandment we are talking about loving God and looking to Him with all of our heart, our soul, and our strength. And yet sin has caused us to fall far short of

God's holy expectation that we have only God as our god. For sin causes us to daily – if not hourly – to turn away from the true and living God by turning our attention to the worship and service of things other than God. Sin has left an emptiness inside us that only God can fill. And yet because of our idolatry we try to plug that hole with many things that are unable to truly satisfy or save us. We should pray that we become discontent with our idols made out of things other than God, and abandon them before this short life is over.

For as sinners we erect idols in our hearts when we turn to these other things that become our gods. There are so many idols invented by sinners that it is impossible to list them all. But here is a small sampling of things that we frequently substitute for God. As sinners influenced by our sinful culture we idolize looks and beauty, sex and sexuality, health and fitness, intelligence and invention, televised fame and Hollywood glamour, the fanaticism of sports, new technology and modern medicine, and all things new and different -- to name just a few. And yet we could surely add to the list: comfort foods, the pursuit of hobbies, the search for self, dare devil adrenaline rushes, and drug induced highs. Even seemingly good things, innocence pleasures, and noble pursuits can become idols when we spend a disproportionate amount of time on them, focusing on them to the point that our life gets way out of balance and out of harmony with God's will for how we are to use our lives. For our time is meant to be spent on pleasing God, and not simply upon pleasuring ourselves.

Saving faith in Jesus Christ and the demands of the First Commandment to daily trust in God are similar yet different. Many of us are anxious and afraid because our lack of trust in God. And yet we are nonetheless saved and forgiven through saving faith in Jesus Christ. For while the First Commandment (God's Law) demands our complete trust in God, God as an act of His undeserved grace actually gives us the faith to believe in Jesus as the One who saved us by His own perfect keeping of the Commandments. And so, what the Commandment demands of us, and yet none of us can do because we are sinners, God did by sending His Son to fulfill the whole Law and will of God in our place. The truth is that even as Christians, none of us trusts in God completely or in Christ perfectly. We are all perpetual idolaters. But the Gospel solves this problem. For the God we sinners so often turn away from by our disobedience to the First Commandment is now the same God we see dying on the cross. This God that we proud sinners like to ignore, is now the object of faith and worship for sinners humbled by the Commandments. For as we focus on this Jesus nailed to the tree, suffering for our idolatry and being punished severely for all of our sins, God has us looking in the right direction again. Looking to God to help and to save us. The Gospel creates faith in Christ that causes us to look to the same God we turn away from when we fail to keep the First Commandment.

Some Christians will read this article and immediately they will turn around and attempt to keep the First Commandment using their own strength. And by doing so they will plunge themselves into idolatry again by thinking that now that they know the First Commandment that they can also do the First Commandment. However, the First Commandment only expresses that God wants and expects of us. It gives no one the will to actually do it. And so if you are searching for the strength to trust in God, this Commandment offers no help to you. The Law gives us no power to trust in God. And so, you will end up asking Law questions, like, "Do I have enough faith?" And once you ask that question, then everything you are thinking will be about you again, and you will have become an idolater by making yourself the center of your faith and focus. The only way to obey the First Commandment is to stop trying to obey it and trust instead that Christ obeyed this Commandment and all others for you.

For the fact that you trust in something means nothing. For all the First Commandment is able to do for you is to call attention to the amount of your faith, or rather to your lack of it. But if you want to be saved then forget about the size and strength of your faith. For your salvation isn't about how much you trust. Your salvation depends on who you trust. Forget for a moment about how much or little faith you have. Instead, fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Think about all that He did and endured for you. Even if you have but little faith, if your faith is focused on what Christ has done by His death for sins then your faith is saving faith. For if you trust in what Christ did for you on the cross, and if you trust that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved.

Isn't it wonderful that the same trust that God demands of us in His Commandment, God then turns around and freely gives to us in the Gospel. For as rebellious sinners we are always turning away from the true and living God in order to serve idols. And yet by the Gospel of Christ God has accomplished the very thing that we could not do. For in the Gospel God found a new and living way to redirect our attention away from sin and back onto God. For by redirecting our focus and faith onto Christ, God has found a way to turn our hearts away from idols. For under the Law trusting God was a demand that we could not keep. But through the Gospel trusting in Christ is not a demand that we must fulfill, but it is a gift from God that we believe in Jesus. The important thing is that by trusting Christ we are forgiven and saved. But by that very same gift of the life that Christ laid down, God is restored to that central place in our lives. Faith in Jesus Christ re-centers us to where God was when the world began -- first in importance and central to everything we say and do as those who believe in and belong to Christ.

Trust Christ and live, the Law no peace can ever give. No comfort and no blessing!

Proclaiming Christ who is our hope, Pastor Mark Elliott

LENT IS IN THE AIR

BACKGROUND AND RELEVANCE

As Christians, it is extremely important that we understand where we have come from. We are Christians who live almost 2,000 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ. We are quite a ways removed from the historic moments of Christ's life on this earth. Even so, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, we belong to the Holy Christian Church that was created by Christ and led by his apostles. Knowing this, we are never to be ignorant of the history of the Church to which we belong. A study of the history of the Church is always a worthwhile endeavor. In that light and in preparation for the season near at hand, an examination of the historic time of Lent now follows.

HISTORY OF LENT

As early as the Third Century, Christians devoted themselves to prepare for the celebration of Easter. In these early generations, two days before Easter were dedicated to the Christian practice of fasting. From the end of the worship service on Good Friday to the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ on Easter—equaling the time Jesus spent in the tomb—Christians would fast. Generations that followed increased the period of fasting to six days which was also the amount of time catechumens spent in humble preparation for the reception of Baptism and the Lord's Supper that they would receive at the Easter service.

History shows that the length of preparation for Easter increased from one week to three weeks to six weeks, usually excluding Sundays, which were held by Christians as mini Easters. In Jerusalem, as early as the Fourth Century, Christians fasted for forty days in preparation for Easter. The forty days consisted of five days a week for eight weeks. These forty days symbolized the forty days that Moses dwelled on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18), the forty days that Elijah journeyed to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), and the forty days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2).

In the Seventh Century, the western church arrived at a forty day preparation period for Easter. They were fasting for six weeks at six days a week for a total of 36 days. Beginning in that century, they decided to include the four days that preceded the first Sunday of preparation. That first day of Lent, then, was known as Ash Wednesday.

During the time of the Reformation, Martin Luther continued to observe this preparation period. Lutheran Churches continue this practice. Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with its conclusion being Holy Saturday, the day before Christ's resurrection. Because Sundays are mini Easters, each Sunday in Lent is *in* Lent and not *of* Lent. And each Sunday in Lent bears a historic Latin name that stems from the first word of the Introit for that Sunday. The names of these Sundays are: *Invocavit*, *Reminiscere*, *Oculi*, *Laetare*, and *Judica*, with Palm Sunday bearing the name *Palmarum*.

ETYMOLOGY OF LENT

For those interested in knowing where the word *Lent* comes from, and even for those not so interested, the word comes from the Old English word *lencten* or *lengten*, which means *to lengthen*. This word was applied to the season of the year when the days were *lengthening*, the season known as *Spring*. *Lent* and *Spring* therefore bear similar meanings.

FASTING

Historically, Christians have prepared for the celebration of the Resurrection by fasting. Fasting was thought to be beneficial to the Christian because evil spirits used food as a means of entering the body. Fasting then limited the possibility of the Christian to contract an evil spirit. Over time, however, fasting became more of a discipline for Christians. During this period of fasting, Christians would not eat any food during the day until the middle of the afternoon. Even though the body strongly desired food, the Christian was to put this desire aside and focus instead on the things of God, the very Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord (Matthew 4:4). The roots of fasting can be traced back to the writings in the Old Testament. Fasting was a means for God's people to practice control over the body. Understood in that light, fasting is still valuable for Christians today.

Many of us love to eat. And we don't just eat a little or until we are full and we don't always eat the best things for us. We often eat more than we should. We do so because we allow the body to control what we eat and how much. This does not have to be for God's people. Paul writes to the Galatians, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh... And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:16–17, 24).

Such desires of the flesh appear in other ways along with gluttonous eating. Paul specifically mentions the sexuality of the Christian as greatly influenced by the flesh as well as the way we conduct ourselves with others. Truly, there are many ways in which we as Christians can practice self-control, which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23).

None of this talk of fasting is to lead us as Christians to conclude that we must do these things to please God or to earn or keep our salvation. Quite the contrary. We are encouraged to do these things because we have been set free to do so. Lying as the driving force behind all of this preparation in Lent is true repentance. As Christians, we are to abhor our sinful natures and to confess that we are poor, miserable sinners. We are led by the Spirit to truly repent of our sins and of ourselves, meaning that we are to turn away from all that is sinful and genuinely desire to live the lives Christ Jesus has set us free to live. Not because we have to, but because we truly want to as God's children, as brothers and sisters in Christ. Having repented of our sins, God faithfully forgives us all our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness because of the perfect work of salvation that Jesus has done for us all.

OPPORTUNITY, NOT OPPORTUNITIES

The season of Lent serves as one opportunity for Christians to prepare for the coming celebration of Easter. The season of Lent is not made up of several opportunities of which you may pick and choose which services you want to attend. Each service is intended to be a part of the total preparation time of Lent. With that in mind, it is my hope that you take advantage of this one opportunity of six weeks to prepare for the celebration of Easter. After these six weeks of dedicated preparation, the Gospel proclamation of Good Friday and Easter Sunday will be that much sweeter to taste. Pray that God would grant this to you this Lententide.

In service to Christ and his Church,
Pastor Caithamer

Let Us Pray

Healing and Recovery: Betty, Darlene, Sue, Barb

Following Surgery: Esther, Pastor Don Ehlers, David, Gary

During Treatments: Juleigh, Gene

Strength, Healing and Hope: Carolyn

Relief of Pain: Lucille

Thanksgiving: Alice for successful treatment, Alice for improved health, Terry & Janet for granddaughter Aubrie

Hospitalized: Eric, Steve, Tom, Mary, Ida

Proper Medical Care: Jean -mother of Bonnie

Military: John, Jimmy, Dustin, Brandon, Keidi, Christopher, Taylor

Missionaries: Pastor David Rakotonirina and the Madagascar Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Magnus Bengston and Lielsalaca Lutheran Church in Latvia, Pastor Obot Ite and the Lutheran Mission in Kingston, Jamaica



Men's Prayer Breakfast

The men of the congregation are invited the second Thursday of each month to Original Pancake House for prayers, devotion, food and fellowship. Please join us this month on Thursday, March 10th, at 6:30am.



Lenten Dinners

Starting March 16 Lenten dinners will be served between midweek services. March 16—Chili, March 23—no dinner because of Spring Break, March 30—Tacos, April 6—Sloppy Joes and Cheesy Potatoes, April 13—Baked Potato Bar with variety of salads. All are invited to come eat and enjoy fellowship. A free will offering will be taken to support our high school youth going to New York and the junior youth servant event to Camp CILCA. Please consider signing up to donate food items. Thank you!

Mary-Martha will meet on Thursday, March 10 at 1:30. The program will be "Strength and Conditioning for Seniors", by Jo Rodriguez. Ms. Rodriguez is an instructor at Parkland and has taught fitness classes for years. Ladies, come and find out how you might benefit from what we learn.

As requested by the voters assembly, here is an update on 2011 offerings through January 2011.

1) Financial Report of Envelope Giving for January 2011

Unified Fund*

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Needed Each Month**: | \$ 135,821.16 | |
| Total Received Jan 2011: | \$ 113,683.89 | -\$ 22,137.27 |
| Env./Plate/S Svc Jan 2011: | \$ 68,262.14 | |
| Tuition Jan 2011: | \$ 45,421.75 | |
| Needed YTD: | \$ 135,821.16 | |
| Received YTD: | \$ 113,683.89 | -\$ 22,137.27 |

Debt Retirement

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Needed Each Month**: | \$ 5,000.00 | |
| Received Jan 2011: | \$ 8,145.00 | \$ 3,145.00 |
| Needed YTD: | \$ 5,000.00 | |
| Received YTD: | \$ 8,145.00 | \$ 3,145.00 |

* Includes envelopes, plate offering, special services not designated for other purposes and school tuition.

** NOTES: Needed values are based on year 2011 estimated budget figures **NOT** actual expenditures.

2011 Proposed Unified Budget: \$ 1,629,853.92
 2011 Proposed Debt Retirement Budget: \$ 60,000.00

2) Giving compared to 2010

| Jan 2010 | Jan 2011 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Envelopes, Plate, Special Services | |
| \$ 69,002.40 | \$ 68,262.14 |
| Tuition | |
| \$ 49,610.11 | \$ 45,421.75 |
| Debt Retirement | |
| \$ 7,753.50 | \$ 8,145.27 |
| ===== | ===== |
| \$ 126,366.01 | \$ 121,829.16 |

3) 2010 End of Year Giving Statements

The 2010 End of Year member giving statements have been prepared and mailed.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Robert
 Financial Secretary

Mission Statement

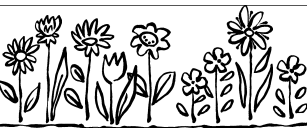
United in faith, we serve the Kingdom of God by building lives that are rooted in the Word, centered on Christ, and motivated by Grace; to reflect Christ's love and share His Gospel with all.

Lutheran Women in Mission

LWML's regular meeting will be held on March 21st at 6:30 PM. The Central Illinois District will host the LWML Annual National Convention in Peoria, Illinois this next June and that will be discussed. Join St. John's LWML, have fun and be a part of a very exciting event that will include our whole nation of LWML Members in one place. Even if you're not a member of LWML, you can attend the convention, help out as a worker and enjoy the religious benefits of something so unreal you will hardly believe it! It's exciting and it's fun to think about all the events of the convention.

LWML's District Convention will be held in Peoria on April 2nd & 3rd. Information is on the Narthex Table and if you have any questions, you can call Jan A few St. John LWML members will be driving and you can catch a ride with one of them! Please consider attending this fun event. There will be a lot of information about the upcoming LWML National Convention to be held in Peoria on June 23-26.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped deliver meals on wheels this past year. The next scheduled delivery week will be April 11 thru the 15th. St. John is responsible for the providing volunteers for that week. If you would like to help out your community by volunteering to this very worthy cause, or if you have questions, please contact Mimi



You're Invited!

Letitia and Paul Cundiff cordially invite you to an Anniversary Cake Reception in honor of John & Gladys who will celebrate their 60th anniversary on March 25. The Reception, hosted by the children of John & Gladys, will be held on Sunday March 27, 2011 from 1-3pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please stop by and congratulate them. No gifts please.

Cub Scout Pack 113

It's candy bar time again. Help us send the boys to camp this summer by purchasing a candy bar. They are only \$1 each and come in Caramel, Krunch, Almond and Dark Chocolate. Candy bars are available in the church and school offices and from any Cub Scout.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We are having a planning meeting Monday 17 at 6:00 pm

VBS IS THE WEEK OF JUNE 13-17 WE ARE LOOKING FOR ONE MORE PRESCHOOL TEACHER AND SOMEONE TO LEAD GAMES!!

Please save toilet paper tubes. We will be using them for a craft. They can be placed in a box in the coat room. If you have any questions or are able to help please see Faith



GARAGE SALE



It's not too soon to start cleaning out your attics, garages, and closets to find items for the Youth Garage Sale! Mark your calendars April 15-16. Watch bulletins for more for more information.....

Is the bad weather getting you down? We have the answer Have a Pizza Party and Save Money\$\$\$What could be Better?

Pizza Hut and the 7th Grade Class have a great deal for the pizza lovers!! Buy a \$10 Pizza Hut Discount Card and save \$10 ever time you use the card!!

Here is how it works: (1) Buy a card from any 7th grader for \$10 (2) Buy an large Pizza Hut pizza (or any \$15 worth of food from PH) and get a FREE medium pizza (\$10 value) (3) Repeat this process up to 12 times (4) Re-coop your investment on the first use; save \$10 each time you use the card thereafter!!



See any 7th Grade student or parent or stop by the office with your \$10 to buy a card and start eating pizza and saving money now. Funds are for the 2011 Washington DC Trip.



| | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Sun., Mar 6 | 8:00 | Handbells |
| | 10:45 | Handbells (Prelude & Introit) |
| Wed., Mar 9 | 7:15 | Handbells (Prelude) |
| Thur., Mar 10 | | No choir rehearsals |
| Sun., Mar 13 | 8:00 | Mixed Choir |
| Sun., Mar 20 | 8:00 | Men's Choir |
| Wed., Mar 23 | | No handbell rehearsal |
| Sun., Mar 27 | 10:45 | Mixed Choir |
| Sun., Apr 6 | 8:00 | Handbells & Mixed Choir |
| | 10:45 | Handbells (Prelude) |

Looking ahead:

The next Baroque Artists of Champaign –Urbana (BACH) concert will be presenting **Music for Royal**

Occasions Saturday, March 19, 2011 at 7:30pm, at McKinley Presbyterian Church (809 S. Fifth St., Champaign). Be “King or Queen for a Day” as you bask in the elegance of music specifically composed to celebrate Royal occasions. Fanfares, odes and anthems by Mouret, Purcell, Handel and others remind us that the richness of Baroque music that we now enjoy was once the exclusive property of royalty.

Keith Williams will be performing one of a series of Lenten Organ Recitals on Wednesday, March 23 at First Federated Church in Peoria.

Keith will be traveling back to his alma mater Oberlin College Conservatory of Music on March 10-12, to be one of a few students performing on a program in memory of his former organ professor, Garth Peacock.

Saturday, September 24 St. John Lutheran will be hosting the 2nd annual Music and Worship Workshop, sponsored by the Central Illinois District. Plan now to attend!

March Youth Events

Sunday, March 13 LYF Groups

Various times

Watch for emails for more information



Sunday, March 27

LYF Fest: GAMES GALORE AND MORE!!
4-6 p.m.

NO LYF LIGHTERS MEETING THIS MONTH!!!



Coming
This Year

**MARK
YOUR
CALENDARS:**

June 10 8th Grade Confirmation Trip

June 21-23 Jr. High Servant Event
Registration Information will be coming soon

June 24-26 FAMILY CAMP

July 8-16 Sr. High Trip to New York

St. John PTF Happenings

www.stjohnls.com

PTF Funds Allocations

The PTF annual Funds Allocation Meeting will be Tuesday, April 12, at 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall. All requests received by the April 7th deadline will be reviewed at the Allocation Meeting and will be recommended for approval or denial at the monthly PTF meeting on Tuesday, April 26, at 6:30pm.

No funds will be distributed until July 1, 2011.

Save the Date ~ Save the Date ~ Save the Date ~ Save the Date ~ Save the Date



PTF Fall Auction : Dinner plus Live and Silent Auctions
October 14, 2011

More information coming soon

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Esth
- 2 Roger Brauer, Amy Gray
- 3 Megan, Kendra
- 4 David , John , Aimee, Tara

- 5 Sheree , David , Rollin
- 6 Amy
- 7 Nick , Greg
- 8 Zachary , Lauren, Dale,
Hunter, Laura, Dan, Katie
Bryan , Zach
- 9 Kathy, Tracy
- 10 Nick
- 12 Anna , David , Rick

- 13 Richard, Beverly
- 14 Don , Nancy , Jackie
, Zachariah
- 15 Jesse, Clinton, Rod
- 16 Ruth , Kathy, Paul , Kelly

- 17 Steve, Adam, Daniel
- 18 Ed Berg, Keidi



- 19 Sara, Scott , David, Michael, Arnold, Don,
Susan
- 20 Paige , Walt , Will

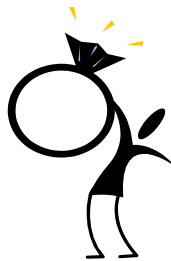
- 21 Olivia, Isabella,
Rachel
- 22 Dan, Kendall
- 23 Peggy , Kathy
- 24 Janet, Gwenny , Me'chele

- 25 Brad , Dion , Roger
- 26 Isaak , Bill
- 27 Audrey, Alex , Dale
- 28 Daniele , Chuck , Lanny
, Jake , Teri
- 29 Caitlyn , Kelli , Judy ,
Shirley
- 30 Chris , Jed
- 31 Kevin , Bob , Lois
, Gale , Angi



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Larry & Marilyn(37)
- 4 Greg & Sue (34)
- 24 Larry & Mary (49)
- 25 John & Gladys (60); Lon
& Betty (16)
- 27 Harley & Dorothy (56)
- 29 Brian & Donna (8)



PLEASE notify the church office (359-1123) if your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect. Unfortunately, we don't have 100% of our members' birthdays & anniversaries on file. Help us complete and correct our records by letting us know of any errors or omissions. Thank you!

ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR FEBRUARY



| Sundays | 8:00 | 10:45 | Comm |
|---------|------|-------|------|
| Feb 6 | 206 | 180 | 159 |
| Feb 13 | 241 | 174 | n/a |
| Feb 20 | 232 | 164 | 175 |
| Feb 27 | 232 | 162 | 120 |

| Wednesdays | 7:15 | Comm |
|------------|---------------------|------|
| Feb 2 | Blizzard—no service | |
| Feb 9 | 28 | n/a |
| Feb 16 | 19 | 15 |
| Feb 23 | 29 | n/a |



If you wish to no longer receive this newsletter, please contact the church office at 217-359-1123 Thank you.

MARCH 2011

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Day School Spring Break March 21-25</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Lutheran Schools Week March 6—11</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">1 10:30 Adult Bible Class 6:30 School Board 7:00 Trustees</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">2 8:25 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Finance Board 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Worship w/Comm</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">3 8:30 Lifelight 12:30 Widow's Group 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">6 <i>Transfiguration</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School, Adult Bible Classes 10:45 Divine Service I</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">7 8:00 Grandparents & Special Friends Coffee 2:15 Mom's Prayer Group</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">8 6:00 Elders 6:00 Parish Ed 7:00 Youth Board</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">9 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 8:25 Chapel 10:30 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Worship Service 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Worship Service</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">10 6:30 Men's Prayer Breakfast 8:30 Lifelight 1:30 Mary Martha 6:30 Lifelight</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">11 <i>Market Day Orders due</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">12 8:00 Handymen 5:00 PTF Funfair</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="margin: 0;"><i>7th Grade Catechism Retreat</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">13 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> 8:00 Divine Service II 9:30 Sunday School, Adult Bible Classes 10:45 Holy Communion LYF Groups TBA</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">14 8:45 MOPS 2:15 Mom's Prayer Group <i>Ram Rebate orders due</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">15 10:30 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Council</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">16 8:25 Chapel 3:00 Market Day Sale 3:30 Holy Communion 4:30 Lenten Dinner 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">17 8:30 Lifelight 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:30 3rd & 4th Grade Musical/Ice Cream Social 6:45 Mixed Choir</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">18 <i>Ram Rebate pick up</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">19</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">20 <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School, Adult Bible Classes 10:30 LYF Leader Mtg. 10:45 Matins</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">21 6:30 LWML</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">22 10:30 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Evangelism</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">23 3:30 Lenten Service 5:45 Lifelight 7:15 Lenten Service</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">24 8:30 Lifelight 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">25</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">26</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">27 <i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i> 8:00 Matins 9:30 Sunday School, Adult Bible Classes 10:45 Holy Communion 4:00 LYF Fest</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">28 8:45 MOPS 1:00 1st Grade Reading Buddies 2:15 Mom's Prayer Group <i>Ram Rebate orders due</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">29 10:30 Adult Bible Class 6:30 PTF Meeting</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">30 8:25 Chapel 3:30 Lenten Service 4:30 Lenten Dinner 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Lenten Service</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">31 8:30 Lifelight 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir</p> | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7" style="text-align: center;">February 2011</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27</td><td>28</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | February 2011 | | | | | | | S | M | T | W | T | F | S | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | | | | | | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7" style="text-align: center;">April 2011</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | April 2011 | | | | | | | S | M | T | W | T | F | S | | | | | | | 1 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| February 2011 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |