

# THE ST. JOHN NEWS

March 2015

## *The Cross Teaches Us to Take Sin Seriously*

*Ye who think of sin but lightly  
Nor suppose the evil great  
Here may view its nature rightly,  
Here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the sacrifice appointed,  
See who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed,  
Son of Man and Son of God.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza of the hymn  
Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*

The cross is unquestionably about God's undeserved love for a world of lost sinners. For Christ Jesus was crucified in our place – the just for the unjust – to bring us back to God. God purchased our salvation with His blood, and won eternal life for us by His selfless sacrifice. And yet the above verse taken from the hymn "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" reminds us that the cross also reveals something about God's just anger towards sin and sinners.

The stanza begins, "Ye who think of sin but lightly, nor suppose the evil great, here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate." The hymn writer is saying, "If you don't think that sin is all that serious, take another good look at the cross, and think again." The hymn writer continues, "Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load; 'tis the Word, the Lord's anointed, Son of Man and Son of God." In other words, "If your sins seem small and fairly insignificant to you, think again. Notice the greatness of the sacrifice that was required in order to pay for your sins. If the purchase of your forgiveness demanded that the LORD Himself must in human flesh forfeit His lifeblood for you, then the weight and the guilt of your sin must be enormous.

If the payment price required to satisfy God's

justice and to assuage God's anger called for a price so steep as the death of the God-man, Jesus Christ, then our sins are hardly trivial to God, nor can God easily overlook sin. It's true that by His being nailed to the tree Christ has once and for all paid for our sins. This is such good news that what sin had made us incapable of doing for God, God did for us by sending His only Son to live perfectly for us, and then die in our place. And yet we must never forget the severity of Christ's punishment as God took out His anger that was rightly against us on His only Son, our LORD Jesus.

Most of the time as believers we view the cross from the more attractive perspective of the gospel. By faith in the gospel we see how we are spared from the coming wrath of God against sinners by the death of God's One and Only Son sent from heaven. We see how we are saved by the perfect obedient life, and by the bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man. And yet most cannot appreciate what Jesus was doing on the cross, since they are not adequately convinced of its spiritual necessity. For the vast majority of people on this planet have been taught to deny the existence of God, or dismiss God as irrelevant.

And if God doesn't exist, then people have no moral accountability to a higher power. With God effectively removed by secular humanism, this has made it very easy to erase the concept of sin from our collective consciousness. With the triumph of Darwin's Evolutionary Theory and Sigmund Freud's Psycho-therapeutic Theory the world came not only to deny the existence of God, but also the existence of good and evil. Other secular philosophies caused the world to deny the existence of any objective truth so that there could be no set moral standard within society anymore.

The point is that we've been raised in a world that denies sin or else doesn't take sin and the final judgment seriously. But if we allow ourselves to think this way we are certain to miss the importance of what the Son of God was doing when He allowed Himself to be passively nailed to a tree. No longer accepting the Bible as God's absolute truth, the world has lost its way. Our world seems to have lost any ethical sense of right or wrong. We are now left instead with "Fifty Shades of Grey" where every moral choice is seen as grey and none are any longer viewed as black or white. We clearly live in an age where instead of doing what is right in God's eyes, now everyone does what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6).

It's bad enough when the world that we live in thinks this way. But this secular-atheistic view of reality has also infiltrated the churches so that the vast majority of church leaders rarely speak out against specific moral sins from their pulpits anymore. This happens within church bodies that have a low view of Scripture and no longer accept that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and without error. It also happens in those churches that are afraid of alienating their

members and losing their statistical size. But any church that does not fulfill its responsibility to condemn sin also forfeits its privilege to forgive sinners by absolving sin.

For these two things go hand in hand. If you take sin lightly, you will take the gospel lightly. If you don't see sin as a problem, you will fail to appreciate the cross as the solution. If you do not warn about the threat of sin, then you will never understand by faith the comfort of the gospel. Do not take the cross lightly. The cross demonstrates the enormity of our sins by the fact that the life of the Son of God was required in order to cancel the sins that once stood against us to condemn us. But if the Holy Spirit can open your eyes to see the seriousness of your sins in the event of the cross, then you will also come to worship Christ and to praise Him for the great sacrifice that He made to free you from your sins. For although the cross is primarily gospel, the cross also demonstrates the seriousness of our sins by the severity by what Christ Jesus suffered there in our place.

Glory with me in the cross of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Elliott

### *Let Us Pray*



**For Healing and Recovery:** Rory, Brad, Alberta, Cindy, Lauren, Darlene, Dorothy, Lingli, Lucille, Esther, Helen, Robin, Pat, Tom

**For Successful Treatment:** Joe, Lea, Nancy, Maxine, Jeff

**For our Military:** Ashley, Taylor, Andy, Luke, Jim, Zachary, Brandon, Christopher, Taylor, Suzzanna, Robert, Ben, Allyson, Tom

**For our Missionaries:** Pastor Randrianasolo Dembiniana Havanjanakary and the Madagascar Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Magnus Bengston and Lielsalaca Lutheran Church in Latvia, Pastor Obot Ite and the Lutheran Mission in Kingston, Jamaica

### **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.

## Jesus and Israel

### The Connection of 40

Not all numbers in Holy Scripture are important. Some are. The ones that come to mind are the numbers 1, 3, 7, 10, 12, 40, 100, 144, and 1,000. As we are in the season of Lent, which lasts for 40 days—excluding Sundays—a look at the number 40 and its occurrences in the Bible is warranted. We'll start by listing the most significant uses of the number 40 as found in Scripture. Next, we'll identify the most common theme that occurs with the use of the number 40. And finally, we'll see what the Biblical number 40 has to do with Jesus and even with us.

#### *Forty in the Bible*

##### Old Testament

**The Flood (Genesis 7:4, 12, 17; 8:6).** God caused rain to fall on the earth for forty days and forty nights in order to "blot out from the face of the ground" every living thing that he had created.

**Manna (Exodus 16).** After complaining that they had no food and that it would have been better for them to have died as slaves in Egypt, God fed his people in the wilderness with bread from heaven for forty years.

**Moses and Sinai (Exodus 24 and 34).** While in the wilderness, Moses spent forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai, receiving all of the instructions from God to his people. After destroying the first set of tablets because of the Israelites' idolatry, Moses was called back to Sinai for another forty days and nights to receive the instruction a second time.

**Time Spent Spying (Numbers 13).** Twelve spies were sent into the land of Canaan in advance of Israel's arrival. In all, the spies were in Canaan for forty days.

**In the Wilderness (Numbers 14).** As a result of the spies' report, the people of Israel were afraid to take Canaan. Because they did not believe God would deliver them, God promised that Israel would wander in the wilderness for forty years so that none of that unbelieving generation of men would enter the Promised Land.

**Rest of the Judges (Judges 3:11; 5:31; 8:28).** The land of Israel was given rest from strife when certain judges were ruling over the people.

**Judgment (Judges 13:1).** After doing what was evil in God's sight again, Yahweh God gave the Israelites into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

**Strong Food (1 Kings 19:8).** Food that Elijah had eaten gave him strength for forty days and forty nights.

**Time for Repentance (Jonah 3:4).** Jonah was called to preach to the Ninevites that they had forty days to repent before their city would be destroyed.

##### New Testament

**Fasting and Tempting (Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2).** Jesus fasted in the wilderness of Judea for forty days and forty nights. He was tempted for the entirety of those days.

**From Resurrection to Ascension (Acts 1:3).** Jesus remained on earth after his resurrection for forty days until he ascended into heaven.

**Stephen's Speech (Acts 7).** In his speech to the crowds of Jews, Stephen gave an account of Israel's history, mentioning specifically the forty years of wandering in the wilderness required of the Israelites.

**Testimony from Hebrews (Hebrews 3:9, 17).** The author of the book of Hebrews saw fit to teach his audience using the Israelites' wilderness wanderings for forty years.

### ***Most Common Theme***

Due to its significance in the history of Israel and its continued citing later in the Old Testament and on into the New Testament, the theme most strongly connected with the number forty is that of judgment or testing. As a result of their reluctance to trust in God for the ability to take over the Promised Land of Canaan from its inhabitants, God ordered the people of Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years. This period of forty years was to allow the death of all those who doubted God's promise to inherit the Promised Land, with the result that none of the unbelieving generation would enter into the Holy Land.

This period of forty years and its frequent references serve as a key identifying mark for the people of Israel. Israel's wilderness wanderings would serve as a reminder over and over again of Israel's faithlessness in the past and as a motivation to be faithful to God in the future. God has always shown that he keeps his promises. He has never given his people cause to doubt, despite the appearances to our senses that his actions are slow or incomplete. Yahweh God is trustworthy and is deserving of true faith.

### ***Forty for Jesus and for Us***

Because Israel is strongly identified with the forty years of wilderness wanderings, it should come as no surprise that Jesus' own time in the wilderness would be similar. Rather than forty years, Jesus spends forty days in the desert being tempted by Satan. Jesus' time of tempting mirrors Israel's time of testing and cleansing. Before Jesus was tempted for forty days, he passed through the waters of the Jordan, being baptized by John. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, clinging to God's Word alone. Where Israel grumbled and complained against God, Jesus did not.

As is seen from this connection with the number forty, Jesus' whole life is to be in the place of Israel. He is God's Son, the perfect Adam, called to take the place of sinful man. Wherever man has sinned, Jesus would not. Wherever Israel failed to trust in God, Jesus would not. With his forty days of temptation complete, Jesus was ready to begin his ministry in the land of Israel. That ministry would finally lead him to the cross, where he would lay down his perfect life lived for sinful man at the foot of the Father. Jesus would be the perfect sacrifice offered to God that was acceptable in his sight. By his death on the cross for Israel and for all, all sin would be forgiven.

Our season of Lent recalls for us that working of our Lord. Even as he endured the forty days of tempting in the wilderness, preparing him for the work of our salvation, so we journey through the forty days of Lent, which serve to prepare us for the celebration of Christ's work of salvation. Throughout his forty days of attack by Satan, Jesus was fed and strengthened by the Word of God as he recalled the passages he had committed to his memory. Likewise, throughout this season of Lent, we are refreshed and strengthened each Sunday with Word and Sacrament, even as we celebrate each Lord's day as a mini-Easter. And truthfully, God gives us that same sustenance throughout our entire time here on earth as he readies us for the life still to come. We eagerly wait for the inheritance prepared for us, the poor in spirit, who shall inherit the earth in all of its new and pristine glory!

God's great peace to you this Lenten season as you continue in your Lenten fasts and sacrifices and in your meditation on the works of our Lord.

Pastor Caithamer

## Men's Prayer Breakfast

The men of the congregation are invited the second Thursday of each month to Original Pancake House for food and fellowship, and devotion and prayers led by Pastor Caithamer. Please join us this month on Thursday, March 12th, at 7:00am.



## Youth News—March LYF Fest

On Sunday, March 8th from 2 to 4pm we will be disinfecting the church and school. Once we are finished with the work, we will play life size hungry, hungry hippos. Please bring a tub of disinfecting wipes. We hope to see you there.

## LWML INFORMATION

Lutheran Women Missionary League will meet on March 16, 2015 at 6:30. We will have a devotion, meeting and refreshments. All women are invited. Thank you to all the women who measured, cut and tied our fleece blankets. We completed 12 blankets which were given to Restoration Urban Ministries.

Mary Martha will meet on March 12 at 1:30 p.m. Our speaker will be someone from Courage Connection (formerly Women in Transition). Ladies of the congregation are welcome to join us.



Reading Buddies will meet  
Tuesday, March 17th, at 1:00pm.

**Easter Breakfast**—All youth and their families are needed to help setup, cook, serve, and cleanup for the Easter Breakfast, to be served from 7:00am to 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall. Sign up sheets to donate food for the breakfast are posted. All donations are very much appreciated!



**The Theological Readers Group** reads some of the best books available in Christian theology. We are just beginning an especially important book entitled, "The Fire and the Staff" written by Klemet Preus. This book gives a well-written explanation of Lutheran Theology in practice. Since this book is rather large we are going to meet three times to discuss it: in March, April and May. After this we will take a break for the summer months and start up again with another book in September. We would love for you to become part of this discussion group. Therefore, we would like to invite you to join our reader's group. There is still time to order a copy of "The Fire and the Staff" from the church office (359-1123). On Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30pm we will be discussing the first four chapters. We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to share this book with us. We meet in Classroom 1A. As you enter through the front double doors of the school, it is the classroom on the right across from the school office. Feel free to contact Pastor Elliott with any questions or for more details.



Thanks to every one for their help in collecting of Campbell soup points for the Lutheran Special Education Ministries in behalf of our Sunday School. In February a total of 1412 points from UPC codes and lids were packed and shipped to Lutheran Special Education Ministries. We will continue to collect the Campbell UPC code which must include the joining Campbell icon. The UPC code or better yet the entire label may be placed in the designated box in the coatroom. NOTE: BEVERAGE CAPS AND SAUCE CAPS ARE REQUIRED IN LIEU OF THE UPC. A list of eligible product labels is posted on the bulletin board by the fellowship hall.

Keep those label points coming!!

# Music Notes



Our adult choirs always welcome you to join them. The full schedule is both listed below and available on our website at <http://stjohnmedia.org/music.html>

## Adult Choir rehearsals continue as follows:

Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Alleluia Ringers
Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm	Men's Choir
<b>No rehearsal Thursday, March 19</b>	
Thursdays from 6:45 pm to 7:30 pm	Mixed Choir
<b>No rehearsal Thursday, March 19</b>	

## Schedule for March and Holy Week is as follows:

Sunday	March 1	8:00	Alleluia Ringers
		10:45	Alleluia Ringers (Prelude)
Sunday	March 8	10:45	Men's Choir
Wednesday	March 11	7:15	Alleluia Ringers - Prelude
Sunday	March 15	8:00	Lois, violin - "The Holy City"
		10:45	School K-3 Prelude
		10:45	Mixed Choir
Wednesday	March 18	3:30	School K-3 Prelude
Sunday,	March 22	(Keith away)	
Sunday,	March 29	(Palm Sunday)	Sunday School children will sing as part of opening procession at both services
		8:00	Mixed Choir
		10:45	Men's Choir
		12:00	Easter instrumentalists rehearsal
Thursday	April 2	6:00 pm	Mixed Choir rehearsal
		7:15 pm	Maundy Thursday service
Friday	April 3	5:00 pm	Easter instrumentalists rehearsal
		6:00 pm	Men's Choir rehearsal
		7:15 pm	Good Friday service
Saturday	April 4	11:00 (t.b.d.)	Easter instrumentalists rehearsal
Sunday	April 5	6:00	Easter Sunrise service with trumpets
		8:00	Men's Choir, Alleluia Ringers, brass +
		10:45	Mixed Choir, brass+

During the Wednesdays of Lent and on Good Friday, the preaching will focus on the "Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross." I will be playing the instrumental setting by Franz Josef Haydn for the appropriate word at each of these services, and the Good Friday service will include the closing chorus from the setting by Theodore Dubois, as well as a lovely Good Friday motet by him as well. Great music all through Lent and Holy Week – spread the word and come join us!

Keith Williams



**Running of the Rams 5K** - If you are interested in helping with this year's Running of the Rams 5K, please join us in the Fellowship Hall at 7:00pm on Tuesday, March 10th. We are looking for many more volunteers from the church and school to help with this exciting fundraiser. This year the race will be held Saturday, May 30th, at 8:00am. Contact Matt for more information, or liking us on Facebook for the latest updates.



**empty tomb Work-a-thon** – Thanks to all who donated the 3lb. spaghetti boxes. We surpassed our goal with 69 boxes collected. 12 people have volunteered to work on Saturday morning, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 8:00-12:00 noon, and though the deadline for volunteering has passed, there is still time to make monetary donations. You can donate by dropping a check off in the office during the week, or you can mail a check to empty tomb at PO Box 2404, Champaign, IL 61825-2404. Please put Mega Work-a-Thon and St. John Lutheran in the memo line. If you have any questions, please contact Pam. Thank you to all who have supported this project with donations of spaghetti, volunteering and /or by making monetary donations.

**THANK YOU!**  
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Supporting our Church and School  
Feature of the Month



On your next visit to Schnucks, request a Community Card. Register your card at [www.escrip.com/schnucks](http://www.escrip.com/schnucks). Present your card to the cashier when you shop at Schnucks. For every dollar you spend, Schnucks will contribute up to 3% of your purchase amount to St. John Lutheran School!

*Almost \$1000 is raised annually through this program!*



**Ram Rebate**

Orders are due on March 2, 13 & 30. Orders can be picked up March 6, 20 & April 3. Visit [www.shopwithscrip.com](http://www.shopwithscrip.com), [www.myscripwallet.com](http://www.myscripwallet.com), or stop by the school office for more information.



**Fun Fair**

The annual PTF Fun Fair will be on Saturday, March 7 from 4-7 pm. Join us for carnival games, inflatables and other fun activities! Food & drinks provided by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to benefit their Gettysburg trip.



Orders are due on Wednesday, March 11 by 3 pm in the school office or 11 pm online. Orders can be picked up on Tuesday, March 17 from 3-4 pm in the Fellowship Hall.



**Ice Cream Social**

Join us for an ice cream social in the Fellowship Hall following the Jr. High Play on Friday, March 13!

# MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Esther
- 2 Roger
- 3 Megan
- 4 David, John, Judy, Aimee, Tara
- 5 Sheree, David, Rollin
- 7 Nick, Greg, Maxine
- 8 Zachary, Lauren, Elizabeth, Dale, Hunter, Dan, Bryan, Zach
- 9 Kathy, Tracy, Vicky
- 10 Nick
- 12 Anna, David, Rick
- 13 Richard, Kristina, Beverly
- 14 Don, Nancy, Jackie, Zachariah
- 15 Jesse, Clinton, Rod, David
- 16 Ruth, Kathy, Paul
- 17 Steve, Adam, Daniel
- 18 Ed, Michael
- 19 Sara, Scott, David, Michael, Arnold, Don, Susan
- 20 Will
- 21 Olivia, Isabella, Rachel
- 22 Dan, Kendall, Pam, Isaac
- 23 Kathy
- 24 Gwenny



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



# MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Larry & Marilyn (41)
- 3 David & Anthea (3)
- 4 Greg & Sue (38)
- 25 John & Gladys (64); Lon & Betty (20)
- 29 Brian & Donna (12)



*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 Comm	10:45 Comm
Feb 1	136 105	60 53
Feb 8	196 151	150 124
Feb 15	182 149	133 115
Feb 22	176 134	161 135

Wednesdays	3:30 Comm	7:15 Comm
Feb 4		15 12
Feb 11		31 23
<b>Ash Wednesday</b>		
<b>Feb 18</b>	91 68	96 76
Feb 25	107 82	42 35

# MARCH

# 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 2nd Sunday in Lent 8:00 Holy Communion (A.R.) 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion	<b>2</b> 9:00 MOPS  <i>Ram Rebate            orders due</i>	<b>3</b> 10:15 Adult Bible Class 6:30 Fellowship Board 6:30 School Board 7:00 Trustees	<b>4</b> 8:05 Chapel 3:30 Lenten Service 4:30 Lenten Dinner 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Lenten Service	<b>5</b> 9:30 Lifelight 12:30 Widow's Group 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir	<b>6</b>  <i>Ram Rebate            pick up</i>	<b>7</b> 4:00 PTF Funfair  
<b>8</b> 3rd Sunday in Lent 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion (M.C.) 4:30 Theological Study Group  <i>Daylight Savings            Time Begins</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 6:00 Elders	<b>11</b> 8:05 Chapel 10:15 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Lenten Service 4:30 Lenten Dinner 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Lenten Service (A.R.)	<b>12</b> 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast 9:30 Lifelight 1:30 Mary Martha 5:00 Handymen 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir <i>Market Day orders due</i>	<b>13</b> 6:30 6th-8th Grade Play/Ice Cream Social	<b>14</b> 10:00 6th-8th Grade Play
<b>15</b> 4th Sunday in Lent <i>New Member Sunday</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion (Mx.C.)	<b>16</b> 9:00 MOPS 6:30 LWML  <i>Ram Rebate            orders due</i>	<b>17</b> 10:15 Adult Bible Class 1:00 Reading Buddies 3:00 Market Day Sale 6:00 Council 6:30 PTF Meeting	<b>18</b> 8:05 Chapel 3:30 Lenten Service 4:30 Lenten Dinner 5:45 Midweek School 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Lenten Service	<b>19</b> 9:30 Lifelight 6:30 Lifelight	<b>20</b>  <i>Ram Rebate            pick up</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 5th Sunday in Lent 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion	<b>23</b>  <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	<b>24</b> 10:15 Adult Bible Class 3:45 Evangelism 6:00 Parish Ed 7:00 Youth Board	<b>25</b> 8:05 Chapel 3:30 Lenten Service 5:45 Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Lenten Service	<b>26</b> 9:30 Lifelight 6:00 Men's Choir 6:30 Lifelight 6:45 Mixed Choir	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> School Track Meet
<b>29</b> Palm Sunday 8:00 Holy Communion (Mx.C.) 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion (M.C.) 12:00 Instrumentalists Rehearsal	<b>30</b>  <i>Ram Rebate            orders due</i>	<b>31</b> 10:15 Adult Bible Class	<i>Church Office            359-1123</i>  <i>School Office            359-1714</i>	<i>Pastor Elliott's day off:            Mondays</i>  <i>Pastor Caithamer's day            off: Fridays</i>	<i>Devotions &amp;            Hymn-sing at            Amber Glen on the            8th &amp; 22nd at 2:30pm</i>	<i>Day School            Spring Break            23rd—27th</i>