

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

March 2023

Lenten Meditation Hymnist: Paul Gerhardt

Meditation during the season of Lent is extremely helpful in gaining enrichment from this time. If you “give up” a food or a practice for this season, it can serve as a regular reminder of Lent and why you are doing it. Hymns can certainly serve the same function. In our day school and midweek school we have a hymn for this time of Lent (this year’s is *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*). We sing its verses each day in order to remember the season and to have direction for our contemplation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One Lenten hymn that I wish to focus on this season is written by Paul Gerhardt and is entitled *A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth*. It is hymn number 438 in *Lutheran Service Book*. To begin, here is a brief biography of Paul Gerhardt.

A Brief Biography of Paul Gerhardt

Paul Gerhardt was born in a small village in the territory of Saxony in Germany in 1607. Before Gerhardt turned 12 years old, the Thirty Years’ War would begin. This war was fought throughout many regions in the northern part of Europe. The major conflict was over the idea of religious freedom. The Roman Catholic Church was embarking on a mission to reestablish itself as the one church of the empire, seeking to bring an end to the divisions ultimately sparked by Martin Luther and the Reformation.

Much battling would occur and many lives would be lost through the empire, especially in German territories. When such conflicts arise, the question of legitimacy arises with them. Is this war worth fighting for? What is at the heart of the matter? The Lutheran Church had committed itself to the teachings of Luther and the Reformation as presented in the Book of Concord. To give that up and return to the Catholic Church would be a huge blow. Families were torn as life-long Catholics became Lutheran and even some baptized Lutherans converted to Catholicism. It was in the midst of this monumental strife that young Paul Gerhardt entered into maturity.

Gerhardt had demonstrated a great ability in academics early on and was granted an education at the royal academy in Grimma. With his poetic skills beginning to form, Gerhardt graduated from Grimma in 1627 and moved on to study at the University of Wittenberg, center of the Lutheran movement. He was blessed to be mentored by professors who were prolific in literature, hymn writing, and poetics. Above all, Gerhardt was exposed to these professors’ staunch loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions.

With his family home and village destroyed in the Thirty Years’ War, Gerhardt remained in Wittenberg until 1642 when he moved to Berlin and began tutoring. His skills in poetry and hymn writing hit their full stride and his reputation as theologian and hymnist were secured. Gerhardt’s lyrics were paired with the musical compositions of his new friend, Johann Cruger. Cruger proceeded to adopt many of Gerhardt’s writings as hymns and included them in a crucial book in 1647 called *Praxis Pietatis Melica* (“Musical Practice of Piety”).

In 1649, Paul Gerhardt was called to his first parish as a Lutheran pastor in a town south of Berlin. It was at this time that Gerhardt was finally married and enjoyed the blessing of five children. Gerhardt was not willing to concede his confessional Lutheranism and was removed from St. Nikolai Church in Berlin, a post he began in 1657. He served as pastor at a church in Lubben from 1666 until his death in 1676.

Gerhardt’s solidly Lutheran catechesis enabled him to produce a vast amount of hymns still cherished by the Church today. His persecution for the faith and the deaths of his wife and four of his children also inspired a volume of his works. He is best known for the Advent hymn “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You,” the Christmas hymn “O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is,” and his translation of “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” We turn now to his great Lenten hymn “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth.”

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

Paul Gerhardt’s great hymn does what any good Lenten hymn should do, and what the season of Lent is intended to do: focus the Christian on Jesus Christ and him crucified. This sentiment no doubt carried Gerhardt through many trials and tribulations of his life, especially living in the time of the Thirty Years’ War and enduring the suffering and death of several of his closest loved ones. The first verse of the hymn opens with Gerhardt pointing us to John the Baptizer’s statement about Jesus being the Lamb of God. Here is verse 1:

*A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth, The guilt of sinners bearing
And, laden with the sins of earth, None else the burden sharing;
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint, To slaughter led without complaint,
That spotless life to offer, He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
The mockery, and yet replies, “All this I gladly suffer.”*

While Jesus is not yet mentioned by name, it is clear he is the subject of the text. "Lamb of God" is a definite title for Jesus, as indicated by his relative John (John 1:29). His lack of complaint going forth echoes the words of Isaiah 53 that state God's servant did not open his mouth, "like a lamb before its shearers is silent." Similar to the scapegoat of old (Leviticus 16), all of the sins of the world have been placed on Jesus. This teaching of Jesus bearing all sin is often connected with his baptism, where he did not have any sin to be forgiven, but instead takes on all the sin left behind in the water, representing all sin of all time. Off he goes to the slaughter, beaten down by his oppressors, weighted by all sin. The "stripes" and "wounds" again call back to Isaiah 53: "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities...and with his wounds we are healed." Despite all that Jesus faced, he "gladly" suffered it all, in accordance with Hebrews 12:2, which says of Jesus that "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."

The second verse from our hymn introduces the conversation of the Father and the Son, which reveals the eternal plan for our salvation:

*This Lamb is Christ, the soul's great friend, The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send To gain for us His favor.
"Go forth, My Son," the Father said, "And free My children from their dread
Of guilt and condemnation. The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
But by Your passion they will share The fruit of Your salvation."*

In this verse, Gerhardt quickly identifies the Lamb as Christ, "the soul's great friend." He is our Savior, of both body and soul, the only one whom God the Father chose to send and to win for us his favor. Because of Jesus, you and I are now pleasing to the Father. The tenderness of our heavenly Father is shown in his words "My Son" and "My children." God the Father loves all mankind and has sent his Son to save us all. Guilt and condemnation because of sin creates the greatest dread in sinners, but Jesus frees us from it all by his passion, which produces forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Verse 3 offers the Son's gracious reply and the realization of the sinner of all that is taking place.

*"Yes, Father, yes, most willingly I'll bear what You command Me.
My will conforms to Your decree, I'll do what You have asked Me."
O wondrous Love, what have You done! The Father offers up His Son,
Desiring our salvation. O Love, how strong You are to save!
You lay the One into the grave Who built the earth's foundation.*

It is a great mystery the unity of the Father and the Son and yet their clear distinction. The Son of God is more than willing to conform his will to that of the Father. Truly, as one, the Father's will has been the Son's will all along. Now, in human form, the Son of God confirms his unity still with the Father. Here, Gerhardt directs our attention to the right reaction to the great story. God, who is love, offers up his own, dear Son. He so strongly desires our salvation that he is willing to subject his beloved Son to the pit of death. He who is the Maker of heaven and earth succumbs to death and is laid in a grave.

Lastly, Gerhardt's hymn is concluded with the culmination of all things, the very goal of Christ's salvation for us.

*Lord, when Your glory I shall see And taste Your kingdom's pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be, My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before Your throne, Your righteousness shall be my crown;
With these I need not hide me. And there, in garments richly wrought,
As Your own bride shall we be brought To stand in joy beside You.*

Even when we shall look upon the beauty of the Lord in all of his glory, the effects of Christ's death on the cross remain. His blood, which was poured out on us in Baptism, shall be our robe on that great day. The righteousness of Jesus will sit upon us as a crown. Because of these great gifts from Jesus, we will have no fear before God, no reason to hide from him. As Revelation 21:2 pictures the Church, we shall be the bride of Christ, and as his bride, we shall be at his side. Not below him but next to him, with him.

What made the Lord Jesus go through it all? His love for you, so amazing, so divine. We will have all of eternity to meditate on that!

God give you the penitential joy of the season of Lent, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pastor Caithamer

2023 Lenten Midweek Sermon Series

Witnesses to Christ: People from His Passion

Created by Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing

Lenten Midweek 1	March 1	<i>Mary, the Sister of Lazarus and Martha</i>	John 12:1-11
Lenten Midweek 2	March 8	<i>Malchus</i>	John 18:1-11
Lenten Midweek 3	March 15	<i>Peter</i>	John 18:12-27
Lenten Midweek 4	March 22	<i>Barabbas</i>	John 18:33-40
Lenten Midweek 5	March 29	<i>Pontius Pilate</i>	John 19:1-16

Let Us Pray

For Peace and Comfort: Karen and family at the death of husband George, Mary Jane and family at the death of her husband Larry, the family of Paul Bunting at his death, Jan and family at the death of son Chip

For Strength, Hope and Peace: Earl

For Upcoming Surgery: Nancy

For Healing and Recovery: Joyce, Eunice, Robin, Greg - brother of Joyce, Mike, Mimi, David -grandfather of Sara and Ryan , Bentley -great grandson of Bob & Joan, Herb, Charlene, Karla, Gary, Judy, Brian, Teresa -godchild of Bob & Joan, Barbara -family friend of Bob & Joan , John, Hendricks -grandson of Dan & Joanie, Maria , Merv, Rebecca - daughter of Marvin & Esther, Roy- father of Anne, Todd-grandson of Harold, Brett -cousin of the Kindts'

For Successful Treatments: Dan , Nancy , Barb , Luke, Earl, Linda, Joan, Jeanette, Nancy

For our Military: Nick, Andy, Brandon, Zachary, David

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



March Music Notes



Our adult ensembles continue their weekly rehearsals, with the exception of the week of March 12, when there will be neither Handbell nor Singing Choir rehearsals.

We are still and always seeking new singers and ringers. All voice parts are needed to swell the ranks of the Mixed and Men's Choirs – no experience necessary!

Schedule for March-

Sunday	March 5	Lent 2	8:00 Alleluia Ringers
Sunday	March 12	Lent 3	10:45 Mixed Choir
Sunday	March 19	Lent 4	Brass
Sunday	March 26	Lent 5	10:45 Men's Choir
Sunday	April 2	Palm Sunday	Sunday School will sing/process
Thursday	April 6	Maundy Thursday	Alleluia Ringers
Friday	April 7	Good Friday	Men's & Mixed Choir
Sunday	April 9	Easter	Brass, Men's & Mixed Choirs

Please be in touch with Keith if you play an instrument and would like to be part of our Easter celebrations!

Putting hymn texts together with tunes is a fascinating and never-ending process. Sometimes a tune and text are created simultaneously. This practice dates to the earliest days of the Reformation. LSB 334 "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You," with text by the great hymn writer Paul Gerhardt and tune by Johann Cruger was first printed in 1653 and the tune and text were created together.

Sometimes a text is newly written and fitted to an already existing tune. The Holy Week hymn LSB 444 "No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet" is an example of a text which is new to our hymnal, set to an early 20th century melody. Sometimes a text can exist for centuries before being linked with its "forever tune", such as Samuel Crossman's 1664 poem "My Song is Love Unknown." This moving elegy inspired John Ireland to write the tune "Love Unknown" specifically for this text in 1925. Here is verse 7 of this lovely poem which appears as LSB 430 and is the Hymn of the Day for Lent 5, March 26:

Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine!
Never was love, dear King, never was grief like Thine.
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Keith

Stewardship Corner— Matthew 15:27 – "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." These are the words of faith, for faith means receiving what God gives. And God has given us so much more than just the crumbs that fall from the table — He has given us life, salvation, body and soul, eyes and ears, possessions and income. That's where our stewardship starts: with faith in the God who is the greatest Giver.

Young Adults Group will meet March 24th at 5:30pm. We will start in the Fellowship Hall for food and devotions, and then head down to the gym for some fun. Please bring food to share. Anyone between the ages of 18-35 are welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Sara

LWML— The monthly meeting of the LWML will be held on Tuesday, March 21st beginning at 6:30pm. In addition to a Bible study, there will be discussion and planning for our upcoming salad supper and next year's officers.

PTF Allocations Requests— Is there something you would like our school and church to have? Fill out a PTF Allocated Funds Request form and return it to the PTF mailbox in the school office by Wednesday, April 26th. PTF will consider all requests. Forms are available in the school office.

Previous allocated funds have included microscopes, SMART Boards, computer and technology funds, playground equipment and mulch, books for the school library and Jr. High classrooms, new equipment for P.E and recess, and classroom funds for each teacher.



CUT HERE

Day School Spring Break is March 13th through the 17th

The March E.A.T. Night will be at Texas Roadhouse on Monday, March 20, 4-10pm. Texas Roadhouse is giving back at least 10% of our purchases. We will receive a larger percentage with more Dine to Donate patrons, so spread the word.



Bring in the flyer or show it on your phone to make sure that the proceeds will be donated to St. John Lutheran School. Flyers are available on the narthex table and on the school website www.stjohnls.com. This fundraiser applies to dine-in and carry out purchases. Thank you for your continued support of these events.

Show Me Dough: Thank You to everyone who ordered items and supported the middle school class trip. Dough-livery Date is Wednesday, March 22nd. As freezer space is limited, please make arrangements to pick up your order.



St. John Athletics **St. John Track Invite** – Come be a part of our premier event in Track & Field - often described as the best meet of the year! Join us on Saturday, March 25 at the UI Armory to help make this event a success. Morning, afternoon or all day volunteer positions are available for a variety of jobs at all skill levels (admissions, hospitality area, field events). Contact the school office if you are interested in helping.

St. John's School Art Class is seeking donations for used Legos (regular sized) for their end of year Art Show on April 28th. Please drop off donations to the church or school office. Thank you.

CUT HERE

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 Roger | 26 Bill |
| 3 Megan | 27 Audrey, Alex |
| 4 John, Judy, Aimee, Tara | 28 Chuck, Fionna, Amelia, Isabelle, Jake , Teri |
| 5 Sheree, David, Rollin | 29 Caitlyn, Jaxon, Judy, Shirley |
| 7 Nick, David, Cole, Maxine | 30 Chris, Jed |
| 8 Zachary, Lauren, Dale, Dan, Bryan, Zach | 31 Kevin, Bob, Lois, Gale, Angi |
| 9 Lucas, 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 | |
| 17 Adam, Daniel | |
| 18 Oscar | |
| 19 Scott, David, Michael, Arnold, Susan | |
| 20 Will | |
| 21 Olivia, Rachel | |
| 22 Dan, Kendall, Pam, Isaac | |
| 23 Kathy, Keelyn | |
| 25 Madelynn, Roger | |

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Larry & Marilyn (49)
- 3 David & Anthea (11)
- 4 Greg & Sue (46)
- 11 Craig & Shirley (23); Roger & Karen (46)
- 23 Taylor & Christina (10)
- 25 Lon & Betty (28)
- 29 Brian & Donna (20)

CHAPEL OFFERINGS—CAMP CILCA OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

The Central Illinois Lutheran Camp Association (CILCA) sits on 225 acres of woodland and open fields just north of Springfield, Ill., within an easy drive of the popular Lincoln sites in Springfield and historic New Salem. It offers a summer program of week-long camps and outdoor experiences for students of all ages and abilities; Outdoor Education programs for area students; and camping of many kinds for individuals, families and groups. Rustic and all-weather sleeping cabins, campsites for tents, trailers, RV's and pop-ups, swimming lake with beach, athletic fields, Challenge Course, and indoor and outdoor chapel spaces are among the camp's features.



Collected offerings will be used to purchase a canoe or kayak and items from their wish list.

PLEASE notify the church office (359-1123) if your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect.

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.



And like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.
Isaiah 53:7b

2023

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<p><i>Church Office</i> 359-1123</p> <p><i>School Office</i> 359-1714</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">February 2023</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>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	February 2023							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"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">April 2023</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</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	April 2023							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							<p>1</p> <p>8:10 Chapel 3:30 Holy Communion 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:30 Lifelight</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
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