

## GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH



*“He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap” - Psalms 113:7*

Mardi Gras/Carnival culminates on the day before Ash Wednesday. The day before the start of Lent. The English call the day “Shrove Tuesday.” To shrove means to confess.

Fasting is often associated with Lent. Pancakes are were a way to use up rich foods such as eggs, milk, and sugar, before the liturgical fasting season begins where in many cultures, this means no meat, dairy, or eggs. By-the-way, Lent is the reason McDonald’s has the Filet-O-Fish sandwich. Fasting can remind us of the sorrows brought by neglecting God’s Word. However, throughout Scripture and the Book of Concord, fasting is often identified as an abuse because we foolishly think we can twist it into our advantage by make it into a work that we do to merit God’s favor.

The Imposition of Ashes (on Ash Wednesday) on our foreheads symbolizes the death of sin and victory over the grave won by Jesus. Ashes also symbolizes our frailty, humiliation, and repentance before God. They also suggest cleansing and renewal. By tradition the ashes used on Ash Wednesday are made by burning the remains of the palms used on the previous Palm Sunday.

As moving as the service is with imposition of ashes, it is only a tradition and not a sacrament. Sacraments (Baptism and Communion) are instituted by God for the forgiveness of sins and have a visible element. The impositions of ashes satisfies none of those requirements. It is a tool used to redirect our attention away from ourselves to the Cross and what God has done for us –a reminder of our baptism.

The traditional words spoken come from Genesis 3:19, “Remember that you are dust and dust you shall return.” When I was in Kanas, we broke from tradition and used words from Psalm 113:7 instead. In days long past faith was based on what was yet to come, now faith is in what has come. My Kansas church felt that the traditional passage did not sufficiently convey the

victory of the Cross.

We are justified before God by Christ, because of Christ's merit. We are not looking forward to the future for salvation but find it rooted firmly in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. In Baptism we are buried with Christ so that we may be raised with Him through faith. We are to reflect upon our Baptisms daily and drown our sinful natures so that we may arise to live before God in righteousness and purity.

Lent is a time in the church year that emphasizes this rebirth and renewal of baptism as we prepare to celebrate the historic event of Easter. Many use this time to focus on the discipline of learning and growing in faith, for repentance and for prayer, even for fasting to practice self-control and to heighten one's awareness of Christ. As Christians we are lifted from dust and rescued from ash.

Grace & Peace,  
Curtis

Deacon's Digest,

This year, March will start the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. This column is the fifth in a continuing series of commentaries on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book "Life Together." Today we are concentrating again on chapter 4, Ministry. Bonhoeffer is telling the reader what we must do individually to uplift the Christian Community. Last month we discussed the ministry of "Helpfulness", which really means finding opportunities to do helpful things for people in their everyday lives. To do this regularly we need to be able to put our needs and plans behind the simple needs of others. It is God's plan that we help others so really this means putting God's plan in front of our plans. You will be surprised at people's reactions when, out of the blue, you offer to help them do something

Today we will talk about the ministry of "Bearing" as Bonhoeffer puts it; as in bearing a burden or a load. You can see that this may be related to helpfulness that we discussed last month. Let us have a look at Galatians 6: 2 ESV: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." The law of Christ here is to love one another. Our love for one another will bring us to the point of helping others with life's troublesome events. Those life things that weigh us

down as though we are carrying a burdensome load. We could use some help in bearing that load sometimes. The Lutheran Study Bible notes for Galatians 6:2 (see page 2012) say specifically that the loads of our fellow Christians come from temptations and sin, but in principle all burdens no matter the source need help with bearing. Jesus showed us the way by suffering the sinful load of all mankind and giving his life to take away the entire load of sin. We, in like manner, should be willing as brothers and sisters of the cross, to share the burdens of our fellow man. For non-Christians (who do not have a commitment to serve) it is very easy to sidestep the burdens of others, but real Christians should not dodge the opportunity to help others bear their loads. Loads that come from the challenges of living in an earthly realm where sin and temptation is seen almost everywhere 24/7.

Taking Bonhoeffer's point, I would like to offer up some ideas for you which may give you an opportunity to help someone who needs help bearing a load. Let's say you are in a conversation with someone, and your discussion brings out that your friend seems to be having a rough spot of worry about something and it seems to be dragging them down [literally like they are being loaded down]. You might say that you will put them in your daily prayers for relief from this burden. If you have some time you might say, "may I pray with you right now briefly about this?". Either one of these approaches will show your friend that you are willing to take some of the burden off them and you are seeking help from The Lord. I guarantee you will be making an uplifting experience for your friend. One other thing, if your friend agrees that you will pray right now together, you should ask your friend what specifically they would like you to ask God's help on. Now remember, God already knows about the needs of your friend. You can use this fact to help if you are not totally comfortable with public praying. Simply say "Lord we understand that You are all knowing, and you know that Bill is troubled by recent news. We pray that you will comfort him at this time of need and please help him carry the load until such time as you can lift this burden from his heart" This is merely a suggestion, but you don't have to be a great orator to say a useful and pertinent prayer for someone who needs help from our God.

I pray that in this season of Easter, you will find occasion to praise our risen Lord and proclaim His Victory over sin and death. Be the person who brings the Good News to those who need it.

Deacon Joe

## **LCMS Stewardship Ministry**

God gives us farmers and ranchers of all sorts so that we can eat. But more than that He created and gave us all the things that those farmers and ranchers cultivate. He gave us the corn, the beans, the wheat, the cows for milking, the steers for grilling. He gave each of those things, properties for our nourishment and sustenance. Without God creating and instilling in those things their taste and their nutritional value, we would not exist.

He gives us doctors, surgeons, nurses, and hospitals. He gives us medicine and medical instruments. Again, he gave us all things that go into making those medicines and medical instruments. He instilled in those things the properties that can be utilized for that purpose. Without God creating and instilling those healing properties into those things, and without God creating the ability within man to find this out and press it into service of our medical needs, we would not enjoy the kind of health we do now.

But there's more. He gives us gainful employment through our employers and provides for the necessities of life through the labor of our hands.

And one step back from that, He has created and given us hands. And attached to those hands are arms with strength. He created us with minds in order to make those arms and hands move to accomplish the work set before us. And He has given us reason and senses. That mind, because of the reason God has instilled in it, is able to work through difficult problems before we press those arms and hands into labor. It allows us to grapple with concepts and run through scenarios instead of having to experience every situation personally. It allows us to learn from the mistakes as well as the accomplishments of others. This can be done for our entire body, all our skills and talents, everything that makes us ... us. So that everything we have AND everything we are is a gift from Him. This is what we confess in the First Article of the Creed when we say that we believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

But that is just the First Article of the Creed. We confess two more articles that deal with God's provision for our spiritual well-being. That He sent His son to die and be raised on the third day for our justification. That He delivers that justification through the Means of Grace (Baptism, preaching, the Word of God, and the Lord's Supper). And to give you those Means of Grace, He gives pastors and teachers, etc. Again, this could be expanded and expounded upon. So that literally everything that we have and everything that we are – in this life and the next – is an inexpressible gift from God.

And it is for this, all of this, that we give thanks. And that is what stewardship is all about – giving thanks for God's provision for us. To give thanks is more than having an attitude of gratitude, more than just a feeling in our hearts. It is an action. It begins in the heart, but it doesn't stay there. It works its way out through the mouth in praise for God's gifts and in love and charity through the hands to our neighbors in family, country, and church. "For all this is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him" (Luther's Small Catechism, 16). So give thanks to God for His inexpressible gift – for everything we have and everything we are. Do this not in word only but also in deed.



**March 1st - How To Spot A Liar**

*Secrets from a former FBI agent*

**March 8<sup>th</sup> – Reincarnation**

*Have you been here before?*

**March 15<sup>th</sup> – The End Times**

*Will we know it when it comes?*

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> – 10 Minutes to Live**

*Now what?*

**March 29<sup>th</sup> – Who was Jesus – Really?**

*A good man? Or something else?*

Barbara Umholtz 3/1  
 Joshua Potts 3/10  
 Ginger Lewis 3/12  
 Sandy Hagel 3/13  
 Kim Finn 3/16  
 Caleb Day 3/19  
 Jean Grieve 3/19  
 Allan Koepsell 3/19



Julie Cox 3/20  
 Darryl Haag 3/23  
 Arthur Brunner 3/24  
 Teresa Dailey 3/25  
 Dalton Binkley 3/29  
 Debbie Angerman 3/31  
 James Wilhelm 3/31



3/5 Tom & Julie Cox  
3/5 Randy & Stephanie Lawson



**Southern District Disaster Response Volunteer Team** came to Good Shepherd to prepare the site to be a disaster response staging location with hookups for 7 RVs. (Only to be used for disaster relief). This is all being funded by the Southern District.

**Quilting:** As you can see below, quilting is for everyone. There is plenty of room every Wednesday to come join the fun in the fellowship hall. Quilt, socialize or just bring your lunch. Everyone is welcome.







