

# Saint Paul Messenger

A Member of the North American Lutheran Church

St Paul Lutheran Church  
435 W Fifth St  
PO Box 957  
Ewart, MI 49631

April 2017

[www.stpaul-ewart.weebly.com](http://www.stpaul-ewart.weebly.com)

At this writing we are in the midst of the 40 days of Lent. The Gospel lesson for the first Sunday in Lent told about our Lord's 40 days in the wilderness when he contended with temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). One of the temptations was when the devil took Jesus to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'he will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

Our Lord countered him by saying, "again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" We know from Scripture that our Lord Jesus was victorious in this temptation and in the other temptations by rightly using the Word of God with its power.

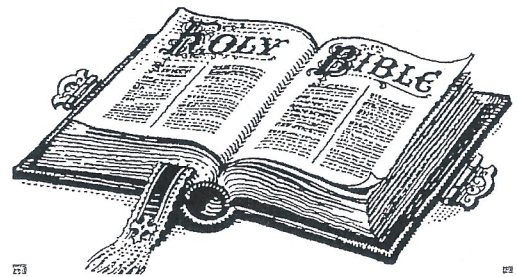
It's interesting to notice in the above referenced temptation that the devil tried to smear the Word of God. He took one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12), and SMEARED it for his own purposes. The passage from Psalm 91

tells us that God has angels watching over us, - and that's a very comforting thought for us. The devil tried to smear that passage, just as he smeared the Word of God in the Garden of Eden, "Did God really say ...".

The Word of God is powerful for Jesus during his time of temptation, and it can also be powerful for us in our daily life. The important thing is to always have in our hearts and minds the highest estimation of the Scriptures for our living.

May the Bible always be holy and sacred to us. Let us remember that it is a very important touch stone that God uses to interact with our lives. Let's keep God's Word sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

*Pastor Turanski*





The  
President's Pen

To: St. Paul Members and Friends;

As the weeks in our Lenten season proceed, we are once again reminded of the great sacrifice that our Lord made for each and every one of us. His dying on the cross in order to free us from sin is love beyond measure. We have to ask ourselves if we too are willing to make sacrifices to be obedient to his word and to truly love one another. We can be so thankful that He loves us unconditionally.

The Stewardship Committee is now in the planning stages and the Council is very seriously looking for ways to help our church. We need to be in serious prayer about what each of us wants for St. Paul. We know that God wants us to persevere but we may have to make some serious changes to keep our church alive!

Faith, along with action, is just a small part of the direction that we need to be heading. We know that God loves us so let's share that same love with others!

*Deb*

### Holy Week Schedule

**April 9 - Palm Sunday** Worship 10am  
**April 13 Maundy Thursday** Service 6:30 pm  
**April 14 – Good Friday** Service 6:30 pm  
**April 16 – Easter Sunday** Worship 10 am

## Council Corner



### St. Paul Lutheran Council Meeting Minutes

**March 12, 2017**

Present: Deb Elliott, Jim Reider, Jim Whitten, Steve Mishler, Don Waker, Pastor Turanski

Absent: Peg Walters, Peg Booher

Guests: none

Call to order by: President Deb Elliott at 11:30 am in the basement.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Turanski

Congregational Comment: none

Secretary's Report: Don Waker motion to accept Jan. minutes, Dave Schlaack 2nd, carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept by Steve Mishler, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jimmie Reider, carried.

Feb. Income: \$3418.07, Expenses \$3538.85, Budget \$4,972

YTD Income \$7718.07 YTD Expenses \$5747.79

2/28/17 Ckg Bal: \$23,689.63 (1 yr. ago \$32,366.57),

2/28/17 Spec. Acct Bal. \$7,993.82 (1 yr. ago \$7,244.81)

#### Reports

1. Pastor & Elders –Lenten Midweek services underway. Pastor & Elders are considering visits to each household for a little time of prayer if they desire it. Written report on bulletin board.
2. Worship and Music – verbal report by Jim Whitten. Worship committee will meet soon to finalize plans for Holy Week and Easter. Written report will be published in March newsletter.





## Council Corner

**cont.**

3. Property: verbal report by Dave Schlaack.  
Contractor has not been able to start yet on eaves. Dave will follow up.
4. Community Dinner – (No report).
5. Call Committee: verbal report by Deb Elliott. Terese Whitten has informed our potential candidate that we are not in a position to offer a call at this time.

Don Waker made a motion to accept Reports, Jim Reider seconded, carried.

### Old Business:

No old business

### New Business:

Stewardship Committee Development - Dave Schlaack & Jim Whitten have begun working on forming a committee to address our recent financial deficit and plans for future growth. There is concern that the congregation is not truly aware of our current situation. Giving was down substantially in 2016 from 2015 levels. The possible sale of the Parsonage may be reconsidered. We may need to meet with the membership (during announcements?) to explain where we stand on our budget, income and expenses. Further discussion will take place regarding how best to do this.

A presentation was made by Jim Whitten regarding a book “Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore” that explores research into why church membership

doesn't appeal to newer generations. Primary reason is that they don't want to be judged. Churches should find ways to show radical hospitality to non-churchgoers in our community to reach those who are reluctant to come to church. A written report is posted on the Council bulletin board.

The committee was expanded to add Don Waker. Jim Whitten will invite non-council members to join also. A follow up meeting will be scheduled with the enlarged committee.

Martin Luther Workshop by Institute of Lutheran Theology. Jim Whitten has contacted St. Thomas Lutheran in Trufant about going together on hosting this workshop in Ewart. Jim will work with Pastor Magera at St. Thomas to find a few common dates to pursue with ILT. Since lunch is part of the program Deb Elliott will bring this up with the Women's Group about whether they would be willing to provide lunch. Jim Whitten will report back next month.

### Correspondence:

An Irish Dinner is being held in Cadillac on March 16. Deb will post information.

Salvation Army letter requesting donation will be forwarded to Peg Booher.

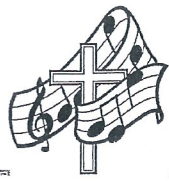
Suggestion Box: No suggestions this month.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 12:20 pm

Next scheduled meeting: April 16, 2017 which is Easter.

Submitted by

Jim Whitten, Secretary



March 2017

**Lent Continues until April 15, 2017.** We are using the Green Book liturgy for the remainder of Lent and Holy Week.

**Midweek Lent services** are being held each Thursday at 6:30 pm during Lent **through April 6.** The theme is “Journey through the darkness – Christ’s and our own.”

Our **Holy Week** celebration includes **Palm Sunday (April 9 – 10 am)** with the procession of palms and the dramatic reading of the Passion by various members of the congregation.

**Maundy Thursday (April 13 – 6:30 pm)** will include a program commemorating the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, followed by the stripping of the altar.

**Good Friday (April 14 – 6:30 pm)** service will be based on the Solemn Reproaches and will end with the singing of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

**Easter Sunday (April 16 – 10 am)** Holy Eucharist. Information will be available shortly for those wishing to purchase Easter Lilies for our worship service.

Beginning on the Sunday after Easter, we will be returning to the Blue Book Liturgy.

## Hallmarks of Lutheran Identity pt.2

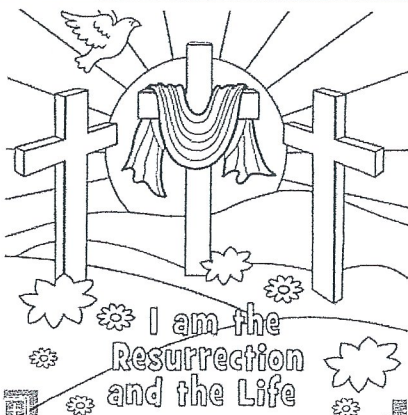
As we look forward to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s posting of his 95 Theses, it is perhaps helpful to remind ourselves of the beliefs that make Lutherans different from other Christians. The following is the second in a series based on a book by Alvin Schmidt.

### *Grace: God’s Merciful Disposition*

*Sola gratia* – grace alone. Grace means “undeserved mercy, prompted by God’s love shown by Jesus Christ. The Greek language has three different words for love. *Eros* which refers to erotic love, *Philos*, referring to the love between friends and *Agape* which is the highest, most exalted form of love. Agape, in reality is a love only God is capable of exercising. Yet, God uses the word agape often as the way Christians should love one another. The apostle Paul told the Ephesians grace is the gift of God, not a result of works. Grace is the disposition of God that prompts Him to save all those who repent and believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. The grace of God is always active and present and God’s love moves Him to be gracious to those who believe in the merits of His Son’s death and resurrection.

Lutheran theology teaches that any and all merits of man are excluded from the concept of grace. God’s grace to us relies solely on the merits of Christ. When grace is understood and accepted as being an exclusive quality of God’s disposition, a Christian can be absolutely certain of its validity. If even a small part came from within a person, we would never be sure that we had done enough to merit eternal salvation. The Lutheran doctrine of *sola gratia* (by grace alone) gives all glory and honor to God.

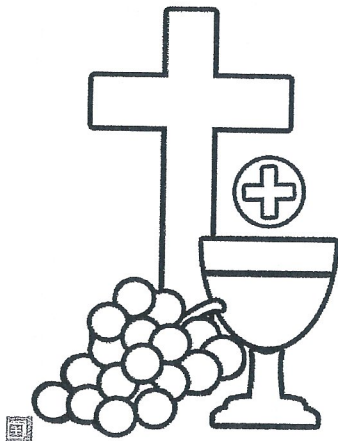
God’s grace for eternal salvation is available to all who confess the name of Jesus Christ as their Lord. From the time of Luther to the





present day, Lutherans believe that God works through means in converting and keeping Christians in His kingdom. The means God uses are His Word and Sacraments. As it says in the Smalcald Articles, "God does not want to deal with us in any other way than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. Whatever is praised as from the Spirit without the Word and Sacraments – is the devil himself. (SAIII VIII 10). In order for Christians to benefit from His grace, God's Word must be made know to us by the reading and/or hearing of the Word. Another means of grace is available to us through Baptism (God's Word connected to the water). In Baptism, the person by daily repentance and faith in God's promises receives the grace of God's forgiveness. A third means of grace available to Christians is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. God's Word in this meal assures repentant Christians that their sins are forgiven when in faith they believe the words, "This is my body given for you. This is my Blood of the covenant which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

All who die and receive eternal life receive it only as a result of God's saving grace through faith that accepts and relies solely on the merits of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who was crucified and raised from the dead for our justification. This doctrine is the core around which the Lutheran Reformation revolved. It is another one of the Hallmarks of Lutheran Identity.



## Behind the scenes on Sunday morning

It has come to my attention that some people in our congregation have questions about what goes on in the Pastor's office prior to the service on Sunday mornings and special services. Let me take a moment to explain. An Elder is not only someone who has the spiritual life of the congregation on their hearts but they also serve as a support for the spiritual life of the Pastor. We all expect the Pastor to pray for us and minister to our needs but who prays for the Pastor?

Before a worship service, one or more Elders spend time praying that the Holy Spirit be present in the Word as it is spoken, that God will guide the Pastor in proclaiming the Word rightly and that those who have ears may hear God's message.

As an Elder and the person who prints the bulletins for the services, I have felt a responsibility to regularly be a part of this time of prayer. This time allows me to pray for the Pastor and to give the Pastor a "heads up" should there be changes in the bulletin or if I have left something out, which happens often.

At an Elders meeting recently it was suggested that the Pastor was not the only one whose ministry would benefit from this time of prayer. So we have extended an invitation to song leaders, lay readers, communion assistants, prayer leaders, and any others who make our worship service possible. Everyone is welcome to join us as we pray that our time of worship is pleasing in God's sight.

*Sarah*