



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

OBSERVING LENT *in a new way*

We are entering that time of the year when some people start asking: “What are you going to give up for Lent?” The world will have already let us know that Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday) — also called Mardi Gras — has defined what kinds of debauchery secular romantics won’t give up!



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

On the other end of the spectrum of Christianity, there are those who ridicule observance of Lent, saying it is nothing more than an endless list of do’s and don’ts that takes one’s eyes off the meaning of Easter. A pastor friend of mine once told me that one of his classmates wrote a sermon for their seminary homiletics class that was the shortest sermon ever. The student preacher went into the pulpit and quoted Rom. 6:23 shouting: “The wages of sin is death!” After a long pause, he added: “And there has been no change in that rate of pay. Amen.”

Scratching ‘itching ears’

Talk about sin and judgment these days isn’t received very well. The story of Adam and Eve’s fall into sin has become more of a fairy tale to most of the neighbors we meet on our

everyday walks, and mostly ignored. If people with itching ears venture into a church on Sunday morning, they’d like to hear about what they can do to live a happier, more prosperous and productive life rather than what Jesus has already done for them — He suffered and died on the cross, and rose victorious over sin, death and Satan.

It’s easy to identify the fallen estate of humanity, not because of our own Christian lives, but because of the overwhelming evidence of what appears to be happening globally. We hear about eons of human conflict, beginning in Genesis with the murder of Abel to our everyday lives filled with carnage and story after news story about one person squabbling with, fighting against or killing another.

But St. Paul, in his letter to the Roman Christians, said that even though the world is fallen, nothing will overtake us. God in Christ is still in control. He still loves us, forgives us and makes all things right. But when we see the effects of a broken world, can we really offer evidence that Christ brought us God’s goodness and planted in us the blessed promise that is more enlivening than all the things that are wrong? It’s certainly a challenge for us, and even more difficult to share that with an unchurched neighbor who’s surrounded by the evidence that just the opposite might be true.



But consider Matthew’s Gospel. Immediately following the narrative of Jesus’ Baptism, we hear of Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus was led by God’s Spirit into the desert for fasting, and after 40 days became very hungry. Satan’s first temptation was for Jesus to turn a stone into bread. But the temptation is about more than just food. It’s about taking control, outside of the will of God. Does doubting God lie deep in the root of something within us? What happens when doubt and worry replace trust in God’s ultimate love and goodness?

Jesus: the better Adam

Ultimately, Adam and Eve simply thought they could know better than God. But Jesus committed Himself to

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God's promise to sustain Him in the wilderness. Adam and Eve acquiesced and ate. Jesus resisted temptation.

Satan's second temptation was for Jesus to throw Himself off the temple roof. With forked tongue, Satan promised: "No harm will come to You." The same temptation to test God sent Adam and Eve into a whirlpool of sin, reasoning that "God wouldn't make us die because of just a small bite of some tasty fruit!" They reasoned that God couldn't possibly withdraw life from them. So they yielded by taking the fruit, thereby dragging all of mankind with them into the abyss of darkness and sin.

How often have you heard someone in the church, with the best of intentions, say: "God won't let me fail when He acts in a way that I want Him to act." It may be not in those exact words, but there are times when someone easily sets up a situation in which they try to force God to act ... manipulating divine providence for personal gain? But can anyone really present God with a *fait accompli*? "If you let me win the lottery, I'll give half of it to Your Church!" What?! God doesn't need half the lottery! Is that kind of desire supremely for God's glory or for our own? Is our prayer motivated by self-centered ambition or God-centered trust?

The third temptation was for Jesus to worship Satan in return for earthly power. But Jesus came to win the world for His eternal Kingdom. He couldn't nor can anyone else gain a kingdom by worshiping and serving evil. Similarly, Adam and Eve reasoned that there was a short cut to divine wisdom. They bit the fruit of temptation and discovered the "worm"

of the truth of Satan's failed promises. There are no short cuts to spiritual wisdom and maturity — just patient discipleship in the pathway guided by God in His Word and Sacraments.

Hope for a broken world

When we look around or listen to the news and see how evil is at work, or see the results of our sinful nature play itself out in our aches, pains and heartaches, it's easy to feel the effects of a fallen world. For the non-Christian, it's so difficult to believe that some Christ redeemed the world, that God made everything right and that our blessed hope lies at the end of this pilgrimage beyond the pits of sin. They're falling victim to the same temptations that Satan offered Jesus.

But we can trust in God and His loving power by faith, believing that His goodness — shown to us in Christ — is rooted in His promise to the world. Lent isn't about giving things up or observing a list of do's and don'ts. It's about how we trust in God's goodness because He took no short cuts to fulfill His purposes for us and the world.

I don't know where the ditty "The Pit" came from, but it illustrates why we might observe Lent in a much different way this year. It illustrates how reason and human efforts are of no value.

It goes something like this: A man fell into a pit and he couldn't get out. He called to Buddha, but Buddha said: "Your pit is only a state of mind." A Hindu said: "This pit is for purging you and making you more perfect." A follower of Confucius said: "If you would have listened to me, you would never have fallen into that pit." A New Ager said: "Maybe you should network with some other pit dwellers." A person filled with self-pity said: "You

haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit." A news reporter said: "Could I have the exclusive story on your experience in the pit?" A bureaucrat said: "Did you pay your taxes for that pit?" A government inspector said: "Do you have a permit for that pit?" A progressive said: "Our world shouldn't have pits." An optimist said: "Things could be worse." A pessimist said: "Things will get worse!"

Out of the eternal pit

But Jesus, seeing mankind in a pit, extended His hand of mercy, grabs us by the hand and lifts us out of the pit. Pits can be an awful place when they're created by the power of sin, worry and temptation. But we're not

left alone. We have the One who came down from glory to take our place in the eternal pit ... His name is Jesus. God came to help ... to save ... to redeem ... to guide. He has acted on our behalf to fulfill the promise that the Seed of a woman would bring new life and salvation for everyone joined together in Him by God's means of grace.

We do not have to dwell down in the pits. We

don't have to give up candy or TV to make things right with God. Rather, we have nail-scarred hands that have been stretched out for us to touch. This is the hope that we have in Christ. This is no vain hope. In Christ Jesus, God has shown us His unfailing grace for us.

The season of Lent is a time for us to prepare our hearts and minds to ponder Christ's passion of Holy Week, His death and resurrection, and how this grace sustains us each day. It is the reality of God's promise that shapes our hope in repentance to new life.

“
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LWR IS EVOLVING...



◀ School Kits distributed to Iraqi refugees and their Syrian host families.

▼ A woman and her child display the quilt they received from Mother of Mercy Women's House (La Casa de la Mujer Madre de la Misericordia).

Founded by Lutherans at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, **Lutheran World Relief** (LWR) was called to break the cycle of poverty so families and communities can thrive. From providing aid in emergencies to working with families to grow food, build rural livelihoods and create more stable futures, LWR is making amazing things happen in the world.

To increase their impact and promote healthier families and communities around the world, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and IMA (Interchurch Medical Assistance) World Health — a humanitarian organization that provides solutions to health-related problems in the developing world — have joined forces.

LWR and IMA have worked together for more than half a century. In fact, LWR, in partnership with other faith-based relief agencies, founded IMA World Health in 1960 to provide medical supplies to the world's poorest populations.

Today, in addition to their ongo-

ing work that serves more than 35 million people around the world, the combined agency is expanding programs to:

- ▶ Improve water and sanitation and thwart cholera in Haiti.
- ▶ Prevent the spread of Ebola along the Ugandan-Congolese border.
- ▶ Provide treatment for pediatric and cervical cancer in Tanzania.

Rural livelihoods and health are intrinsically linked. A family in poverty can scarcely afford health care. A sick breadwinner may be unable to earn income. Together these two humanitarian nonprofits can increase their individual impact on breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting healthier families



and communities.

By integrating Lutheran World Relief's work in rural economies and emergency response with IMA's global health expertise, they have created a unified organization that's helping millions to enjoy a healthier, more prosperous tomorrow.

In addition to making an even deeper and more lasting impact in the lives of those in need around the world, the joint organization is set to become an even better steward of their donors' gifts by increasing operational efficiency and maximizing resources.

"We remain an organization rooted in the Lutheran values upon which we were founded," said Daniel Speckhard, LWR president and CEO, "and this new partnership will increase the impact of our supporters' generosity and compassion around the world. Together, we'll be better equipped to serve people living in poverty with comprehensive, long-term solutions that promote dignity, health and self-sufficiency."

Learn more by visiting lwr.org/imaworldhealth.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Dec. 31, 2018 (12 months)

Anticipated amount (100 percent of budget).....	\$1,581,411
Actual receipts	\$1,542,151
Over (under) anticipated amount....	(\$39,260)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$437,645
Allocated to Tanzania	\$25,000
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70 % of receipts)	\$1,079,506
Total receipts	\$1,542,151

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2018	\$1,542,151
Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2017	\$1,558,963
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$16,812)

38TH BIENNIAL LWML CONVENTION

Celebrating in Mobile ... 'in praise to the LORD'



**Register
before
March 13
and save
\$20!**

Registration is open for the 38th Biennial LWML convention, "In Praise to the LORD!" The convention theme is based on 1 Chron. 16:23-24a:

"Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations."

The convention will be held June 20-23 in Mobile, Ala.

Led by God's power, attendees will embrace the convention goal and praise and proclaim the Lord among all the nations!

The convention agenda will be filled with speakers, Bible study, fellowship, a pledge walk, servant events, LWML business — and a lot of fun.

Speakers will include Rev. Dr. Brent Smith (keynote), Donna Pyle and Jan Struck,



among others. Special entertainment will include Voices of Mobile singers and Joe Castillo.

Early registration ends March 13 and is \$175; and regular registration (\$195) ends May 10. After May 10, registration is \$220 through June 10.

Registration materials and more information are available in the Winter issue of *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*. To register online, visit lwml.org/convention.

IN PHOTO: Participants pose with the Martin Luther Playmobil cutout in the exhibit hall during the LWML's 36th Biennial Convention in 2015 in Des Moines, Iowa.



**Remember to
set your clock
forward ("spring
ahead") at 2 a.m.
on Sunday,
March 10**

This tradition has a somewhat sporadic history.

Benjamin Franklin is often credited with "inventing" Daylight Saving Time (DST) in 1784, when he likely suggested it as a joke. Others made similar suggestions over the next 120 years, but it wasn't until 1915 when the Germans recognized its value as a light-extending, fuel-saving measure during World War I, when Daylight Saving Time was officially adopted and employed.

The British switched one year later, and the United States followed in 1918 when Congress passed the Standard Time Act, which established our time zones. This experiment lasted only until 1920. The law was repealed due to opposition from dairy farmers (cows don't punch timeclocks.)

During World War II, DST was again imposed — this time year-round — to save fuel. DST has since been used off and on, with different start and end dates.

Currently, DST begins at 2 a.m. on the second Sunday of March and ends at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November.

The Florida legislature passed a bill to enact permanent DST — the Sunshine Protection Act — in 2018; and Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island have introduced proposals or commissions to that effect. Although 26 states have considered making DST permanent, unless Congress changes federal law, states can not implement permanent DST — states can only opt out of DST, not standard time (Hawaii and most of Arizona have opted out of DST).

Blessings in Thompson Station

The Rite of Ordination and Installation for Rev. Craig Fiebiger as a Specific Ministry Pastor was held on Jan. 12 at Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson Station, Tenn. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Carl Wenk, Dr. Roger Paavola (district president), Fiebiger, Doug Kalleson, Curt Hoover; (back row) Jerry Meyer, Ken Krohe, Eric Christensen, Allan Thoe, Randy Sakach, Lane Reuter, David Callies (district president emeritus) and Ken Shaw.



Welcome!

God's family at CTK, Memphis, grows with new members

By Genie Swan

Community Relations Coordinator

Following the completion of a six-week adult instruction class, Christ the King welcomed new members into its family in December.

The members were honored at a reception following worship, and photos of each family, along with biographical information, were included in the monthly newsletter. Several of the younger

new members have been included in youth confirmation class, while others are enjoying regular Sunday school attendance.

The adults completed time and talent surveys and have been actively participating in some of the many ministries offered at Christ the King.

We celebrate a gracious God who led these new members into our midst.

Sign up for trivia and support Lutheran camp

Camp Trinity's annual Trivia Night is moving to spring. After 10 years with the fundraiser being held in August, it is switching to the last Saturday in April. The 2019 date is April 27.

Trivia Night is held in the Family Life Center of Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, Ark. Teams from LCMS congregations throughout central and western Arkansas compete in the contest, in which eight-member teams answer questions in eight rounds of competition. The winning team receives restaurant gift certificates.

The evening also includes a silent auction, when participants can bid on dozens of great items, including sports memorabilia, original art, shop tools, kitchen gadgets, home furnishings, University of Arkansas

**ATTENTION
PLEASE**

**Camp Trinity's
Trivia Night is
now a spring
event, and will
be held April 27.**



Razorbacks gear, wine packages and more.

A concession stand offers burgers, hot dogs, nachos, soft drinks and sweet treats.

Trivia Night includes three other contests: Most Clever Team Name, Best Costumes and Best Table Decorations. Prizes are awarded to the winners in each category.

Many come not to compete, but just

to watch the fun. Patti Airolodi of Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, serves as emcee and keeps the crowd entertained with one-liners and her arsenal of accents.

Anyone interested in signing up or learning more or can register online at lutherancamp.org. You don't have to have team members all lined up in order to register; all that's needed is the name of one contact person. The cost is \$20 per person or \$160 per team.

WANTED: Volunteers for work weekend



Spring Work Weekend is a great time to enjoy fellowship with other believers while performing a needed service for Camp Trinity.

Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain, is in need of volunteers to complete special projects and get the camp in shape for the busy retreat and camp season. Although volunteers are welcome any time, one weekend has

been set aside especially for volunteer service. The annual Spring Work Weekend is March 22-23.

Men with chainsaws are particularly needed as the camp has lots of downed trees and limbs that need to be cut into firewood.

Other projects likely to be on the list: Install parking bumpers; spread crushed stone on camp roads; spread mulch on camp trails; deep clean cabins; clean Trinity church; rake the campground; burn brush; and repair elements in the group initiative course.

Cooks are also needed to prepare meals for the workers.

Volunteers can stay in cabins and enjoy meals — all free of charge. All ages are welcome.

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WORK WEEKEND

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The weekend is a time of fellowship as members of LCMS congregations work together, enjoy meals together and hear a devotional message. For those who stay overnight, there will be an evening campfire with camp songs.

Volunteers are asked to contact the camp office ahead of time to ensure there is plenty of food. Send an email to director@lutherancamp.org.

REMINDER:

Summer camp registration underway

Registration continues for summer camp at Camp Trinity. The camping season — June and July — includes four traditional camp sessions for children and youth from second through 12th grade, as well as four special sessions: Adventure, Arts, Overcomers and Family camps.

Some sessions may fill up early. Please check the website to ensure there are openings. To learn more or register, visit lutherancamp.org.

Happy 10!

On Jan. 6, Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, Ark., celebrated the 10th anniversary of its pastor, **Rev. Paul Hass** (right), as shepherd of the congregation. He was presented with a plaque to commemorate the occasion by Craig Johnson, chairman of the congregation's Board of Directors. Haas also serves as Mid-South District fourth vice-president.



Providing pastoral care for the military

The installation for Rev. Neil Vanderbush as a U.S. Army chaplain was held Jan. 5 at Faith, Bentonville, Ark. He was deployed in January. Pictured are, from left Revs. Gordon Besel, Dr. Roger Paavola, Roger Schoolcraft, Vanderbush, Robert Herring, Brandon Martin and Paul Hass.



Grace, Knoxville helps veterans celebrate Christmas

Thanks were offered to all those at Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, Tenn., who made a presentation of gift cards and scarves to the Ben Atchley Veterans Home possible.

The Lutheran Women in Mission started the ball rolling in September. The Prayer Shawl Ministry picked up the baton and these women made 125 scarves to be distributed to the residents for Christmas.



On Dec. 18, (from left) Phoebe Linnabary, Carol Haase and (at far right) Sandi Harjala presented gifts for residents at the Ben Atchley Veterans Home, which were gratefully accepted by the activities assistant.



Special Olympics medalist Krista Carsten — seen here with Rev. Timothy Henning — will join Team USA for competitions held in Abu Dhabi March 14-21.

Trinity athlete headed to World Games in Abu Dhabi

By Rev. Timothy J. Henning
Pastor, Trinity, Mena, Ark.

Krista Carsten, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mena, Ark., will travel with Team USA to the Special Olympics World Games to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, this month. Krista will participate in the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash and the 1x400 meter relay. She is the only Arkansan selected to be part of Team USA!

The Opening Ceremony will be aired live on ESPN on Thursday, March 14, as will the Closing Ceremony on Thursday, March 21. Krista and the other athletes will participate in a three-day event prior to the Opening

Ceremony, when they will experience the culture of Dubai and get some rest before the games begin.

This past summer, as part of Team Arkansas, Krista participated in the USA Special Olympics Games held in Seattle. She brought home several ribbons and a silver medal in the 1x400 meter relay.

Please join the members of Trinity in congratulating Krista for being selected for this honor. She is the daughter of Rev. Gary and Linda Carstens of Pensacola, Fla.

Follow Krista and Team USA at abudhabi2019.org.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day (and the Christian history it recalls)

St. Patrick was born in Britain as Maeywn Succat. In about 400 A.D., when he was 16 years old, he was kidnapped and taken to Ireland, where he was enslaved and made to work as a shepherd. Six years later, he escaped and returned home, answering his call to preach the Gospel and pursue missionary work.

After years of study, he became a priest and his name was changed to Patrick. Although he was not the only Christian in Ireland, he is credited with spreading Christianity throughout the land and bringing an organized church into existence.

The shamrock is recognized as a symbol of St. Patrick's Day because legend claims that St. Patrick used its three leaves to explain the Holy Trinity.



Fun facts and folklore:

- ▶ Blue, not green, was the color originally associated with St. Patrick.
- ▶ St. Patrick's Day is the traditional day for farmers to plant peas.
- ▶ Cabbage seeds should also be planted on this day, but farm lore recommends that, for best success, they should be planted while wearing one's nightclothes.



Deadline for the May issue is March 15

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Our submission deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication.

Send email submissions to:

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or send by postal mail to:

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