



MONONA MESSENGER

MARCH 2024

+ Therefore My Brothers +

A few short weeks ago, the Christian Church began the season of Lent by observing Ash Wednesday. Perhaps you knelt at the altar as your forehead was marked with ashes. You heard the words, "You are dust and to dust you shall return." This rite serves to remind us of our beginning: that God created man from the dust of the earth. It also foretells our ending: that our mortal bodies will die and decay. It is a solemn moment; in truth, all of Lent is solemn. Yet, every Christian holds in his heart a secret the world needs to know: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:56-57). That is the message of Easter: through Christ we have won the victory! We wept through the night of sorrow, but morning has come and with it the joy of the morning of eternal life (Psalm 30:5b).

We remain on earth, waiting for the fullness of that joy that will be ours when we are in Heaven with the Savior. We are not idle while we wait, however. After his glorious pronouncement of this victory over death, the Apostle Paul continues, "Therefore my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). These are orders for all God's servants, the "beloved brothers." First, "Be steadfast." Day in and day out, not just on Sunday, but every day, all day, we are steadfast, putting the work of the Lord first, keeping uppermost in our minds that all we do is done in His strength and for His glory. At our work and in our homes, we remember that we "are serving the Lord" (Colossians 3:24).

We are "immovable." We don't get sidetracked. In his Gospel, Luke takes his readers along on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Like the Israelites traveling through the desert, Jesus' trip was not a straight line and it included many stops (although not for the same reasons), but as faithful as God was to deliver His chosen people, so "immovable" was Jesus on His way. We, too, have a goal: to travel to eternal life doing the Lord's work on our way. We are "immovable" in our desire to practice faithful stewardship on our journey (especially the stewardship of the Gospel), and God is faithful to go with us on that journey.

By God's grace through which He enables and equips us, we can "always [abound] in the work of the Lord." By God's grace, we overflow with good works. We are eager and willing to give of ourselves and our resources that His work might be done. Even when we get discouraged, we don't quit, because we know "that in the Lord [our] labor is not in vain." Now that you have seen and experienced the suffering, the death and the resurrection of Jesus (now even as the disciples), our mission clear—Come and see, and go and tell! This is the message of Easter, a powerful story we have to share (our own story) and how it has completely changed our lives. So what are we waiting for?

In Christ, the Gift to Be Shared,

Pastor Nowak

Partnership News

February 2024

Immanuel Lutheran Church Pastor Michael Erdman
St Paul Lutheran Church Pastor Grant Sorenson
Monona Lutheran Church Pastor Thomas Nowak
Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church

Introduction to the Partnership

Pastor Michael Erdman

Around this time of year in 2023, Immanuel, St Paul, and Our Savior Deaf all reached out to Nathan Meador at roughly the same time looking for help. (Nathan Meador is the South Wisconsin District Executive for Missions and Mercy.) It didn't take him long to look at a map and realize all these churches were right next to each other. When he spoke to me next, I still remember clearly what he said. "Don't you think you might be stronger together, than you are individually?"

Over the following year, this idea has already born a lot of fruit. Our Savior Deaf found a new home, sharing a building then a pastor with Monona.

Discussions of a three church partnership grew into a four church partnership, with a committee formed to discuss the idea starting in August. We have now held 10 events together, with more coming up soon.

In truth, we have only begun to scratch the surface of what we can do together. This newsletter is part of digging deeper, a way to keep everyone informed about what we are accomplishing and planning together. Be looking for these updates in your bulletin and e-mail inbox moving forward, as we have many exciting opportunities ahead.

Lenten Midweek Services and Good Friday

Pastor Grant Sorenson

This Lent and Holy Week, we are partnering with our sister churches here in Madison. Joint services will be continue to be held at 6pm at St Paul. Our midweek services will feature rotating preachers following our Lent theme, "The Sounds of the Passion."

- March 6 @6pm – Tramping Feet
- March 13 @6pm – Crowing Rooster
- March 20 @6pm – Shouting Mob

We will also join together for our Good Friday service during Holy Week to be hosted at Monona on March 29 at 1pm. More information to follow.

A Prayer Vigil will be held on *Saturday*, March 30th from 9 am to 2 pm at Monona. Please feel free to come anytime and stay as long as you'd like. If you would like, there will be a *Prayer Guide* to use for your meditation.



<i>Palm/Passion Sunday</i>	<i>March 24th</i>
<i>w/Communion</i>	<i>9:00 a.m.</i>
<i>Maundy Thursday</i>	<i>March 28th</i>
<i>w/Communion</i>	<i>6:00 p.m.</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>March 29th</i>
<i>Joint Service-Monona</i>	<i>1:00 p.m.</i>
<i>Prayer Vigil</i>	<i>March 30th</i>
<i>at Monona</i>	<i>9 am – 2 pm</i>



<i>Easter Celebration</i>	<i>March 31st</i>
<i>w/Communion</i>	<i>Coffee & Treats 8:00 am</i>
	<i>Worship 9:00 am</i>



March

<i>Lee Retzlaff</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Nicole Siegenthaler</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Darren Culles</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Hilary Merrill</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Jeff Meyer</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Sue Neuser</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Sarah Simon</i>	<i>31</i>



Mike & Lynn Reinholtz - 39 years; 3/2
Gary & Judy Thompson - 62 years; 3/17



Congratulations & God's Blessings

Steward Builders

A newsletter to help you grow as a steward.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share God's Word so that our members will better understand who we are to be and what we are to do in the light of the Scriptures. It is our hope that this monthly publication will help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and as a Christian steward.

Give Your Best

There's an old story about a wealthy, middle-eastern king who was good and kind and just to his people. His son, the prince, was getting married and the king wanted it to be the most splendid wedding of the century. Instead of bringing costly gifts for the prince and his bride, the king simply asked that those who were attending the wedding bring a jar of their best wine, and they would be poured together into a huge urn. This wine would be the "best of the best", blended together to be served to all of the guests at the wedding.

One of the guests who was invited was rather selfish and greedy and thought of a plan to attend the wedding without even having to bring a jar of wine. He decided to bring a jar of pure water and to pour it into the urn with all of the wine from the other guests. No one would be able to tell that it was just water when it was all mixed together.

On the day of the wedding feast, as the guests were arriving, each one poured his jug of wine into the urn near the head table of the prince and princesses. When it was his turn, the selfish and greedy guest quickly poured in his jar of water and sat down at his place at the table. When all the jars of wine had been emptied into the urn, the king

asked that the wine be ladled into chalices for the wedding party and the guests, and he made a wonderful toast to the bride and groom. Then he took a sip of the wine...and suddenly spit it out on the floor! It was pure water! Every guest had thought that, if he or she brought water instead of wine, it wouldn't be noticed when mixed with the wine of all the other guests. The King was so furious that he sent all of the guests home!

Just as this king expected his guests to give their best, God wants us to give Him our best. Throughout Scripture, God praises those who give from loving and generous hearts and is critical of those who give out of duty or less than their best. This is illustrated in the first act of giving in Scripture when God is pleased with Abel's gift because he gave from the first portion of his produce, whereas Cain gave just some of his crops.



Our gracious and giving God gives us far more than we can ever give to Him. God gives us our food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond our physical needs, He provides for us spiritually. Through the ultimate sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, we can live as His forgiven and redeemed children.

Knowing that all we are and have are gifts from God, we show our gratitude by giving Him our first and best.

Interesting or Scary

I had a terrible dream. I dreamt that the Lord took my Sunday offering, multiplied it by ten, and this become my weekly income. In no time, I had to give up my car, my house payments, my luxuries, and even some of my necessities.

What can a person do on twenty dollars a week? If the Lord took your offering, multiplied it by ten (a reverse tithe), and made that your weekly income, where would that leave you and me?

On the Lighter Side

Johnny was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place, I will give a tithe to my church and special offerings throughout the year."

Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

Johnny looked up again and said, "Never mind, I found one."

God Will Supply

We go to work based on the promise of a wage for our labor. We enter into marriage covenants promising to be faithful to our spouses for life. We get on planes, trusting

the pilots are well trained and the aircraft safe so that we can get to our destinations. We drive our cars on the right side of the road (in the US, anyway!), confident that oncoming traffic will stay in their proper lanes.

If we put so much faith in fallible humans who are prone to error and misjudgment, how much more can we live as stewards who give first to God, trusting Him to supply all our needs! "*Praise be to the Lord,*" prayed Solomon. "*Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through His servant Moses*" (1 Kings 8:56). God's stewards throughout history have praised God for His faithfulness: Elijah, fed by ravens beside the brook (1 Kings 17:2-4); Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6); Paul, preaching the Word of God even while imprisoned (Acts 28:17-31), to mention a few.

How about the Macedonians who gave generously even out of their poverty to share with others they felt were even more needy (2 Corinthians 8)? All these attest to the faithfulness of God. Surely God has blessed us, too, so that we can bless others with our gifts. David, the psalmist, wrote from experience: "*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed*" (Psalm 37:25-26).

Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!

Loving and Losing

We continue to have a bible study at church at 10:00 am for those that have lost a loved one — especially widows and widowers. We meet on the second Monday of each month. Through the timeless lens of Scripture, we will find comfort and hope as we focus on relevant issues.

American Sign Language Classes

Richard Belling – Our Savior Deaf

Hello to all Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

We are holding American Sign Language classes at Monona Lutheran Church, all are welcome to join us. We will have two classes each week. Come to the one that works best for you:

- Tuesdays at 6:00pm
(Except for the second Tuesday of each month)
- Thursdays at 5:00pm

If you have any questions or concerns about the date or time, text me at 414-243-1148 and I will be glad to talk with anybody.

Here is a book I would recommend for you all to buy for our Sign Language class. These are fully colored pictures for us to use. You can order online.

“Learning American Sign Language” by James W Guido. Buy at Amazon: tiny.cc/aslbook

That is all for now and have a blessed week

April Messenger Deadline:

Monday, March 25th, 2024

No Late Articles

Please submit articles by this date.

Email to: mlc-ms@hotmail.com OR
leave a copy on the office desk.

Prayer Chain

Life presents challenges to all of us, but sometimes those challenges can feel like *it's* just too much. If you are experiencing situations, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, call our Prayer chain.

You may give your prayer requests to Angie TerMaat at 608-246-9608, or the church office at 222-7071 or call if you would like to become a part of our Prayer chain.

*“Hear my prayer, O Lord;
listen to my cry for mercy.”*

LWML: Please note that quilting will take place on the 1st and 2nd Thursday at 9 am in March and our next Get Together will be on Thursday, March 21st at 9 am at the Steingraber's. If you wish to subscribe to the ***LWML Women's Quarterly***, please let me know before March 1st. The cost is \$6.00 per year. *Ellen Peck*

Upcoming LWML Events – 2024

Heart to Heart Sisters:

It's not too early to plan to attend the **Heart to Heart-Sisters of all Nations Event** on Saturday, March 16 from 8:30am-1:30pm at Benediction church hosting at LUMIN school - 8242 Granville Rd., Milwaukee. There will be exhibits, worship service, lunch and a program. ALL are welcome to attend.

Zone 16 LWML Spring Gathering will be held at St. John's Lutheran on Saturday, April 20th with registration beginning at 8:30 am. Save the date and watch the Sunday announcements for more details. Hope to see you there.

2024 LWML-SWD Convention

June 14th & 15th – Bethlehem Lutheran
Sun Prairie

The American Red Cross: There will be a community blood drive at Alliance@4200 (formerly Lake Edge church) on Monday, March 4th from 1 pm until 6 pm. Please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org for donation information, to make an appointment to donate or to ask medical or travel related eligibility questions. Thank you for supporting the American Red Cross and the hospitals and patients we serve! The Red Cross is grateful to those who commit to helping save lives.



March 9th, 2024

Online Newsletter:

Our church website has a copy of the current month's newsletter. If you misplace your paper copy, you can go there to read it at: www.mononalutheran.org.

Happy Easter



MONONA MESSENGER
Monona Ev. Lutheran Church, LC—MS
4411 Monona Dr.
Monona, WI 53716
Address Service Requested

MARCH 2024

Divine Worship

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Communion Services

1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

Midweek Lenten & Advent

Vespers 6:00 p.m.

Sunday Christian Education Hour

Sunday School 10:15 am Sept. - May

Pastor: Rev. Thomas Nowak

Office Phone: 608.222.7071

E-mail: mlc-ms@hotmail.com

Website: www.mononalutheran.org

Stewardship Thought

The Holy Spirit Equips and Powers Us

“And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and He said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping?’” (Luke 22:45-46). Jesus was exhausted too. After all, He was human. He got hungry

and tired, just as His disciples did. We are prone to shake our heads at those lazy, disloyal disciples, but how often do we say we’re too tired to serve, too poor to give, too inadequate to help? Like the disciples who were transformed on Pentecost, we have received the Holy Spirit Who equips, enables, and energizes us to be God’s stewards.

Prayer: *Our gracious Heavenly Father, You have given us the message and the power to proclaim the Gospel. Give us joy and courage in our task. Forgive us when we fail our responsibility. Thank You for Your Son Who has lived the perfect life of stewardship for us. Through Him we ask these things. Amen.*

Blessings on your stewardship journey!



Empowered
by the
Holy Spirit

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

“Loving Christ, Serving Others through Preaching, Teaching, Reaching”