



St. Paul's EPISTLE

March 2022 edition

Reaching out with
the love of Jesus.



CRUSHED

A LENTEN INTRODUCTION

Notes on Worship

Beginning on the 2nd day of this month, we begin the all-too-familiar walk of Lent—40 days of preparation for the events of Holy Week and Easter. To

give you a glimpse into our worship during this season, I invite you to read some notes about our upcoming services with references to readings you'll hear during Lent. (The following paragraphs are taken from some of the additional resources of the new hymnal, all of which help edify and enrich our worship.)

The readings during Epiphany uncovered the principles by which Jesus' heavenly kingdom operates. Each of those principles is like a separate stone in the foundation on which the life of the Christian and the church is built (Luke 6:46-49, Epiphany 8). As the one who both advocated and embodied those principles to the fullest, Christ himself is the church's cornerstone (Luke 20:17, Lent 5).

Not everyone wants a life built on Christ and his Word, however. In a world under the influence of Satan, Christ and his church will always face opposition. During the season of Lent that opposition reaches its culmination as Christ goes toe-to-toe with our enemies. Even as Lent begins, however, we already know how it will end. What we witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration guarantees that when the dust from this cosmic battle settles, Christ will be the one left standing. As a result, the same cornerstone on which the Church is built is also a stone that crushes all who reject it (Luke 20:18, Lent 5).

Continued on page 2

- **Were You There?** p.2
- **Sports & More** p.3
- **Bear One Another's Mental Burdens** p.4
- **Improving Our Worship Experience** p.5
- **Financial Update** p.5
- **In the Mailbox** p.6
- **Easter for Kids** p. 6

Worship
Sunday at 8:00 & 10:30AM

www.stpaulswr.org

A LENTEN INTRODUCTION

continued from pg 1

Out of his great love for us, therefore, God gives us time to repent (Luke 13:1-9, Lent 3). Through his law and by the power of his Holy Spirit, he works in us a broken and contrite heart. Through his gospel and by that same Holy Spirit, he washes away our iniquity and restores to us the joy of his salvation (Psalm 51, Ash Wednesday). He crushes us in repentance now so that we will be spared from being crushed at the judgment later.

This is God's gracious work in us during Lent. Rather than Christ being a rock on which we stumble and fall, God uses his Word to

make him the solid rock on which we firmly stand (1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Lent 3).

LENT SERIES THEME: CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring:

"lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit." †

WERE YOU THERE?

Wednesdays in Lent

As most of you know, during Lent we have additional worship services on Wednesdays. Although our Ash Wednesday service will key off of the "Crushed" theme, the remaining Wednesday services will have the theme, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord." Of course, we will be singing the familiar hymn by the same name, but we will also focus on some of the people who were there when our Lord was condemned, was crucified, and died.

Our sister congregation, Good Shepherd, will also be using this theme at their Thursday midweek services. We will be welcoming their pastors (Pastors Tullberg and Melke) for two of our Lent midweek services. We will also look forward to Pastor Valleau

(our former vacancy pastor) serving us for one midweek service. And, our pastors will be serving the saints of Good Shepherd during their midweek service.

Lent at St. Paul's also means fellowship meals. These will be served on Wednesdays between 4:45-6:00 PM. A different ministry group will serve each week. On Ash Wednesday, the Willing Workers plan to have a taco bar. There will be a freewill offering at each meal to cover the cost of the food and to support that ministry group. If you attend the meals, we would appreciate it if you donate cookies or bars sometime during the season.

Wednesday Lenten Services are held at 4:00 & 6:30 PM beginning March 2 through April 6. Hope to see you there! †

Were you there
when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there
when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there
when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there
when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there
when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there
when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there
when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there
when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there
when they laid him in the tomb?

SPORTS AND MORE

by Staff Minister Randy Pahl

“Congratulations to our basketball team!” Mr. Melso exclaimed after chapel. “They were victorious in their game last night,” he announced to all who were in attendance. Next, he had the team members stand to a rousing ovation from their classmates, teachers, and the plethora of adults who had remained glued to their seats. Since that event took place, and at the time of the writing of this article, our St. Paul’s Panthers still have one home game remaining on the schedule = Tuesday, February 22 at 5:00 p.m. against St. Peter’s of Schofield. And, finally, on February 26 the Panthers will be competing in the annual Northland Lutheran Grade School Tournament = times are yet to be determined.

Having spoken with our Athletic Director, Ms. Rachel Haugly, she and I thought it would be nice to recognize our team members.

Here is a breakdown of the 2021-22 Panthers by grade: 8th – Vanessa Christenson; 7th – Jasmine Chapman, Kaiden Fairbanks, Xaris Sellnow; 6th – Lanny Boyles, Julia Christenson, Max Gaccetta, Josiah Sellnow; 4th – Ava Bay, Elysia Chapman, Carter Hulce, Charisma Johnson, Noah Rullman, and Mya Sabin. As you can see, we have a relatively young team which bodes well for the future of St. Paul’s basketball. We would also like to take this opportunity to say a great big, “THANK YOU” to our coaches: Jason and Melissa Christenson, as well as Sarah Sellnow who made being part of the Panthers a most enjoyable experience!

And, finally, as we begin our journey down the Lenten path to our Savior’s cross, may we always be reminded of the incredible love He has for us. And we would ask Lord that you would help us to share that same love with one another! †

4K Students enjoy learning on “super hero day.”



Registration for fall 2022
Is now open!

3K-8th grade

Apply online at
stpaulswr.org/school

Schedule at our:
715-421-3634



BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S MENTAL BURDENS

by Pastor Lucas Proeber

The Holy Spirit tells us in Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ.” What does that look like, though? As a church, we deal primarily with spiritual burdens. When a loved one is weighed down by guilt and shame, we work together to proclaim the full and free forgiveness of Jesus to that person. Guilt is lifted, and a burden is borne.

But that’s not where we stop as Christians. We care about the entire person since God created everyone with an eternal soul, as well as a mind and body. In Luther’s explanation of the Fifth Commandment, he urges us to “help and befriend [our neighbor] in every bodily need.” As a congregation, we have certainly found some striking ways to do this: clothing giveaways, Thanksgiving Day meals, food pantries, and supporting Dime and Dollar (just to name a few). A physical need is met, and a burden is borne.

What about the mind?

There are often benefits that come from speaking with fellow Christians or trusted called ministers about issues that aren’t exactly spiritual. We know that the principles of Scripture govern every part of our lives as we “make every thought captive so that it is obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

However, there are situations in which pastors or fellow congregation members have reached a point where they are simply not equipped to help

with mental burdens. Things like brain structure and function; dealing with trauma; and the delicacy with which mental illnesses must be discussed and treated are all points that make it difficult for pastors and fellow Christians to assist properly and effectively someone who is dealing with a heavy mental burden.

Providing Assistance

For that reason, we will be exploring participation in the Member Assistance Program or MAP. MAP is a program offered by Christian Family Solutions, the WELS-affiliated counseling ministry. MAP would allow members to receive counseling through a live video connection from their home or at St. Paul’s. This partnership also allows the Christian counseling services to be offered at no cost to the member. We, as a congregation, would purchase an allotment of counseling hours, which would then be used at the discretion of the pastors. The cost for the congregation is \$75/hour. That might seem like a lot, but that is 50% less than what is normally charged. Plus, these hours of counseling are another simple, yet effective, way to help bear one another’s burdens.

Look for more information on this as more is discussed and decided. There will be a portion of money set aside in our ministry plan for this service. Finally, direct any questions or comments you have to either of the pastors. †

IMPROVING OUR WORSHIP EXPERIENCE



Window Shades

You may have noticed a window shades installed over some of our stained glass windows. The early morning sunlight streaming through the east windows can make it difficult at times to see clearly what is on our video screens. Having the shades down should improve readability. The same is true at times with the afternoon sun at evening services. Therefore, shades will also be installed on the west side of the sanctuary.

Eventually shades will be installed on all of the stained glass windows, so can also use them to darken the sanctuary for Good Friday services. Five of the shades will be motorized and the others will have chain pulls. The cost was paid for with \$500

from the Willing Workers and donations from church members. Installation is being handled by volunteers.



Organ Restoration

Work on our organ has begun at the factory. They are getting the shop set up (something involving harnesses), have started building wind chests, and have ordered pipes. Transferring our organ to the factory is scheduled for the last week of February. Since they will have some preliminary work done, we hope that means we can have the organ back by Easter. While the organ is gone, our worship services will be accompanied by the clavichord, electronic piano. †

FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Michael Anderson, Financial Secretary

In an effort to give you a better understanding of our church's finances, each month we will have some additional, more detailed information to share with you.

Organ Fund: To date (2/10/22), \$106,917.00 has been given to fund the organ repair. We have made two of the required four payments so far, leaving us a balance of \$32,578.20 in the fund. Our next payment, due in about 6 weeks, is \$37,169.40, so we still have some work to do. We are only \$16,981.00 short of totally covering the repair! Thank you to all who have given over and above weekly offerings to support this project!

Gift received: An anonymous gift of \$25,000 was received by the church at the end of January. The gift was designated for Cheerful Givers. This gift will help us as we work to pay down our mortgage. (Current mortgage balance is \$1,167,148.13). A "Thank You" from the congregation was sent to the giver through an intermediary at the WELS Foundation.

Pastoral Retreat Door Offering: The offering received from the past two Sunday door collection has resulted in slightly over \$3,000 for the expenses

Pastor Proeber and Pastor Plagenz will incur when they travel to Texas in April. Thank you again to all who helped make this continuing education and fellowship event possible.

Synod offerings: The latest update from our synod shows that we are at 97% of our budget of \$28,000. When our December 2021 offering is posted, we will be well over that amount. In addition to the church's gift, they noted an additional \$5,570.00 in gifts from our members direct to synod.

Additional offerings: In addition to the weekly offerings reported in the bulletin, the month of January saw gifts of \$44,960 designated to the organ fund, MinisTREE gifts of \$600, and SCRIP income of \$1,900.75.

God has truly blessed us richly this month. Collectively, these gifts are used to help us carry out our ministry plan, to spread the gospel message, one heart and home at a time. Continue to pray for the church, its leaders, and our ministry plan.

If you have any questions regarding this financial snapshot, do not hesitate to ask me. I can be reached at 5JAnderson@charter.net or 715-423-5922. †

IN THE MAILBOX

Thank You from the Plagenz Family!

Two years ago this month, I drove a U-Haul truck filled with all our family's belongings into town as we moved to Wisconsin Rapids, so I could become one of your pastors. A lot has happened in those two years, and many things have changed. One thing that has not changed is your love and support for me and my family. We've seen that in so many ways including words of encouragement, thoughtful cards, and generous gifts.



In the past months, we have seen even more of this support! In the fall, many volunteers helped rebuild the deck on our parsonage. Thank you especially to Mike Paul, Josh Radtke, Kevin Meister, Jeremy Radtke, Peter Paul, Pastor Norm Paul, Mike Anderson, and Larry Wesenberg, as well as Dale Grove, Lauren's father.

These men gave many weekend hours or donated dollars to help with various parts of the project. Thank you! During the Christmas season, many of you gave special gifts to our family. Thank you! And now, with the birth of our third child, Matthea, many of you again gave special gifts to her and our family. Thank you!

We have greatly enjoyed becoming a part of the St. Paul's family. Thank you for everything you have done to make us feel at home. We love you all and sincerely look forward to many more years together!

Pastor Peter Plagenz



- Baptisms -
 Matthea Lynn Plagenz
 Alexander James Christopher
 - With the Lord -
 LaVern Becker

Words cannot express our gratitude for the support, encouragement, and prayers shown to us during this difficult time. Thank you to the Pastors for their comforting message of hope, the organists (Kristi & Sue) and all who helped serve the meal afterwards. The generosity and kindness shown to our family has been such a blessing. May God continue to bless us all.

Delores Becker, Veronica & Larry Klish



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for Easter for Kids



See the Ministry Table for more information or visit stpaulswr.org/easter-for-kids

Special Gifts & Memorials

Through February 13, 2022

Current Expenses

- In memory of Vivian Kroll given by Charlotte Carlson, Jim & Jeanne Jackson
- In memory of Bob Hetzel given by Charlotte Carlson
- In memory of LaVern Becker given by Randy & Pat DeBoer, Harvey Pierce, Stephanie Bathke, Inge Johnson
- In memory of Martin Obsuszt father, Michael M. Obsuszt, given by Jim & Jeanne Jackson
- In memory of Janet Heister's son given by Kevin & Laurie Meister

Organ Fund

- In honor of their parents, Tom & Sue Kulhanek given by Shinae & David Hildebrandt
- In memory of Helen Kuhn given by LaVern & Delores Becker, Edna & Faith Haferman
- In memory of Robert Hetzel given by Edna & Faith Haferman, Vaughn & Rhonda Hetzel, Barb Manz, and Family & Friends

- In memory of Bethel Hafermann given by Edna & Faith Haferman,
- In memory of Vernon Meyer given by Dick & Donna Berndt, John & Theresa Prebbanow
- In memory of LaVern Becker given by Betty Meyer, Carol Newsom, Tom & Sue Kulhanek, Mark & Debbie Freeberg, Tom & Debi Wittrock, Ron & Georgene Provost, Kevin & Laurie Meister, Dale Kretschmer, Robert Bell, City of Wisconsin Rapids, Barb Manz, Mike & Judy Anderson, and Family & Friends
- In memory of Lloyd Brock given by Barb Manz

Mortgage

- In memory of LaVern Becker given by Anita Simenson

Pastor Teacher Assistance Fund

- In memory of Bob Hetzel and Helen Kuhn given by Tom & Barb Reitz

CATECHISM CORNER

Luther on Prayer

We should be more encouraged and moved to pray because God also added a promise and declared that it shall surely be done for us as we pray. He says in Psalm 50:15, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you." And Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "Ask, and it will be given to you;...for everyone who asks receives" (7:7-8). Such promises certainly ought to encourage and kindle our hearts to pray with pleasure and delight. For He testifies with his own Word that our prayer is heartily pleasing to Him. Furthermore, it shall certainly be heard and granted, in order that we may not despise it or think lightly of it and pray based on chance. (Large Catechism, III, par.19-20)



A Closer Look

Some people pray to individuals who have died—individuals like Mary, other saints, or even family members—believing that those who are dead can do something about the challenges the living face on earth. God has never told us that those who have died can hear anything spoken to them by the living. Instead, God commands and invites us to go directly to him for all of our needs. When we place our confidence in someone other than God, we sin against the First Commandment.

- Luther's Catechism © 2017 NPH



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
311 14th Ave S
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-2402

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
Paid
Permit No. 46

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: 715-421-3634
E-mail: churchoffice@stpaulswr.org
March 2022 edition

WERE YOU THERE?
**Midweek
Lent Services**
Wednesdays
4:00 & 6:30 PM

Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 2

Pastor Lucas Proeber · 989-780-3184 · pastorproeber@stpaulswr.org
Pastor Peter Plagenz · 920-689-3036 · pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org