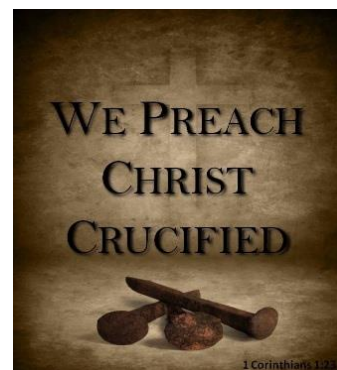




# MEMORIAL MESSENGER March 2020



*Where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*  
*Romans 5:20 – 6:2*

Some say it's no coincidence that *Lent* rhymes with *repent*. Although the very first of Martin Luther's 95 theses declares that the entire life of a Christian is one of repentance, Lent is the season of the Christian church year when there's a heightened focus on self-examination and on awareness of our need for salvation someone else had to win for us.

Lent is a time to recognize the many temptations we face daily to indulge our selfish, sinful desires. The sinful world shouts, "No one can tell anyone what to do! As long as it feels good and no one gets hurt, it's fine!" But even the sinful world labels substance abuse, embezzlement, harming children as wrongful, destructive acts.

But how about the less obvious forms of destructive living, those that creep into our lives in clever disguise? The sinful nature inside of me is delighted to compare myself to the flaws of others, then conclude that I'm better than they are. That's destructive to my soul because it doesn't examine what's wrong with me. I want to pile up more and more possessions, not satisfied with what God has given me. That's destructive to my walk with God because it suggests that things are more important to me than what the Savior has done for me.

Lent is a time to hear with somber, sensitive hearts the questions the Holy Spirit had Paul ask. "*What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*" The extra Lent services and the dominant Lent tone lead us to examine our lives in the light of God's law. Look at the suffering Savior – and see the steep price God demands for sin! Look at my life with God – and see how easily I walk the other way, the easier way, the way the world walks. Is that why Jesus died for us, and thus *we died to sin*? Never! Seeing what the Savior has done to rescue me from hell forever, *how can [I] love in [sin] any longer?*

We're a few days into Lent now. We know where the lessons will take us: to the upper room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the courts of Caiaphas and Annas and Pilate, the cross at Calvary. We don't just shuffle along the way at a safe distance behind Jesus as though we're interested tourists visiting a holy site. He is carrying our guilt, winning our victory over sin. We walk with Him repentant – terrified that we have defied the holy God, rejoicing in His forgiveness, using His power to put sin behind us, living in the freedom from sin He won for us.

May the Holy Spirit bless our Lent repentance as we walk with Jesus and away from sin!

*Pastor Voss*





**THE WALK ALONG OUR SAVIOR'S** path to His crucifixion continues *each Wednesday this month* with worship services **at 7:00**. The final midweek Lent service is April 1.

Join us to praise God for the gift of salvation won by our Savior for us sinners in His life, death, and resurrection. Area WELS pastors are conducting the services under the theme *The Son of God Goes Forth to War*.

**LENT SUPPERS** precede each midweek Lent service. We are doing this as an opportunity for families to come here for their evening meal, then receive spiritual nourishment from God's Word, and still be able to return home by a decent hour.

The remaining suppers begin at **6:00**. A free will offering to help with meal expenses will be received each week. Our thanks to all who will volunteer to provide food for these suppers, as well as to those who will set things up for the meals and clean up after them!

*We are still looking for several families to host the last two suppers.* The dates are March 25 and April 1. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the main church bulletin board for the date that you choose.

**THE WALK** to our Savior's cross and empty tomb reaches its climax the second weekend of April with a number of special worship services.

***OUR HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE:***

Palm Sunday, April 5 – one service only at 10:00 with the Concert Choir of MLS joining us

Maundy Thursday, April 9 – 7:00 PM with Communion

Good Friday, April 10 – 7:00 PM: Tenebrae (darkness) service

Easter Sunday, April 12 – **7:30 & 10:30 AM**

Easter breakfast served 8:45 - 9:35 **at our school**; no Sunday School or Bible Class

**THE CHILDREN** of our *Sunday School* will sing at the beginning of the 10:30 service Easter Sunday. They have been rehearsing their song at the beginning of each Sunday School session.

Students in *grades K-5* from our school will sing at the beginning of each service and have been practicing daily at our school.

**INVITE UNCHURCHED** loved ones, friends, and neighbors to our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services, as we celebrate the greatest events in world history: ***Christ has died and is risen to save us sinners!*** Invite them to our Easter Breakfast as well. Use the invitation cards on the narthex counter to extend your invitation to them to worship with us.



**THE VOICE CHOIR** has resumed rehearsals. The choir meets **Thursday evenings at 6:30**. We are practicing anthems to sing in mid-March and for our Holy Week services.

We ask you to prayerfully consider joining the choir. We could use more voices. Any communicant member is welcome to sing with us. What a joy it is to serve our Savior and His church this way!

**THE LADIES FELLOWSHIP GROUP** This month we are going to make greeting cards to be sent to our shut-ins and hospitalized members. Please bring any scripture verse stamps you have and any other materials you have that we can use to make these cards. We especially focus on *thinking of you* and *praying for you* type cards.

At this meeting Monday, March 2 we will also decide on our mission projects since we had too many absent last month due to illness, and we will make final plans for the Lent meal that we will host on March 4.





**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME** begins *Sunday, March 8!* Set your clocks *ahead* one hour *Saturday evening, March 7.*

**PRESCHOOL ROUNDUP** at our school will be *Wednesday, March 4 at 9:30.* If you know of a family interested in Preschool for next year, please tell them about this special day and speak to Mrs. Leitz. Children must be 3 years old by September 1 to enroll.

**KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP** at our school will be *Friday, March 6 at 9:30.* Letters have been prepared for our church and school families who have children of Kindergarten age for next school year, and others who have expressed an interest in our Kindergarten.

If you are aware of anyone who might be interested, please speak to Mrs. Leitz or Pastor Voss to get information sent to that family. Children must be 5 years old by September 1 to enroll in Kindergarten.



**THE MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY CONCERT CHOIR** will present God's Word in song at our church Sunday morning, *April 5.* To accommodate the choir's travel, there will be *one service April 5 at 10:00.* Our member Hannah Domke is a member of the concert choir.

Following the service, there will be a dinner for the students (and their family members who are here for the service). Watch for an announcement later this winter about how you can help with the meal.

Because of the different schedule that morning, and due to the choir's need to use our fellowship hall and sanctuary to prepare for the service, there will be no Sunday School or Bible Class sessions that morning, nor will there be first-Sunday-of-the-month refreshments.

**OUR 10-FOR-10** Stewardship emphasis continues. We are not hoping to get more money into the General Fund. We are rather encouraging you to ponder earnestly how richly God has blessed us sinners with forgiveness and eternal life in Christ, and then to consider prayerfully whether it is feasible for us to increase our thankofferings.

The first **10** in *10-For-10* is a suggestion that members evaluate committing **10%** of their income to support the Lord's kingdom work (the percentage that God required of His Old Testament people in Israel). If that isn't feasible for you, we ask you to consider increasing your thankofferings by **10%** of the amount you had been offering in 2019.

The second **10** in *10-For-10* is **10 weeks.** We suggest individuals and families consider an increase in thankofferings for the 10-week period from January 19 – March 29. At the end of those 10 weeks, individual and families will re-evaluate the amount of thankofferings they bring to the Lord.

Please understand that these are only suggestions. We also stress that there will not be any reports generated about specific giving units with an increase or decrease in thankofferings.

May our gracious God fill our hearts with joy in Jesus, and move us to offer him a percentage of our God-given gifts that honors Him!

**OUTREACH MATERIALS** The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship reminds members that we have copies of the **WELS DVDs "Road to Emmaus", "Come, Follow Me", and "My Son, My Savior"** are available for purchase (\$3 per copy; 2 for \$5).

Consider purchasing copies for your family and friends to show them why the work of the Savior is needed by every sinner. *Any, or all, of these videos would be a great way to invite them to our special Lent services and to the Holy Week services April 5, 9, 10, and April 12.*

**SCHOOL NIGHT AT CULVERS** A portion of the sales at Culver's in Okemos (Times Square Drive; across from Aldi) on *Monday, March 23 5:00 – 10:00* will be given to our school. Consider eating at Culver's that night. Invite friends and families to do so, too. Drive-through orders will count as well.

**PIZZA PARTY** On *Saturday, March 14 at 4:00* there will be a pizza party for our church & school families to celebrate the completion of the youth basketball games and to thank the supporters of the program.

The menu will include pizza from Williamston's Spag's restaurant, home-cooked ribs, salads and subs. You are asked to bring a favorite dessert to share. After dinner, the gym will be open for our use and tables will be set for a euchre card party.

We hope you can join us! Please sign up at church or school.

**THE CMLAL VOLLEYBALL** tournament will be held in our school gym on *Saturday, March 28*. Games will begin at 10 AM and continue into early afternoon. If you can help with concessions, please speak to Pastor Voss or Judy Domke.

**WELS APP** Every so often we remind you about the WELS app that our Synod has developed and makes available with a free download. We encourage you to download the WELS app – and use it!

It has a church locator for your travels, daily devotions, Bible reading series, and much more!

**WELS CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S RETREAT** will be held *March 13-15* at Treetops Resort in Gaylord. You will find more information, as well as register online, at [www.SistersInChrist.org](http://www.SistersInChrist.org).

**IF YOU WILL BE AWAY FROM CHURCH** and/or out of town for an extended period of time, there is a convenient way to submit regularly your thankoffering. You can instruct your bank to mail a check to *Memorial Ev. Lutheran Church / 1022 W. Grand River Ave. / Williamston, MI 48895*. When such checks arrive the mail, they are given to our thankoffering counters the following Monday. The amount is deposited into our General Fund, and the amount is noted for your account as our Financial Secretary keeps a record of all thankofferings by our members.

**IF YOU HAVE ACCESS** to the internet and get this *Memorial Messenger* that way, please let us know and we will no longer print a copy for you.

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

**PASTOR'S REPORT** – *WELS news*: Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) totals for 2019 across WELS totaled \$21,242,962 (\$21,111,878 in 2018). That was more than \$300,000 over the amount of 2019 subscriptions. That \$21+ million total included \$2,258,785 from Michigan District congregations (\$2,146,645 in 2018), which was 106% of the amount Michigan District congregations promised in subscriptions at the beginning of 2019.

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** – *Classroom Grades 1-5*: Sickness led to many missed days and a lot of make up work. Mrs. Domke is working with students and parents to stay on top of assignments. Mrs. Domke is encouraging participation in MLS Science and Fine Arts Fair Saturday, March 7.

***Classroom Pre-school and Kindergarten***: A new 3-year-old student is working out well. Prorated tuition for her was set by our board. Mrs. Leitz announced to parents make up days for Preschool when illness closed school.

***General School items***: ACT Aspire materials have been ordered for Spring 2020 testing. Cost for 7 students: \$199.50.

Mrs. Leitz has contacted Culvers in Okemos (near Marsh Road) for a Memorial Lutheran School night that will allow us to get a percentage of sales for that evening. It will be Monday, March 23.

***Upcoming events***: March 7 Science and Fine Arts Fair at MLS Saginaw; March 20 CMLAL Choir Concert at Emmanuel First – Lansing;

***PTO***: January 15th PTO meeting – Attendance was strong. Work bee for playground was discussed, along with the preliminary draft for the 2020-2021 school year calendar.

***Sunday School***: Sunday School children will sing in church in March.

***2020-21 tuition***: Was discussed and will be discussed further at our next board meeting.

**Dates for VBS 2020:** July 27-30 appears to be workable for our faithful VBS helpers.

**2020-2021 School Calendar:** Faculty prefers starting a few days earlier: Wednesday, August 26 instead of Monday August 31. That means we'd need to move registration to Wednesday August 19. We will discuss this further, tweak the calendar, and adopt it at our March meeting.

**BOARD OF ELDERS** – The Elders discussed upcoming special worship services for the Lenten season and Holy Week. As has been our practice in the past when Easter Sunday falls on 2nd or 4th Sunday of the month, we will not have Communion due to the anticipated higher number of visitors worshipping that day.

Our summer Thursday evening services will be at 7:00 pm and begin on May 21 and run through September 3.

Pastor will meet with chime choir members to discuss possible candidates for the chime choir director.

The voice choir has resumed rehearsals in preparations for Lent, Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday.

**BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP** – We will use the bulletin, newsletter, and Facebook posts to inform people about our midweek Lent suppers and services, inviting them to join us. The board also asks our office secretary to make more flyers about our church and school to have the flyers available for our members to use in inviting people to worship with us.

The 10-For-10 stewardship emphasis that began January 19 will continue through March 29. At our board's April meeting we'll get a report from our financial secretary, in very general terms, about any increase in thankofferings.

Several groups have volunteered to host Lent suppers. We are looking for hosts for three more suppers. The open dates are March 18, March 25, and April 1.

Our new member reception is usually Palm Sunday, and features a pot luck dinner at school after the late service that day. This year our congregation hosts the MLS Concert Choir on Palm Sunday, April 5. On that Sunday there will be one service at 10:00, and then a meal prepared by our members for the choir and their family members to eat in the church fellowship hall after the service. We discussed moving the new member reception to March 29, but that would involve members making food for three straight Sundays. Therefore, this year we will have the new member reception in connection with the Easter Breakfast on April 12. 9

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES** - Our board recommends the purchase and installation of 19 window replacements, double hung, no grills installed, for the parsonage.

The bathroom vent fan was repaired.

## ***BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL***



**FROM MRS. LEITZ AND PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN:** This month we have been learning about Joshua, Gideon, and Samson leading the Israelite people back to God. The people would let the outside world influence their faith and allow them to stray from God but then God would bring leaders to them to lead them back to God. Just as we sometimes stray from God and let outside worldly things affect our faith life. We need to go to church and dive daily into God's Word so that we do not stray from God or replace Him with other things.

The preschoolers continue to progress in their learning and have been covering the math concept of putting things in order according to size. The threes have been working on their shapes and next month will be working more on their fine motor skills. The fours have been working on their letters and patterns with shapes and colors this month. We have also had our post office up and running in the dramatic play center learning how our postal system works. We will be learning all about the ocean in the month of March and hope to have a submarine or boat to play in for our next center.

Don't forget we have round up coming up in our first week of March for preschool and Kindergarten. If you know of anyone interested please pass on the information.

May the Lord bless your month as we reflect on His suffering death, and the hope this gives us!



Next month grades 3-5 will head to MSU for the Young People's Introduction to the Band concert. It will be a great way to see and hear what the instruments of an orchestra are all like. That same week grades K-5 will head to MLS to see *Pan!*, a children's play all about Peter Pan. What a great week we will have!

