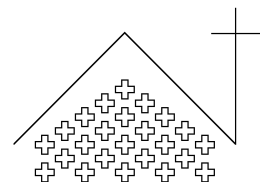


THE FAITHFUL REPORTER



Faith Memorial Lutheran Church
The Rev. John M. Albers, Pastor

753 N. Calumet Av. (Old Hwy. 49)
(219) 462-7684

Valparaiso, IN 46383-7903
Vol. 18, No. 1, February, 2010

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR LENT

Bible study to be accompanied by opportunity to “practice”

Beginning on Sunday, February 21, folks at Faith Memorial will have TWO options for Sunday Morning bible study.

One, a study on the lectionary texts for that Sunday will be led by Pastor Albers. The second will be led by Prof. Rene Schoer from Valparaiso University and a FMLC member.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

The concept of spiritual practices or “disciplines” is from early monastic traditions. Disciplines were meant to help people become more Christlike and/or follow the way of life of the monastery — through silence, prayer, service, preaching, etc.

In short, spiritual disciplines — practices that train us in faithfulness — take practice, discipline, practice, and help.

The study that Rene will lead beginning on February 21 and continuing throughout the season of Lent will just “introduce” these practices.

After a brief introduction to the concept on the 21st of February, following weeks will focus on just one practice. These will include: lectio divina (sacred

reading), silence/solitude, Sabbath keeping, hospitality, and service.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

It’s a perfect season for this sort of introduction, since the season of Lent is designed as a time for this very thing. The addition of midweek worship is an example of this sort of practice.

Pastor Albers is developing a companion piece for daily use by congregational members, a Lenten prayer book that will include a short outline for daily prayer for individuals, couples, or families.

Each week the “theme” of the prayer will mirror the theme for Shoer’s Sunday morning study.

You might notice that “prayer”, one of the most common of spiritual practices, is not included in the study for Lent. The first 10 days of this prayer book will focus on the theme of prayer.

Readings and devotions for the next several weeks will put into practice the specific spiritual practice discussed during the Sunday morning class.

(See “Bible Study Plans,” page 4)

A NEW YEAR

The Faithful Reporter turns 18-years-old

Did you notice, THE FAITHFUL REPORTER turns 18 this year. And it’s about time it takes on a new look.

Pastor Albers would like to find ways to “jazz up” the look and feel of our church newsletter, including the increase of features regularly prepared by church members. (As an example see “Book Corner”, page 7)

But new features are only part of the plan. Eighteen years ago, THE FAITHFUL REPORTER took on a more “newspaper” feel, with headlines, articles, and the like. After so many years the content might be fresh and appealing, but the look can still use a bit of a “face lift.”

Any ideas? If you would like to be part of this “makeover, send an email to newsletter@faithmemorial.net. In the next couple of weeks a design team will get together and start dreaming a bit more about the possibilities, of what “could be.”

In the meantime: take more photos, submit more information, and consider the possibility of how you can participate.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Lenten season begins with traditional liturgy

Lent begins again on February 17, Ash Wednesday.

The season of Lent is a kind of spring cleaning for the body and spirit – a time to take stock of our lives and check for false gods and idols that may have crept unnoticed into the premises of our hearts, and to begin cleaning them out by the power of God’s spirit.

Lent is intended as a time of preparation for the celebration of the central mystery of the Christian faith, our redemption in Jesus Christ. The season culminates in the Paschal Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The season reaches its conclusion in the celebration of Easter.

ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY

Ash Wednesday begins the 40-day journey, reminding us of our sinfulness and, using the words of the confession of sins, “what we by our sins have deserved.” The mark of the cross is intended to be a two-fold symbol. One, it reminds us of our sin and, two, it reminds us of that which Christ, our Savior, did to save us from that sin.

Like last year, there will be an “early morning” option for Ash Wednesday. A spoken setting of the Ash Wednesday liturgy will begin the day at 7:00am. There will also be a service at 7:00pm “as usual.”



WHAT’S INSIDE

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Pastor’s Perspective | ... p. 2 |
| Small Group Activities | ... p. 2 |
| Thoughts from the Deaconess | ... p. 3 |
| Worship Schedule | ... p. 3 |
| Assisting Ministers’ Schedule | ... p. 4 |
| Youth Update | ... p. 4 |
| Kids’ Korner | ... p. 5 |
| What’s Happening!! | ... p. 6 |
| Book Review Corner | ... p. 6 |
| Hilltop Fundraiser | ... p. 7 |
| Stewardship Thoughts | ... p. 7 |
| Revitalization | ... p. 8 |
| Interesting E-mail | ... p. 8 |
| That You May Have Life | ... p. 9 |
| Transforming Churches Retreat | ... p. 9 |
| Special Events | ... p. 9 |
| The Financial Reporter | ... p. 10 |
| Voters’ Assembly Report | ... p. 10 |
| Difficult Decisions Ahead | ... p. 10 |
| Lectionary Focus | ... p. 11 |

Pastor's Perspective

WELCOME TO THE "NEUTRAL ZONE"

It may sound like the introduction to a weird take-off of a television series made popular in the early 1960s, but it's not. For one thing, I'm not Rod Serling, nor do I have a fascination with the unexplainable.

In this case the "neutral zone" refers to the time we have now entered as a congregation, the time after our efforts in revitalization have begun and before we have seen the tremendous results we anticipate and long (pray?) for.

BIBLICAL BUSINESS IMAGE

Interestingly, the concept comes from a book, *Managing Transitions*, which I read along with the Revitalization Learning Community of which I am a part. It was prepared for a *corporate* audience, a way of helping those in business to move through any number of transitions.

Interestingly, the authors primary image in trying to explain his concepts is a biblical one, Moses leading the people of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness to the promised land. In this case "Egypt" is anything and everything a business or other organization needs to leave behind. The "promised land" is the goal of the organization once it has come through a period of transition. The "wilderness" is the time in between the letting go of what has been and the end goal.

BEGINNING WITH AN ENDING

Each "transition," the author suggests, "begins with an ending and ends with a beginning." We've studied and contemplated our mission and values. We've made some rather significant changes to our congregational structure. We have stated rather emphatically the kind of things we must "leave behind", for example: a focus "inward" rather than "outward".

This and other "endings" can remain statements on paper, or they can truly die and become a part of our past. I pray that they are a part of our history rather than our future.

This and other "endings" can remain statements on paper, or they can truly die and become a part of our past. I pray that they are a part of our history rather than a part of our future.

ENDING WITH A BEGINNING

This time of transition, we pray, will be marked by a new beginning, a new energy and enthusiasm for ministry, a new way of "getting things done" and organizing ourselves for mission. We can already see "hints" of the beginning as individuals are capturing a "spirit" of what is possible rather than focusing only on the seemingly impossible hurdles we face.

THE NEUTRAL ZONE

In the middle is the "neutral zone". It will, the author reminded me, be a time of difficulty and more than a little confusion. It will be a time of angst on the part of some as the "comfortable" is laid aside and an unknown future is placed before us.

It will also, they promise, be a time of great energy and enthusiasm, of creativity and inspiration. It will have much in common with the wilderness. We move forward, however, with the promise from our God, "I am with you ALWAYS!"

That is my perspective of life among God's people at Faith Memorial Lutheran Church. What's yours?

Pastor John Albers

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

WEDNESDAY WOMEN — The luncheons of the Wednesday Women are opportunities for informal fellowship. The group now will be meeting for lunch at 11:30am on the first Wednesday of March, June, September, and December.

The December gathering was the annual Christmas Luncheon held at Strongbow Inn on Wednesday, December 2. March 3 will be here before you know it! Contact Linda Berner, 462-2774, if you would like to be included on her list of "regulars" to be called each quarter.

Friends and family who are not an active part of the Faith Memorial family are WELCOME! Please invite them to join the group.

GRAPE CLUSTER — Members of the cluster gathered at the home of Ted and Barb Prange on Sunday, January 17.

The schedule for the balance of 2010 was determined by the group. If you missed this gathering, cluster members should check with a cluster friend as soon as possible to get the details of the schedule.

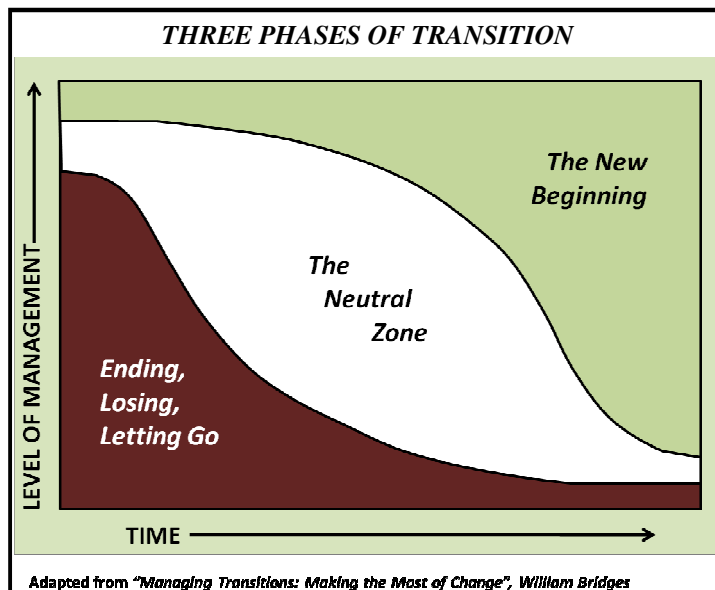
Ted Prange is also organizing the Grape Cluster to provide soup for one of the five Lenten suppers (March 10). Let Ted know how you can help.

WOMEN WANTING WISDOM — The group did meet on the third Wednesday in January (January 20th) and plans for that to be their "regular" schedule going forward ... unless Lent and Advent interrupt.

Since the 3rd Wednesday in Lent is Ash Wednesday, the group is relocating their gathering in February to the 10th, at 7:00pm, at the home of Dorothy Kehe. They will conclude their discussion of "The Shack," by William P. Young.

YOUTH NEWS — Members of the Senior Youth Group continue to make plans for participation in the National Youth Gathering in the summer of 2010.

Take a look at the more detailed information about the Youth group plans on page 4 of this edition of THE FAITHFUL REPORTER.



**SUBMISSIONS
NECESSARY!**

Submissions of articles and news items are absolutely necessary for THE FAITHFUL REPORTER to be an efficient and helpful publication. Thanks to those who continue to submit regular articles. Each board chairperson and officer should consider submitting regular updates on the activity of his or her board or office. Everyone is invited to participate.

THE FAITHFUL REPORTER is the primary communication resource for the people of Faith Memorial Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, Indiana.

THE FAITHFUL REPORTER is published monthly throughout the year. Officers, board chairpersons, and other members or friends of Faith Memorial are encouraged to submit articles on upcoming events, updates on congregation activities, and items of interest for our members and friends. Deadline for submission of articles is the 2nd last Tuesday of each month. Content of articles and other submissions must be in harmony with the mission of the congregation and serve to promote unity and fellowship among God's people.

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8:30am-3:30pm

MISSION STATEMENT
Embraced by God
through the Gospel
of Jesus Christ our Lord,
we share hope and healing
within and throughout
our community.

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"The Lord's Prayer"

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name . . .

The word that is translated *hallowed* comes from a Greek verb *hagiazesthai*. This is connected with the adjective *hagios*, and means to treat a person or a thing as *hagios*. *Hagios* is usually translated as holy; but the basic meaning of *hagios* is different or separate. We can think of Sunday as *hagios* because it is different (or should be) from other days. So, this petition means that God's name is to be *hagios*, or different from any other name.

But along with that, God's name is not just what we call God. In Hebrew *the name* means much more than merely the name by which a person is called. *The name* means the whole character of the person as it is revealed and known to us. Psalm 9:10 says, "Those who know thy name put their trust in thee." That means that those who know the whole character and mind and heart of God will gladly put their trust in him. Psalm 20:7 continues the idea, "Some boast of chariots and some of horses, but we boast of the *name* of the Lord our God."

This petition parallels the second commandment where we are told to not misuse God's name. It seems like respecting God's name is harder to do. As I was in conversation with someone, he was lamenting the foul language that permeates TV and radio. But in the same sentence, he called on God's name in ways that were disrespectful. He wasn't even aware of what he was saying. Daily, he is surrounded by the same behavior, and he now mimics it without any thought. It happens to all of us. "Oh my gosh" turns into "Oh my God", when we had absolutely no intention of calling on God because of a burned dinner. Sadly, when others hear our flip-pant use of God's name, they will see no need to respect God.

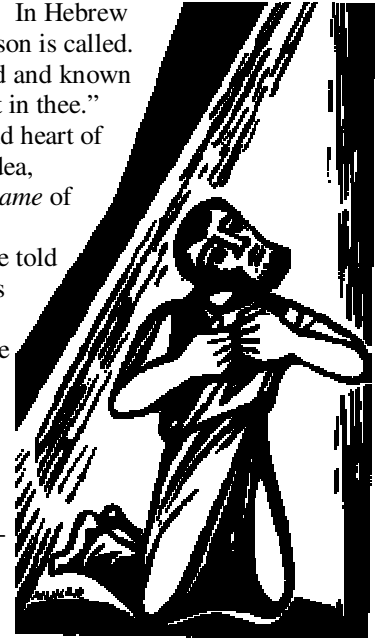
So, how do we pray this petition? "The truth is that we cannot pray the Lord's Prayer to the glory of God unless at the same time we pray it against ourselves." (Helmut Thielicke) We can't pray this petition, unless we are willing to acknowledge our own lack of respect for God's name. We can't pray this petition unless we are willing to let God's *hagios* enter into our lives. And maybe that is where the real problem lies.

What does it mean to let God's *hagios*, God's difference enter into our lives? What is different about God from any other being in all of creation? We could say that God is all-powerful, knows everything, can breathe life and take life away, can create from nothing, and all of the other traits that are mentioned in scripture. But the one difference that sets God apart from all other beings is that God became one of us through Jesus Christ.

Jesus was willing to let God's difference take over his life. God was the center of all that Jesus said and did. Ultimately, that led to death on a cross.

May we not pray "hallowed be thy name" unless we are willing to let God's *hagios* into our lives.

Becky Graef, Deaconess



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Unless otherwise noted, all services are from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

| | Day | Time & Service | Time & Service |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| February 7 | Epiphany 5 | 8:00am, Word and Prayer Setting from <i>With One Voice</i> | 10:45am, Holy Communion Setting from <i>With One Voice</i> |
| February 14 | Transfiguration of Our Lord | 8:00am, Holy Communion <i>with Burying of Alleluias</i> | 10:45am, Holy Communion <i>with Burying of Alleluias</i> |
| February 17 | Ash Wednesday | 7:00am, Holy Communion <i>with Imposition of Ashes</i> | 7:00pm, Holy Communion <i>with Imposition of Ashes</i> |
| February 21 | Lent 1 | 8:00am, Morning Prayer | 10:45am, Holy Communion |
| February 24 | Lenten Midweek | 7:00pm, Evening Prayer, <i>A Liturgy for Lent</i> | |
| February 28 | Lent 2 | 8:00am, Holy Communion | 10:45am, Morning Prayer |
| March 3 | Lenten Midweek | 7:00pm, Evening Prayer, <i>A Liturgy for Lent</i> | |
| March 7 | Lent 3 | 8:00am, Morning Prayer | 10:45am, Holy Communion |
| March 10 | Lenten Midweek | 7:00pm, Evening Prayer, <i>A Liturgy for Lent</i> | |

Assisting Ministers' Schedule, February 7 — March 7

| | Hour | Acolytes | Altar Guild | Cantors | Communion Assistants | Intercessors | Lectors | Ushers |
|--|---------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| February 7 5th Sunday after Epiphany | 8:00am | J. Grossnickle | | Adult Choir | | J. Szoke | A. Lyons | K. Kehe & A. Lyons |
| | 10:45am | T. Price | D. Albers | L. Frost | I. Nimtz | M. Chambers | S. Nord | A. & F. Marton |
| February 14 Transfiguration of Our Lord | 8:00am | E. Gustafson | K. Albertson | B. Berner | 1. D. Pilz 2. D. Kehe A. Brandt | A. Lyons | D. Pilz | S. Szoke & K. Eichstaedt |
| | 10:45am | A. Price | D. Cawby | P. Nord | | M. Price | M. Price | D. & M. Chambers |
| February 17 Ash Wednesday | 7:00pm | H. Albers | L. Berner | Adult Choir | T. Prange | L. Berner | M. Porter | A. & F. Marton |
| February 21 1st Sunday in Lent | 8:00am | J. Grossnickle | | C. Kilpinen | | | J. Kilpinen | J. & C. Splitgerber |
| | 10:45am | T. Price | D. Albers | Adult Choir | I. Nimtz | M. Chambers | S. Nord | K. Kehe & B. Lindner |
| February 24 7th Day of Lent | 7:00pm | H. Albers A. Price | | D. Porter | | | B. Kehe | A. Lyons & L. Berner |
| February 28 2nd Sunday in Lent | 8:00am | E. Gustafson | E. Bradshaw | F. Schultz | 1. C. Splitgerber 2. D. Allwardt | B. Kehe | B. Kehe | S. Szoke & K. Eichstaedt |
| | 10:45am | H. Albers | | F. Schultz | | | M. Chambers | M. Zasada & M. Lindner |
| March 3 13th Day of Lent | 7:00pm | OPEN | | B. Berner | | | | J. & C. Splitgerber |
| March 7 3rd Sunday in Lent | 8:00am | OPEN | | OPEN | | | A. Lyons | OPEN & OPEN |
| | 10:45am | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | A. & F. Marton |

NOTE: As always, it is VERY helpful if Assisting Ministers take the time to SIGN-UP themselves, rather than be scheduled by the office. If you would RATHER have the office "assign" you a time, please just let Becky Graef know.

BIBLE STUDY PLANS

(Continued from page 1)

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR STUDY

There are, currently, about 30 folks regularly involved in bible study on Sunday morning or at other times in the week. The intentional move to two bible studies on Sunday morning is designed to accomplish several things:

- Eliminate "excuses"/"reasons" why people don't attend study (e.g. "That's way over my head.")
- Increase the number of persons actively engaged in bible study each week, from about 30 presently to 40 or more by the end of 2010.
- Introduce a wider diversity of topics, styles, and target audiences (there may be studies in the future designed specific for men, or young couples, etc.)

OTHER STUDIES

The Wednesday morning study continues to read and discuss the book, "Five Love Languages." The discussion will likely continue through the season of Lent and a new study theme announced in early March.

The Thursday morning study group is currently studying the gospel reading for the coming Sunday. The group found this the best option during the weeks of winter, when weather can dramatically impact participation. Again, a new study theme will begin in the season of Easter (early April).

YOUTH ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The Youth Hit the Ice (Literally)

The youth from FMLC enjoyed an evening of ice skating at Deep River Water Park on their recent youth night, January 16. All who attended had a great time, which outweighed the aches and pains that Mrs. Schneider (who was the first and most frequent faller of the group) felt the next day.

Although this was Hannah Albers; first attempt at ice skating, she was the only youth who didn't fall at least once during the night. Ashleigh Schneider, who had only ice skated once at the age of five, was a natural speed skater. However, she took a hard fall and bonked her head on the ice, demonstrating that the apple does not fall far from the tree.

Anna and Thomas Price (with friend Andrea Howey), who were more experienced skaters, showed the rest of us how to properly fall the one time they fell. A welcome part of the night was a hot chocolate break, which warmed everyone a little before the second round of skating. The youth were joined by Robby Schneider, Jackson Block, and Mr. Schneider.

Youth activity nights are scheduled on the third Saturday of the month. The

next one is on February 20. Ideas are discussed at the Youth planning meetings on the FIRST Sunday of each month immediately following the 10:45am service.

Each of the activities is designed to include friends, especially those who may not actively attend church.

If you have an idea for an event speak with Mrs. Schneider on Sunday morning, or just come to the next gathering on Sunday, February 7.

If anyone is interested in receiving youth updates, so they can join upcoming youth activities, please email Deb Schneider at dfarrarschneider@behaviorspecialists.net to be added to the youth email list.



Get it on your schedule ...

ANNUAL YOUTH DINNER DANCE

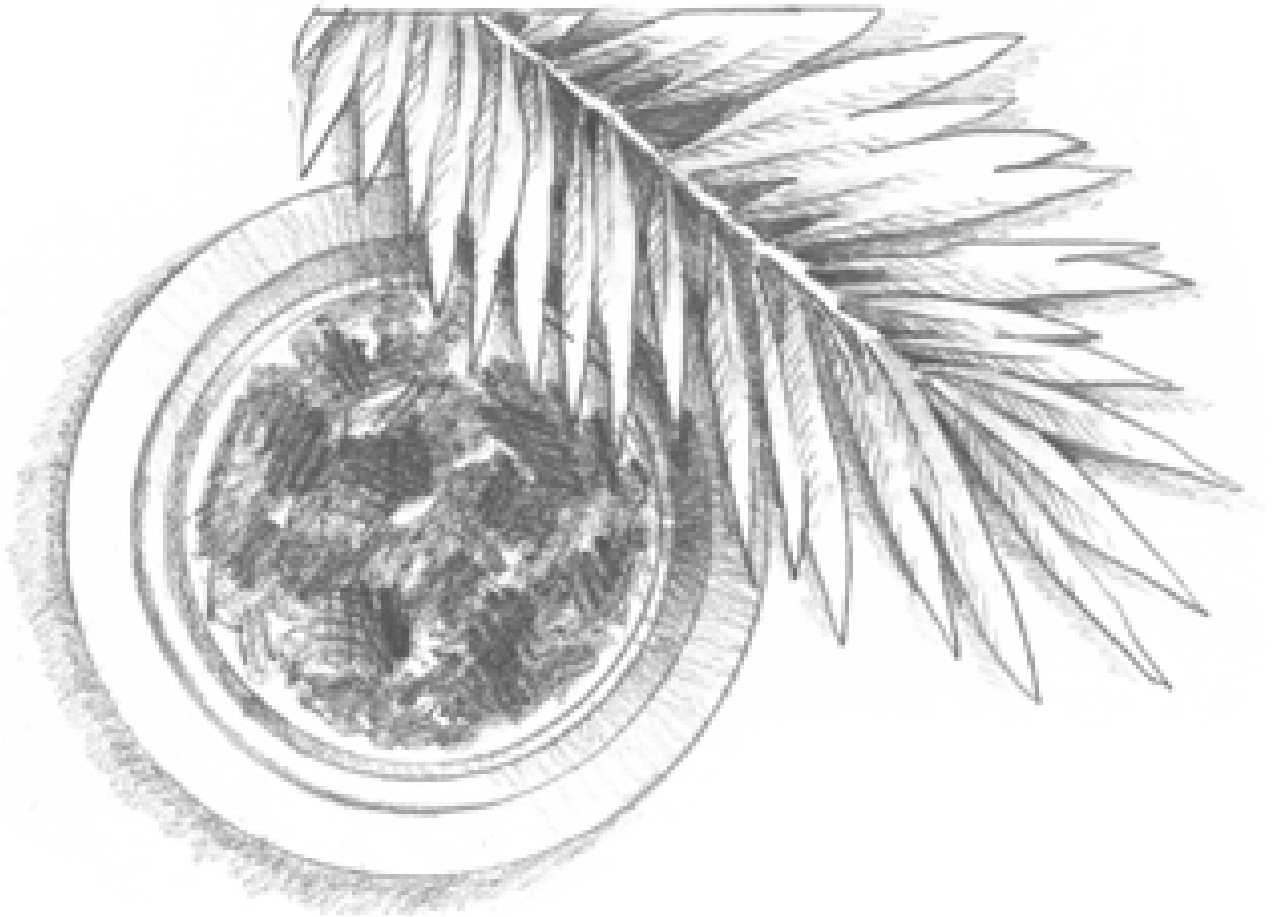
Saturday, March 6

Plan to invite a friend.

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17 is known as ASH WEDNESDAY. It is the first day of Lent. In church that day Christians throughout the world receive a cross of ashes on their forehead to remind them of their sinfulness and how God's people rely on God's love in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for their sins.

The ashes which are used for this service are made by taking palm branches used last Palm Sunday and burning them. The ashes are then combined with olive oil. The minister places them on the forehead of worshipers with these words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return."



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Need answers? Come find out more!

No, it's not a re-run (©) of a popular 1970s sitcom ... Raj and Dwayne and Re-run won't be dribbling a basketball down the sidewalk ... it's a plan to make sure you know better how to get involved at Faith Memorial.

A few seconds before worship begins is just not enough — ask any member of the staff who has ever tried to explain an event or recruit new persons to get involved.

Beginning Sunday morning, February 21, there will be at least one more opportunity for you to find out "What's Happening!!"

YOUTH AND OTHERS

For this first session Pastor Albers has asked the YOUTH LEADERS to bring an update concerning their plans for the coming months: the dinner dance on March 6, stock sales, and other fundraisers leading up to the National Youth Gathering this summer in New Orleans.

The Relay for Life team is getting organized and already planning at least one major fund-raising event. The event is earlier in the year (in May) and will require some additional organization if the group wants to eclipse their record results from last year's effort.

The Men's Overnight Shelter team looks to be having another banner year in their efforts to involve more and more FMLC folks in this ministry.

"DOWN" TIME

Several leaders observed that there is significant "down time" on Sunday mornings, especially on the 1st and 3rd Sundays when we use the Morning Prayer liturgy at 8am.

The idea is to "capture" this time and more regularly update those who members and friends are interested. Since we're not just "waiting for church to begin" the updates can be a bit more detailed and include some time for Q & A.

WOMEN WANTING WISDOM

An opportunity for you ...
... and your friends

Since last fall a small group of women from Faith Memorial have been gathering for conversation and fellowship.

Although the "holiday season" put a dent in their regular gatherings, they got together on the third Wednesday in January (January 20) and plan to meet again in February.

Since February also brings the season of Lent which brings a full schedule for Wednesday evenings, the group is moving up their regular meeting week to February 10. They will gather at the home of Dorothy Kehe beginning at 7:00pm. They plan to complete their discussion of the book, *The Shack*.

As before, reading the book is not "required", but encouraged as the more who read the book, the more interesting the conversation.

Although details are still developing, the group is discussing some "creative" plans for the month of March since there is a conflict on the church calendar every Wednesday evening (Lenten Mid-Week Services and Soup Supper).

Watch the *Announcements* in the bulletin on Sunday mornings for more information.

WWW

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!

Sunday, February 21, 9:00am — 9:25am

NEW FEATURE: BOOK CORNER

Women Wanting Wisdom reach out and invite you to join in reading *The Shack*

As we were gathering Wednesday night for Women Wanting Wisdom several of us thought a Book Corner for the newsletter was a good idea. So watch for a new author or book that one of us thinks might be enjoyed by others in the congregation. This time I will review "The Shack" by William Paul Young. It is a book that should be read by everyone; not just the women in the congregation but the men too!

The Shack is a story about a man named Mack who has had an unspeakable tragedy in his life. His relationship with God is damaged and he is floundering in his life and with his family, until one day he gets an invitation to meet Papa at the Shack for the weekend. Papa is what Mack's family calls God. True this is a novel, but it also creatively teaches theology in a way that all can understand.

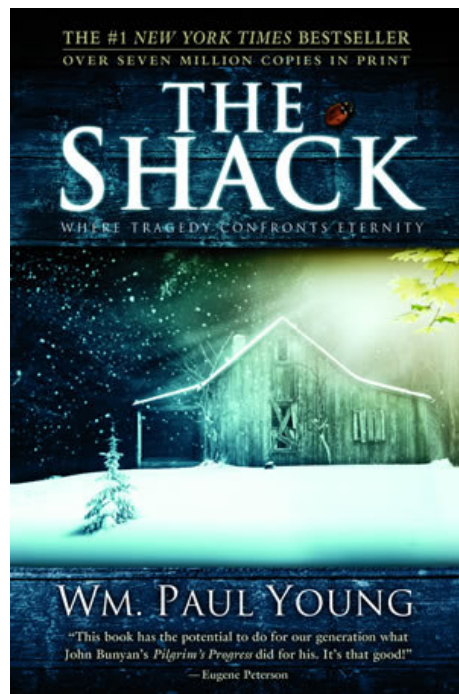
Once I started reading it was hard to put it down. I was part of a journey that took me to God. I cried, I laughed and I even came away understanding the Trinity better than when I started. This book will change the way you think about God. It answers questions we have all asked ourselves. Where is God in a world of suffering? Why doesn't God do something about the pain and evil in the world? The answers were clear and powerful.

Please read "The Shack", God will find us, whether we are in sorrow or joy, or trapped by our disappointments, God never leaves us! Don't miss this story of Grace that could change you forever!

Dorothy Kehe

YOUR IDEAS

As always, your ideas are welcome. Do you have a book to review? Submit the review to newsletter@faithmemorial.net.





Save the Date!

11th Annual
Hilltop Neighborhood House
Heartwarming Soups
&
Hometown
Entertainment

Come join us!
Feb. 11th, 2010
St. Paul's Catholic Church
Valparaiso, Indiana

Hilltop Neighborhood House
219-477-4222
www.hilltophouse.org

 Thrivent Financial
for Lutherans®

Faith Memorial Service Team for Hilltop's annual fundraiser

Once again it's time to prepare for the Hilltop annual; soup dinner. The fundraiser **Heartwarming Soups and Hometown Entertainment** will take place on **Thursday, February 11, 2010**, at St. Paul Catholic Church on Harrison Blvd. in Valpo.

Last year the support that Faith Members provided with our Thrivent Service team was greatly appreciated and helped Hilltop reach its fundraising goal.

This year members of Faith Memorial are again being asked to make **homemade** yeast bread, rolls and corn muffins. If homemade is not possible, it is requested that "**homemade style**" bread be purchases, like the artisan breads sold at Panera or Strongbow.

The breads need to arrive by 3pm that day so it can be put out on the tables by 4:30pm. It is important that you sign in when dropping off your items.

Faith Memorial will be recognized as helping to provide as much as \$2,400 to provide scholarships for children of low-income parents.

A sign-up sheet is in the narthex. If you have any questions or need your bread delivered, please speak with Fran Marton.

You are invited to the
Grape Cluster's 27th
Annual Valentine's Party
at the Lindner's (459 East 900 North - Valpo)



Saturday - February 13th - starting at 7:00 p.m.

Call Bruce or Marilyn at home 926-6956
for more info or directions!



Dress will be casual!
Munchies and beverages provided by the Grape Cluster!

Sr. Youth Group age and older - come alone or bring a friend or more.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

New Year Resolutions

Each household has its own routine. We go to work; we help the kids with their homework and attend their events; we make the meals, clean the house, and do the laundry.

Our days are full – sometimes too full. So full that time for the Lord is abbreviated or omitted altogether. Then comes Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. It's just what we need to get back on track. We gather together for worship. Over the weeks of Lent, we hear again about Jesus' ministry, about the events that eventually lead up to His Crucifixion, about His zeal for the Lord's house. We hear His prayer for His disciples and His words of comfort and preparation to them.

Lent is about turning our hearts to Christ instead of toward ourselves. We ask for grace to love and serve as He did, sacrificing self for the good of others. *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13). Paul comments, *"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:7-8). God loved and chose us, the unlovely, to shed His grace upon. We are reminded that, *"since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"* (1 John 4:11).

"Love one another." Not just our close friends or those who agree with us, but *"one another."* We can't do it, can we? Some people are just too hard to love. Some people are not deserving of our gifts and our attention. Some people aren't interested in the love we have to offer. The command remains: *"Love one another."*

Now is a good time to read John 15. Here we find the secret of loving and serving. Here we find the source of love, of faith, of everything we need. That source is Jesus. He is the Vine. He sustains and nurtures us, the branches. He enables us to bear fruit, to *"love one another."* He calls those who obey Him His friends and tells us He will give us whatever we ask in His name. So we pray, Lord, let us *"love one another."*

REVITALIZATION, RE-VISIONING, RENEWAL

Eighth in a series: Getting Organized

This is the eighth in a series of articles on our “revitalization” process that we undertook as a congregation earlier this year. This is about what’s happening right now, and what is planned for the next several months.

JUST A START

On Sunday, December 13, the Voters’ Assembly made necessary changes to the congregational bylaws to implement a new Accountable Leader model for church governance and structure.

But those changes were a rather small part of changing the way we “do business” at Faith Memorial.

On Sunday, January 31, more than two dozen congregational leaders gathered together to begin the rather long process of getting “organized”.

THE CHALLENGE

Throughout the month of January Pastor Albers visited with as many congregational leaders as possible, the leaders who were mostly responsible for organizing the events that have been a part of our congregational life over the past several years.

Although each leader offered a unique perspective, there were four broad challenges that emerged:

- *Coordination* (there were times where it seemed little was happening and other times folks felt overwhelmed)
- *Communication* (one leader or group of leaders did not always know what other leaders were planning)
- *Recruitment* (of additional leaders and also participants for various events)
- *Implementation of new ideas* (we have many creative folks at FMLC, but they don’t know what to do with their new ideas)

STAFF

The biggest transition will be a new way of thinking concerning the people who take a leadership role at Faith Memorial.

These staff persons, both paid and unpaid, will be responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing events and ministries. In some cases the events and

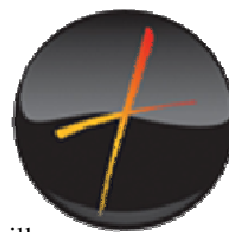
those who organize them will be the same as those who did before. The primary difference is that they will be reporting directly to Pastor Albers who will then be held “accountable” for the day-to-day operation of the ministries of the congregation.

This staff will be primarily responsible for answering the challenges of coordination, communication, recruitment, and the implementation of new ideas.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At its first two meetings, the Board of Directors have mostly been working to get “organized”, developing policies and principles on how the board will operate and work to hold Pastor Albers “accountable” according to the design of this new structure.

By the end of February the board should have a draft of Guiding Principles that will provide more specific direction for the staff as it does its work.



INTERESTING E-MAIL

Email messages that were sent to Pastor Albers by church members and other friends included these.

A man and his dog were walking along a road. The man was enjoying the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was dead.

He remembered dying, and that the dog walking beside him had been dead for years. He wondered where the road was leading them.

After a while, they came to a high, white stone wall along one side of the road. It looked like fine marble. At the top of a long hill, it was broken by a tall arch that glowed in the sunlight.

When he was standing before it he saw a magnificent gate in the arch that looked like mother-of-pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like pure gold. He and the dog walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a desk to one side.

When he was close enough, he called out, “Excuse me, where are we?”

“This is Heaven, sir,” the man answered. “Wow! Would you happen to have some water?” the man asked.

“Of course, sir. Come right in, and I’ll have some ice water brought right

THE TRAVELER

up.” The man gestured, and the gate began to open.

“Can my friend,” gesturing toward his dog, “come in, too?” the traveler asked.

“I’m sorry, sir, but we don’t accept pets.”

The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog.

After another long walk, and at the top of another long hill, he came to a dirt road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence.

As he approached the gate, he saw a man inside, leaning against a tree and reading a book.

“Excuse me!” he called to the man. “Do you have any water?”

“Yeah, sure, there’s a pump over there, come on in.”

“How about my friend here?” the traveler gestured to the dog.

“There should be a bowl by the pump.”

They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old-fashioned hand pump with a bowl beside it.

The traveler filled the water bowl and took a long drink himself, then he gave some to the dog.

When they were full, he and the dog walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree.

“What do you call this place?” the traveler asked.

“This is Heaven,” he answered.

“Well, that’s confusing,” the traveler said. “The man down the road said that was Heaven, too.”

“Oh, you mean the place with the gold street and pearly gates? Nope. That’s hell.”

“Doesn’t it make you mad for them to use your name like that?”

“No, we’re just happy that they screen out the folks who would leave their best friends behind.”



If you would like a copy of these e-mails to pass along to a friend, send your request or email to newsletter@faithmemorial.net. If you have an interesting e-mail that you would like to share, send it to newsletter@faithmemorial.net.

THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

A New Liturgy for Lent

Faith Memorial folks have usually appreciated the work of Marty Haugen and Susan Briehl, even if they didn't realize it.

Marty Haugen is a composer and Susan Briehl, a Lutheran pastor and theologian is regularly a partner in preparing texts for his music.

Over the years Deaconess Becky Graef and Pastor Albers have used the results of their work in our worship services. Haugen's style of music and Briehl's technique seems to fit very well with the way Faith Memorial "does worship."

A NEW LITURGY FOR LENT

So when Pastor Albers came across a new liturgy for the season of Lent, one prepared by this "dynamic duo" he was curious. When he looked more closely, he was pleased to see some things that were "familiar" and some parts that are very new.

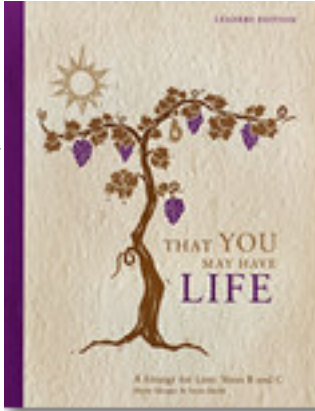
The structure is similar to that of an evening prayer liturgy, although it could be used at any time of day. There is a

single psalm setting for the entire season from Psalm 103, followed by a reading, a Gospel Song, and a reading from the gospel for the coming Sunday morning.

The Gospel Song follows a similar style but the text and setting are unique to each week.

Following a short homily, the liturgy ends with prayers using a setting that was introduced last year during the season of Lent, and then closing with the gospel canticle, the Nunc Dimittis, a familiar text to a new musical setting.

Use this opportunity to invite a friend to join you for worship.



SPECIAL EVENTS IN OUR CHURCH SCHEDULE

February 10-11
Ft. Wayne, IN

Transforming Churches Network
Great Lakes Urban Ministry regional group

Saturday, February 13

Home of Bruce and Marilyn Lindner sponsored by the Grape Cluster

Congregational Valentine's Party

Sunday, February 14, 8am & 10:45am **Transfiguration of Our Lord**
Sanctuary Festival Services of Holy Communion
with Installation of Officers and members of Standing Committees

Wednesday, February 17, 7:00am & 7:00pm **Ash Wednesday**
Sanctuary Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes

Saturday, February 20, 7:00pm **Men's Overnight Shelter Staff**
at Immanuel, Valparaiso

Sunday, February 21, 9:30am **Christian Practices**
new study led by Prof. Rene Schoer

The Texts this Week
new study led by Pastor John Albers

Sunday, February 21, 12:00pm **Newcomer Welcome Potluck**
Fellowship Hall talk to Cindy Splitgerber

Wednesday, February 24, 7:00pm **Lenten Evening Prayer**
Sanctuary with Soup Supper at 6:00pm

Sunday, February 28, 12:00noon **Staff Development**
Fellowship Hall Planning Session

Wednesday, March 3, 7:00pm **Lenten Evening Prayer**
Sanctuary with Soup Supper at 6:00pm

Saturday, March 6 **Youth Dinner Dance**
Fellowship Hall Masquerade Ball

Special Events

EVENT REMINDERS

Each month FMLC helps with services designed to bring word and sacrament ministry to those who cannot attend worship regularly.

WHISPERING PINES

Service of the Word
4th Sunday at 2:00pm

PINES VILLAGE

Holy Communion
1st and 3rd Thursdays at 2:00pm
(Pastor Albers leads on the 1st Thursday. A pastor from Immanuel, Valpo leads on the 3rd Thursday.)

TRANSFORMING CHURCHES NETWORK

Pastor Albers to attend annual conference in February

About this time last year Pastor Albers joined a local "Learning Community" as a part of the Revitalization Effort under the guidance of Rev. Tom Eggold.

The gatherings over the past year have proved extremely helpful, including reading, study, and discussion of various books on leadership as well as congregational development.

Pastors from several learning communities from across the Great Lakes region will be gathering in Ft. Wayne on February 10-11.

The agenda for the brief conference will include:

- emphasizing the mission of the church,
- Sharing best outreach event practices, and
- "Missional" preaching.

Pastor Albers has been asked to lead closing devotions for the group on Wednesday evening.



THE FINANCIAL REPORTER

all figures as of 12/31/2009

BUDGET — 2009

Year-to-date Income

2008 Year-to-date

Over/(under)

Year-to-date Expenses

Year-to-date Budget

(Over)/under

Actual Net Income (Loss)

Some financial data is hidden in the online version. Members should contact the church office for the latest information.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

More detailed reports of income and expenses are available to those who would like to review them. Send an email to office@faithmemorial.net or call 462-7684.

Board of Directors Update

The new Board of Directors has already met twice since the beginning of the year, and plans two more meetings in the month of February, although one of these will be a short meeting on Sunday, February 7.

The group elected its officers and is working to fill various positions by appointment.

Jon Kilpinen was elected president, while Dave Pilz was elected vice-president. Dave will also serve as the Board member on the Elders Committee.

Dorothy Kehe was identified as the Secretary, while Laura Frost was identified as the Board member on the Finance Committee.

In other action the Board of Directors appointed Dave Chambers to continue as Treasurer and ratified Pastor's selection of Darlene Eichstaedt as the Financial Secretary.

Additionally, Kent Eichstaedt was appointed to the Elders Committee. At its meeting in early February the Board will complete this committee with the appointment of one other member.

Appointed to the Finance Committee was Bruce Lindner, filling out this particular standing committee.

If a church member would like to have something on the agenda for the Board of Directors, please speak with Pastor Albers. During this time of transition it will not always be clear whether something requires the approval of the board.

At its meetings in February the Board of Directors will work on the preparation of Guiding Principles so the staff (*See "Revitalization, Revisioning, and Renewal," page 8*) can really get organized for achieving the goals the board lays out for the congregation.

WHEN A PLAN "PAYS OFF — AT LEAST SO FAR

Mortgage principal payments increase by 20% over previous years.

It's been difficult to locate obvious "good news" in the area of congregational finances. Larger-than-expected budget deficits present significant challenges. But there has been some "good news" on the horizon, especially when you review the status of the mortgage.

BITS AND PIECES

Over the last several years several bits and pieces have come together that has enabled Faith Memorial to significantly pay down the balance on its mortgage. At the beginning of 2005 our mortgage balance stood at about \$220,000 and the budget for paying interest stood at more than \$11,000 annually.

Five years later, at the beginning of 2010, our mortgage balance stands at less than \$167,000 and our budget for interest this year will be less than \$9,400.

A couple of "pieces" have come together to make this possible. The first was the decision to pay the PRINCIPAL on the mortgage from the BUILDING FUND, encouraging members to make additional donations that could help reduce the balance on the mortgage. The only item included in the annual budget of the congregation is the INTEREST on the mortgage.

Another decision which has helped "whittle away" at the principal balance is to use contributions from outside groups who make use of our building and place them in the Building Fund, instead of the General Fund. Although it comes to FMLC in bits and pieces, the total amount applied towards the principal from these sources in the past five years is more than \$14,000.

By far the most important factor is the ongoing faithfulness of church members in making regular donations to the BUILDING FUND in addition to amounts they give to the General Fund. In the past five years these gifts have totaled about \$52,500.

ANNUALLY ADJUSTED INTEREST RATE

The last piece is a bit out of our control, since the mortgage rate is annually adjustable. The current rate is 5.875% and is adjusted in May of every year. We might expect the rate to drop again in the spring of 2010. Even a modest drop in the rate would help. (Every 1/8% means about \$200 less in interest per year.)

In the next several years we anticipate paying about \$15,000 in principal. We are about one-half of the way through the 20-year term on the mortgage. As always, your continued support is needed for BOTH the General Fund and the Building Fund in order to sustain the ministry at Faith Memorial.

PARKING LOT FUND

Closing in on paying off large investments

We've invested more than \$7,500 in parking lot maintenance over the past three years, which should save tens of thousands of dollars in replacement costs in the coming 5-10 years.

However, that investment left a large "hole" in the Parking Lot Fund. There was a rather large deficit in the fund at the beginning of 2009, nearly \$2,700. And then, in 2009, the parking lot needed to be re-sealed and re-stripped to avoid any additional deterioration. Preventative maintenance at a cost of \$3,600.

Several church members "stepped up" and made major gifts to help eliminate this deficit, near the end of 2009 and then now at the beginning of 2010. As a result the deficit in the Parking Lot fund has been reduced to less than \$1,200. THANK YOU for your help!



One note to remember, this last "deal" to re-seal and re-stripe included one year of snow removal, which will mean a significant savings to the General Fund budget.

If you can make even a small additional gift to help eliminate the deficit in the Parking Lot fund, it would be helpful.

BUILDING FUND SNAPSHOT

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1/1/2009 Balance | \$ 4,805.55 |
| Contributions | \$11,091.00 |
| Other income | \$ 3,510.00 |
| Principal Payments | (\$15,136.31) |
| Other fees | (\$ 34.29) |
| 12/31/2009 Balance | \$4,235.95 |

MORTGAGE SNAPSHOT

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1/1/2009 Balance | \$181,843.85 |
| Principal Payments | (\$15,136.31) |
| 12/31/2009 Balance | \$166,707.54 |
| Interest Payments | (\$10,203.52) |

Lectionary Focus

This resource is provided so that the readings and other resources we use in worship each week might be used in your personal or family bible study. Consider using these resources to prepare for worship or to review the lessons and other resources following worship. Typically this page will include information for the current month plus one or two Sundays as space allows.

The Season of Epiphany

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, February 7, 2010

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13), *Send me*

Psalms 138, *They shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.* (Ps 138:5)

1 Corinthians 14:12b-20, *Build up the church*

Luke 5:1-11, *Jesus calls the disciples to fish for people*

Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 14, 2010

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Deuteronomy 34:1-12, *Moses and the LORD on the mountain opposite Jericho*

Psalms 99, *Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy!* (Ps 99:9)

Hebrews 3:1-6, *Jesus worthy of more glory than Moses*

Luke 9:28-36, *Jesus is transfigured on the mountain*

The Time of Easter

The Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Joel 2:12-19, *Return to God*

Psalms 51:1-19, *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.* (Ps 51:17)

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10, *Now is the day of salvation*

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, *The practice of faith*

First Sunday in Lent, February 21, 2010

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Deuteronomy 26:1-11, *Saved from Egypt*

Psalms 91:1-13, *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.* (Ps 91:1)

Romans 10:8b-13, *You will be saved*

Luke 4:1-13, *The temptation of Jesus*

Second Sunday in Lent, February 28, 2010

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Jeremiah 26:8-15, *Mend your ways and your deeds*

Psalms 4, *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.* (Ps 4:8)

Philippians 3:17—4:1, *Our citizenship is in heaven*

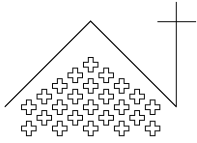
Luke 13:31-35, *A hen gathering her brood*

40 Days, Not Counting Sundays

This year Easter is on April 4, the 1st Sunday following the 1st full moon (March 30), following the vernal equinox (March 20)

- *Lent is 40 days ... not counting Sundays ... and begins with Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17 this year)*
- *Transfiguration of Our Lord at the end of the Epiphany season is the Sunday prior (Feb. 14 this year)*
- *Easter is later than April 4 about 2/3rds of the time, so you could say Easter is a bit “early” this year ... but just a bit.*

Thinking ahead ... Ascension is always the 40th Day of Easter ... what day and date is Ascension this year? Members from across the Valparaiso circuit will gather for worship on that day.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Celebrations!



BIRTHDAYS February

- | | | | |
|----|------------|----|------------|
| 2 | Evan F. | 14 | Deborah G. |
| 3 | Les K. | | Laurel M. |
| | Chance L. | 15 | Carroll M. |
| 6 | Alexis B. | 16 | Megan E. |
| 7 | Hannah A. | 18 | Julie D. |
| | Patsy B. | | Tom W. |
| | Maggie L. | 22 | Kenneth F. |
| | Anna P. | | Joshua J. |
| 8 | Kenneth K. | 26 | Madelyn F. |
| 12 | Debora P. | 28 | William A. |
| 13 | Beth U. | | |

ANNIVERSARIES February



14th John and Loretta F.

23 years

Due to the privacy of personal information, last names are either abbreviated or eliminated in the online version. Members are encouraged to call the church office for complete information.

Did we miss one?

Check the dates if you celebrate a birthday or anniversary this month. Put a note on the desk in the church office or send a note to office@faithmemorial.net.