

Lutheran Church of the Master
580 Kuhn Road, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188
Curt Gerald, Interim Pastor
February 17, 2010 - Ash Wednesday
“...and do you know how much God loves you?”

In his resignation letter sent out to members of the congregation this week, Jim's next to last paragraph is: "My prayer is that you continue to ask yourselves these questions: *Who are you in Jesus Christ? What are you doing for the Kingdom of God? And do you know how much God loves you?*"

I know that many tears have been shed by those of us who read this letter. I've walked with Jim through the past months of interviews. We have prayed with each other and for each other. I'm excited about the new ministry to which Jim has been called. I'm thankful for the ministry and for the ministries that Jim has been involved in establishing here in and through the Lutheran Church of the Master.

And as I thought about today ... I thought that Jim's question is a good one to take with us into this Lenten journey "*... and do you know how much God loves you?*" Jim's question launches us into this Lenten journey ... even though we realize that when our Lenten journey is completed this year, Jim will not be with us any longer. Along with Jim ... I hope you (and I) know how much God loves you (and me). If you're not sure, I'll give you a clue ... just look at the big brown piece of wood hanging on the wall behind this altar ... and that is what this journey called Lent is about.

Lent developed as a time of preparation of candidates for baptism in the early church ... by the middle of the 4th century in Jerusalem, candidates for baptism fasted for 40 days and attended catechetical lectures every day. (This 40 day fast was based on the image of Jesus' fast at the beginning of his ministry ... Moses' stay on Sinai ... the 40 years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness ... and Elijah's fast on his way to the mountain of God.)

After Christianity was legalized and became the official religion in 313 CE, the length of the fast was 36 days – six weeks (not counting Sundays which are always feasts celebrating the resurrection) ... and was thought to be a tithe (tenth) of the 365 days of the year.

In sixth century Rome, 4 days were added to bring it to the biblical number of 40 days ... and by the end of the eighth century, the 40 day Lent had become general in the West.

So ... perhaps it is a good reminder for us that first of all came the formation of the Church ... and then by the early 300's this Lenten tradition had started ... and then in 397CE the Council of Carthage acknowledged the 27 books of the New Testament.

Before the Church had a Bible to read ... it was observing Lent.

And today/tonight, I want to invite you into this year's Lenten journey. As we do so, I want to share the following meditation with you keeping in mind that, if you decide to participate in this journey and whatever you do in this journey if you decide to do so ... it has only one purpose: TO HELP YOU AND ME KNOW HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US.

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Ash Wednesday

“...and do you know how much God loves you?”

A guide for this year's Lenten Journey:

(1) Lent is an opportunity (and/not) an obligation for:

the Church

the Baptized Christian

a seeker

(2) Lent is a time to:

give up something

Why?

Are Sundays included? **No!**

give to something or someone

take on a new project or proposal

(3) During Lent, we might want to remember that:

(a) 523 passages talk about (prayer/money)

(b) 1,539 passages talk about (prayer/money)

(c) 1 in 6 verses in the first three Gospels relate to (prayer/money)

(4) Wednesdays at noon:

Wednesdays at 12:30 & 6:00PM:

Wednesdays at 7:00PM:

Wednesdays at 8:00PM:

A LENTEN SERIES BASED ON LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

The Wednesday Evenings in Lent, 2010

24-Feb
3-Mar
10-Mar
17-Mar
24-Mar

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

The Ten Commandments

The Apostles Creed

Confession

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

A hymn by Martin Luther from the Lutheran Book of Worship

MEDITATIONS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Introduction & First Petition

Second & Third Petitions

Fourth & Fifth Petitions

Sixth & Seventh Petitions

The Doxology

7:45-8:30PM - After Worship Catechumenate Opportunities

Preparation for Holy Baptism

Meeting with Those Requesting Transfer from Full Communion Churches

Adults Interested in Membership: #1 - The Church

Adults Interested in Membership: #2 - The Lutheran Church

Adults Interested in Membership: #3 - The Lutheran Church of the Master

(5) The Opportunities on Sundays:

		The Lesson	Gospel	
	LENT			
2/21/2010	1	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16	Luke 4: 1-13	Called to Confidence through Jesus
	LENT			
2/28/2010	2	Genesis 12:1-9	Luke 10:1-2	Called to Go where Jesus Sends Us
	LENT			
3/7/2010	3	Psalm 63:1-8	Luke 13:1-9	Called to Bear Fruit for Jesus
	LENT			
3/14/2010	4	Psalm 32	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	Called to Celebrate with Jesus
	LENT			
3/21/2010	5	Psalm 126	John 12:1-8	Called to Extravagant Worship of Jesus

(6) Pastor Curt's Suggestions for Lenten Reading

<p>The Lutheran Study Bible New Revised Standard Version (2009 – Augsburg Fortress)</p>

Armstrong, John

Your Church is Too Small: Why Unity in Christ's Mission is Vital to the Future of the Church (2010 – Soon to be released) (Pre-order a copy at Amazon)

Borg, Marcus J.

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time (1994 – Harper San Francisco)

The God We Never Knew (

Reading the Bible Again for the First Time (2001 – Harper San Francisco)

Campolo, Tony

It's Friday: But Sunday's Comin' (1984 – W Publishing Group)

The Kingdom of God Is a Party (1990 – Word Publishing)

101 Ways Your Church Can Change the World (1993 – Regal Books)

Carpe Diem: Seize the Day (1994 – W Publishing Group)

Following Jesus Without Embarrassing God (1997 – W Publishing Group)

The Church Enslaved: A Spirituality of Racial Reconciliation (2005 – Augsburg)
(With Michael Battle)

Chalke, Steve

The Lost Message of Jesus (2003 – Zondervan)

Clinton Bill

Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World (2007 – Alfred A Knopf)

Foss, Michael W

Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church
(2000 – Fortress Press)

A Servant's Manual: Christian Leadership for Tomorrow (2002 – Fortress Press)

Friedman, Thomas

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century (2007 – Picador)

Gore, Al

An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It (2006 – Rodale)

An Inconvenient Truth (Adapted for a New Generation) (2007 – Viking/Rodale)

Hauerwas, Stanley & Willimon, William H

The Truth About God: The Ten Commandments in Christian Living
(1999 – Abingdon Press)

Lamott, Anne

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith (1999 – Anchor Books)

Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith (2005 – Riverhead Books)

McManus, Erwin Raphael

An Unstoppable Force: daring to become the church God had in mind

(2001 – Group Publishing)

Seizing Your Divine Moment: Dare to Live a Life of Adventure

(2002 – Thomas Nelson)

Uprising: A Revolution of the Soul (2003 – Thomas Nelson)

Wide Awake: the Future is Waiting Within You (2008 – Thomas Nelson)

Popcorn, Faith

Clicking: 16 Trends to Future Fit Your Life, Your Work, and Your Business

(1996 – Harper Collins)

Putman, Robert D

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community

(2000 – Touchstone Book)

Rossing, Barbara R

The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation

(2004 – Westview Press)

Wallis, Jim

God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It

(2005 – Harper San Francisco)

Rediscovering Values on Wall Street, Main Street, and Your Street

(2010 – Howard Books)

(7) Check out “The Year of Luke” (quarter #2) at our website:
http://www.lcotm.org/the_year_of_luke.php