

On Eagle's Wings



St. John's Monthly Newsletter – March 2021

Growth

Pastor's Paragraphs

Lent is a somber season. It draws our attention to the brokenness we feel in our relationship with God. We connect brokenness from God with sin. We say that we cannot escape from sinning and so we must depend upon God's grace to save us.

That quick summary of our situation is all well and good, but it passes over a subtle but significant point about sin. St. Augustine's writings from the 4th century have become foundational to many people's understanding of sin. Augustine's thoughts tend to link sin to guilt. There's some basis for that, especially 1st John 3:4 (Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.) However that actually misses the Bible's main thrust about sin; which is connecting sin to shame.

Shame and guilt are similar words but they have significantly different meanings. Guilt is feeling bad about *something you have done* that is wrong. Shame is feeling that *who you are* is wrong. Shame is about something inherent to your worthiness as a person.

When we root our understanding of sin in guilt then we tend to think sin is an action (or perhaps an inaction) that was wrong. Forgiveness is wiping it away as if it never happened. However, when we root our understanding of sin in shame we are in a very different place. Shame tells us that *who were are* before God is hopelessly lost and unlovable. It tells us that no matter what we do we cannot become good enough to deserve God's love. Forgiveness then is not about ignoring a bad thing we did. Forgiveness is God seeing us as people worthy of loving.

The word "guilt" never shows up in the New Testament. The word "guilty" shows up four times, and two of those times refer to Jesus' trial. By contrast the word "shame" shows up eighteen times. "Ashamed" shows up sixteen times. That's a total of thirty-four times! Our scripture is far more concerned with shame than guilt.

I believe rooting sin in shame is far more appropriate than rooting it in guilt. If sin is rooted in guilt, then an upright, upstanding citizen may actually believe that he or she can live a good enough life to make it to heaven.

Not so! When sin is rooted in shame we understand reality. We cannot earn our way into God's love. Period.

Crucifixion was a very shameful way to die. We see that in Hebrews 12:2, "...looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God." The earliest Christians never depicted the cross in their art. It was simply too shameful. And yet the shame of the crucifixion was central to being a follower of Christ. Ultimately the work God does for our salvation is more about shame than it is about guilt.

I don't want to go so far as to say we need to feel ashamed of ourselves. Shame can be absolutely crippling. Some people suffer terribly. However a healthy dose of realizing that we cannot be truly good in and of ourselves is important. Some sense of shame is necessary to truly feel forgiveness. Grace – true grace – grace that is abundant, and amazing, and awe-inspiring – comes when a person realizes God's never failing love for them is truly undeserved. God's grace says you are worthwhile and important no matter how bad you feel you are.

Ultimately God loves you. God wants to be in relationship with you. God made you good. God wants to help you to flourish. What really matters then is that it is God who graciously reaches out to us each and every day. God wants to be with us.

Blessings,
Pastor Jon



Growth (Cont.)

Christian Education

This is a repeat of previous months as a reminder:

Children's Sunday School

Here's the plan:

- One Facebook Messenger call for all kids at 10 am
- Teacher for that week will read the associated bible verse for the lesson.
- Discuss the verse briefly.
- Ask kids some questions to spark some discussion
- Close the 30 minute maximum call with the prayer for the week.
- Each child will then work on the associated worksheet for that week on their own off of the call.

Worksheets for each child have been gathered through Christmas and put in envelopes. Parents are invited to pick them up at church. Please be in touch with Jen White if you have any questions.

Adult Sunday School

The adult Sunday school class is using Bible study videos from the 1517 Academy. We use the same Zoom meeting used for worship at 9:30. Talk to Pastor Jon if you have any questions.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class continues online. Confirmands will continue to receive a link for Zoom each week.

Men's Breakfast Women's Bible Study

The weekly men's and women's Bible studies are continuing in person. Both groups will meet in the sanctuary since it is the only room we are keeping warm.

Worship



March Bible Readings for Worship

March 7 – Mark 10:32-52

March 14 - Mark 11:1-19

March 21– Mark 11:20-13:37

March 28 (Palm Sunday) – Mark 14:1-11

You'll notice that we'll be covering the events of Palm Sunday a couple weeks earlier. Then on Palm Sunday

itself we'll be looking at the events of Wednesday of Holy Week. This is a little out of whack but a lot goes on during the final week of Jesus' ministry. This gives us a chance to look at more of it in Sunday worship.

Sunday Worship

We have discontinued the 8:30 worship service because of the pandemic and the 10:30 service has returned to online only. The church council is going to review our worship situation on a month by month basis.

If you have a computer and internet connection:

The link to the service is emailed out. For security reasons it is no longer directly available on the website.

If you cannot connect with a computer:

You can still hear and participate in the service with any phone. Use the most appropriate phone number below and enter the meeting number when you are asked.

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 834 9025 1842

Password: 778805

Mid-Week Lenten Worship

-Created for Community-

Wednesdays February 24-March 24

7:00 pm by Zoom

We are participating in a conference-wide Lenten series this year. Each week's service is being created by a team of pastors. From about 7:00 to 7:30 will be a fairly traditional worship experience with song, prayer, Bible reading, and preaching. Then at 7:30 the worshippers will be split into two groups. One group will have conversation about the topic. The other group will explore various prayer techniques. The themes are:
February 24 – In Community with Creation
March 3 – In Community with All the Saints
March 10 – In Community with Our Neighbor
March 17 – In Community with Those on the Margins
March 24 – In Community with Christ

Here's the Zoom meeting information for each week:

Meeting ID: 837 4022 0666

Passcode: 802756

Worship (Cont.)



Give Up Lint for Lent

This bizarre collection is becoming an annual tradition in our congregation's Lenten journey. If you have trouble giving something up for Lent, this will be your easiest discipline ever! There is a collection box in the Gathering Area for you to put your **dryer lint, used dryer sheets, old crayons and stubs of candles**. This worthless stuff (and somewhat gross) will be melted together and burnt in a fire – possibly at the sunrise service on Easter if we have one. This Lent give up your most worthless stuff so that God can turn it into heat and light!

In-Person Worship

If you would like to be present in the sanctuary during the 10:30 worship service you are welcome to. In-person worshippers are expected to follow all infectious disease prevention practices. Music during worship will still be primarily online and only one or two reading parts in worship will be done by those in the sanctuary. Be in touch with Pastor Jon or council president Gary Wood for more information.

Service



- Thank you to everyone who helped shovel and plow snow in February.
- Thank you to everyone who donated gift cards or made cash donations to Family Promise to help with our February hosting week.
- Thank you to the Whites for the sectional sofa they donated. It is in the Sunday school wing and will help when we host Family Promise again.
- Thank you to Mary Zuege for leading the project of having the worn and damaged pews reupholstered.
- Thank you to Bruce Stevenson for making repairs to the pew that was broken.
- Thank you to all the musicians who have been providing special music in worship. A special thank you to Jim and Karen Spawton.



- The Rev. Matthew Nickoloff and the South Wedge Mission in Rochester.
- Rev. Karen Anderson for her missionary work in Chile.
- Gary Myers who is being treated for multiple myeloma.
- Linda Ellis whose cancer issues continue.
- The family and friends of Bob Stroup, Rob Stroup's dad, as they mourn his death.
- Knute Halvorson, who is living in Atria Nursing Home in Penfield.
- Eleanor Spawton, Jim Spawton's mother, who has a weakening heart valve.
- The family and friends of Carol Urbanic's brother as they mourn his death.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Spring is right around the corner. That means daffodils, sunshine, green leaves, warmer days, and our 16th blood drive!

Over the years the Red Cross has collected 440 units of blood; potentially helping 1320 people regain their health.

Our drive will take place on Tuesday, April 6 from 1:00 – 6:00.

We take every precaution to keep things clean and safe. Including everybody wearing masks; all workers gloved; temperature checking everyone; all surfaces cleaned with alcohol wipes after contact; minimum number of volunteers; and prepackaged snacks.

Please go to the redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent Members- You may have gotten a notice from Thrivent about where to direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars. Please consider directing them to St. John's. We usually save the money and apply it to special projects. Talk to Pastor Jon for more information.

Nuts and Bolts

February Council Highlights

Church council held its regular monthly meeting on - February 15th.

Officers were elected:

President – Gary Wood

Vice President – Pete Gregory

Secretary – Wendy Sackett

Treasurer – Rob Stroup

Financial Secretary – Dave Bullwinkle

Committee liaisons:

Stewardship and Finance – Katy Stimmel

Property – Mary Zuege

Worship and Music – Beth Schroeder

Education – Wendy Sackett

Fellowship – Lisa Kurilovitch

Outreach – Judy VanDeVelde

Family Promise – Beth Schroeder

Youth – Julie Stuart

The council also reviewed returning to in-person worship. At this point people are welcome to come to the sanctuary during worship but we are not reopening as much as we were in the fall.

January Financials

YTD Income \$17,940.00

YTD Expenses \$16,063.66

Difference \$1,876.34

Church Website Update

The church's website has been updated to a new platform and has a slightly new look and feel to it. We really could use some high-resolution pictures to scroll on our welcome page. If you have any ideas for content updates, please contact Rob Stroup. Or...if you want to help out with website administration, please let Rob know! The site is located at stjohnsvictor.com.

Fun



February Bible Trivia Answers

1. When the disciples see Jesus walking on the sea what do they think it is? Answer: a ghost (Mark 6:49)
2. The Syrophenician woman who pesters Jesus was asking for healing for whom? Answer: her daughter (Mark 7:25)
3. What three disciples witnessed the transfiguration? Answer: Peter, James, and John (Mark 9:2)
4. What does Jesus tell the rich man he must do to receive eternal life? Answer: sell and give his possessions then follow Jesus (Mark 10:21)

March Bible Trivia Questions

Hint: All the answers may be found in the Bible readings chosen for Sunday worship.

1. What two disciples ask to sit at Jesus' right and left when he is in glory?
2. Only one person who is healed in Mark's gospel is named. His name is?
3. On what does Jesus ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?
4. How many coins does Jesus see the poor widow put into the treasury?



MARCH 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 George Herbert, hymnwriter, 1633 7:00 Boy Scouts	2 John and Charles Wesley, renewers of the church	3 8:30 Men's Breakfast 1:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Lenten Worship	4 7:00 Worship and Music Committee (Zoom)	5 3-8 Cello Lessons	6
7 <u>3rd Sunday in Lent</u> Perpetua, Felicity, and companions, martyrs 202 9:30 Sunday School (Online) 10:30 Worship	8 7:00 Boy Scouts	9	10 Harriet Tubman, 1913, Sojourner Truth, 1883, renewers of society 8:30 Men's Breakfast 1:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Lenten Worship	11	12 Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604 3-8 Cello Lessons	13
14 <u>4th Sunday in Lent</u> Daylight Savings Time 9:30 Sunday School (Online) 10:30 Worship	15 7:00 Church Council (Zoom)	16	17 Patrick, bishop, missionary to Ireland, 641 8:30 Men's Breakfast 1:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Lenten Worship	18	19 <u>Joseph, Guardian of Our Lord</u> 3-8 Cello Lessons	20 Spring Conference Assembly
21 <u>5th Sunday in Lent</u> Thomas Cranmer, bishop of Canterbury, martyr 1556 9:30 Sunday School (Online) 10:30 Worship	22 Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians 1758 7:00 Boy Scouts	23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156	24 Oscar Arnulfo Romeo, bishop of El Salvador, martyr 1980 8:30 Men's Breakfast 1:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Lenten Worship	25 <u>Annunciation of Our Lord</u>	26 3-8 Cello Lessons	27
28 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9:30 Sunday School (Online) 10:30 Worship	29 Hans Nielsen Haug, renewer of the church, 1824	30 7:00 Property Committee	31 John Donne, poet, 1631 8:30 Men's Breakfast 1:00 Women's Bible Study			



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

**Grace for Everyone
-Always-**

*We are a community of faith
committed to living and sharing the love of God.*

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Address Service Requested

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Wednesdays 7:00 Lenten Worship