

pregnancy occurs when both parties do not participate willingly in sexual intercourse. This is especially true in cases of rape and incest. This can also be the case in some situations in which women are so dominated and oppressed that they have no choice regarding sexual intercourse and little access to contraceptives. Some conceptions occur under dehumanizing conditions that are contrary to God's purposes.

**What is the status of this conversation in our local faith community? What words or phrases seem important to you today? What words challenge you?**



Dear Parents, We would love to work with you to bring your children to communion with Christ when he/she is hungry and curious to know the love of Jesus in this way. We rely on you to present your child to us when he/she expresses the desire to participate in communion with some understanding of why it is significant.

Soon, we will be preparing students to receive First Communion on Maundy Thursday or the Sunday following Easter by gathering with you for a mini-retreat on either Thursday, March 26th or Thursday, April 2nd in which we will talk about Christ's presence in the Eucharist, make a personal banner, and bake communion bread as an act of service for the whole community. If you have a child you feel is ready or would like more information, please contact Kaileen Weaver by March 25th at (319) 480-6031 or [cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com](mailto:cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com)

### Friday, February 14th

- \* Pulse Deadline

### Sunday, February 16th Eucharistic Ministry

- \* 8:30am Worship
- \* 9:30am Coffee Hour
- \* 10:30am Worship
- \* 12:00pm Adult Initiation Meeting
- \* 4:30pm Love is Kind Dinner

### Tuesday, February 18th

- \* 1:30pm Prayer (Beginning Yoga) — in Prayer Chapel
- \* 2:00pm Sisters Ecumenical Study—LL CE
- \* 2:30pm R & R - in Prayer Chapel
- \* 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE
- \* 8:00pm AA—LL CE

### Wednesday, February 19th

- \* 7:00am Good Guys Bible Study—McOttos
- \* 8:00am Lutheran Men in Mission
- \* 6:00pm Worship
- \* 6:00pm WD4

### Thursday, February 20th

- \* 3:00pm HACAP Distribution

**Church Office Hours:** Typically church staff are in the building Monday - Friday. **Lois' office hours** are: Mon. & Th 9-2; Tue. 12:30–5:30; Wed. 9-4; Fri 9-12. Outside these hours call ahead to see if someone is here.

St. Paul Phone: (319)462-4841

Office: 103 E. Cedar Street, Anamosa, IA 52205

Website: [www.stpaulanamosa.com](http://www.stpaulanamosa.com)

Church Secretary email: [stpaulanamosa@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulanamosa@gmail.com)

### Wednesday, February 19th

**Ushers:** WD4 Students  
**Reader:** WD4 Students  
**Comm Prep:** Darla Algoe  
**Comm Server:** WD4 Students  
**PowerPoint:** WD4 Students

### Sunday, February 23rd 8:30 a.m.

**Ushers:** Ed Gerst/Susan Koppenhaver  
**Reader:** Virginia Danielson  
**Comm Prep:** Jan Allaire/Karen Biere  
**Comm Server:** Virginia Danielson, Colin & Carol Stiffler  
**PowerPoint:** Conor Fortune  
**Video:** Linda Kenny

### Sunday, February 23rd 10:30 a.m.

**Ushers:** CJ Sullivan Family  
**Reader:** Gary or Carlene Vavricek  
**Comm Prep:** Barb Wilson  
**Comm Server:** Staci Sullivan, Gary & Carlene Vavricek  
**PowerPoint:** Victor Chalstrom  
**Video:** Sean Hollett

### Sunday, February 16



### 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday post Epiphany

Liturgy setting one can be found on pages 57-74 in the green Lutheran Book of Worship

**All Are Welcome** to commune with Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We serve the fruit of the vine under two forms: wine

and grape juice. The inner ring of the tray is grape juice. If in doubt, please ask the distributor. Gluten free hosts are available; please notify an usher before service begins.

**At the beginning of worship you will be invited to turn to another person and complete the statement, "This week, I encountered God...."** In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We too are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

**Prayer Concerns:** Leslie Swartz, Bobbie Gersdorf, Sharm Sisler, Betty Lubben, Bob Hefflefinger and for the families of Loren Lubben and Darlene Hellman. (Names will be removed from the prayer list after four weeks unless there is a change in the person's condition. Requests need to be made by an immediate family member.)

**Lenten meals are starting again** March 4, 2020. Please use the sign up sheet to help in the kitchen or to bring bars or cookies. High school students who need silver cord hours just bring your sheet with you. Thank you so much to all of you who step up every time I call. Lori R

### Interviews to be Conducted

The church council has been meeting with Pastor Erika Uthe of the Southeast Iowa Synod. She is the director for evangelical mission. Pastor Erika works with congregations in helping them find the best ways for fulfilling their mission of sharing the Good News. She instructed the council on techniques that can be used for receiving input from congregational members. As a follow-up to the table talks that were held last year, it was determined that individual interviews would be a good way of receiving additional input. Ten individuals have been trained in the interviewing process. Our goal is to interview approximately 100 members. During the next 8 weeks, you may be receiving a call from an interviewer, wishing to schedule a meeting with you. The interview will be informal and last only 30 to 40 minutes. The following questions will be asked:

### Interview Questions

What are the strengths of the St. Paul Community? What would you like to see develop at St. Paul over the next three years?

What resources are needed to support that vision/development?

If you do not receive a call and would like to be interviewed, please notify the church office and an interviewer will be happy to call you to schedule a visit. Thank you for your participation in this project.

### Next Dinner with Friends Fri., Feb. 28 at 5 pm:

Please join us in the old Subway area, party room at Tapken's. A variety of pizzas will be ready to share. \$5 per person to share the pizza cost. Grab your favorite non-alcoholic beverage and delicious Ashby's ice cream on your own. Soups and other foods are available for purchase.

**Flowers on the Altar** are in loving memory of Bev Geltz.

**Financial Peace University!** Teresa Hackenmiller and Jim Collier are offering this class again at the Hiawatha office Education room starting March 8th. For more information follow this link to see full class schedule and register: [FPU.COM/1103976](http://FPU.COM/1103976) We encourage people to bring family/teens - and encourage people "on the fence" to attend the first class FREE and register if they continue. We do ask for RSVP, because we cancel if we do not have at least 10 in the class. RSVP with Teresa cell 319-826-4272 Email: [teressa.hackenmiller@thrivent.com](mailto:teressa.hackenmiller@thrivent.com) or Jim Collier - cell: 319-350-3484 Email: [jeshbr@msn.com](mailto:jeshbr@msn.com)

### RAGBRAI Housing Requests:

- 2 Men, 1 woman—call David at (319) 572-7247

### Neighborhood requests—

- team of 15 side by side housing if possible—email Dawn at [vanrossum728@hotmail.com](mailto:vanrossum728@hotmail.com)
- Lutheran Men in Mission team of 23 in same neighborhood contact Mark at 712-540-1391 [mcmjuhl@midlands.net](mailto:mcmjuhl@midlands.net)

### First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 NIV

The Book of Deuteronomy was originally presented to the Hebrew people by their elders while they were under Babylonian captivity. The book claims to contain the words of Moses addressed to the chosen people just before they entered the land of Canaan. The name of the book means "second law" and in it Moses proclaims the laws given by God at Mount Sinai. {The first edition of the law is contained in Exodus and Leviticus.} Moses offers motivation to the people for keeping God's law; in his day (1200's B.C.), it was to help those who had been freed from slavery and exile in Egypt to regain the Promised Land. In the day of this book's writing, it was to encourage those who had been in the Babylonian exile for forty years to keep the laws of Yahweh so the people would be freed to return to Jerusalem (it was about 600 years after

### Wednesday, February 12th

**Ushers:** Ken & Pam Humpal  
**Reader:** Beth Hora  
**Comm Prep:** Ken & Pam Humpal  
**Comm Server:** Marge Bohlken, Beth Hora  
**PowerPoint:** Beth Hora

### Sunday, February 16th 8:30 a.m.

**Ushers:** Don & Deb Hardersen  
**Reader:** Don or Deb Hardersen  
**Comm Prep:** Dee Ihlenfeldt  
**Comm Server:** Conor Fortune, Brian & Michele Lubben  
**PowerPoint:** Grant Lubben  
**Video:** Grace Lubben

### Sunday, February 16th 10:30 a.m.

**Ushers:** Dan & Marilyn Lambertsen  
**Reader:** Dan or Marilyn Lambertsen  
**Comm Prep:** Amy Christianson  
**Comm Server:** Amy Christianson, Sally Clapp, Addie Dales  
**PowerPoint:** Emma Dales  
**Video:** Logan Dales

Moses). Moses was regarded by the people as the greatest leader and his words still held sway.

Because the people in exile do not have the Temple, Jerusalem: the city of their God, the priests to mediate the Sabbath ritual worship, nor a king to explain God's will, available to them, they are caught up in the throes of chaos. They wonder who they are and whose they are. In today's passage, Moses reminds Israel that God's commandments (or WORDS) are in their hearts. If they observe them faithfully, they will know the new life promised to them. But keeping the law involves more than simply adhering to a set of rules. Faithfulness enables the people to turn to God "with all your heart and all your soul." This complete return to Yahweh was necessary because some of the people were tempted to worship the gods of Babylon or take on the traits of the dominant society. Only a relationship of total dedication to the God of Israel would bring them the freedom and unity they sought.

The Israelites understood God to be totally other and totally separate, and they were getting in trouble because they desired a powerful God they could see and touch. While in the Sinai desert, they had created a golden calf out of this desire. But it was not YHWH God, and Moses reminded them that they didn't need material representations of God. Even without a statue or church, the law of God's commands can be known and kept; they are not overly burdensome or difficult because they are practical, rooted in love, and written on the heart of God's community. They are not a distant reality that must be sought in the heavens; rather, these divine expressions are a part of the cycle of life and the way of creation. Moses is reminding them that the wisdom/law of God resides within their communal heart, and if they listen, they will know God's will.

### **Second Reading: The first letter of St. Paul to the Christian community in Corinth, Greece 3:1-9 NIV**

Paul is confronting a group of religious people in his community who considered themselves superior to others because they possessed a special spirit through wisdom granted unto them. These people (*pneumatikoi*) looked down upon those they labeled as spiritual children and less mature. Surprisingly, they included Paul in this group because he was often found to be lacking in eloquence of speech and earthly handsomeness. The culture supported judgments being made on externals (warts, a crooked nose, stuttering, a short limb, etc) and harsh shaming through name-calling frequently followed. Perfection was prized as a sign of blessedness.

In this case, however, Paul decided to speak up and challenge their self-righteousness by saying that he will teach them not with human wisdom but with the wisdom of the ages: God's plan for the world's salvation. Keeping in

mind the people's focus on externals, they had rendered Jesus a failure, a fraud, and cursed. No "ruler" dies in humiliation on the cross. Paul points out the failure in their limited wisdom by noting it was exactly Jesus' earthly weakness and humility that created the opportunity for God to raise him to new life. In this way, Jesus became the eternal Lord of Honor and Glory. God intended to do this from the beginning of time and intends to do it for all of creation throughout time. Having heard this, it was time for the people to decide: will they continue to follow human rulers of the earth who are led by wicked powers to work against the true will of God or will they choose to follow the Lord of Life. He offers this choice not as a condemnation but as a prayer for those who consider themselves mature in faith yet fail to realize the plan of God. Instead of assisting God, the *pneumatikoi* open themselves to the malevolent forces of the universe and end up working to evil's end. Paul implies that demonic forces have little effect in the world except where humans cooperate. Similarly, will they allow themselves to be divided as they claim allegiance to one preacher or another?

Paul is dealing with a real situation that arose in this young Christian community. The Corinthian believers had begun to put the leaders of the church ahead of their unifying faith in Jesus the Christ. They argued about who was more worthy of being followed: Cephas (Peter), Paul, or Apollos (a Christian preacher from a community in northern Africa who came to Greece to spread the word of God. His reputation was that of a great public speaker. Even Paul admits that Apollos is a more eloquent speaker, but this should not render Paul's witness to the cross of Christ devoid of power, especially when it's rooted in personal sacrifice).

As often happens in worshipping bodies today, the people in Corinth began to associate themselves and their faith with one or the other of the leaders. Some followed Peter (*Cephas*, meaning *rock* in Aramaic) because of his apostolic witness; some showed allegiance to Paul because he had lived with them for at least eighteen months and had helped establish them as a community; some were drawn to the inspiring oratory of Apollos. No matter the affiliation, Paul takes exception with this tendency because the baptized are not to allow factions over human leadership to develop. Faith is misplaced when a particular preacher or pastor is able to change one's affinity for the Truth. According to Paul, there is only one source of unity for the body, Christ, and He cannot be divided. Anything short of unity is a symptom of selfishness.

### **Gospel: Matthew 5:21-37 NIV**

One of Matthew's goals in his gospel was to convince

his Jewish audience now living outside the Promised Land that Jesus was the new Moses. Like Moses, the great leader who brought the Israelites out of captivity into freedom, Jesus "saves his people" {in fact, that is what his name *Yeshua* means}. The comparison was begun earlier in the gospel. Now, in this fifth chapter, we hear that Jesus went up the mountain to reveal God's message to the disciples who had gathered (allusion to Moses' going up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments). Jesus sat down to teach, which was customary in that day; revered people spoke while sitting in a place of authority (occasionally, you'll see the Pope or a priest preach from the presider's chair, which flows from this tradition.) Matthew wants his readers to believe that in Jesus, Israel has been recreated. Through Jesus' followers, Israel continues to exist; and so the Beatitudes become the description of the faithful remnant; those who will sustain and recreate God's chosen people.

This lengthy list of honorable traits puts flesh on the shorter list of beatitudes that precedes it in chapter five (Truly honorable/blessed are those who.... You are salt, light). The pattern of Jesus' speech for this section is to present a teaching, as it has come to the people primarily from the Pharisees, and clarify it through His understanding. Interestingly, Jesus spends most of his time scraping away the layers of additional duties or actions the Pharisees had added over time to help the people be holy as they were holy (multiple times of fasting, numerous times of prayer, several ritual washings, ways to divorce, settling an argument, care of eating utensils, convincing someone you're telling the truth, etc.). In brief, this section includes: avoiding comments that could escalate to anger and murder; naming the foolishness of using adultery as a way to shame another man by pointing out how devastating it is; reasons for divorce are interpreted strictly, not liberally for the man's sake; and, lying is not to be tolerated, especially in exchanging goods. Jesus does not abolish the honor based system practiced by his society, rather he attempts to make it more humane within his community of followers by putting the locus of honor in God. His primary method is to return to the Mosaic Law and put it into the simplest form so that the average person who desires to live righteously can do so without having to be affirmed by the self-absorbed religious authority.

*Raqa* is derived from a Hebrew word meaning to separate or create distance. The Sanhedrin, or

religious court, was sometimes called upon to settle disputes between family members, but this was never desirable because it could bring shame upon the families. Public opinion was very influential.

Gehenna is the place of fiery torment; an image borrowed from the ever burning garbage dumps on the south side of Jerusalem, in the Valley of Hinnom.

If you sit with Jesus's statement about adultery for awhile, you might gain additional insight into the choice in some Middle Eastern countries to completely cover their women in clothing (*burkas*, etc.). Admitting men's natural inclinations, it is an attempt to remove the temptation to look at a woman with lust.

### **Taking It Home:**

--Have you ever sought assistance or clarification from a religious authority? How did it go? If not so well, what do you think happened? Have you sought to reconcile the situation by requesting a different perspective or letting the authority know your feelings?

--With your family, discuss some choices you've had to make. Be clear about the things you were choosing between (i.e. fire/water, share/keep for self, one girlfriend or another, respect another's property/take it for self, Prius/Pathfinder, lie/tell truth...) What did you consider when making the choice? Did it matter? Was God's will part of the decision making process?

--Name a time people might have thought you were weak but actually you were allowing another to be strong.

--Who or what serves as a wisdom guide for you?

--To what do you look most forward to in spring time?

**A Social Statement on: ABORTION** [This social teaching statement was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Orlando, Florida, August 28-September 4, 1991.]

IV. GUIDANCE IN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES: B. Ending a Pregnancy-- This church recognizes that there can be sound reasons for ending a pregnancy through induced abortion. The following provides guidance for those considering such a decision. We recognize that conscientious decisions need to be made in relation to difficult circumstances that vary greatly. What is determined to be a morally responsible decision in one situation may not be in another. In reflecting ethically on what should be done in the case of an unintended pregnancy, consideration should be given to the status and condition of the life in the womb. We also need to consider the conditions under which the pregnancy occurred and the implications of the pregnancy for the woman's life. An abortion is morally responsible in those cases in which continuation of a pregnancy presents a clear threat to the physical life of the woman. A woman should not be morally obligated to carry the resulting pregnancy to term if the