

to turn to abortion as the answer to unintended pregnancies.

{2. Embryology provides insight into the complex mystery of God's creative activity. How we interpret and evaluate this data makes a difference in how we as Christians make decisions regarding abortion: The genetic material from the egg and sperm unite at the point of fertilization and form a unique, undifferentiated, loose cluster of cells. From 40-75 percent of these zygotes spontaneously fail to implant in the uterus. After implantation occurs at about two weeks after fertilization, the complex process of developmental differentiation begins, with a close symbiotic relationship between the embryo and the mother's body. At about the eighth week, the embryo becomes a fetus. Integrated brain functioning begins to emerge at about the tenth week, followed by the increasingly complex emergence of functional, behavioral, and eventually psychic individuality. The social aspect emerges through recognition by and relation with others, most dramatically as birth is approached. The fetus becomes viable when it is capable of surviving disconnected from the placenta. Depending upon technological supports, this can occur at 24 weeks if not earlier.}

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

Wednesday, January 15th

Ushers: Darla Algoe
Reader: Darla Algoe
Comm Prep: Darla Algoe
Comm Server: Summer Parks, Laura or Marcy
PowerPoint: Beth Hora

Sunday, January 19th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Mark & Rhonda Bickford
Reader: Lois Ocenosak
Comm Prep: Wilma Anderson & Verna Lewison
Comm Server: Wilma Anderson, Wayne & Becky Embree
PowerPoint: Grant Lubben
Video: Grace Lubben

Sunday, January 19th 10:30 a.m.

Ushers: Curtis Weaver family
Reader: Paula Sisler
Comm Prep: Serge & Paula Sisler
Comm Server: Sally Clapp, Addie Dales, Paula Sisler
PowerPoint: Emma Dales
Video: Logan Dales

Friday, January 17 Pulse Deadline

Sunday, January 19th Eucharistic Ministry

- * 8:30am Worship
- * 9:30am Coffee Hour
- * 10:30am Worship
- * 3:00pm Men's Craft Aft

Monday, January 20th

- * 5:00pm Potluck at St. Pat's
- * 6:30pm Prayer for Christian Unity at St. Pat's

Tuesday, January 21st

- * 1:30pm Prayer (Meditation & Movement) — in side chapel
- * 2:00pm Sisters Ecumenical Study—LL CE
- * 2:30pm R & R - in side chapel
- * 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE
- * 8:00pm AA—LL CE

Wednesday, January 22nd

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

Thursday, January 23

- * 10:00am Friend to Friend—Fellowship Hall

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.

Phone: (319)462-4841

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

Website: www.stpaulanamosa.com

Church Secretary email: stpaulanamosa@gmail.com

Wednesday, January 22nd

Ushers: Ken & Pam Humpal
Reader: Barb Kleis
Comm Prep: Ken & Pam Humpal
Comm Server: Doug & Jody Fairbanks
PowerPoint: Myra Powell

Sunday, January 26th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Colin Stiffler & Jay Willems
Reader: Jay Willems
Comm Prep: Jim & Dolores Albrecht
Comm Server: Ed Gerst, Susan Koppenhaver, Arlie Willems
PowerPoint: Conor Fortune
Video: Linda Kenny

Sunday, January 26th 10:30 a.m.

Ushers: Carl Achenbach, Bob Goodyear
Reader: Gary or Carlene Vavricek
Comm Prep: Bob & Janice Goodyear
Comm Server: Fred Austin, Gary & Carlene Vavricek
PowerPoint: Victor Chalstrom
Video: Sean Hollett

Wed., Jan 15 & Sun., Jan. 19, 2020

Second 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.

Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

Prayer Concerns: Karen Kleppe, Kara Butterworth, Dennis Heth, Peter & Claire Mannon; Zack, Aspin & Livi Covey; Sharm Sisler and for the family of Ruth Ann Bungum. (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.)

Prayer for Christian Unity: Mon., Jan. 20, observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by joining together with people of all faiths for the Christian Unity prayer service hosted at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Anamosa. Potluck will start at 5:00 p.m. and service at 6:30 p.m.

Please take a moment and pick up your **2019 Giving Statements** and 2020 'My Offering' box in the southwest corner behind the pews. If you do not have a box and want one please place your name on the list at the table.

Jones County Food Bank Although anything and everything is appreciated, the following items are the most needed: diapers; sizes 4, 5 & 6; toothbrushes & toothpaste; feminine pads & tampons; dish soap; deodorant. December found 160 families in need of help. Thank you for your contribution for those in need.

Quilt-In January 26: St. Paul Quilters host an all day quilt-in on January 26 beginning at 10 am. Bring your machines, scissors, threads, etc. and join us for a day of fellowship and Lutheran World Relief work. We will do a potluck lunch.

Sub Sunday is just around the corner! Why not grab a sub so your supper is ready for Super Bowl watching. Your meal will include a cold cut sub sandwich, lettuce, condiments, chips, and sweet treat for \$5. Don't wait! Complete your pre-order form below TODAY!!! Last day to order is Sunday, January 26th. Meals will be available following both services. Delivery is available. Any questions, please contact Michele Lubben at bmgglubben@gmail.com or 319-551-6820. Thank you for your support!

Dinner with Friends (yes, you are a friend). Scooters! Anamosa. Friday, January 24th. 4:30 pm, we will order closer to 5:00. More friends are always welcome, Please join us! See you there!

Men's Craft Aft will be at 3:00 pm Sunday afternoon at Scooters. Join us for conversation around paper mache and the post human experience.

Green: the color of ordinary time and of hope. As mentioned before, there really is nothing ordinary about this season because it is a season of hope marked by Sundays that celebrate the new life found in resurrection. The season is actually misnamed; it should be "Ordinal Time" in which the Sundays are numbered to indicate the passing of time (second, third, fourth, etc.) especially when we consider that Ordinary Time contains portions of winter, summer, and fall. We celebrate the coming of Jesus the Christ in our weekly Eucharist as we wait in joyful hope for his final full arrival. He is alive!

In the Scriptures, we are being reminded that profession of faith leads to mission.

First Reading: Book of the Prophet Isaiah 49:1-7 NIV

What was it like to be part of the Jewish community hearing this message from Isaiah? Perhaps it is helpful to imagine for a minute that you have been living away from your home for a long time, but not by choice. You have been waiting to return to the home of your parents, the whole time feeling as if you are being punished, deprived of your security, identity, sense of closeness with family, and everyday freedoms. You note that some days you waiver between feelings of righteous anger and depression, while other days you sense hope

only to have it eclipsed by feelings of emptiness. Over time, you are growing weary, and just when you are about to give up, you get the word, “We’re going home!” Your heart is elated; you begin to imagine what it will be like seeing the old neighborhood, rebuilding the markets and stores and ball-fields and schools, going to church, seeing billboards proclaiming, “God has blessed us!” There will be a great festival for God with a parade and bands playing, “*When the Saints Go Marching In.*” There is a sense of peace and joy and potential. You feel special, chosen, loved.

And, at the end of the day, your leader stands up to say, “My friends. We have truly been blessed. Our faithful God has recognized our faithfulness. We have suffered for awhile, but our suffering has not been without purpose. It has made us stronger. It has heightened our desire for freedom and joy. It has forced us to depend on God. We have been prepared for a much greater mission. We must take this message to our children who do not share our enthusiasm, to those who have been scattered, to our neighbors, literally, to the whole world. We must share our story so that others will know our God is a just and merciful God. All will come to worship God because of us! Are you with me?!?”

The Lord, {*Elohim* or *Yahweh*}, is giving the nation of Israel a two part mission: to (restore Jacob) gather back all the Jews who had been scattered throughout the world during this time of exile, and to restore Israel by ending the exile and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

Second Reading: Paul’s First Letter to the Christians in Corinth, Greece 1:1-9 NIV

This reading is the opening greeting of Paul’s letter to the those who are following Jesus in Corinth, Greece, and it communicates several statements of conviction held by Paul. Paul was writing to bolster and support this fledgling faith community in carrying out their baptismal mission. Pockets of believers were spread throughout the Mediterranean area. Intercommunication and exchange of support was not yet a reality. It was dangerous and hard to be a Christian in the midst of an established Jewish community and the predominantly pagan culture of the Roman Empire. One can imagine how the tiny church in Corinth might have felt cut off from other believers wondering how much suffering they might have to endure for the sake of the gospel before Christ returned.

Paul reminds them in the opening of this letter, “You are a consecrated people, called to be holy, in Jesus Christ.” It is their faith in Jesus as the Savior that unites

them to all believers, even those outside Corinth. They have solidarity in spirit with all followers of Jesus, and their mission to bring the Good News to others around them had to flow from that conviction. Christians are the “new Israel”, and like the Jews of Isaiah’s time, they/we are meant to be a light for others who live in the darkness of sin (unbelief). By living as Christ did, in sacrificial love for others, they will end the divisions that plagued their fledgling community and made them questionable “lights” to the unbelievers. As the Spirit is spread by each baptized member, so the presence of Christ is felt. In this way their community, and the world, are continuously being transformed.

Sosthenes became a companion of Paul and is the co-author of portions of this letter. He was a synagogue official in Corinth who apparently was swayed to believe in Jesus as the Christ by Paul’s preaching. Some of the Jews wanted Paul silenced, but after not receiving satisfaction from their own religious officials, a group of frustrated Jews dragged Paul before Gallio, the Roman procurator, and accused him of inciting people to worship God against the Jewish Law (Acts. 18:17). Gallio dismissed the charges against Paul because they had nothing to do with the Roman Empire’s law and he didn’t get involved in religious disputes, so the mob beat the sympathizer Sosthenes in the midst of the crowd (this is reminiscent of the drama between the Chief Priests, Jesus, and Pontius Pilate).

Gospel: John 1:29-42 NIV

We take a break from Matthew’s gospel this week in order to prolong our reflection on Epiphany themes with the help of John’s writings. In today’s gospel, John the Baptist continues his testimony about Jesus’ identity as “the Son of God” by explaining the meaning of the baptismal event as the inauguration of Jesus’ public messianic ministry.

John’s story of Jesus’ baptism is different from what we find in the other three gospel’s (Mark, Matthew, and Luke are referred to as the ‘synoptic’ gospels because they tend to have the same “view point” on Jesus’ life and mission. Matthew and Luke used Mark’s gospel as a source. John apparently did not.) This is due to the fact that his purpose is to refute the view held by some in his community that John the Baptist was superior to Jesus because he came on the scene first. Almost the entire reading today is composed of John the Baptist’s words through which he clearly states that his sole purpose

was to help God reveal Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Lamb whose blood marks the beginning of the new Passover, freedom, and exodus to new life. He does not do this by baptizing Jesus but rather by pointing out the identity of Jesus that had been revealed to him. Jesus’ very presence as *Emmanuel*, “God is with us,” removes the separation due to sin.

If you recall last week’s first reading, Isaiah’s “Servant Song” indicated that the Lord God had given his spirit to his chosen servant, and upon that servant God’s favor rested. Matthew interpreted that sign to have been given to Jesus in his baptism (the dove). Similarly, in John’s gospel, John the Baptist testifies that God’s plan to save the whole world would be worked out through the chosen servant, Jesus. Notice that John the Baptist twice indicates he did not know Jesus was the Messiah until he saw the spirit of God descend upon Jesus at his baptism. He knew from then on that Jesus would be the one who baptized the world with Holy Spirit and forgiveness. John the Evangelist tells it this way because he was trying to convince his exiled community that they were the new Israel, the people of God re-animated through faith in Jesus, the chosen servant, not through the admittedly ignorant John. And now, as the living Body of that chosen servant, Jesus’ saving mission was to be carried on by them. Their baptism proclaimed their commitment to Jesus’ mission.

What if John or Jesus or the members of John’s community would have said “NO” to God’s voice calling them to mission?

Taking it home:

--Name the three relationships you think you are most committed to.

--If another person observed you for a week, would s/he be able to tell these are the three primary relationships in your life? What would be the indicators?

--When your faith is threatened, to whom do you turn?

--Do you ever feel all alone while standing in a church filled with people? What do you relate that feeling to?

--God needs you to be His word of hope and love for someone this week? Who might that person be? Are you prepared? Can you handle it?

Despite your insecurities, don’t say No.

--In what sense is this passage from John’s Gospel an epiphany story?

Mindfulness (set aside three minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images emerge in your imagination?) “The real questions for parents is: “Are you engaged? Are you paying attention?” If so, plan to make lots of mistakes and bad decisions. Imperfect parenting moments turn into gifts as our children watch us try to figure out what went wrong and how we can do better next time. The mandate is not to be perfect and raise happy children. Perfection doesn't exist, and I've found what makes children happy doesn't always prepare them to be courageous, engaged adults.”
– [Brené Brown, Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead](#)

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.]

- II. CONVICTIONS OF OUR FAITH

Some basic faith convictions undergird our judgments on abortion:

· God calls us to repentance, renewal, and responsible living. We have ‘died to sin’ through our Baptism into Christ and through him are raised to new life (Romans 6:2ff). We are forgiven and sustained through God’s grace. Our faith is to be active in love and our freedom used for the benefit of one another. This is the fruit of the Spirit manifest in our lives. We are to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

· As a community of forgiven sinners, justified by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we are empowered so that we might do what is effective in serving the needs of the neighbor. Inspired by Jesus’ own ministry, our love for neighbor embraces especially those who are most vulnerable, including both the pregnant woman and the life in her womb.

III. THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY SUPPORTIVE OF LIFE: Because we believe that God is the creator of life, the number of induced abortions is a source of deep concern to this church. We mourn the loss of life that God has created. The strong Christian presumption is to preserve and protect life. Abortion ought to be an option only of last resort. Therefore, as a church we seek to reduce the need