

abortions; · mandatory or coerced abortion or sterilization; · laws that prevent couples from practicing contraception; · laws that are primarily intended to harass those contemplating or deciding for an abortion. The position of this church is that, in cases where the life of the mother is threatened, where pregnancy results from rape or incest, or where the embryo or fetus has lethal abnormalities incompatible with life, abortion prior to viability should not be prohibited by law or by lack of public funding of abortions for low income women. On the other hand, this church supports legislation that prohibits abortions that are performed after the fetus is determined to be viable, except when the mother's life is threatened or when lethal abnormalities indicate the prospective newborn will die very soon. Beyond these situations, this church neither supports nor opposes laws prohibiting abortion.

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?

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. 9-5; Fri 9-12. Outside these hours call ahead to see if someone is here.

St. Paul Phone: (319)462-4841
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Website: www.stpaulanamosa.com
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Wednesday, February 26th Ash Wednesday

Noon Greeters: Ken & Pam Humpal

Noon Reader: Lois Ocenosak

Noon PowerPoint: Darcie Tenley

6:00 pm Greeters: WD4 Students

6:00 pm Reader: WD4 Students

6:00 pm PowerPoint: WD4 Students

Sunday, March 1st 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Tom Sabotta & Sherri Evans

Reader: Tom or Sherri

Comm Prep: Dee Ihlenfeldt

Comm Server: Jeff & Kristi Fortune, Dee Ihlenfeldt

PowerPoint: Conor Fortune

Video: Linda Kenny

Sunday, March 1st 10:30 a.m.

Ushers: Shaun Lambertsen Family

Reader: Paula Sisler

Comm Prep: Serge & Paula Sisler

Comm Server: Fred Austin, Greta Vaughn, Paula Sisler

PowerPoint: Dean Lambertsen

Video: Eli Lambertsen

Sunday, March 1st

* 8:30am Worship

* 9:30am Coffee Hour

* 10:30am Worship

* 12:00pm Adult Initiation Meeting

Monday, March 2nd

* 9:30am Woodland Park Service

All Are Welcome

Tuesday, March 3rd

* 12:00pm Sisters at Grounds & Goodies

* 1:30pm Visio Prayer in Prayer Chapel

* 2:30pm R & R - in Prayer Chapel

* 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE

* 8:00pm AA—LL CE

Wednesday, March 4th

* 7:00am Good Guys Bible Study—McOttos

* 8:00am Lutheran Men in Mission

* 5:00pm — Lenten Worship w/portrayals

* 5:30pm-6:30pm—Lenten Supper

* 6:00pm WD4

* 6:45pm Lenten Worship w/portrayals

* 7:45pm Mission Trip Meeting LL CE

Thursday, March 5th

* 1:30pm Anamosa Care Center Service

All Are Welcome

Wednesday, March 4th 5:00 p.m.

Ushers: Summer Parks

Comm Prep: Dorothy Wood

Comm Server: Dorothy Wood, Laura or Marcy

PowerPoint: Lois Ocenosak

Wednesday, March 4th 6:45 p.m.

All Helpers: WD4 Students

Sunday, March 8th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Merlyn & Marlaine Wilken

Reader: Virginia Danielson

Comm Prep: Wilma Anderson, Verna Lewison

Comm Server: Wilma Anderson, Mike & Nancy Bickford

PowerPoint: Lois Ocenosak

Video: Linda Kenny

Sunday, March 8th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Ben & Angie Coyle

Reader: Ben Coyle

Comm Prep: Amy Christianson, Dave & Alex Oldham

Comm Server: Amy Christianson, Dave & Alex Oldham

PowerPoint: Ruby Robertson

Video: Sebastian Goldsmith

Sunday, March 1st



1st Sunday of Lent

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 tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

Prayer Concerns: Sharm Sisler, Betty Lubben, Bob Hefflefinger, Leslie Swartz, and Bobbie Gersdorf. (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.)

Blessings to Ben Coyle and Angie Thomas

who were united in marriage on February 20, 2020.

Lenten meals are starting again March 4, 2020.

Please use the sign up sheet on the bulletin board in church entryway 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

Seeking Congregational Leaders: If you would like to raise up the name of a person from our faith community you believe could be a leader, please share her/his name with me so I can invite him/her into a time of discernment. Thank you, Pastor Rodney

St. Paul Lutheran World Relief quilt work

begins on Monday, March 2 at 1:00 pm. We will continue to tie quilts each Monday through April 6. As our mothers would say, "many hands make light work." If your hands are free, come work with the quilters.

Jones County Food Pantry Items Needed:

peanut butter, hamburger helper meals, canned fruit, corn, cereal. We are always in need of personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies.

The Serenity Prayer (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time, Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that You will make all things right, If I surrender to Your will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life, And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Amen

Reminder: Our Lenten Services with portrayals start this week with a 5:00 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. service and free, light supper between 5:30-6:30 p.m.

March is ALY month for St. Paul. See sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

First Reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

The first reading of this Lenten season is a reminder that we are indeed creatures of the earth, dependent upon it for our lives and forever tied to it in our spirits. From this understanding comes the story of Adam and Eve, the parents of humanity, who allowed sin to enter into their situation of original grace, peace, and holiness. They desired to be something they were not; they wanted to be gods, equal to and independent of God. It does not take long for us to get in touch with this basic drive within ourselves; the desire to control, create, destroy, and have ultimate power is always lurking just below the surface. This ancient Hebrew story strives to describe these ever-present human mysteries as well as the essence of humanity's relationship with God.

This story refers to the creation of "man" when describing God's actions. The Hebrew word translated here as man is actually "*adam*" which is closely related to the word "*adamah*," which means ground. The Hebrew people heard in these similar-sounding words the intimate relationship between humanity and the earth. *Adam* could be more appropriately translated "Humanity or earth-beings" and was considered inclusive of both genders, although these are later differentiated. Yahweh breathes life in "the Human" and it becomes a "living being." Humanity lives because Yahweh's breath is in it; without God's breath {*RUACH*},

humanity dies. This is true of individuals and of humanity as a whole. The section on the creation of woman is omitted today not because it is unimportant but because the event is less significant for the purpose of today's lesson. In the tenth century BCE, the author has woman created in order to explain the marriage relationship. Originally, the woman was equal to the man and a suitable helper in fulfilling their destinies as images of God. According to the author, it is one of the results of "the original sin" that the woman is made subordinate to her husband. {A helpful device when we hear the word 'sin' is to think of 'division, separation, or diminishment.'}

In the original relationship of creation, animals and humans were closely linked as well because both were creatures of the ground animated by God's breath. Humans were different because Yahweh spoke to them which led them to the ability to reflect on their existence (consciousness). In the second half of the story today, which attempts to explain not the origin but the experience of sin in the world, we experience a rupture in this relationship. The "serpent" referred to here has in some traditions been equated with Satan or the devil; an association that doesn't show up until the first century BCE. This association was not in this author's mind. He simply knew that the serpent (not a snake) was the voice of doubt and distrust that plagues the exercise of human free will. Again, a word play is employed to create an allusion. The Hebrew word for cunning is *arum*, and the word for naked is *arummim*. Thus, humans became aware and ashamed of their nakedness through cunning and deceit. {Later in the story, when confronted with their disobedience, the humans will hurriedly blame one another.}

Why a serpent? The idol-worshipping pagans of the author's time represented their fertility gods with serpents. The author is trying to discourage the Hebrew person from succumbing to the temptation of idol worship by showing the adversity between the pagan gods and Yahweh who ultimately controls all things. In an agricultural society, it was/is a constant temptation to call on gods that purportedly control weather and reproduction.

And so, what are the main themes of this reading? Yahweh created humanity out of the earth. Humans are tied to the earth (remember you are dust... humility). Yahweh provided enough for humans to be happy. Temptation was present from the beginning. Deceit and misrepresentation of God led to the "original sin" and guilt. Humans tried to cover their shame, but

only God can make the relationship right. While the humans grasped at the knowledge of good and evil, they unfortunately lacked the divine wisdom needed to apply it justly in life.

Second Reading: St. Paul's letter to the Christian Community in Rome 5:12-19 NIV

According to Paul's argument, which is rooted in ancient scriptural stories, ADAM unleashed a lethal force into the world (sin) and it led to definite alienation from the God of life. While this is a universal experience, it cannot be the end of the story. Paul says emphatically that Jesus Christ is the new Adam in that He brings forgiveness of the sin (new life, re-ordering of relationship with God) into the world by using his free will to serve God, not self. As devastating as sin's effects are in the world, the overwhelming, abounding, and overflowing grace of new life brought to the world through Jesus diminishes the sting of sin. The effects of this grace are ever-present, but as is true at any time in history, humans have to admit their powerlessness and give themselves over to Christ through faith inspired by Holy Spirit so that the fruits of a faithful life can be realized in the world.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

The first humans gave into temptation and received the fruits of sin: separation from the paradise God had created for them, division between themselves as mutual helpers, separation from harmony (*shalom*) with nature (pain at childbirth, toiling over the soil, crushing the heads of snakes), and diminishment of their self-esteem. Likewise, during the Exodus the Israelites gave into temptation while in the desert. They doubted God's ability to provide for them; they challenged the leaders who brought God's voice to them (Moses); they were tempted to return to the pagan gods and the fleshpots of the Egyptians; they wondered if God was really in their midst at all; they made a golden calf idol to worship. In many ways, the Hebrew people had failed to keep the covenant between them and Yahweh.

In contrast to the failings of the first humans and the ancient Hebrew people, Matthew paints the portrait of Jesus as the one who finally faithfully lives the covenant. In him, Israel, indeed the whole family of humanity, is redeemed. They are given the perfect model of a lover of God. For each of the tempter's challenges, Jesus is able to quote from the Book of Deuteronomy

what it means to perfectly love Yahweh God. At his baptism, the spirit voice gave Jesus a compliment, naming and claiming him as the "one with whom I (God) am well pleased." A compliment is always challenged in the Middle Eastern culture, so it is no surprise that the devil spirit offers Jesus three opportunities to act in a way that would displease his Father and bring shame. These are the same three temptations represented in the fruit that Eve chose to eat (satisfying the appetite, the source of wisdom & power). But unlike Eve, Jesus does not allow his own hunger, thirst, doubt, and loneliness to drive him from his loyalty to God. He becomes the new Moses. He is the new Adam/Eve. He is the obedient son.

The term "son of God" was most often used in the Hebrew Scriptures to designate the faithful people of Israel. This was expanded to "children of God" and basically meant the "chosen people." At times, the term also referred to a particular representative of the people, such as the king at his coronation. The use of this title by the devil is meant to identify Jesus as a redeeming figure for the nation of Israel. Christian communities after the Easter event began to use it as a title for Jesus because of his unique relationship with the Father and role in history. There is no evidence in the gospels that Jesus ever used this title to refer to himself (even though John titles him that). Jesus referred to himself consistently as "the Son of Man." According to the Prophet Daniel, this human figure was designated by God to usher in the "Day of the Lord," also known as judgment day. Perhaps that is partly why Jesus is quoted as saying: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!" and then proceeds to engage in activities that look and feel like Paradise: the lame walk, the blind see, all are united, there is enough to satisfy all people....

Taking it home:

--Identify struggles or diseases in those around you that may have been the result of giving into temptations similar to those faced by Jesus.

--Look at the people you encounter every day. What sin would you guess each is struggling with? Reflect on this not for the sake of judging them but for the sake of expressing compassion or praying for them. How can your gift of understanding and empathy help them overcome the sin/addiction?

--"Remove the plank from your own eye first." What sins are you most struggling with right now? What is distracting you from keeping God first? Write it/them down and bring them to prayer each day. Admit your powerlessness and ask for God's help. See what happens.

--Think of the people you most enjoy being around. Do they tend to think of themselves or others first? Is there a pattern?

--How do you respond to temptations for power, pleasure, and status?

Mindfulness (set aside five minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images emerge in your imagination?)

Barbara Marx Hubbard uses the language "universal human" to describe the development of the human species into a more caring, intuitive, responsive and responsible one in relationship to other species. As we shed pettiness and addictions to patterns of behavior that are destructive to others and ourselves, we help move the species into *homo universalis*. Precursors of this more evolved species, she explains, are many great spiritual teachers such as Jesus and Buddha. I think of them leading us to become more finely tuned and trustworthy recipients of Divine guidance. *Libby Comeaux CoL, Cosmology, Spirituality, and the Universal Human in Loretto Earth Network News, Vol. 19, No. 2*

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.]

V. PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES RELATED TO ABORTION: Laws should be enacted and enforced justly for the preservation and enhancement of life, and should avoid unduly encumbering or endangering the lives of women. Because of our conviction that both the life of the woman and the life in her womb must be respected by law, this church opposes: · the total lack of regulation of abortion; · legislation that would outlaw abortion in all circumstances; · laws that prevent access to information about all options available to women faced with unintended pregnancies; · laws that deny access to safe and affordable services for morally justifiable