

to legal medical services, and the concern that people's tax money not be used to pay for what some people consider profoundly wrong. While we strongly affirm family communication and support, the law should recognize that in some cases husband or partner involvement in the decision could be unwise or dangerous (e.g., if the relationship is broken or violent). If a law requires parental consent when the woman is a minor, it should specify other trusted adults as alternatives if parental involvement is inappropriate or unsafe. It is through the public processes of our society that the common good is sought for all. This church encourages its members to participate in the public debate on abortion in a spirit of respect for those with whom they differ. Committed to a process of raising and deliberating the difficult and unresolved questions, this church encourages its members, informed by faith understandings and by their conscience, to decide and act on this issue in ways that are responsive to God and to the needs of the neighbor.

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?

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 5th 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 8th

- * 8:30am Worship
- * 9:30am Coffee Hour
- * 10:30am Worship
- * 12:00pm Adult Initiation Meeting

Monday, March 9th

- * 1:30pm Lutheran World Relief Quilting
- * 4:30pm Worship Team Meeting
- * 6:30pm Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 10th

- * 1:30pm Meditation Prayer in Prayer Chapel
- * 2:00pm Sisters LL CE
- * 2:30pm R & R - in Prayer Chapel
- * 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE
- * 6:30pm Marcy Circle Fellowship Hall
- * 8:00pm AA—LL CE

Wednesday, March 11th

- * 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

Friday, March 13 Pulse Deadline

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
 Office: 103 E. Cedar Street, Anamosa, IA 52205
 Website: www.stpaulanamosa.com
 Church Secretary email: stpaulanamosa@gmail.com

Wednesday, 11th 5:00 p.m.

Ushers: Cole Millard
Comm Prep: Donna Selk
Comm Server: Summer Parks & Laura or Marcy
PowerPoint: Myra Powell

Wednesday, March 11th 6:45 p.m.

All Helpers: WD4 Students

Sunday, March 15th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Mark & Rhonda Bickford
Reader: Mary Lou Schipper
Comm Prep: Don & Dorothy Harmon
Comm Server: Pete Bungum, Wayne & Becky Embree
PowerPoint: Grant Lubben
Video: Grace Lubben

Sunday, March 15th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Nancy L-D, Jamie & Kinsley Hamblin, Brie Wittenburg
Reader: Nancy Lyon-Douglas
Comm Prep: Barb Wilson
Comm Server: Sally Clapp, Addie Dales, Nancy Lyon-Douglas
PowerPoint: Emma Dales
Video: Logan Dales

Wed., March 4th & Sun. March 8th, 2020 2nd Sunday of Lent



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

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

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

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.)

There will be a Noisy Collection at all Lenten Services to benefit Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

Helpers still needed for Lenten Meals 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

St. Paul Lutheran World Relief quilt work Mondays 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.

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

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

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

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction—that aspects of our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 (from the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous)

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a {NIV}

The book of Genesis is the first of the five great Hebrew books called the Torah. Genesis was written to explain the pre-history of humanity and the early history of the Israelites. The authors of Genesis, who wrote between 1000 and 500 BCE, attempted to explain through symbol rich stories such mysteries as the creation of the world, the origin of humans and their relationship to the creator, how sin and separation entered the world, why marriage exists, and why different languages can be heard.

Jews, Muslims, and Christians all claim Abraham as their father of faith. Today's first reading tells us why. Abram {"Exalted Father" in Heb.} and his wife, Sarai {"Princess" in Heb.}, are told to pack up camp, take their kin away from the land of their ancestors, and move to a land Yahweh would show to them. It is an invitation to complete conversion, stripping away all that is comfortable and familiar with the promise of something better.

For Abram, it was a chance to leave the idol worship of his ancestors, but as is so often the case, if he was to fully worship Yahweh, he and his family had to exchange their surroundings for a new environment. God promised that after some hard times and struggles, Abram would be blessed seven times over with land and descendants (the number seven in Hebrew scripture refers to 'perfection.') Because of Abram's obedience and trust in God, his name is changed to Abraham, which means, "Father of a host of nations." The story will go on to tell of Abraham's first born, Ishmael, his other son, Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob, and the twelve sons he fathered to create the nation we call Israel. In telling the story again, we recognize how the promises of God have been fulfilled. God is an awesome God!

Second Reading: St. Paul's Letter to the Christians in Rome 4:1-5, 13-17 {NIV}

Paul had a case to make to the members of this Roman community: both Gentiles and Jews are saved through Jesus the Christ, and their faith heritage applies to both. He wanted all believers to see Abraham as their father in faith. Paul tells this story in order to tie two separate sections of the Hebrew Scriptures together as testimony for his case. Deuteronomy 19 required two witnesses in order that any testimony might be considered valid and convincing, and since Paul was a devout Pharisaical Jew, he followed these rules of argument. He quotes Genesis and Psalms in order to say that the promises God made and carried out through Abraham were for all believers, Gentile and Jew. According to Genesis, Abraham was a believer for 29 years before he was circumcised. He and Sarah bore Isaac from their "dead" bodies because God had promised them offspring even in their old age as a reward for faith. Abraham was credited with righteousness even before he was made a child of God through circumcision. Similarly, those who are not circumcised (the Gentiles) can be considered righteous for their belief in God.

Abraham believed in a God who could bring life out of death. Paul was encouraging the Roman Christians to hang onto their hope in Jesus, because God continues to bring life out of death for those who believe.

Gospel -- John 3:1-17 {NIV}

In the Gospel of John, Nicodemus is another example of someone coming to greater faith in God's salvation through the works of Jesus the Christ. Nicodemus is presented to us earlier in this same chapter as one of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, a member of the Sanhedrin (Religious Court that functioned similar to the U.S. Congress), who found intrigue in Jesus' message. Because Nicodemus held a position of leadership, he regarded Jesus cautiously, and so to protect his honor among the other Jewish leaders, went to Jesus under the cover of darkness. The darkness is a strong symbolic idea for John because those who do not believe in the Name (Power) of Jesus remain in the nighttime of disbelief. Jesus is the light and revelation of God's power. Those who believe live in the light and are saved by the truth.

But like most of us, this is not the totality of Nicodemus' spiritual journey. He appears two more times in the gospel, and each time he expresses a deeper commitment to Jesus. In 7:50-51, Nicodemus defends Jesus' before the Pharisees. They are mocking Jesus because he is from Galilee, "the armpit of the nation." They ask: How can he be the Messiah when he is from the little hicktown, Nazareth? The Messiah is supposed to be from David's line and from Bethlehem; surely the savior cannot come from outside Judea. Nicodemus sticks up for Jesus by asking the question: "Can we judge a person before we have given him a chance to speak in his own defense?" For his question, Nicodemus is shamed by the other Pharisees. They accuse him of being from lowly Galilee as well. This is to dishonor him by putting him with the people who are not important, and that is exactly where they place Jesus. Nicodemus drops the argument but has already taken a step outside his comfort zone by trying to address an injustice among the leaders. His conversations with Jesus in the dark are beginning to reveal some light. Like Jesus when he went to the lepers, Nicodemus ventures outside the conventional boundaries.

Later, we see Nicodemus' full conversion when he joins Joseph of Arimathea in the public act of anointing and burying the body of the crucified

Jesus (19:38-42). His actions are in the daylight and clearly separate him from the non-believing Sanhedrin members who remain in the dark. Notice that Nicodemus' conversion occurs even before the resurrection. By believing the message of Jesus, he has already begun to live the qualities of a righteous, eternal relationship with God.

The oft quoted Jn. 3:16, was designed by John to elicit strong responses. In his experience, "the world" that God acted to save actually is comprised of people who are at odds with Jesus, His Spirit, and the community baptized in His name. John is adamant that his community is outside the world because it is born of a spirit "from above" (3:3). When confronted with a Christ who was shamefully crucified, those who failed to understand often responded with shocked disbelief and even violence at the absurdity of the notion and the judgment being passed on them by this crazy Christian sect. Modern believers who wave the Jn. 3:16 posters in public should not be surprised when they are met with angry protests from those who do not share the Christian light.

Taking it home:

Name where your life feels barren or empty right now. Is it because of something you've done, a choice you've made, or something you had no control over (i.e. someone's death). Ask Holy Spirit to be with you in that desolate place. Stay there. Be quiet. Feel and name the emotions. Look for the signs of life present there.

Talk with someone you trust about this issue: "Do I participate in church and perform acts of goodness in response to the knowledge that God loves me, or am I trying to win God's favor?" Compare your relationship with God to other significant relationships: your parents, friends, teachers, coaches.... What or who motivates you to be your best?

Find two other people to join you: pick a neighborhood other than your own. Walk around it picking up the garbage. Greet people. Note how people respond to you.

Is there a situation in your life that is destructive to committed relationships and healthy living because it is filled with temptations (to satisfy your lusts or ego, to doubt God's love, to put yourself in control, to put your trust in earthly objects)? If so, are you being challenged to remove yourself and change your environment, group of friends, or attachments for the sake of right relationships?

Describe a time you were challenged to trust God over your own desires. What convinced you to trust? What resulted?

Look at the people around you. Name the things that unite you to them. Make an extra effort to let the *Shekinah* of God shine through today.

Which of these images for God is closest to the one you hold: critical observer or ultimate participant? These come from Richard Rohr's book, *Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation*. Consider it for Lenten reading.

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*. "The signs of our emergence as universal humans include an unconditional love for the whole of life, a powerful, irresistible passion to unite with the Spirit within, and a deep heart-felt impulse to connect with others and co-create a world equal to our love and our capacities." *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.]

D. Some Issues Requiring Further Deliberation: On the issue of public funding of abortions, two important values are in conflict—the concern for equity of access