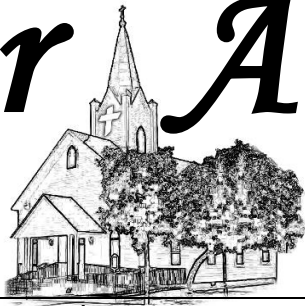


For All The Saints



The Epistle of St. Paul Lutheran Church, The Grove, Texas

March 2018

Dear Fellow Redeemed:

As we continue our Sunday morning sermon series I will use this page to share with you the areas of our lives in need of rebooting that we will consider in this month of March.

March 4th – Peace – Mark 6:30-34

Our lives can get out of control! Jesus knew this too. When He tried to get some rest, needy crowds interrupted His plans. When the pace of life becomes too fast, how do we find rest? The short answer is not always by changing our pace, but by turning toward Christ.

March 11th – Finances – Matthew 24:14-19, 24-27

Many people have financial regrets that have left them in over their heads. This is why faithful stewardship is so important! No matter how much or little you have, you can steward your resources well, even if you have stewarded them poorly in the past.

March 18th – Faith – Matthew 11:1-6

Even people who seem to have strong faith sometimes doubt. This was the case even with John the Baptist. John the Baptist wondered out loud if Jesus was the Messiah. Perhaps you struggle with doubt and you wonder if you can ever be forgiven for your doubt. Jesus spoke to John's doubts lovingly. He speaks to our doubts in the same way.

March 25th – Joy – Philippians 4:4-9

What do you do when you have experienced a terrible tragedy or loss and you feel like you will never be able to smile again? Paul, himself in the middle of a very difficult time as he languishes in prison, is able to write, "Rejoice in the Lord always." (Philippians 4:4) We can learn from Paul's joy as we seek to be joyful!

In HIS service and yours,

Pastor Heckmann
Hebrews 13:20-21

Congregational Easter Egg Hunt

The Easter egg hunt will be held on April 1st, Easter Sunday, this year at 2:00 pm. There will be a devotion prior to the egg hunt and prizes will be hidden for children of all ages. Hope to see you there!

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings from Fortress! My prayer is that you are experiencing the love of Christ in even deeper ways as you journey to the cross this Lenten season.



This month has been a significant one for Fortress. We put in an offer of \$370,000, that was accepted, for a 5.5-acre piece of property with buildings in Harker Heights. In addition to the purchase offer, the owner agreed to a temporary lease so we could use the space until closing. We are now in the 60-day option window and are completing the due diligence. The building, asbestos, and Phase 1 environmental inspections did not uncover any significant concerns. The Texas District CEF loan application was submitted by St. Paul Lutheran Church - The Grove and we will hopefully get approval the middle of March. We are currently in the process of getting bids for the work needed to temporarily occupy the building. Our hope is that we can start using the property sometime in April. Your continued prayers concerning this are greatly appreciated!

Working with the LCMS office of the Ministry to the Armed Forces, we are continuing to pursue a Distinctive Religious Group Leader (DRGL) designation on Fort Hood. This would provide LCMS Lutherans stationed on the post, Word and Sacrament ministry when there are no LCMS Chaplains. The goal is to have this in place mid-year, prior to the current LCMS Chaplain moving out.

We can't thank you enough for your financial and prayer support for Fortress. It is humbling to be in partnership with you as God continues to open doors for us to help, support, and care for many people in His name!

Please pray for the following:

1. That the property purchase would progress quickly and in God's will
2. Doors would continue to open to support people on Ft. Hood
3. That people would continue to experience refuge in Christ through the people of Fortress.
4. Continued, generous financial support for our mission efforts and the building.

As we celebrate the season of Lent, we come face-to-face with our Savior, Jesus. We see the sacrifice He made, the gift of abundant, eternal life in Him demonstrated in the most extravagant act of love ever! May God continue to transform you to become more and more like Him, seeing Him in the small and the large, rejoicing in the lost being found, and marveling at how good He is!

Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jerry

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERMON SERIES

We continue to follow our usual pattern of the past years by offering you the opportunity to worship each Wednesday morning of Lent at 10:30 a.m. (Lunch at 11:30 a.m.) and then again each Wednesday evening of Lent at 7:30 p.m. (Supper lasting from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.)

This series of sermons continues to deal with different journeys that take place in the Bible and how they apply to our lives as we make the journey through this life and on into eternal life.

As you are well aware, many things happen along the journey. As Christians, we are daily on this journey that takes us from being exiles living under the burden of sin and the condemnation the Law of God speaks to that sin, to the joy of the Gospel that is ours in Christ Jesus.

As we consider each Biblical journey, do not be surprised to discover that Christ travels with us. Isn't it amazing how all of this ties together as we journey with Jesus, joining Him on His mission as we travel to the end of this life and on into eternal life. We will walk through this Lenten season considering the reality of our earthly journeys but with eyes fixed on the destination—the empty tomb and the open gate of heaven, with the confidence of knowing that we do not walk alone!

The stops left on our journey this year are:

March 7th: “Out of Egypt: Through the Water”

March 14th: “Tree to Tree: The Tree of Life to the Cross”

March 21st: “Death to Resurrection: The Wilderness to the Promised Land”

March 29th: “Meal to Meal: The Passover to the Lord's Supper”

March 30th: “Sin-Bearer to Sin-Bearer: The Day of Atonement to the Atonement”

April 1st – Easter:

Sunrise: “The Pit to the Pit: The Pit of Lions to the Tomb”

10:15 am “Welcome Home!”

With this lineup in mind, I again encourage you to make it a priority to set aside these few hours on these Wednesdays, either in the morning or in the evening, or both if you are so inclined, to join us for worship. It gets harder and harder as the days get longer and the temperatures get warmer to come to church, opting instead to stay home and do what you want to do there. I encourage you to join us, however, morning or evening, as we learn together.

LENTEN WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

Just a reminder of our Lenten schedule. The **Morning Services** continue to begin at 10:30 a.m.

Following the service we share the Noon Meal. The schedule of providers of the **Noon Meal** are:

March 7th, Fellowship Committee; March 14th, Quilters; and March 21st, Fellowship Committee. A free will offering will be received for the use of these groups. The quilters use their money for supplies and the Fellowship Committee returns the money to the church to offset the cost of the meals. The **Lenten Suppers** are held on the same dates beginning at 6:00 p.m. and serving until 7:00 p.m. The lineup of providers for these meals is: March 7th, Altar Guild (Sandwiches); March 14th, Ushers (Chili); and March 21st, LYF (Frito Pie).

LENTEN OFFERINGS

Our Lenten Offerings this year are being divided between two missionary families that need our support as they tell people about Jesus in our name in faraway lands. Those two families whom we pray for daily are the Brian and Amanda Gauthier family in Panama and the Stuart and Debra Freese family in Ghana.

MIDWEEK RELIGION CLASS AND EVENING BIBLE STUDIES

The Men's and Women's Evening Bible Studies will not meet during the Lenten Season. They will begin again on April 4th.

Our **Midweek Religion Classes** begin at 6:20 p.m. and last until 7:20 p.m. We do not have a group opening, but go directly to our classes so that we can study together for an hour. Then we gather for our **Midweek Lenten Services** at 7:30 p.m. so that you can be back at home about your usual time. I would encourage you to make time in your busy spring schedules to be a part of these times of worship. I will guarantee that you will learn some things you never knew before and that you will be strengthened in your relationship with your Heavenly Father and with each other. I know that sometimes being in church can be seen as a hassle with all of the other things that call for our time, but I encourage you to make it a priority to set aside these few hours to be with us these Wednesdays of Lent. You will be glad you did.

EASTER INVITATION

On the table in the Narthex (Entry Way) are invitations that I would ask you to share with others inviting them to our house for Easter. This (and the days of Christmas) are times when people are very receptive to being invited to church. For many it brings back pleasant memories of their youth. If we invite them, they very well could join us to hear about our crucified and risen Savior, and who knows what the Holy Spirit may be able to do in their lives as they hear the Word. If you need more invitations, let me know.

A NEW TABLE AND CHAIR FUND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

There is a desire to have all of the tables and chairs used in the FAC to be of one kind and color, namely white plastic as about half of them are now. There is also a desire to establish a short term fund to gather the funds needed to pay for all of the replacement tables and chairs. That fund was established at a duly called Voters meeting on February 13, 2018. You may give to this fund by placing your gift into an envelope and writing on the outside of the envelope, TABLE AND CHAIR FUND. These funds will be used to purchase new white tables and chairs that match the white plastic tables and chairs we already have. It was also decided at that meeting that all of the tables and chairs that are being replaced will be donated to Fortress Congregation for their use as they see fit. The total cost is estimated to be a little less than \$5,000.00.

F.A.C.T. (Friends and Christ Together) 5th-8th graders

Our March FACT outing will be a hike at Mother Neff State Park after church on Sunday, March 25th. We still need to work out the details about a cookout to precede the hike. The plan is to have a cookout at Mother Neff, and if that does not work to do it here, and then go for a hike in the First State Park ever designated in the Great State of Texas. If you have any questions, visit with Melissa Houchin.

STOVE IN KITCHEN

The Board of Trustees would like to encourage everyone who uses the stove in the kitchen in the Family Activity Center to make sure that you clean up after yourself when you are done with your event. We know that you are tired and that you have donated your time to whatever event or cause it may be, but when very few people take the time to clean up when they are done the stove gets very dirty. This is especially important now as we have spent \$1,674.84 to fix this "brand new" stove. We have also spent many hours cleaning the stove and getting everything back to the way it should have been. Please take the time when you use the stove to clean it so that it can be inviting and ready to go for the next group. Thank you. s/Board of Trustees

NEW NOTIFICATION TOOL

More and more lately it is being brought to my attention that people are not being called when announcements need to be made to the entire church family. We have a Phone Tree set up and revised every year by our dear Doris Symm. The newest version just went into your mailbox a few weeks ago. However, when a notification about a funeral is sent out I hear that some people did not get the message. I hear that some people don't call "their people" because "they did not think they needed the information", or they didn't have time to call and forgot, or other reasons. Thus, more and more of our folks are not getting the news. When we had to cancel church on New Year's Eve, it took the Heckmann family a while to text all those we could that the service was cancelled.

With that in mind, we have been looking at systems whereby we can notify the whole congregation of events and news (like funerals, or church cancellation because of ice or whatever) that you need to know about right away. We have looked at services that cost 40 or 50 dollars a month. We would never use it that much to justify such a price. We have found a service that is free that many of you are probably already using, especially if you have children in school. It is called **Remind**. I have talked with some parents here who have 10 or 12 or more different accounts set up to be reminded of everything from homework assignments at school, to extracurricular activities, to school closings, to lunch menu, etc. Melissa Houchin is using it with the FACT group at church and uses it, like most of the rest of our teachers, with her school students. Stacey Golden uses it as a teacher and parent and says she can't live without it.

So, we are going to set it up and see how it works for us. It is free, so the price is right for this "Depression Baby". You can sign up to receive updates and information via a free App you can get from the App store, via text, or via email. If you have none of these capabilities, we will continue to call you on the phone.

To make this much easier on me, I will ask that you follow the directions below to sign up for the notification service. I promise you that I will not bombard you with notifications. We will use it for church closings, funerals, Midweek Religion class cancellations, and things like that.

If you have any questions, please ask. We will see how it goes. I signed up for the service and was able to complete the task without any troubles at all as computer illiterate as I am. It will say it is a "School App". We can use it as a church, so don't let that throw you. Like I said, let me know if you have questions.

Here is how you do all of this.

On a smartphone open your web browser and go to the following link: **rmd.at/cong220**. Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You will be prompted to download the App and you will be good to go.

For text notifications only, text the message **@cong220 to 81010**.

To receive email notifications go in your web browser to **rmd.at/cong220**

Again, if you have any questions give me a call or ask. Hopefully we can cover almost all of our congregation so that we can receive important notifications as quickly as possible.

Texas Church Extension Fund

By Betty Tatge

Current interest rates being paid on CEF investments

<u>Investment</u>	<u>Fixed Rate</u>		<u>Floating Rate</u>	
	Rate	APY	Rate	APY
One Year Note	1.750%	1.76%	1.750%	1.76%
Three Year Note	2.000%	2.02%	2.000%	2.02%
Five Year Note	2.500%	2.52%	2.250%	2.27%
Flex Savings			1.000%	1.00%

For more information talk to Betty Tatge or log on to the TCEF website.

Every dollar you invest with CEF earns a competitive rate of return and provides low-cost loans to congregations.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE AT ST. PAUL

Our next Contemporary Worship service will be SATURDAY, March 10th. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and be filled with many of your favorite contemporary songs.

The service will be "Lutheran" through and through as we sing contemporary hymns, hear the Word of God proclaimed to us, confess our faith in the historic words of the Creed, and receive the forgiveness of our sins that our Heavenly Father has to offer to each of us.

So, think of whom you will invite to this service and mark the date on your calendar so that you can be sure to join us.

We will be blessed once again to have the group New Revelation leading us in our singing. The members of this group are Kris and Peggy Sharp; Josh and Kirsten Watson; Tony and Renee Wightman; and Dinorah Feliciano.

ADULT CHOIR PRACTICE

The Spring Choir season is here. We are continuing to prepare to sing our praises to God during the Lenten season, Holy Week, and Easter morning. Choir members, and those interested in joining us, will meet each Sunday, following the worship service, in the balcony to continue working on the anthems we will be singing. To God be the glory! If you have any questions, please visit with Sylvia Winkler.

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Sunday Multi-purpose Room Bible Class is studying the book of **Jude**. This short letter (25 verses) distinguishes between false teachers and "weak" Christians. It calls us to persevere and contend for the faith in such a time as this. It reminds us that the judgment of God against evil is a reality! **Beginning March 11th**, the class will have a special study, **THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD - THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH**. The study will focus on uncovering how the world is influencing the believers (The church) and how the church can influence the world as we live in the world and face such life-forces as "sexual behavior," "hate," "political correctness," "life and death issues," "shootings," etc. S/Dr. Sohns

CEMETERY EASTER SUNRISE WORSHIP SERVICE

Once again this year we will attempt to hold our Easter Sunrise Service in our cemetery. It is scheduled to begin at **7:00 a.m.** since the weather service tells me that the sun will rise that morning at 7:18 a.m. We will gather in the cemetery at the appointed hour for worship with angels and archangels, all the company of heaven, and all those gathered here on earth with us. You are invited to bring your lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on. We will have a few chairs out there in case you do not have a lawn chair to bring. We will ask that you park in the parking lot and walk to the cemetery if you are able, so that those who are unable to walk that far can park up by the cemetery. If you would like to help get this all put together, let me know. As always, if you have any questions, let me know and pray for a glorious Easter morning, weather wise that is.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS – 3 YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER

This learning opportunity happens in the **nursery** in the **FAC**. Parents are welcome to join their children learning about and praising God. If you have any questions, please contact Rebekah Morrow. If you have children in this age group I would strongly encourage you to be here with them to learn even more about Jesus at this tender age. ***Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*** (Matt 19:14)

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY – MARK

This class is studying God's Word For Today - Mark: The Serving Christ. The book of Mark speaks to us today about the suffering Messiah; the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection for us, and His call to us to follow Him in a life of servanthood and sacrifice. Join us in the Emerging Ministry Suite (EMS) in the Parish Hall.

SANCTUARY BIBLE CLASS

For the month of March we will be spending this Bible Class hour going a little deeper into the topic we will be discussing in our Midweek Lenten Services. This way we will be able to understand better the theme on Wednesday evening as we spend a little more time considering each part of the journey we are on as we make our way to heaven.

"Blessing Bags"

By Mary Alsup

Many of us have been to Feed My Sheep to help feed the homeless in Temple. Others have participated with Family Promise as they help homeless families get back on their feet. All of us have seen the individuals on the street corners asking for money, food and even work. The homeless population is all around us. We are surrounded by family, friends, love, and more than we need. The homeless deal with poverty. The greatest poverty of all is the poverty of love, respect, friendship and worth.

When we think of homeless people we often think about taking care of their basic needs such as shelter, food, water, etc. But as individuals we do not have the resources to make much of a dent in these kinds of issues. At the LWML District Convention we will be creating "Blessing Bags" to hand out to those in need or at homeless shelters in Temple, Killeen and Waco. This is a very real, tangible way to help in a situation where you feel like you want to do something. This small bag helps the homeless know that someone cares about them while also taking care of some of their most basic needs.

All the LCMS congregations in our circuit and in the Waco area are collecting items to assemble 500 "Blessing Bags". The items going into the bags are: a pair of socks, water, a drink mix packet, bath soap, tooth brush, tooth paste, shampoo, hand sanitizer, chap-stick, granola bar, beef jerky stick, a Band-Aid, comb, nail clipper and lotion. All items will be packaged in a gallon zip lock bag.

Our congregation along with our LWML is being asked to provide 500 small Slim Jim beef jerky sticks. These beef jerky sticks can be purchased at HEB for \$2.98 for a box of 14. If you would like to help provide the jerky sticks a box will be in the Parish Hall for your donations. If you would rather make a monetary donation please talk to Kelli Alsup or Melissa Houchin, our District convention chairs. The deadline for contributions is APRIL 30, 2018.

The "Blessing Bags" will be assembled at the LWML District Convention in Waco July 5-8, 2018 during the Servant Event on Saturday afternoon. The convention will be held at the Waco Convention Center.

If you have any questions, please visit with Mary Alsup.



Next LWML Bible Study/Social

Our next meeting will be on March 20 at 6:30 in the Multi-Purpose Room. Our hostesses will be Kelli and Mary Alsup.

Mission Project for March

We will be making and serving desserts for FOCAS (Feast of Caring and Sharing) on March 3rd.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars! The 14th Annual Servant Event will be held April 21st from 8:00 am - 1:00 pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church Copperas Cove.

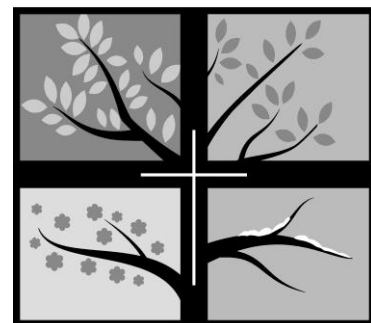
March Mission Grant Recipient

Christian Hope Through Mass Media in Egypt- Lutheran Hour Ministries-\$100,000
Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) has over 60 years of experience proclaiming the Gospel via mass media in the Middle East. Fortunately, the political climate in Egypt provides a new opportunity to expand ministry in the region. Other parts of the Middle East, however, are experiencing great turmoil with war and, as a result, refugees, mainly women and children, are fleeing to safety. There is urgency to expand their proclamation of the Gospel in these areas, especially refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. LHM will reach families, refugees, and citizens of the region through a new television program broadcast in Cairo, Egypt. This new television broadcast has the potential to reach millions of people throughout the Middle East, refugees and citizens alike, with the message of faith and the true love of Christ and to be a strong Christian voice and witness through Arabic satellite television programming.

Member Birthdays/Anniversaries!

Mellissa Boswell's birthday is March 6th and her anniversary is March 20th!

BE READY



**IN SEASON AND
OUT OF SEASON**

C.L.A.S.S.I.C.S. Page

By: Mary Alsup

CLASSICS met Thursday, February 15, 2018, for Bible Study and fellowship. Pastor Heckmann led the study on the First Article of the Apostle's Creed. No one of us is self-sufficient. Each one of us receives life and support as a gift from outside of ourselves. As Christians, we confess that every good thing, however small, within our lives is an undeserved gift from God. God did not have to create the world. He created the world freely, out of love. God created each one of us and mercifully sustains us in spite of our sinfulness. Creation and redemption are bound closely together. It is by God's goodness and mercy that we are created and it is by God's goodness and mercy that we are made new again.

It is only right for creatures to respond to the gifts of their Creator in word and deed. I thank God by expressing my gratitude for all that He has done for me.

God cares about His creation and has called us to care for it as His stewards. We have been entrusted to look after God's creation so that it may flourish. We are responsible for the care of our possessions, finances, neighbors, the church, church workers, and church property. We are responsible for the care of the earth, its bounty and all life.

Pastor and Deb provided the sausage jambalaya and salad for our Noon meal. Mary Alsup provided the cornbread. Rose Brown, Betty Tatge and Donna Heiner provided our desserts. Next month the meal will be provided by Mary Alsup. Trina Munz and Lydia Winkler will provide the desserts. A special thanks to all who provided food for this month!!!

Our next Bible Study will be on March 15. Everyone is welcome to come and study the Catechism with us. There is no age limit. We will be starting a study of the Second Article. This Bible Study, fellowship and meal are open to anyone wanting to study the catechism.

Come and join us!

That invitation is for anyone and everyone who is free the third Thursday of the month, in the morning. You don't have to be a certain age to get in. Right now our age range is from the middle 50's to 90 plus. If you fit anywhere in between there, or if you are younger or older, you are invited.