

# Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church

(Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod)

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Pastor: R. Wayne Morton

Ministers: Each and Every Member

## The Fifth Sunday in\* Lent

March 18, 2018

(Sunday celebrations of our Lord's resurrection are "in" the time frame of Lent, but not part "of" the penitential Season.)

### Welcome

In the name of Jesus Christ, we warmly welcome you to God's house this morning. Especially if you are visiting, we pray that you will feel at home with us and discover the blessing of God's grace in this service.

### As We Gather:

The Bible refers to Jesus in many ways: Christ, Son of Man, Rabbi, Lord, and others. As we approach the culmination of Lent, in Hebrews we hear one of the oddest: Jesus is "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Melchizedek is a mysterious figure who came to Abram when he was down and out. Abram had heard the call and promise of God and had followed—and it had gotten him nothing but trouble. No land, no heir. So God sent to Abram this Melchizedek, "priest of the Most High God," who blessed him and gave him bread and wine.

Jesus comes to us like this, when we are down and out, and He blesses us and nourishes us with His true body and blood. As Melchizedek was appointed to serve Abram, and Jesus is appointed to serve us, so we are appointed to serve our neighbors.

(10:25 a.m.) The Ringing of the Bell

(10:25 a.m.) Make a Joyful Noise

(This celebratory element of our liturgy is omitted during the penitential season of Lent.)

### The Welcome

(The Pastor may invite the people to God's house by using the following greeting:

"The Lord be with you." "And also with you.")

### \* (stand) The Invocation and Opening Versicles

*Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**People: Amen.**

*Pastor: I love the LORD because He has heard my voice,*

**People: And my pleas for mercy.** (Psalm 116:1)

*Pastor: I called on the name of the LORD:*

**People: O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul.** (Psalm 116:4)

### \* (stand) The Confession and Absolution of our Sin

*Pastor: Since we are assembled here to hear the Word of God and to call upon Him in prayer, it is good that we reflect upon our unworthiness, confessing before God our sins of thought, word, and deed, and our helplessness to free ourselves from our sinful nature. It is also good that we remember who we are as the baptized children of God, to whom the Lord has shown His mercy, cleansed from all our sin, and declared righteous in Christ our Lord. We come here today to lay claim again to the grace in which we are forgiven, and, for the sake of Christ, to be restored by His mercy to serve Him and walk in His ways.*

*Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.*

*O almighty God, merciful Father* (Ps. 32:5)

**People: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

*Pastor: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I publicly forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.* (John 20:19-23)

**People: Amen**

## Entrance Hymn: #435 “Come to Calvary’s Holy Mountain”

\* (stand) The Greeting and Prayer of the Day

*Pastor: The Lord be with you.*

**People: And also with you.**

*Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, it was Your will that Your Son drink the cup of suffering and death on our behalf. Grant us repentance and faith that we might receive the benefits of Christ’s suffering for us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**People: Amen.**

### The Announcement of the Day

*Pastor: Today is the fifth and final Sunday in Lent. The weeks have pointed us more and more to the cross and today Jesus speaks bluntly of what waits for Him. He has not come to be served but to give Himself into death, the ultimate service that will ransom the world from sin and give us eternal life. From Jeremiah we hear the prophet speak of the days to come when a new covenant will bestow forgiveness and life. From Hebrews we hear of the one High Priest who will fulfill the promise of Melchizedek by the sacrifice of His own flesh and blood. In the Gospel according to St. Mark we hear the bickering of the disciples over who is greatest and of the greatness of the cross.*

### The Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 31:31-34

*“I will make a new covenant for my people, forgiving their iniquity and remembering their sin no more,” says the Lord.*

31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the

house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the most of them. I will be merciful to the unrighteous, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember

*Reader: This is the word of the Lord.*

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### The Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 5:1-10

*(Although He was the Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered, becoming the source of salvation for all people.)*

5 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”;

6 as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” (mehl-KIHZ-eh-dehk)

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (mehl-KIHZ-eh-dehk)

*Reader: This is the word of the Lord.*

**People: Thanks be to God.**

\* (stand) **The Gospel Acclamation** (LSB, p. 157, “Return to the Lord, Your God”)

*Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the tenth chapter.*

**People: Glory to you, O Lord.**

\* (stand) **The Holy Gospel: Mark 10:(32-34)35-45**

(“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”)

(32 And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33 saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”)

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” 36 And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” 37 And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” 38 Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” 39 And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

*Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord. People: Praise to you, O Christ.*

Hymn of the Day: #418 “O Lord, throughout These Forty Days”

### The Sermon

\* (stand) **We Believe, Teach, and Confess: The Apostles’ Creed**  
(from inside the back cover of your *Lutheran Service Book*)

### The Offering

(If you have not already done so, please register your attendance with the Friendship Form at this time and pass it down and back your pew, taking note of the names of those sitting with you and rejoicing in their presence here today.)

\* (stand) **The Offertory Song: “Create in Me”** (LSB pp. 192-193)

\* (stand) **The Responsive Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

*Pastor: As God’s chosen ones, beloved sons and daughters of God, appointed not just to be served but to serve, let us pray for the Church, for the world, and for all people according to their needs.  
For the Church throughout the world, that during this Lenten season we intensify our repentance, fasting, prayer, and generosity, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For people of every language and nation in the world, that all may be delivered from warfare, oppression, and violence, and live in the peace and safety God intends for His creatures, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For those who serve in the armed forces of our nation, that they may defend the innocent, maintain justice, and establish peace; for the families of those who are deployed far away, that they may receive comfort and guidance; and for our enemies, that by the death and resurrection of Jesus we might be reconciled, so that people everywhere may bear witness to Your power and peace, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For those who are sick, facing surgery, or convalescing, that their sickness may be turned to health, and that they may experience the love of God through our care and concern, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For all who travel, whether for business or pleasure, that their journeys may be safe, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For guests in worship today, that Christ bless their hearing of the Word with faith, understanding, and joy, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: For the people of this congregation, that as Melchizedek served Abram and as Jesus served us by giving His life, so we may grow in serving both God and our neighbor, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*Pastor: In thankfulness for those who have gone before us and have died in faith, and that when our days on earth come to a close, our God might bring us to that place of never-ending praise, worship, and thanks to Him in heavenly splendor, let us pray to the Lord,*

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

(Here special intercessions may be made. Each petition concludes:  
*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*)

*Pastor: Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**People: Amen.**

*Pastor: Taught by our Lord and trusting His promise, we are bold to pray:*

**People: (The Lord's Prayer)**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

\* (stand) The Blessing of our God (LSB, p. 166)

*Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.*

*The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.*

*The Lord look upon you with favor and give you (+) peace (Num. 6:24ff)*

**People: Amen.**

The Closing Hymn: #857 "Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way"

Parish Announcements and Organ Postludes

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**MISSION MINUTE:** A blank check. James and John wanted Jesus to write them a blank check. They asked him "to do for us whatever we ask of you" (Mk. 10:35). They didn't know what they were asking. He told them so: "You do not know what you are asking" (v. 38). He told them they didn't know what He was doing. Oh, He was writing them a blank check, all right - good for the forgiveness of any and all of their sins. But in order for that check to be "good," He was going to have to suffer and die. He was going to have to offer up His life for the life of the world. That wasn't on their radar - a check that would literally be signed in His own blood. And chances are it isn't on your neighbor's radar either - or your co-worker's, or your family member's. So you're going to have to tell them - tell them all they have to do is fill in their name by faith, and it's all theirs - as much as they need.

**AND SPEAKING OF MISSION,** please take a few minutes to welcome those **VISITING WITH US AT SHEPHERD THE LAST FEW WEEKS.** If you know them, be sure to let them know how glad you were to see them at worship. And if you don't, make it a point to meet them, to invite them to worship again or to Sunday Bible Class or Ladies' Bible Study or *LifeLight* Bible Study.

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Margaret Quay - Whiteriver, AZ. Canyon Day Lutheran church  
Lesta Cromwell, and S'Layna Bradley - Pinetop, AZ  
Norm & Donna Schaefer - Show Low, AZ

**SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS WEEK:**

Organist: Maja Chadwick Elder in Charge: Kevin Dooley  
Project Keep-In-Touch Mailing: Martee Eberley

*"This is the week that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!"*

Sun	3/18	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service 11:45 a.m. - LWML "Mites for Mission" Coffee Fellowship
Tues	3/20	5:00 p.m. - NO Confirmation Class (BRUSD Spring Break)
Wed	3/21	9:30 a.m. - Ladies' Bible Study 6:00 p.m. - Lenten Midweek Supper (Penders serving) 7:00 p.m. - Lenten Midweek Worship
Sun	3/25	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service - Holy Communion (Palm Sunday) 11:55 a.m. - Dorcas Society "Mites for Missions" Coffee Fellowship

**LIFE QUOTE OF THE DAY** (from Lutherans For Life) "Ultimately abortions are antithetical to the Gospel message the church proclaims, as we marvel over the fact that Jesus says to undeserving sinners: *'I will lay my life down for my sheep,'* and so He did, taking on our sin and shame and the debt that stood against us and nailing it to the cross. Abortion instead demands of an innocent life, 'You will lay your life down for me.'" (Pastor Gunnar Ingi Gunnarsson, Loftstofan Baptistakirkja, Iceland).

**WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS TODAY:**

All those who are sick  
All those who travel  
All those who serve  
Ewald K - wrestling with heart, lung deterioration  
Bob D - miraculously recovering/healing following transplant surgery  
White Mountain Life Church (Assemblies) - Pastor Rich Van Proyen  
Trinity Lutheran Church - Scarsdale, NY. Pastor Gordon Naumann  
Calvary Lutheran Church - Mechanicsburg, PA. Pr. Luke Zimmerman  
March SS/BC Mission Project - Four Corners Christian Camp for at-risk youth

**LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR** (from Lutherans for Life): "My body, my choice"; however, life is not for controlling but for offering and sharing (Mk. 10:45). Our Creator bestows life as gift, promise, covenant, connecting us to Him and one another (Jer. 31:31-34). Broken covenants become cruel lords (Mk. 10:42). Yet still Jesus enters our predicaments and understands our troubles (Hebrews 5:2, 7). No one suffers alone, and He remembers our sins no more. Eternal salvation results! (Prayer: Almighty Maker, enable us to share Your life with each other. Amen.)

**WHERE ARE OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS OFF TO THIS MONTH?** Glad you asked. We only just decided last Sunday morning, as we often do the first Sunday of every new month. We're supporting a Christian camp that tries to give at-risk kids the tools they need to lobby for themselves and to make good decisions rather than bad. It's up in Colorado. JB has been there hunting for buried treasure. Larry, too. They take the "detectors" money and use it to defray the cost of their youth camp. Four Corners Christian Camp - between Cortez and Durango. Keep them in your prayers, please, as they'll be in ours.

**WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY?** Christian Ed. - 16; Worship - 48 (Members 40, Friends 3, Guests 5) How many were here because you invited them? How many will return because you welcomed them?

**WHAT WE'RE *NOT* GIVING UP GIVING UP FOR LENT THIS YEAR IS WORSHIP.** And, because Sundays are not a part of Lent, we'll be gathering together for Lenten worship every Wednesday night. Our Lenten midweek series this year is all about the Lord's many invitations to return to Him. Each week features one of those Old Testament invitations. Last week, we turned to the prophet Hosea with "Return to the Lord, Who Will Raise You Up." This week, our invitation comes from God's mouthpiece Malachi, whose invitation is, "Return to the Lord, Who Does Not Change." Each Lenten service begins at seven o'clock.

**AND TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO WORSHIP, WE'RE SERVING UP SUPPER, TOO!** Each week, our Lenten midweek service will be preceded by a Soup, Salad, or Surprise dinner right here at church, hosted by one (or more) of our "families" - singles, couples, or the kids, too. We meet right here at church, so you don't have to get the house ready for company along with dinner. The one remaining Wednesday in Lent  
Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Sylvia & Bob \_\_\_\_\_

**CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:** Birthdays: Today! - 3/18 - Susan Dale, Linda Nadel, 3/21 - Betty Zink; 3/23 - Ewald Koenig (ten short of 100); next Sunday - 3/25 - Donita Wood, Audrey Kaasa. Anniversaries: 3/21 - Bob & Sylvia Pender.

**SO NOW HOW DO YOU LIKE THE COLOR OF THE SIDING?** Now that we accepted \$8,200 in settlement from the builder for the mistake he made putting on a different color than the sample we handed him? Could we still choose to replace it all? We *could*. But it would cost us another \$8,200 by all estimates just to have it installed, plus the thousands it would cost to have it taken off. And for the next year at least we're operating under his builders' warranty, so we'd want to wait that long before doing anything; that's for sure. And by now many of us are used to the color, so the alternative is to keep the money and use it for completing the Sunday School rooms (drywall, painting and flooring), which will complete the new addition, and/or use it for the fellowship hall expansion into the old men's restroom and narthex.

**LET'S PLAY "HOW MUCH DO WE OWE?"** We had saved up our money. We used it all, but then more continued to come in. Before that happened, in order to make certain we wouldn't run short, we conservatively borrowed some from LCEF, "God's bank," the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Sixty thousand, to be exact. We've been paying that (20-year loan) off month by month. But then money began to come in specifically for debt retirement, specifically for loan principal reduction. And so, our game: "How much do we owe?" Where is that \$60,000 debt today? Where does it stand? (If you've seen Treasurer Bob's colorful red and blue graph in the fellowship hall, you can't play our game; you already know!) What's your guess? We had some early support, and some year-end gifts, and some first-of-this-year designations, too. Are we at \$50,000? Forty thousand? Could we be as low as \$30,000 - only *half* of what we started with only a year and a half ago? Already? Our history does say this congregation pays its debts! So, take a guess, and then take a peek at Bob's graphs. And give God thanks for all our generous supporters out there, as we work to take that number back down to a nice, round 0.

**BOY, DOES SHE KNOW HOW TO THROW A COUNCIL PARTY - ER, COUNCIL MEETING!** She doesn't know when to stop. *We* didn't know when to stop. Four meetings in one! We had a Council meeting interrupted for a Landscaping Committee meeting, interrupted for a Narthex Decorating Committee meeting and field trip, interrupted for a Safety and Security comprehensive inspection and review, interrupted for a Final Review with our Building Contractor! All in under six hours! Way to go, Madame Vice-President! What a big day for progress! What a big day for getting closure on some long time outstanding issues, and direction on a lot of other things that have been in the works for an equally long time. And thanks to all the folks who have been working behind the scenes - especially on those committees - so that your Church Council would be in a good position to make some decisions on your behalf.

**SO WHAT CAME OUT OF THE LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE MEETING?**

the Budget Committee is presently terminating the contract for the Fireside Room). (We had earlier deleted that concrete work from our addition contract for financial reasons. But now that not only the contract has been fully paid for but also additional work in many of the areas that we assumed responsibility for beyond the contract, and we still had some money left over, we agreed to put it toward that (original) work.) The good news for the Landscape Committee is that not only will that work being done as soon as the weather permits not damage anything they might be contemplating, but that cost won't have to come from dollars that have been donated for landscape improvements.

**MEANWHILE, OUT IN THE NARTHEX. . . .** You may have noticed a new picture hanging there on Sunday. So, you could probably use a little history. Back in December, some folks approached congregation President John not only with a vision for how to decorate the Narthex, but also with a donor willing to fund it. (Every muse or artiste needs a patron, right?) So, a Narthex Decorating Committee was formed, and the details were worked out for a unified approach to "appointing" our new greeting and "first impression" space. (If you were present at the last Voters' Assembly meeting, you read the presentation. "Read," because, sadly, as it turned out, no one from the committee was available (in town) to do a real presentation. So, at Council last Friday, the committee Chairwoman took us all on a field trip, shared the full vision, filled us in on the latest changes to the report, and answered all the questions that we had or that had been raised by others since that VA meeting. After a few compromises - for example, the piecemeal "roll out" of some of the many moving parts over time, after we've all had the opportunity to see what the earliest changes look like - the committee got the green light

And the added bonus for all of us is that any monies left over after everything has been completed will be - at the donor's request - applied to the outstanding principal balance of our LCEF loan on the addition. (And it does look as if there will be dollars left over!)

**NEXT IN LINE FOR "GRACES THAT MIGHT NEED A UNIFIED VISION" THE FIRESIDE ROOM.**

Back in December, some folks approached congregation President John not only with a vision for how to decorate the Fireside Room, but also with a donor willing to fund it. (Every muse or artiste needs a patron, right?) So, a Fireside Room Decorating Committee was formed, and the details were worked out for a unified approach to "appointing" our new greeting and "first impression" space. (If you were present at the last Voters' Assembly meeting, you read the presentation. "Read," because, sadly, as it turned out, no one from the committee was available (in town) to do a real presentation. So, at Council last Friday, the committee Chairwoman took us all on a field trip, shared the full vision, filled us in on the latest changes to the report, and answered all the questions that we had or that had been raised by others since that VA meeting. After a few compromises - for example, the piecemeal "roll out" of some of the many moving parts over time, after we've all had the opportunity to see what the earliest changes look like - the committee got the green light

**AND WHAT'S THAT ABOUT A "SAFETY AND SECURITY" INSPECTION AND REVIEW?**

Well, we're blessed to have Linda - and her husband Seth - as experts in that area. Both have law enforcement backgrounds and specific experience in designing systems to keep people and property safe from intruders and ne'er-do-wells. They are developing a comprehensive assessment of our building, and, because they love us, they're doing it at no charge. What they'll present to us will be a menu of recommended actions and physical improvements from which we'll then be able to choose to implement or undertake depending upon our will, our finances and our people resources.

**IT'S THE HOLIEST WEEK OF THE CHURCH YEAR,**

and it begins already *next* Sunday! One week from today, we end our Lenten journey and start making our way down the holiest week of the Church year. We begin with the Palm Sunday crowds jubilant to welcome their Jesus King, and we end up with the bloodthirsty mobs on Good Friday insisting that Pilate "Crucify him!" The joint commemoration of Palm Sunday and The Sunday of the Passion marks the end of our Lenten focus on our sin and our baptism into Christ's death, and turns out thoughts to our Savior, as He makes His way down the Way of Sorrows to Calvary's cross, in order that *we* might (by our baptism into Him) have the joy of his resurrection. There is no mid-week Wednesday worship, but Maundy Thursday brings us to the Last

Supper, and Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, and His commandment (*mandatum*) that we love one another. On Good Friday, we offer two worship opportunities, one at noon and one in the evening. Midday we meditate on Christ on the cross, and at 7:00 p.m. we plunge into the church's historic "service of darkness." On Sunday morning - Easter morning - we again offer two worship opportunities, one at 6:30 a.m. and another beginning at 10:00 a.m. While both services offer fellowship at the Lord's table and some of the features of the traditional Easter Vigil service, the second service includes a richer and more-complete experience of the Vigil.

**"EASTER IS A SPECIAL TIME . . ."** And after nearly six weeks - forty days - of Lenten preparation just for the occasion, it *should* be! But even after Lent, Easter still wouldn't be "complete" - its joy wouldn't be complete - without a commemoration of the great Easter Vigil. Therefore our **Easter Resurrection Festival** flows directly out of a brief service of the Great Vigil. That means that Easter is at a special time: Easter service begins **a half hour earlier than usual, at 10:00 a.m.**

#### **DON'T BE CAUGHT HAVING TO MAKE BREAKFAST ON EASTER**

Let us make it *for* you. This year again, it will be the Youth budget that will benefit from this annual fundraiser and SOTMLC tradition. We'll be offering Beth's traditional egg, sausage and cheese bake beginning at 8:00 a.m. - with Dean's famous flaky French toast coming off the griddle by about 8:15 a.m. Add to those goodies a fruit medley, a couple of kinds of fruit juice, steaming hot coffee, and the fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ, and you really wouldn't want to eat anywhere else that morning! And since you're being generous, we will, too; holding the line at 1990's pricing: Adults \$6.00, Children under 12, \$4.00, Families \$20.

#### **AND JUST IN CASE YOU HADN'T HEARD:**

**BACK IN JANUARY, OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS WENT OFF TO LUTHERANS FOR LIFE FOR "OWEN'S MISSION."** We weren't alone, apparently. LFL had set a goal of \$175,000 - an amount that would allow them to be able to supply a set of Touch of Life fetal models - free! - to every one of the remaining 900 Lutheran day schools across the country that had not yet received one. They just announced the good news. They met their goal. The Touch of Life sets typically are presented during a 15-20-minute program put on by an LFL staff member (or trained volunteer). Most are done as part of a school chapel service or special assembly. The hope and prayer is that seeing the lifelike models, the students will come to appreciate the God-given value of each human life from the very moment of conception. As John Hawkins of LFL says, "May all our youth be motivated by what God has done as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier that gives value to life!"

#### **TWO WEEKS AGO, PASTOR SAID THEY'RE LIKE ANOTHER MEMBER - ANOTHER FAMILY. THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS.**

Yes, maybe they don't get to church that often - maybe only once or twice a year - but they're very regular about sending in their offerings. In fact, they use direct deposit; they plop them right into our checking account at the Lutheran Federal Credit Union. A couple of weeks ago, they deposited another \$127.00. And now this last week, they plopped in another \$12. Oh, and another \$4,000 on top of that! That's right, a total of \$4,012! Thank you, TFFL, and thank you, Thrivent members, for continuing to make the Choice™ for Shepherd of the Mountains. We all know how this one works by now, right? Thrivent Financial for Lutherans offers insurance and financial services products at rates and returns competitive with the for-profit insurers and financial services companies. But TFFL is a fraternal organization - not a for-profit corporation - so, as long as it continues to distribute amounts equal to what it would have to pay as corporate income tax if it *were* a tax-paying corporation either directly to its members (its policyholders and investors) or its members' causes (their churches, schools, mercy ministries, etc), it escapes income taxes. (Viva the fraternal, right!) Thrivent Choice™ is one way

the company does that. TFFL sets the amounts that each investment or insurance product will “earn” under the Thrivent Choice™ program. It doesn’t affect the interest rate earned or the cost of the insurance; that’s completely separate. In this week’s list of members to thank - and just in case you were wondering, we have no idea how much these individuals invest or how many insurance products they purchase; we only get a list of those whose Choice™ for Shepherd of the Mountains has resulted in the latest deposit to our account - Richard E., Amy G., Beth and Pastor, Mark & Leslie, Norm S, and Donita W. Thank you, one and all. We promise to use your gift wisely.

**WE DIDN’T NOMINATE HIM, BUT SOME OTHER CONGREGATION DID! OUR PASTOR! FOR DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND BISHOP! AND ALSO FOR DISTRICT REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT.** Deja vu, right? We went over all this three years ago, when Pastor sat down with us and had an honest conversation. The good news was, he didn’t feel called to the DP chair. The bad news was, he was going to retire at a “normal retirement age.” So here we are three years later. He’s declined both nominations again. Still, he knows it’s an honor that folks out there continue to think he might be the man - even though he thinks its time for him to hang up his boots. As daughter #2, Allison, offered, she’d rather have Poppa (grandpa) than President. And that’s pretty hard to argue with.

**WE’RE GIVING THE CONFIRMANDS TWO WEEKS TO THINK ABOUT IT.** Their final exam, that is. They took it a week ago Tuesday, and school’s out for two weeks for Blue Ridge USD Spring Break. When they return - having successfully passed - Pastor will walk them through a verbal examination - with the Elders in the room to witness to the faith and knowledge of these next two members here at Shepherd of the Mountains.  
(It’s the way we do our “examination.” We know; you had it much worse!)

**IF YOU WEREN’T HERE TO HEAR THE LETTERS, YOU HAVE TO GO READ THEM FOR YOURSELF.** The letters from some of the kids out at Concho Elementary School. They’re on the bulletin board in the old hallway. And they are dear. Heartbreaking, in some case, but dear. They are reminders that even in our own communities, even when we never want for *our* next meal, others do. Even other *children*. They are the encouragement we need to remain faithful and generous as we continue to provide meals every Friday for those kids who just miss the federal government cutoff for weekend food. (Both sets of students count on the government for breakfast (State Breakfast Program) (SBP) and lunch (National School Lunch Program) (NSLP). The school kids them-selves load up the backpacks for the ones who receive our gifts. They fill them with two meals for Saturday and two more for Sunday. Single-serving is the watch-word. And healthy is the rule. And while there’s an extensive list of suggested items at the wicker collection basket in the narthex, some of the more common ones include: fruit cups, breakfast bars, Pop-tarts®, canned meats, canned or pouch tuna, crackers/cheese, crackers/peanut butter, veggie straws, snack bars, nut packs, jerky sticks, water, and Gatorade. (And if you can’t get out to shop, cash gifts work, too. There are always foods and drinks they need to fill in with.)

P. S. We’re committed until the end of the school year in May. Thank you for your continuing support. And don’t worry that you might never see anything in the basket; the need is great enough that your gifts get whisked away to the food pantry at CES just as soon as they come in. (Thanks, Linda, and Kevin and Patti, for all the delivering!)

**WHO JESUS IS . . . IN EVERY BOOK OF THE BIBLE** In 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, He is the Mediator between God & man. In Philemon, He is the Friend that sticks closer than a brother. In Titus, He is Truth. In Hebrews, He is the Blood of the everlasting covenant. In James, He is the Great Physician. In I & II Peter, He is the Chief Shepherd. In I, II, and II John, He is the Manifested Love of God. In Jude, He is the Foundation of your faith. In Revelation, He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, your Coming King.

**WHAT ARE THE COUNTRIES WHERE IT MOST DANGEROUS TO FOLLOW JESUS?** According to OpenDoorsUSA, China, Kenya, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam make the top fifty. But the top ten are - in decreasing order: Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, and everybody's # 1 - North Korea.

**CLEAN UP GOD'S HOUSE DAY:** You do *your* spring cleaning each year, but who does *God's*? Wouldn't it be great to spruce up His place here after the grime and dirt of winter and construction? Have you had a project you've had your eyes on - a touch-up here, a clean-up there, a tossing out of some accumulation there (think refrigerator and freezer and storage), a small improvement here? Well now's your chance. When can we get this all done? Before Easter - before Palm Sunday - would be the goal! You're welcome to work whenever it best fits your schedule, but we'd sure like to invite you to a grand group clean-up that Saturday - March 24<sup>th</sup>. Plus, it's a whole lot more fun that way! The more, the merrier! If history repeats itself, we'll even toss in a lunch to really make a day of it!

The list is up - on the last bulletin board on the right in the bulletin board "wall" in the fellowship hall. Your name next to a job gives you first crack at completing it - when it's convenient for you, or when it might be most fun (when others will be at church doing their favorite chores, too). And for those jobs not on our list but on yours, try the Trustees' Suggestion Box.