

Palm Sunday / Passion* Sunday

March 25, 2018

* pas•sion (pāsh'n) *n.* [ME< LLat. *passio*, suffering < Lat. *passus*, p.part. of *pati*, to suffer.]

Welcome!

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

May God richly bless your day now begun in His name.

As We Gather:

The Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday service marks the transition from Lent to Holy Week, and the change in focus from *our* sinfulness to *our Lord Christ's* suffering and death. On the one hand (the procession with palms and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem) we celebrate the joy of living as God's people in the name of Jesus. On the other hand (the narrating of the Passion story) we mourn that the consequence of our sin is the very death of Him in whose name we live.

The reading of the entire passion account from the Gospels (St. Mark, this year) helps us to prepare for the coming week, in which we will follow our Savior through his suffering and death — and then finally raise our voices again in jubilant praise at his glorious resurrection.

The Distribution of the Lord's Supper

Following Holy Scripture, which speaks of the blessing of forgiveness (and therefore life and salvation) for those who discern the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Supper (Mt. 26:28, e.g.), but warns of harm and judgment for those who don't (1 Cor. 11:27-30, e.g.), we urge all those baptized and catechized individuals (youth and adults) who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sin;

believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;

affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread & wine;

and desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.

If you have not previously communed here at Shepherd of the Mountains, please first introduce yourself to our Pastor, in order that all those who will commune together today - who will share the one bread and the one cup - may be assured that we share as well the same confession and understanding.

(Young) children who are not yet capable of such self-examination are nevertheless invited to come forward - not to receive the body and blood of our Savior, but rather, the blessing of our gracious God.

(The individual cup will be offered first, followed by the common cup.)

(The white wine in each tray is "non-alcoholic" wine.)

..... The Palm Sunday Procession

(Our liturgy begins in procession as we affirm publicly before the world that we are ready to follow Jesus, our Savior, in his passage through earthly defeat and death to heavenly victory and life.)

* (stand) The Invocation and Prayer for the Procession

Pastor: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit (+) be with you all.*

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*

People: **Hosanna to the Son of David!**

Pastor: *Let us pray.*

Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem, with palms in their hands, gathered to greet your dearly beloved Son when He came into your Holy City, grant that we may ever hail Him as our King, and when He comes again, go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts, following him in the way that leads to eternal life; through Him who lives and reigns with you and with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen**

The Processional Gospel: John 12:12-19

(Jesus rides into Jerusalem in triumph.)

Pastor: *The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twelfth chapter.*

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

^{Jn 12:12} The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ^{Jn 12:13} They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

^{Jn 12:14} Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, ^{Jn 12:15} “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” ^{Jn 12:16} At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

^{Jn 12:17} Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ^{Jn 12:18} Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. ^{Jn 12:19} So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!” ”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

Pastor: Let us go forth in peace

People: in the name of the Lord.

* (stand) The Processional Hymn: #443 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

(The Palm Sunday procession, led by the children and the Pastor and the processional cross, begins as the organ plays the *introduction* to the hymn (to allow all the worshipers time to enter the sanctuary.) The congregation, palm branches raised and singing "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna” follows. The procession moves around the sanctuary in one great circle, through the exit row, down the center aisle, across the back, up the right side, across the front, down the left side again, and over to the center aisle again, at which time the worshipers naturally move to their seats - (but remain standing for the completion of the hymn and the continuation of the liturgy).

(The congregation remains standing for a moment of silence, during which the triumphant processional cross is draped with a black cloth. The Palm Sunday Procession thus ended, the worship service continues with the Service of the Passion.)

Sermon

(The placement of the sermon at this point in the service emphasizes the stark contrast between the exultant joy of the Palm Sunday celebration and the terrible suffering of our Lord’s passion.)

. The Service of the Passion

* (stand) The Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience, and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson: Zechariah 9:9-12

(A humble king is coming.)

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

11 As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

12 Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle Lesson: Philippians 2:5-11

(Jesus is the humble servant even to death.)

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be

grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

* (stand) The Gospel Lesson: Mark 14:1 - 15:47

Pastor: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Mark.

(The congregation may be seated.)

Mark 14: 1-11 Jesus is Anointed by the Woman

Mark 14:12-26 The Celebration of the Passover and the Lord's Supper

The Spoken Response:

Pastor: As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup

People: you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Mark 14:27-31 Jesus' Prediction of Peter's Denial

Mark 14:32-42 Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

The Hymn Response: "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (LSB #436, verse 1)

**Go to dark Gethsemane, All who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see. Watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away; Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.**

Mark 14:43-52 Judas' Betrayal and the Arrest of Jesus

Mark 14:53-65 Jesus' Trial

The Hymn Response: "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (LSB #436, verse 2)

**Follow to the judgment hall, View the Lord of life arraigned;
Oh, the wormwood and the gall! Oh, the pangs his soul sustained.
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; Learn from him to bear the cross.**

Mark 14:66-72 Peter's Denial

Mark 15:1-15 Jesus Before Pilate

The Hymn Response: "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (LSB #436, verse 3)

**Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb; There, adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear him cry; Learn from Jesus Christ to die.**

Mark 15:16*-32 Jesus is Mocked and Crucified

(*The congregation stands for the account of our Lord's crucifixion (v. 22).)

Mark 15:33*-41 The Death of Jesus

(*The congregation falls silent at the announcement of our Lord's death (v. 37).)

Mark 15:42-47 Jesus' Burial

The Responsory

Pastor: The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve

People: and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Pastor: Jesus humbled himself and became obedient unto death,

People: even death on a cross.

Pastor: God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son,

People: that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Offering

(Please help us to celebrate your presence today by completing a Friendship Form (in the burgundy cover in each pew rack) and passing it along to the others in your row. As it moves down and back the pew, note the names of those who are worshiping with you today so that, following the service, we can all greet a brother or sister in Christ - warmly receiving our friends and neighbors, and gladly welcoming our guests.)

The Offertory Song: #781 “We Give Thee But Thine Own” (vs. 1, 2)

* (stand) The Responsive Prayer

(Please note: in the fifth petition, worshipers will be invited to lift aloud the names of those for whom they would pray.)

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For the rulers of the world, each appointed by the one true King, that they may defend the powerless and rule wisely so that we and all people may live in peace, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For all who continue to follow You along the pilgrim path, that we may be brought at last to Your nearer presence with the great company of all the saints who have died with faith in You and now rest from their labors, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For the Church here and throughout the world, that during this holy week she may joyfully proclaim Jesus who humbled Himself even to point of death that all might have life in Him, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For our military personnel, that they and their families may be protected from all harm and comforted by Christ's battle and victory, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For all who are depressed, anxious, burdened, and troubled, that they may know Christ's merciful care for them and for all people; for the sick and all who suffer any weakness of body or soul, that the forgiveness and freedom You have won for them may sustain them in their affliction,

(Here worshipers individually are invited to speak the names of those for whom they pray.)

we cry to You for help, saying,
People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For ourselves and all the baptized who gather around the Word and Sacraments this Holy Week, that we may receive grace to follow You through Your Passion, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For all who approach Your Table today, that we may turn away from our sins and cling to Your true body and blood given for our forgiveness, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

Pastor: For those in hospice care and those near death, that knowing Christ's faithful death and His defeat of death's reign they be sustained in Him, we cry to You for help, saying,

People: Hosanna, crucified King.

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

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, for the sake of Your Son, our Savior and our King.

People: Amen.

* (stand) **The Order of Holy Communion**

Pastor: O God, our Father, when we could not come to you because we were dead in our transgressions, you came to us in the person of your only Son, Jesus Christ. For the joy set before Him” - the joy of our salvation - He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of your heavenly throne. Now hear our confession, for the sake of our Savior, Jesus.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name.

Pastor: Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for you and for his sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God.

through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who accomplished the salvation of mankind by the tree of the cross that, where death arose, there life also might rise again and that the serpent who overcame by the tree o the garden might likewise by the tree of the cross be overcome. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:

(LSB #507 “Holy, Holy, Holy)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

People: Amen.

* (stand) **The Words of Institution**

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the very night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for

you. This do in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

(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.

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

The Distribution

(We encourage all those communicants who intend to come to the Sacrament today to prepare for receiving the Lord's gracious gifts with the Christian Questions found on page 329 of our worship and hymn book, *Lutheran Service Book*.)

(Following Holy Scripture, which speaks of the blessing of forgiveness (and therefore life and salvation) for those who discern the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Supper (Mt. 26:28, e.g.), but warns of harm and judgment for those who don't (1 Cor. 11:27-30, e.g.), we urge all those baptized and catechized individuals (youth and adults) who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sin;

believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;

affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread & wine;

and desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.

(If you have not previously communed here at Shepherd of the Mountains, please first introduce yourself to our Pastor, in order that all those who will commune together today - who will share the one bread and the one cup - may be assured that we share as well the same confession and understanding.)

(The individual cup will be offered first, followed by the common cup.)

(The white wine in each tray is "non-alcoholic" wine.)

(Children who are not yet capable of such self-examination or who have not yet had communion instruction but are coming forward for a blessing are asked to keep their hands well below the communion rail in order to eliminate any confusion for those who are distributing.)

* (stand) The Common Dismissal

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul unto life everlasting. Depart (+) in peace.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Thanksgiving and Closing Prayer

Pastor: Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

People: And his mercy endures forever.

Pastor: O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask you not to forsake Your children but always to

rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Blessing of Our God

*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. 6:24).*

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Closing Hymn: #837 "Lift High the Cross" (vs. 1-6)

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Parish Announcements A Time of Greeting and Fellowship

MISSION MINUTE: Do you know any "passion-ate" people? Do you see folks on the news who get "passionate" about the most certain things - even what at times seems to be the most unlikely things? That's because we were created with the ability to feel, and to feel passionately, about things that matter. However, when we don't know of an object worthy of our affections, in order to satisfy that need, we'll substitute lesser objects. So share the good news of Christ's "passion" - His passing through terrible suffering and death to life again - and explain that He did it out of His passionate love for all.

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.

Lesta Cromwell, and S'Layna Bradley - Pinetop, AZ

Norm & Donna Schaefer - Show Low, AZ

WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY? Christian Ed. - 12; Worship - 37 (Members 29, Friends 5, Guests 3) How many were here because you invited them! How many will return because you welcomed them?

WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS TODAY:

All those who are sick

All those who travel

All those who serve

Miss Ella and Miss Shelby, confirming their faith the Sunday after Easter

Ewald K - wrestling with heart and lung deterioration

Donna K - wrestling with heart and lung challenges

White Mountain Bible Church - Pastors Walters, Fiore, and Freeman

Faith Lutheran Church - Chesapeake, VA. Pastor Christian G. Morales

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church - Blue Bell, PA Pastor David M. Young

March SS/BC Mission Project - Four Corners Christian Camp for at-risk youth

SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS WEEK:

Organist: Maja C

Elder in Charge: Joe R

Bulletins: (Thanks, Maja, Elders, and Dooleys)

Project Keep-In-Touch Mailing: Martee E

LIFE QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Moreover, when Christ, the Son of God, was to be conceived in His mother's womb and become incarnate, He certainly had to be already present in essence and in person in the Virgin's womb, and had to assume humanity there" (Martin Luther (LW 37:62)).

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

Sun	03/25	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service - Holy Communion (Palm/Passion) 12:05 p.m. - Dorcas Society "Mites for Missions" Coffee Fellowship
Tues	03/27	5:00 p.m. - Final Confirmation Class (Mortons serving)
Wed	03/28	9:30 a.m. - Ladies Bible Study 6:00 p.m. - NO Midweek Lenten Supper or Worship Service
Thur	03/29	7:00 p.m. - Maundy Thursday - Lord's Supper
Fri	03/30	Noon - Good Friday Meditation on Christ on the Cross service 7:00 p.m. - Good Friday Tenebrae "Service of Darkness"
Sun	04/01	6:30 a.m. - Easter Sunrise Service - Holy Communion 8:00 a.m. - Easter Breakfast (until 9:15 a.m.) (9:15 a.m.- NO Sunday School/Bible Class) 10:00 a.m. - Easter Vigil/Resurrection Festival - Holy Communion 11:55 a.m. - NO Dorcas Society "Mites for Missions" Coffee Fellowship

SOMEBODY TOOK MY SEAT! Somebody took *everybody's* seats. But don't worry; it's just temporary. This morning - at least at the beginning - all the seats will be in the Fellowship Hall - so we can take our Palm Sunday processional. (And next, week, too - if you show up for the Sunrise Easter service - all the seats will be there, as well.) Thanks for your flexibility, as we try to plan the richest possible worship experiences for you.

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR (from Lutherans for Life) "Whose life matters most? Every human being down to the teeniest and feeblest, since God made sure to incarnate Himself as embryo in Mary's womb and then become completely helpless in crucified execution. How much do they matter? So much that Jesus redeemed them each and all, with His lifeblood as the price." (Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, bring forth Your name from our lips so that it draws all people to You. Amen.)

HOLY WEEK IS HERE! This morning, in our combined service - Palm Sunday and the Sunday of the Passion - we begin our walk down the holiest week in the entire church year. There is no midweek Wednesday Lenten family worship service, but on Thursday, after forty deliberate days of Lenten preparation, we finally arrive at the celebration of the three great days of our Lord's *pascha* - his Passover - through death to life. Please plan to be here for each of the three great days:

Maundy Thurs 7:00 p.m. Holy Communion - (representative) Footwashing

Good Friday 12 Noon Liturgy of the Word/

Meditation on Christ on the Cross

7:00 p.m. Tenebrae (historic "Service of Darkness")

Easter Sunday 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise (fellowship hall) - Holy Communion

10:00 a.m. * Easter Vigil/Alleluia Festival - Holy Communion

(* Note the special time for the Easter Vigil/Festival service: 10:00 a.m.)

"**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 it's 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 last year's pricing: Adults \$6.00, Children under 12, \$4.00, Families \$20.

THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED CLEAN UP GOD'S HOUSE YESTER-DAY (and in the run-up to it). Many hands indeed make light work. And a fair amount of fun, too! Thanks to Trustee Jay for coordinating all the work. We didn't build this house of God, but those who went before us did, and left it to us. (Okay, so yeah, we built - what? - a third of it?) Yes, it came with a "pink slip," but we inherited that along with it, and paid the loan off some six years ago already. So now our good stewardship says we take good care of it. Thanks for making all of it - the new and the old - shine in so many areas. Those whom God will bring by for the celebration of the resurrection of his Son next week certainly will be blessed by all the hard work.

"LADIES ONLY." Girls, mark your calendars, put a couple of frozen meals in the freezer or leave some of that butter and egg money out for the boys to be able to buy some food for themselves, and get yourselves packed for our annual **Ladies' Retreat, Wednesday and Thursday, April 11th and 12th in Greer.** It's really only a 24-hour deal - we leave just after lunch after regular Wednesday Ladies' Bible Study and we're back home by dinner time on Thursday - but it feels like a whole lot more. This is a fun time in the Lord, ladies. We sing, we devote, we eat, we study; we celebrate what it means to be sisters in Christ. We'll laugh, we'll learn, we'll share, we'll cry (We're girls!), we'll pray, we'll love being together . . . in the Lord! Mimi is taking names. Get yours in now, before anything else comes up. She'll be taking money, too. We'll toss in an Alexander Hamilton or two (or ten or twenty Susan B. Anthonys, if you prefer) to cover our materials, our snacks, a couple of meals, and a housing equalizer. Mimi's got the details. You just be sure to get the time off. It'll be the best just-over-24-hours ever!

PSSST: Guys, we're all in the same boat when the girls go away - there's no one working the Mess Hall - so, since we already have all we need here at church, let's at least do our "crying in our beer" together? What do you say? - pink meat (with BBQ sauce, of course) and a showing of something that doesn't qualify as a "chick flick"? Talk to Pastor to make your reservation.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK: Today! - 3/25 - Donita W, udrey K.

WHERE ARE OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS OFF TO THIS MONTH? We're supporting a Christian camp in Colorado that gives at-risk kids the tools they need to lobby for themselves and to make good decisions rather than bad. JB has been there hunting for buried treasure with metal detectors. The camp uses that money to defray the cost of their youth camp. Four Corners Christian Camp - between Cortez and Durango. Keep them in your prayers, please. ours.

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 builder's 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?" The game is easy. We built a grand addition on the front of our church. Then we doubled the size of the kitchen, moved the doors into sanctuary, turned the old rest rooms into storage, finished up the offices, and completed everything in the Fireside Room except the flooring, which is even now acclimating to its future space. 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

... \$50,000. ... \$20,000 ... ?

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.

MEANWHILE, OUT IN THE NARTHEX. . . . You may have noticed a new picture hanging there. 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 in town to do a real presentation. So, at our March Council meeting, 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

... 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 "SPACES THAT MIGHT NEED A UNIFIED VISION," THE FIRESIDE ROOM. So, if you'd be willing to spend a little time thinking and working on that, we'd be happy to hear from you. (Just let Trustee Jay or Pastor know.) As you can see if you poke your head in, the walls have been painted, the fireplace and mantel (whose design was "run by" the Council way back when both were still in the donation stage) finished, and the flooring installed (for the most part). And as you may remember, we held back some cabinets from the kitchen for use in there as well. (There is plumbing for a sink, for instance.) But that still leaves a lot of work to do finishing up the furnishings and decor in that space. It could be that some of the folks from the Narthex Decorating Committee would be willing to do double-duty, but then again, maybe it would be a good idea to pull together some new folks for a fresh, new vision in that next space.

SO, WHAT CAME OUT OF THE LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE MEETING? Council agreed that we should allocate a bit over \$3,000 from monies still in the Building Fund account at this point to extend the front sidewalk that presently terminates abruptly at the entrance steps in the direction of St. Mary of the Angels - up to the end of our building (east corner of 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.

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...essment 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.

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR (from Lutherans for Life) “Whose life
matters most? Every human being down to the teeniest and feeblest, since God
made sure to incarnate Himself as embryo in Mary’s womb and then become com-
pletely helpless in crucified execution. How much do they matter? So much that
Jesus redeemed them each and all, with His lifeblood as the price.” (Prayer: Lord
Jesus Christ, bring forth Your name from our lips so that it draws all people to You.
Amen.)

AND JUST IN CASE YOU HADN’T HEARD:

READ THEM FOR YOURSELVES - 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. Dear, and in some cases, heartbreaking. They’re the encouragement
we need to remain both faithful and generous as we continue to provide meals every
Friday for those kids who just miss the federal government cutoff for weekend
food. Thanks to us, these kids - who also depend on the government for both
breakfast and lunch at school - can depend on having two meals on Saturday and
Sunday, too. Single-serving is the operative word. And healthy is the rule. Check
out the list at the wicker collection basket in the narthex.

P. S. We’re committed until the end of the school year in May. And don’t
that your gifts aren’t in the basket long; the need is so great that we whisk
them away to the food pantry at CES just as soon as they come in. (Thanks,
Linda, and Kevin and Patti, for all the delivering!)

**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.