



SHEPHERD'S SCRIBE

February 2024

This article was originally written by the Rev. Timothy Steele II in preparation for this upcoming Lenten season. I have adapted, edited, and expanded it for our use with his permission.

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." These words, spoken through the Prophet Joel, resound just as loudly as they did ages ago. Dear friends: before we know it, the Season of Lent will be upon us. Lent is a time of repentance, a time of contemplation, and a time of preparation. Repenting of our sins; contemplating God's great love for us in Christ Jesus; and preparing for the joy of our Savior's Resurrection on Easter. The very name "Lent" gives us another angle to ponder. Lent comes from the Old English "*lencten*", which simply means "Spring Season". On its face, this simply reflects the fact that the 40 days of Lent leading into Resurrection Sunday/Easter fall during, and into, Spring. Easter, of course, is the holiday that happens during Spring.

But let us pause and contemplate the nature of Lent's relation to Spring and remember God's call through the Prophet Joel. Instead of thinking of Lent as 40 days during which we must somber and depressing, let us rather look at it as an opportunity for spiritual spring cleaning. Let Lent be for you a Springtime for the soul: a time for self-examination; a time for cleaning house. What is the best way you may do this? The power of God's Word, repentance of sins, and fixing your eyes on Christ Crucified, the Lamb of God Who takes away your sin!

Have you been away from Church for a time? Don't be a stranger to God's House! Your Heavenly Father loves you, and Jesus desires to give you His Grace. Whether it has been a few months, or many years, RETURN! Do not let your Faith wither and weaken; no longer let the throne room of your heart grow dusty!

Lent is a wonderful time to get back into the habit of coming to God's House to receive His gifts. Come, and hear how Christ washes away your sin. Let the breath of the Holy Spirit refresh your soul and blow away the dust and debris of your heart. Hear the Word of God, that your soul would be strengthened, confirmed, and enlarged. For some of you, I have seen you a handful of times but not yet had the honor and opportunity to know you properly. As your pastor, I invite and encourage you to attend not only our regular Sunday worship, but also our additional Midweek Lenten and Holy Week services:

Ash Wednesday Service: Feb. 14th @ 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM

Lent 1 Evening Prayer: Feb. 21st @ 7:00 PM

Lent 2 Evening Prayer: Feb. 28th @ 7:00 PM

Lent 3 Evening Prayer: March 6th @ 7:00 PM

Lent 4 Evening Prayer: March 13th @ 7:00 PM

Lent 5 Evening Prayer: March 20th @ 7:00 PM

Palm Sunday: March 24th @ 10:30 AM

Maundy Thursday Mass: March 28th @ 7:00 PM

Good Friday Mass: March 29th @ 7:00 PM

Easter Sunrise and Divine Service: March 31st @ 6:30 AM and 10:30 AM

Do you attend frequently? Use this season to discipline your daily prayer and personal devotions. Make a practice of praying as soon as you wake and right before you sleep. This is what Luther advised good Christians to do:

"In the morning, when you rise, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross [make the sign of the cross over yourself] and say:

"In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

“Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the [Apostles’] Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. If you choose, you may, in addition, say this little prayer:

“I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee to keep me this day also from sin and all evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.”

“Then go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, [such] as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest.

“In the evening, when you go to bed, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross [make the sign of the cross over yourself] and say:

“In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.”

“Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the [Apostles’] Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. If you choose, you may, in addition, say this little prayer:

“I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously kept me this day, and I pray Thee to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.”

“Then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.” (Small Catechism, Prayers)

I might suggest updating Luther’s Morning and Evening Prayers—as they are known—to more modern English if that helps. You should likewise consider adding all or part of a Psalm to your daily prayers, such as Psalm 4 which I have adapted as if I were to pray it (many will need no changes of personalization, such as Psalm 13 and 51):

Original (ESV) ¹Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

²O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*

³But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.

⁴Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

⁵Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.

⁶There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!”

⁷You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Personal Prayer form ¹Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

²O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

³But know that the Lord set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.

⁴Teach me to be angry, and not sin; make me ponder in my heart on my bed and be silent.

⁵Guide me in offering right sacrifices, and putting my trust in You, O Lord.

⁶There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!”

⁷You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸In peace I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Amen.

Likewise, remember your brothers and sisters in Christ during your daily prayers! You could also invite them to spend time with you during these cold and lonely days. Expand your time of fellowship from Sunday Service to more of your week by attending the Monday Morning or Thursday Afternoon Bible Studies. Practice improving your faith through increased study of God's Word alone or together! (if you want a penitential read for the penitential season of Lent, add a chapter of Jeremiah to your daily devotions, or some other book of the Old Testament.)

Last of all, to young and old, sorrowful or joyous, lonely and in need, join your brothers and sisters at Good Shepherd in repenting of our sins, contemplating God's great love for us in Christ Jesus, and preparing for the joy of our Savior's Resurrection on Easter.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Raymond Cox



ELDERS

Ash Wednesday and Valentines Day

Many people are looking at their February calendars and doing a double-take seeing Ash Wednesday falling on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

The two days, steeped in tradition, don't have too much in common beyond their religious roots. Valentine's Day, named after St. Valentine, a third-century martyr, is all about romance with its emphasis on cards, candy, flowers and nice dinners.

So what is Ash Wednesday then? Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. Its official name is "Day of Ashes," so called because of the practice of rubbing ashes on one's forehead in the sign of a cross. Since it is exactly 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Easter Sunday, it will always fall on a Wednesday—there cannot be an "Ash Thursday" or "Ash Monday." The Bible never mentions Ash Wednesday—for that matter, it never mentions Lent.

Lent is intended to be a time of self-denial, moderation, fasting, and the forsaking of sinful activities and habits. Ash Wednesday commences this period of spiritual discipline.

While the Bible does not mention Ash Wednesday, it does record accounts of people in the Old Testament using dust and ashes as symbols of repentance and/or mourning

2 Samuel 13:19; But now Tamar tore her robe and put ashes on her head. And then, with her face in her hands, she went away crying.

Esther 4:1; When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail.

Job 2:8; Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes.

Daniel 9:3; So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and sprinkled myself with ashes.

The modern tradition of rubbing a cross on a person's forehead identifies that person with Jesus Christ.

Should we observe Ash Wednesday? Since the Bible nowhere explicitly commands or condemns such a practice, Christians are at liberty to prayerfully decide whether or not to observe Ash Wednesday.

If you decide to observe Ash Wednesday and/or Lent, it is important to have a biblical perspective. Jesus warned us against making a show of our fasting.

Matthew 6:16-18; And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. We must not allow spiritual discipline to become spiritual pride.

It is a good thing to repent of your sinful activities, but that's something we Christians should do every day, not just during Lent. It's also a good thing to clearly identify yourself as a Christian, but,

again, this should be an everyday identification. And it is good to remember that no ritual can make one's heart right with God.

John 14:6; Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

You can find our church on the internet in the sites listed below... God's Peace, Gary

<https://www.facebook.com/Lutheran-Church-of-The-Good-Shepherd-LCMS-114008195294825/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCEsFmpDHX1dAfhzkKg_0XQ

or email goodshepherdbiloxi@gmail.com



LWML

Some people contend that laughter is the best medicine, but in times of grief and sorrow people turn to music to lift their souls. Though few would dispute the therapeutic power of humor, there is something especially soothing about music that reminds us that God is on his throne and in control. Music is also a great way to Praise and exalt the Lord. I especially enjoy praise music as the lyrics and melodies remind us that we serve a God who is faithful and just. I would like to share one of my many favorites. *(My Jesus, my Savior, there is none like you. All of my days I want to praise the wonders of your mighty Love. My comfort. my shelter, Tower of refuge and strength. Let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship you. Shout to the Lord All the earth let us sing, Power and Majesty, praise to the King. Mountains bow down and the seas will roar at the sound of your name. I sing for joy at the work of Your hands. Forever I'll love you forever I'll stand. Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.)*

I would like to personally thank everyone who has helped with communion ware. If you are not able to help on your assigned day please give me call at 228-326-4596.

The LWML Ladies have a big meeting January 28. The March newsletter will have all the actions that were made at that meeting. Happy Valentine's Day to all.

May God Bless All.

Sandra Ziegenhagen. President

Lenten services: Ash Wednesday is February 14th. We will be having Lenten services the five weeks following on Wednesday nights. We will be having a meal of soup and sandwiches before each service at 6:00 PM. We will need volunteers to donate food for the meals. There will be a different church group to help with the different Lenten meals. We still NEED other people to help and donate food. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex. Listed below is the schedule for the groups assigned for each Wednesday.

February 21, 2024 - LWML

February 28, 2024 - Elders

March 6, 2024 - Endowment Fund

March 13, 2024 - Board of Education and Evangelism

March 20, 2024 - Church Council Officers

Lenten services will begin at 7:00 PM.



The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

2004 Pass Road, Biloxi, MS 39531, Office: 228-388-5767

goodshepherdbiloxi@gmail.com, www.goodshepherdbiloxi.com

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy New Year for 2024. What a great new year to look forward to. Although we have been led by a wonderful and dedicated group of elders and fill in Pastors these past three years, we are blessed to finally have a full time Pastor to shepherd us. We look forward to Pastor Cox's leadership in growing Good Shepherd's future.

We gratefully thank each and every one of you for tithing to the church and giving unto God. As most of you are aware, we have to create a budget each year of known and expected costs, like paying personnel costs, bills (electrical, utility, insurance, etc.) and support programs to spread God's word. The church leaders carefully review the budget each year and have trimmed it back to the bare necessities and brought it to the Voter's Meeting for approval. There is however, a bit of a dark cloud that each of us can help resolve. In the past three years, we have not had to pay a fulltime pastor's salary, taxes, insurance, etc. and were able to meet each year's financial requirements without experiencing any budget deficits. However, for 2024, our budget requirements are currently experiencing a \$42,186 shortfall.

During these past years, the church council has established emergency funds to help cover such a situation. These funds are limited and can only provide the needed funds for a short period of time. Due to the budgeting shortfall, we are asking those who currently don't tithe regularly to please, prayerfully, give what you can regularly. In addition, we are requesting that you review your pledges and, if possible, increase your giving by an additional 10% or whatever you can.

We understand that not everyone is able to increase their pledges and we do not wish you to incur any financial difficulties. We only ask you to consider an increase that your budget allows.

Thank You for Your Prayers and Consideration. God Bless You,

Werner H. Harris

Council Vice-President and Stewardship Chairman

2 Cor 9:6-7 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver.

Mission Report 2023

On the first Sunday of every month, a collection is taken for Missions. These donations are shared with Loaves & Fishes or Welfare, every other month. This is a report of what happened with these donations:

Beginning Balance 2023	\$.	515.94
Donations for the year		\$1,055.79
Total		\$1,571.73

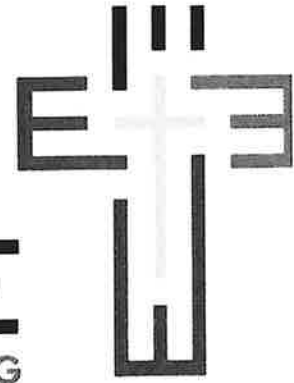
Disbursements to Loaves & Fishes	\$.	469.71	
Disbursements to Welfare	\$.	275.00	
Year End Mission Balance		\$.	827.02

Loaves & Fishes received a donation every other month. In welfare, we donated \$175.00 to the Grain Train for tornado relief, through the Synod and \$100.00 was given to a church family to help with their Christmas.

Thank you, Everyone, for all of the donations throughout the year.

Debbie Harris
Welfare Chairman

The Flock News February 2024



ENDURE

2025 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING
HEBREWS 12:1-3



The next LCMS Youth Gathering is just around the corner in July 2025, and this time, we will be just down the street in New Orleans! Did you know that The Gathering is not only the largest gathering of LCMS youth, but also the largest gathering of LCMS adults! If you're an adult (19+) who is interested in helping at The Gathering, scan the QR code to learn more about being a Gathering Ambassador, Young Adult Volunteer, or part of Team Flex.

how our youth are preparing:

Prayer.

Fundraising kicks off with the Spaghetti Dinner on February 11

Begin **studying** Hebrews 12 and The Gathering theme of Endure

3 of our youth are expected to be **Confirmed** this year

2 veteran youth are **leading** the way for their second Gathering

3 youth will have the opportunity to attend for the **first time!**

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



FEBRUARY



WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US! 1 John 4:19

As St. Paul writes, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) It is Jesus' death on the cross that shows us what true love is. You do not know how to love your neighbor or your God unless you know how God loved you in sending his Son to die for you.

CHILDREN AND PRAYER

Teaching children to pray is an ideal way to help them mature on their discipleship journey. When children learn to pray, they learn to communicate their faith. This learning is a process that happens over time, but we don't need to wait until we think our children are "ready" to pray. Prayer is a spiritual communication with God. Pray frequently with your children to remind them that prayer is a way to alleviate their fears. We pray frequently in Sunday School and the children know to...fold their hands, close their eyes and bow their heads.

We are so proud of the children for how well they did on their Christmas Program! The Love of the Lord shone through them and they did a wonderful job of sharing the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior!

This spring the Sunday School children will be learning Easter hymns to sing in worship on Palm Sunday!



MAVERICK



ARIELLA



HARLEE



DELILAH



ANGEL



BENTLEY



JULIANNA



ADELINE



AZELINA



ANALEIGH

FEBRUARY FAMILY TIME

This month make valentines with your children and share the love of Jesus with others! This might mean the senior citizens in your congregation, a nursing home or an assisted living facility!

The **EDUCATION BUILDING** is still being renovated to make classrooms for Sunday School, and we are finally ready to finish up the electrical, start painting and get the cleanup going! Thank you the Monday Work Crew and the youth for all the hard work they have done!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Men's Bible Study will be held each Monday morning at 8:00 AM in the fellowship hall. All men are invited.

Adult Instruction will be held on Thursday nights at 6:00 PM. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Cox.

Communion Ware There is a list of volunteers on the bulletin board in the narthex of people to help with communion ware after service. If you are unable to help when scheduled, please contact someone to take your place.

Flower Chart: The Flower Chart is completed and hanging in the narthex. We need volunteers to sign-up and donate flowers for the altar for different occasions. Select a date, write your name, and then write the reason for donating the flowers (such as anniversary, a birthday, or in memory of someone dear, etc.). If you will be providing flowers through Rose's, please pay the \$45.00. The flower arrangement that you have done on your own should not be over 28" high from the bottom of the vase to the top of the flowers. If you pay for the arrangement from Rose's you can take home the flowers with you after the service. The vase and the insert will be recycled each week and used again the next Sunday. If you have any questions, please talk to Patty Thurber or Debbie Harris.

Special Collections: Just as a reminder that we collect for Missions on the first Sunday of the month and for LWML Mites on the fourth Sunday.

Office Hours: Office hours are Monday – Wednesday 8:00 AM to noon and Friday from 8:00 AM to noon.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2004 PASS ROAD, BILOXI, MS 39531
CHURCH OFFICE PH: 228-388-5767
goodshepherdbiloxi@gmail.com
www.goodshepherdbiloxi.com
Rev. Raymond Cox

CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS

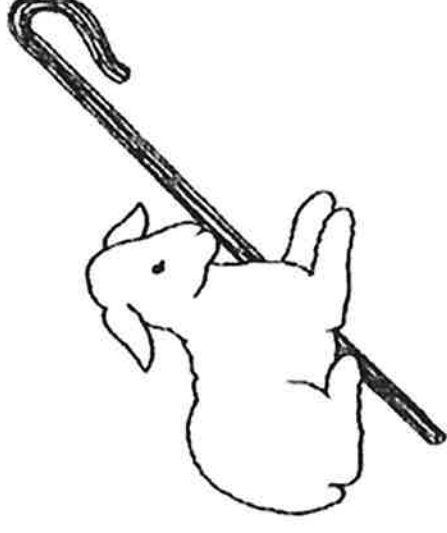
President: Michael Litke
Vice President: Werner Harris
Secretary: Monica Litke
Treasurer: Debbie Harris
Financial Secretary: Sally Manker

BOARD/COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Board of Elders: Gary Thone
Board of Trustees: Sonia Hill
Board of Stewardship: Vacant
Board of Welfare: Debbie Harris
Board of Evangelism: Vicente Munoz
Board of Education: Monica Litke
Board of Youth Ministry: Vacant
CEF: Vacant
Endowment Fund: Mike Hunt

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

President: Sandy Ziegenhagen
Vice President: Ruth Gilbert
Secretary: Dorothy Golnick
Treasurer: Jean Campbell
Altar Guild: Carol Spiering



BIRTHDAY

Walter Prestenberg	2/1
Barbara Bruhnke	2/3
Donna Kelley	2/5
AvaBella Thayer	2/7
Kaylee Tyndall	2/7
Carol Spiering	2/9
Ellen Smith	2/18
Sandra Ziegenhagen	2/21
Jessica McEwen	2/25
Christopher Hill	2/27

February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Bible Study 1:30 PM Adult Instruction 6:00 PM	2	3
4 Missions Collection	5 Men's Bible Study Breakfast 7:30 AM Study 8:00 AM	6	7	8 Bible Study 1:30 PM Adult Instruction 6:00 PM	9	10
11 Flock Spaghetti Lunch After Service	12 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM Elders Meeting 6:00 PM	13 Sisters in Study 10:30 AM Ellen Smith's House	14 Ash Wednesday Service 10:00 AM And 7:00 PM	15 Bible Study 1:30 PM Adult Instruction 6:00 PM	16	17
18	19 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	20 Voter's Meeting 6:00 PM	21 Lent Dinner 6:00 PM Service 7:00 PM	22 Bible Study 1:30 PM Adult Instruction 6:00 PM	23 Newsletter Articles Due	24
25 Mites Collection	26 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	27	28 Lent Dinner 6:00 PM Service 7:00 PM	29		

Elders: Paul Smith and George Thurber

COMMUNION WARE
 Feb 4 Jean and Donna T
 Feb 11 Marcia and Sandy
 Feb 18 Dorothy and Vanessa
 Feb 25 Christina and Avabella

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
 Children's Sunday School 9:00 AM
 Adult Sunday School 9:00 AM
 Divine Service 10:30 AM