
THE VISITOR

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

Westchester, California

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The Mission of Our Savior Lutheran Church
*“To communicate to our community the love of Jesus
and the changeless Word of God in today’s changing world.”*

March greetings to you, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Jeff Foxworthy, the comedian and host of “Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader” says, that if you know all four seasons—almost winter, winter, still winter and road construction—you might live in Wyoming. A lot of other people in wintry states might say the same thing. But in March we observe the beginning of spring. As the trees and bushes bud, the grass starts to turn green, and the soil takes on a smell of new life, we look forward to the beginning of a new cycle with warmer weather and a new start for seedtime and harvest.

Sometimes as God’s stewards we may feel that stewardship is more of the same old, same old. But, just as spring starts a new cycle of life, so also



Easter with its joy and celebration starts a new cycle of life for us as God’s stewards. During the reflective season of Lent we look forward to the joy and celebration of Easter. This is a great reminder that we are “Easter people,” that is, people of hope. Hope is stronger than memory. Memory mostly makes us think about past failures, unfulfilled promises, frustration and disappointment, but hope refreshes us with a new start, not just at spring time, but for every new day.

During Lent we reflect on the extravagant love of Jesus as He went all the way to the cross and death as the perfect sacrifice for our sins and failures. Philippians chapter two reminds us: *“Jesus humbled Himself and became*

obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
(vv8-11 NIV)

One day every knee will bow before Christ, even the knees of those who did not believe in Him, and confess Him as Lord of lords and King of kings. Those who do not believe will be forced to bow their knees when they see Jesus coming in glory and then they will go away to everlasting sorrow. By contrast, our knees will bow in humble adoration and our voices will proclaim **“How great Thou art!”**

Just as the earth comes back to life in spring time, so also we are renewed day by day to live as God’s redeemed stewards who freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes. This new life is not boring! It is exciting as we experience God’s power in our lives and look for opportunities in which we can manage our time, talents, relationships and financial resources in a way that honors Him and provides so many blessings to others and ourselves.

Let’s “spring” to new life as God’s redeemed stewards who, in

cooperation with and encouragement from fellow redeemed stewards, manage all that we are and have to God’s glory!

The Lord bless you this Lent season with a repentance heart filled with faith in God’s grace on account of The Lord Jesus Christ,

Pastor Umbenhaur

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A FEW THOUGHTS ON FASTING

During Lent God’s people are fasting from alleluias. We have not spoken of fasting, but perhaps it is time. Fasting is often perceived as a “Catholic” thing to do, but is in fact enjoined upon Christians in Scripture in a number of places. The people of the first centuries of the Church regularly engaged in fasting and considered it a very important part of their discipline, as did people of Old Testament times. Before she comes into see the Emperor, Esther asks her uncle and family to fast and then she and her whole staff fast and pray.

The question is why? What is going on with fasting? I believe most of who attend our church do not understand this practice. First of all, let’s dispose of a few misconceptions. It is not about weight control. That does not work. In fact, if the physiologists are to be believed, the body of a fasting person starts metabolizing much more

efficiently and the result is that when you start eating again, the body will start packing pounds back on. It is not effective as a weight control and I would not connect the practice to the fact that most Americans are overweight.

Fasting is not about “earning points” with God. That may seem obvious, but you will be amazed at how frequently such ideas creep into any human’s thinking. It is also not about distinguishing between Christians in terms of their own relationship with God. The fasters and the non-fasters are just as loved and just as forgiven by God.

But then, what is fasting? Fasting is a spiritual discipline in which the person focuses the mind, body, and whole self on God. I have known a number of people who engage in a complete fast. A colleague in Utah and the principal and his wife in Las Vegas were two whom I had a chance to talk to about this. They spoke of how much they get done when they fast. The first three days are tough as the appetite gets more insistent that they eat, but then, after three days, the appetite seems to give up and the period of productivity and clarity begins. You might be surprised to learn that most report that energy levels do not go down; rather, they go up. What most also report is a clarity of thinking and especially an ability to pray with greater focus and endurance.

This sort of fasting is not something you do alone, nor is it something that I recommend you do without consulting your physician. I also have been advised that you want to use the European model for fasting and not the more austere American model for fasting. The Europeans do not consider juice to be a breaking of a fast, but Americans often think that only water is acceptable. The problem, as explained to me, lies in the complete elimination of sugar. Without a little sugar intake your body starts looking for it in tissues and robs rather indiscriminately, even from the heart muscle.

Very few people engage in this sort of fasting. The Krafts, the principal and his wife from Las Vegas, would regularly fast for the entire Lenten season, all 40+ days.

The more common sort of fasting is “giving up something for Lent” which is another sort of fasting altogether. This sort of fasting is not so much a spiritual discipline connected to prayer as it is a healthy and deliberate participation in the suffering of Christ. Philippians says he gave up everything for us, so we give up something to remember that sacrifice. This is fasting as an act of worship, not that a complete fast is not an act of worship, but this sort of fasting is really more akin to the offerings that we bring than to a spiritual discipline connected to prayer.

This fasting is motivated by a desire to let the sacrifice of Christ shape our lives and our devotion to him. This sort of fasting is actually, according to those who have done both, harder to do. Because every day involves a choice and a deliberate action, this sort of fast is often more difficult to keep. The complete fast is easier once the initial period of appetite is over. The desire for food seems to recede. For the person who has given up a cherished sweet or another real sacrifice, the decision to forgo is daily. This sort of fasting, by the way is not limited to food. One can fast from Television, from the radio, or from something else. The only caveat on this sort of fasting is that it should be something that you can with joy restore to your life on Easter. A vice or bad habit is something you wish to be rid of. Lent might make a good time to do that, but you don't want to restore it. That is not this sort of fasting, this is not self improvement, but participation in the sacrifice of Christ. Giving up sweets may be a healthy thing, but we don't forgo in order to improve our diet.

The partial fasting which many of us know from Lent is a fruit of faith, it flows from the desire to be like Christ because we love and trust in him. It remembers with our body the great gift of his sacrifice for us. We do not seek martyrdom or persecution, but we also

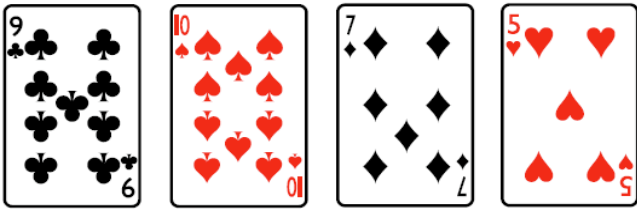
exercise the fact that we are enslaved to no thing.

The final aspect to all fasting is that Christ has set us free. I survey the things of my life and rejoice in my freedom by putting something aside. Perhaps I just need to be sure that I am not enslaved to this or that, so I will live without it. Perhaps I will truly miss this and its absence will daily remind of what Christ has done. Perhaps by fasting from lunch, I will have both a little time and money to bring to the soup kitchen or the homeless shelter and I can remember the good that Christ has done for me when I was helpless and hungry for salvation.

*(Written by Professor Rev. Phil Brandt of Concordia U.,
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CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

What's wrong with this picture?



You carry perceptions into daily experience that cloud your sight. Some people call these preconceived notions "paradigms." If you filter everything you see through your preconceived notions, you can miss the truth. You are so used to red diamonds and black spades, that these cards may not look wrong. Or...you may see them, know there is something unusual, but not be able to put your finger on it.

STORY: A sculptor, resting from his day's work, fell asleep one afternoon and dreamed he was the block of stone he was carving. He was aware of himself, inside the stone block, yearning to be released. Yet when the sculptor in his dream began to hammer away, he found the stone too hard. The dream sculptor's chisels broke. His hammer handles splintered. Finally, the dream sculptor gave up working on the block. "This is the most stubborn block of stone I ever encountered," said the dream sculptor. "If there is a statue inside this block, it will just have to stay there!" The real sculptor woke up in a cold sweat. In his day-to-day work he envisioned each block of stone to contain a statue yearning to get out. As an artist, he saw it as his mission to chip away the excess stone and free that image so others could see

it. "The worst thing in the world would be like my dream—a man trapped inside stone so hard that no artist could release him." Some people in the church are like the hard stone. God is a sculptor who desires to work with our lives. Hard people resist the Sculptor's work. They see God's work as "chipping away at my life," as "reducing my resources." They don't recognize that God wants to free a beautiful image from the stone—one that can emerge only as parts of the outside block are chipped away. As a child of God, inside of you is a person capable of managing what God gives. The problem is in the perception that God wants you to give up something to be a steward. Nothing is further from the truth. God wants to GIVE you something (actually, many things) as His manager.

STORY: A mother had 15 children. One of the only ways to know if they were all accounted for was to count them each night at dinner. One summer day she counted only 14. She went out into the neighborhood and found her eight-year-old son just where she expected—at a local construction site. He had gotten into a bucket of tar and was covered from head to foot. She sized him up and said to him, "It would be easier to have another one than to clean you up!" We, too, are covered with the tar of sin. God could find it easy to say to us, as he told Moses about the Israelites (Ex.

32:7-10), "It would be easier to wipe you out and start over than to clean you up." But that's not what God did. You may not presently be a good manager of what God entrusts to you. But God is willing to work with you, rather than walk away. That's called God's grace. In Christ, He's ready.

EXERCISE: While you are driving this week, take this thought along with you: Whether you are on an expressway or a side street, you will be making exits and turns today. If you make the wrong turn or take the wrong exit, you may have to travel on the wrong road for some distance before you can correct your mistake.

In life, making a wrong turn can also get you onto a wrong road that will take some time to correct. But God helps you prevent wrong turns in life with the internal guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through His word, He maps out for you the right road. In prayer, ask God to show you today the ways that He will be directing your life in where to turn, how long to keep going and taking the proper exit. Managing all of life and God's resources are always easier with His direction. **PRAY** Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9-11: ...That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.... For more details on paradigms and perceptions, check out Joel Barker's resources at

<http://www.lspublishing.com/Joel.html>
STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES - PRINCIPLE ONE God's stewards are GOD'S stewards. God's stewards are stewards by virtue of their creation and their re-creation in Holy Baptism; therefore, they belong to the Lord. See Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 43:1-31; Romans 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Ephesians 2:8-10. God makes us His stewards and we remind each other that we are His new creation each day. The Lord is the source of all stewardship, which includes all areas of life.

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PRAYER CONCERNS

Please add these prayer needs to your daily prayers.

That God send more children and families to our pre-school so we may share the Gospel of Jesus with them.

That God strengthen our faith and love that our stewardship overflows to His glory and building of a lasting ministry at Our Savior.

Our men and women in the armed services. Our government officials. Our NATION. For the people in Haiti.

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CHILDREN OF OUR SAVIOR PRE-SCHOOL

Dear Family and Friends of Children of Our Savior Pre-school,

Time just keeps on flying by at our preschool. We had a very exciting month celebrating Ground Hog Day, our Presidents, Valentine's Day and Black History month. Hats off to all the teachers who did some very unique projects in their classrooms. It was fun to see so many happy children.

March is a very busy month at our preschool. First off we will celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week. Please join us on Thursday, March 4th from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. for a Continental breakfast down at the preschool.

During March we will be talking about Wind, Air, St. Patrick's and spring. If you would like to read a story to one of classes please feel free to come on down to the preschool, we love to have visitors!

Friday, March 26th is our Trike- A – Thon and Auction. We will begin our day at 9:00 a.m. with all the children taking turns riding their bikes. Then at noon we will be having hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch. Please register with Linda, Missy or Ronda if you will be joining us. This is our biggest event of the year and we would love to have you join us.

Please remember to keep our preschool in your prayers as we are registering children for the new school

year. This is always a busy time of year for us.

Serving His Children,
Ronda Pata

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ALTAR GUILD

Ruth Long and Gail Theodore will be your contacts for March.

Easter lilies will be needed to decorate the altar for Easter. Please bring them in the week of March 29th and leave them in the kitchen. Also, needed are white calla lilies for the living cross for Easter Sunday.

Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will begin at **5:30 p.m.**

God's Blessings,

Ruth Long, Altar Chairperson
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MARCH PRESCHOOL BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Michael Drucker
- 4th Jacob Putman
- 5th Paige Franzen
- 10th McKenzie Simpson
- 11th Odera Nwosu
- 13th Jack Robertson
- 15th Lucas Glastetter
- 21st Jonathan Gharibeh
- 22nd Logan Burger
- 26th Parker Harrington



27th Claire Younger
 27th Matthew Stein
 29th Micha Matthews
 29th Emily Quan
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MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4th Kevin Pata
 5th Gary Smith
 8th Eleanor Hullinger
 10th McKenzie Simpson
 25th Jose Mercado
 20th Ryan Umbenhaur
 27th Mallory Josten (Kennedy)
 28th Evelyn Trollope
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MARCH ANNIVERSARIES



3rd Rose & Bob Glick

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FLOWER CHART & REFRESHMENT CHART

There are still dates that you can sign up for—don't be left out!!

Flower Chart: 3-14, 21—5-2, 9—7-4, 18, 25—8-1—9-26—10-3, 10, 17, 24, 31—11-28, 12-6, 12-12, 12-19, 12-26.

Refreshment Chart: 3-14, 3-21, 3-28—4-11—5-2, 5-9, 5-16, 5-23—6-6, 6-20, 6-27—7-4, 7-11, 7-18, 7-25—8-1, 8-8, 8-29—9-12, 9-26—10-3, 10-10, 10-17, 10-24, 10-31—11-7, 11-14, 11-28—12-6, 12-12, 12-19, 12-26.

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	Offerings	Budget Requirements
Dec-09	\$ 7,089	\$ 7,500
Jan-10	\$ 6,424	\$ 7,500
Average	\$ 6,757	\$ 7,500

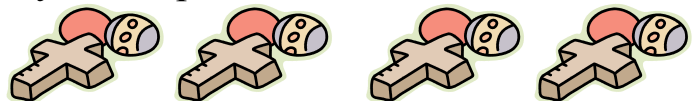
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**EASTER EGG HUNT
 SATURDAY, APRIL 3RD**

The Easter Egg Hunt committee is asking for you help with the following needs:

- 1) Plastic Easter Eggs (4-5 dozen per family)
- 2) Individually wrapped candy

Bring eggs and candy to the Church office on or before Wednesday, March 24th. On Thursday, March 25th at 7:00 p.m. we will be stuffing the eggs with your donations. Last year we filled 1,000 plastic eggs in just 1 hour!! Think what we can do this year with your help.



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THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.
Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may

ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father.

The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean? God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also. *How is God's name kept holy?* God's name is kept holy when the word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

The Second Petition

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come.

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also. *How does God's kingdom come?* God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also. *How is God's will done?* God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us this day our daily bread

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. *What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and

reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

The Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.

What does this mean? This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means “yes, yes, it shall be so.”



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DIRECTIONS ↑
TO OUR FATHER'S HOUSE

Make a Right onto Believeth Blvd. Keep straight and to through the Green Light, which is Jesus Christ. There,

you must turn onto the Bridge of Faith, which is over troubled water.

Now when you get off the bridge, make a Right turn and Keep Straight. You are on the King's Highway – Heaven-bound.

Keep going for three miles: One for the Father, One for the Son, and One for the Holy Spirit.

Then take the Grace Blvd. exit. From there, make a Right turn on Gospel Lane.

Keep Straight and then make another Right on Prayer Road.

As you go on your way, Yield Not to the traffic on Temptation Ave. Also, avoid Sin Street because it is a Dead End.

Pass up Envy Drive, and Hate Avenue.

Also, pass Hypocrisy Street, Gossiping Lane, and Backbiting Blvd.

However, you will have to go down Longsuffering Lane, Persecution Blvd. and Trials and Tribulations Ave., but that's all right, because Victory Street is straight ahead! AMEN!

Author Unknown

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