



The AGAPE NEWS (#19)

THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

A BI-WEEKLY "BLOG-LIKE" NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH



ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, CALGARY AB – March 8, 2021

Proclaiming the love of Jesus Christ in Bridgeland since 1913

Hello dear SMLC Family and friends!

Lenten greetings to all of you!

How are you holding up so far?

Here we are on March 8th as I write this newsletter. Our minds are all over the place right now. Some bad news, some good news. The pandemic has not gone away...the number of Covid cases is still rising in most countries in the world. I think of my home country, Brazil, where the situation is terrible right now.

As we watch what's going on in the world, we learn about the many earthquakes in New Zealand, Japan and New Caledonia, the celestial phenomena like the planet alignment, the huge asteroid called 2001 FO32 that will be passing near our planet on the 21st of March, the natural catastrophes that have happened recently in the planet. If we add to these things a global lethal pestilence, we are led to think about all the eschatological texts in the Bible – you know, the “things that belong to the end times”. Especially texts like Joel chapter 2, Matthew chapter 24, and Luke 21 refer to “signs” of the end times. There will be signs in nature, in the skies, among nations, in the close relationships like families etc.

Most of the Christian churches are seeing the current situation as the beginning of those signs. Check out what Jesus says in Luke 21: 11: *“There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven”*. It almost sounds like we are reading today’s newspaper. However, I don’t mean to scare anybody. My task as your pastor is remind you of this: as a child of God, YOU are safe...or better, you are SAVED by what Christ did for you on that cross. “Fear not” came out of Jesus’ mouth many times to his followers – and to you! His constant presence in good times and in bad times should always accompany us wherever we go or whatever we must endure. We belong to the Lord, and whatever happens to us, we will end up in His presence! Do you need any better news?

Well, then here are some additional, not better, but some uplifting news on this side of eternity: In less than two weeks we will be in the “vernal equinox” (yes, spring finally begins). We thank God for a good winter. We survived it! Today also marks another International Women’s Day, as I write this. We thank God for all the women in our lives: in the family, in our congregation etc. We pray that “equality” and justice will take place in a healthy way in our society. Congratulations on your day, ladies! May God give you strength, endurance, and faith to live your life and your vocation as a woman in a God-pleasing way.

Maybe you have a devotional time tonight and open your hymnal (the LSB) on hymn 855 and sing with your family – the hymn is called “For All the Faithful Women”.

Another good news: the “Covid vaccines” are finally here and many of our members are already getting it. Praise be to God! Soon it will be coming for all of us. Lord, deliver us from this pestilence forever. Amen.

And, before I wrap up my message here, by the time I write the next Agape News, we have celebrated St. Patrick’s Day too. He was the “apostle of Ireland”. Legend credits Patrick with teaching the Irish about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity by showing people the shamrock, a three-leafed plant, using it to illustrate the Christian teaching of three persons in one God. This story first appears in writing in 1726, though it may be older. The shamrock has since become a central symbol for Saint Patrick's Day. If you don’t know it, we do have a hymn in our hymnal that was written by St. Patrick: it’s LSB 604 – a beautiful baptismal hymn with an Irish

tune called *I Bind Unto Myself Today*. If you read this newsletter on your computer, you may listen to it by clicking [here](#). Note what it says at the bottom of the page: text attributed to Patrick, c. 372-466. Can you believe it? I haven't done any research, but I suspect this may be one of the oldest hymns we have in our hymnal!

May God bless your preparations during this holy season and help you focus on Jesus and his sacrifice and victory, so you may be blessed. And don't forget: you are under God's wings of "agape" (God's undeserved and unconditional love towards you).

In His service,

Your pastor

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NOTE ABOUT THE PANDEMIC: (From the last editions of the Agape News)

We at SMLC continue to be cautious and try to follow the protocols to protect each other. We thank God for the fact that we are still able to come to church for worship and some fellowship, even when all looks different. By promoting this as best as we can, we try to keep God's three first Commandments.

Please note:

1 - If you have any symptoms, if you feel unwell, please **get tested immediately** and **stay home**: refrain from coming for the worship services. You may watch us from home (our website or YouTube) until you recover fully.

2 - **If you test positive for Covid-19, you MUST call us as soon as possible, especially if you have attended church.** Your church needs to know, we're all liable and we need to be responsible. You may call either the office, or our chairman Peter Graumann or myself, your pastor. We will never disclose your name. You may find the contact numbers at the end of this newsletter.

And remember: Despite of the bad times we are living these days, we should always trust God's promises that HE IS WITH US in every situation and a stronghold in every trouble. And "trouble" in all around us! However, our God is

stronger than any trouble we may experience! Please continue to pray for our church, our families and for the world. And now...enjoy your reading!

A SMALL DOSE OF GOD'S WORD FOR YOU TODAY:

PSALM 107:6 (From the Psalm for the Fourth Sunday in Lent)

“Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.”

AUF DEUTSCH:

...“die zum HERRN riefen in ihrer Not, und er errettete sie aus ihren Ängsten“



NEWS FROM SMLC.

1 – DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME: will begin at 2:00 a.m. on this coming Sunday, **March 14**. Don't miss the church service!



2 – YOUTH CAMPFIRE EVENING: On this coming Friday March 12, we will gather our youth at 7 p.m. in the back of the church office building (where the lawn is located) for a special evening of devotion, campfire, guitar playing, song singing, smores & smokies and fun games. We ask the participants to bring their favorite camping foods and lawn chairs.

3 – QUESTIONNAIRE: We are planning to hold an online retreat on Mission and Ministry in our church on April 24 (Saturday). In order to discuss and evaluate our priorities, goals and plans for the future of St. Matthew, we want to hear your opinion on some important aspects of our Mission and Ministry. Our board of elders and the PPC have prepared a questionnaire to be answered by EACH

CONFIRMED MEMBER of our congregation. You will be able to pick it up at our church or you will receive it by mail soon. We ask you to, prayerfully consider the questions, write down your answers and return it to us **by April 11**. We thank you for being part of this planning for the future of our church!

4 – BIBLE STUDIES AND LENTEN DEVOTIONS: As we have now entered the holy season of Lent, we put our bible studies on hold for this period. Instead of having bible studies, we have weekly Lenten evening devotions every Wednesday evening. Note: it is not live streaming, but it will be available on our website and YouTube channel, so you can take your time with your family (or by yourself) and watch it until the Holy Week. We will resume the bible studies after Easter.

5 - PRAYER REQUESTS: Send us your prayer requests. We have a “prayer chain” where a group of people (the “prayer warriors”) pray for your needs.

6 – ISOLATION: LONGLINESS & DEPRESSION: During this pandemic, social isolation can give way to feelings of loneliness, depression, and hopelessness. However, you are not alone – here are some resources put together by the Lutheran Laymen’s League Canada that can help. If you have access to the internet, you may click here: <https://www.lll.ca/social-isolation>

7 – CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS’ MEETING: You are invited to participate in our online congregational meeting on **March 21st**. The meeting will be on zoom, at 2 p.m. that Sunday. If you don’t have access to the internet, you may still take part of the meeting over the phone. The invitation will be sent out soon.

8 - THANK YOU: Today I want to thank **DEBORA KLAUS**. She has taken up the position of “envelope secretary” and does her duties very well. Debora also fills in for Andrea, when our office secretary is away. Big thank you, dear Debora! "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy". Philippians 1: 3 & 4

9 – WHAT’S HAPPENING THIS WEEK AND NEXT WEEK?

March 9 (Tues): Online Sunday School (“church school”) for kids @ 4:30 p.m.

March 9 (Tues): Online Youth movie night @ 7 p.m.

March 10 (Wed): Recorded Lenten Devotion on YouTube or our website (evening)

March 12 (Fri): Youth Campfire Evening, at 7 p.m.

March 14 (Sun): Lenten Worship services at regular times

March 16 (Tue): Online Sunday School (“church school”) for kids @ 4:30 p.m.

March 16 (Tues): Online Youth Bible Study @ 7:30 p.m.

March 17 (Wed): Recorded Lenten Devotion on YouTube or our website (evening)

March 18 (Thurs): Online PPC meeting @ 7 p.m.

March 21 (Sun): Lenten worship services @ regular times with the holy communion

March 21 (Sun): Online congregational meeting @ 2 p.m. (zoom)

Names of the upcoming Sundays:

March 14: Fourth Sunday in Lent (Laetare) – Remember the Daylight Saving Time!

March 21: Fifth Sunday in Lent (Judica)

10 – TIME TO CELEBRATE: BIRTHDAYS

March 8 – Helen Woessner

March 12 – Halle Butterwick

March 12 – Alisanne Keller

March 14 – Heinz Feist

March 14 – Jonah Graumann

March 16 – Leo Hartfelder

NEW BIRTH (BAPTISM) ANNIVERSARIES:

March 15 – August Boehm

March 16 – Andrea Dean

March 18 – Emilie Woessner

March 19 – Lori Salter

March 20 – Paul Rehmann

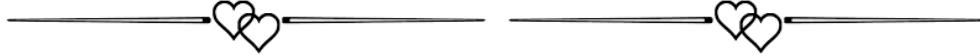
If any name is missing, please let me know. God bless you all!

CURRENT & UPCOMING FEASTS, FESTIVALS and COMMEMORATIONS IN THE CHURCH YEAR:

March 17 – Patrick, Missionary to Ireland

March 19 – St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Look them up, it’s always interesting to learn from those faithful men and women.



UNSERE DEUTSCHE ECKE! GERMAN BEAUTIFUL HYMNS

Wenn Sie diesen Newsletter am Computer lesen, können Sie hier unten klicken. Hören Sie sich dieses wundervolle Stück von Bach an. Er erzählte die ganze Geschichte der Passion Christi, wie sie vom heiligen Matthäus geschrieben wurde, und verwandelte den Text in erhabene Musik. Dies ist das vollständige Konzert, nehmen Sie sich also Zeit, um es anzuhören. Genießen Sie es!

Matthäus-Passion BWV 244 | (Complete) (Full Concert) (J. S. Bach)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P21qIB0K-Bs>



New section: A SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
(in a very simple language)

GENESIS

Genesis is the first book in the Old Testament section of the Bible. The word "Genesis" means "origin". The Book explains that God created a beautiful world (Genesis 1). But the first people did not obey God (Genesis 3). Everyone suffers because of this.

Genesis is a history book. It tells the life stories of many important people. For example, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers.

Jesus was born 1600 years after the events at the end of Genesis. But even in the book of Genesis, God promised that Jesus would come. See Genesis 3:15, Galatians 3:6-20, Hebrews 7 and Hebrews 11:1-22.

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Oh, and now, our “clean joke”:

The Bible, Through the Eyes of a Child, a continuation from the last Agape News:

Here's our version of the stories of the Bible if they were to be told by a child.

Moses

Moses was the next important man. His real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel lights out of Egypt because of the bad Pharaoh. God sent ten plagues on the Egyptians. Some of the plagues were mice, frogs, bugs, lice and no wifi.

Every day in the desert, God fed the Israel lights some manicotti. He gave them His "Top Ten" commandments. They were things like: don't lie, don't cheat, don't dance, don't smoke, don't covet your neighbor's stuff (whatever that means). He also told them to humor their fathers and mothers.



Thank you for taking your time to read my newsletter. If you enjoy reading it, let me know!

In His service, **Rev. M. Zeuch**

On March 8, 2021 Anno Domini

Ph: (403) 837-4600

Visit our website: www.stmatthewlutherancalgary.com

THE STAFF OF ST. MATTHEW

Organist/Pianist: Johnson Philip

Cantor: Dana Salter

Youth Leader: Elizabeth Schieman (306) 715-1191

Secretary: Andrea Sovary (403) 266-1458

Chairman: Peter Graumann (403) 275-2166

Head Elder: Ernest Schulz (403) 239-3966

Church Office hours are 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday

Watch us on



“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” Col 3:15

„Und der Friede Gottes regiere in euren Herzen; zu diesem seid ihr ja auch berufen in einem Leib; und seid dankbar!“ Kolosser 3, 15