

Acts of Faith

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Kewanee, Illinois

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Redeemed by Love

True love comes from God alone. The Holy Apostle, St. John, records for us the words of Jesus, “*For this is how God loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, in order that all who would believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). God’s love isn’t superficial or transient like so much of this life. God’s love is a matter of life and death. God’s love for us is the death of His beloved Son that we might in Him have eternal life. God has given for us and to us His own eternal Son that in His suffering, death and resurrection we might receive and have the sure confidence and comfort of eternal life. The display and reality of God’s love is Jesus who died upon the cross.

This is the love that we’re commanded to reflect as we deal with one another in our day-to-day lives. Jesus said that the summary of the law is, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind*” and “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matt. 22:37-39). Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Yet, this love isn’t simply the fulfillment of an obligation, but a reflection of the love, which God has first given to us. We, who have been shown and made a part of God’s love, are to also love one another in the same way. Even as God has forgiven *us*, so we forgive *one another*. Even as God places us and our needs foremost (thus sending His Son as our Savior) so we place our spouse, our children, our parents, our family, our neighbors, our friends and coworkers, etc. first and foremost.

The problem is that we live in a sinful world—a world of which we all are a part for we are all conceived and born sinful (Ps. 51:5). This world of which we are a part and in which we participate is marked more by hate and division than by love. But then, that should be expected—the prince of this world, the Devil, is the prince of darkness, a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

Consequently, the great American festival of love, Valentine’s Day, is frequently nothing but a cheap charade. There will be all sorts of expressions of love that day: candy, cards, flowers and parties—many reflecting the deep love that we have for one another. But, all too soon, the candy is gone, the flowers are wilted, and the cards and decorations discarded. Soon forgotten, Valentine’s Day 2008, and all its perks, will pass away and be discarded.

The solution isn’t found within us. It’s not something that we can achieve by our efforts. Nor is it to be found in the holidays of this world that typically have no meaning beyond immediate pleasure. The answer is found in the church, the House of God. This is the place where God comes with His gracious eternal gifts.

Far more important than Valentine’s Day is the first Wednesday of this month, February 6th, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. With this Festival, the Church begins her preparation for the great celebration of the glorious act of love on God’s part. On this day, the Church begins her preparation to remember the suffering and death of Jesus upon the cross and His glorious resurrection from the grave three days latter. The Church looks forward to the great festivals, for in *them* is displayed the great love of God — Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Blessings,
Pastor Fischer

Lenten & Holy Week Services

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6th. We will be having a special series of Lenten and Holy Week services on the theme of "Tears Tell the Story." The midweek Lenten services will be at 7:00 PM. A light supper and fellowship time will be available between 5:45-6:45 PM.

Ash Wednesday	Feb. 6 th	Longing Tears: Jesus Agonizes over Jerusalem
Midweek 2	Feb. 13 th	Coming Tears: Jesus Warns the Unprepared
Midweek 3	Feb. 20 th	Impossible Tears: Jesus Promises Grief Will Turn to Joy
Midweek 4	Feb. 27 th	Bowl of Tears: Jesus Reveals His Betrayer
Midweek 5	Mar. 5 th	Garden Tears: Jesus Grieves over His Suffering
Midweek 6	Mar. 12 th	Guilty Tears: Jesus is Denied by Peter
Maundy Thursday	Mar. 20 th	Remorseful Tears: Jesus' Betrayer Ends His Life
Good Friday	Mar. 21 st	A Mother's Tears: Mary Watches Jesus Die
Easter Sunday	Mar. 23 rd	Tears of Sorrow, Tears of Joy: The Risen Jesus Greet a Weeping Friend

Continuing to Learn...

Included in this newsletter, and future newsletters, will be reprints of the excellent "What About" articles written by former Synodical President, Dr. Alvin Barry. We all need refreshers on the basics of our faith, and the "What About" series help us to better understand what it means to be Christians and Lutherans.

February 2008

- ♥ **Feb. 03** **The Transfiguration of Our Lord**
- ♥ Feb. 04 Sunday School Meeting, 6:15 PM
- ♥ Feb. 06 Lenten Supper & Fellowship,
5:45-6:45 PM
- ♥ **Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 PM**
- ♥ Feb. 07 Evangelism Committee, 6:30 PM
- ♥ **Feb. 10** **1st Sunday in Lent**
"Sweetheart Sunday" Fellowship,
following the service.
- ♥ Feb. 11 Circuit Pastors' Meeting, 9 AM,
Zion, Taylor Ridge
- ♥ Feb. 13 Lenten Supper & Fellowship,
5:45-6:45 PM
- ♥ **2nd Midweek Lenten Service, 7 PM**
- ♥ **Feb. 17** **2nd Sunday in Lent**
Royal Oaks Worship Service, 2 PM
Kewanee Care Worship Service, 3 PM
- ♥ Feb. 18 Martin Luther's Birthday (1483)
- ♥ Feb. 19 Women of Faith, 10 AM
- ♥ Feb. 20 Lenten Supper & Fellowship,
5:45-6:45 PM
- ♥ **3rd Midweek Lenten Service, 7 PM**
- ♥ Feb. 21 Church Council Meeting, 7 PM
- ♥ **Feb. 24** **3rd Sunday in Lent**
Faith Youth Group, 6 PM
- ♥ Feb. 27 Lenten Supper & Fellowship,
5:45-6:45 PM
- ♥ **4th Midweek Lenten Service, 7 PM**

"O Lord, satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" Psalm 90:14.

Sweetheart Sunday

Please invite a friend for some Christian Fellowship on Sunday February 10th. The children would like to spoil our senior members in celebration of Valentine's Day! The children will be decorating cookies after church and serving the congregation some special Valentine treats. So, invite a friend to spend the morning with us at Faith Lutheran to see what we are all about!

**Chairman's Message:
"In the Pink"**

In the floral business, the color pink means "I will never forget you." The color pink creates a calming feeling of love and acceptance. This holds true for the congregation at Faith too.

Last month, the members of Faith approved our annual budget. Weekly, we must receive an average of \$2,550 to meet our monetary requirements. This figure includes \$729 for our monthly mortgage payment of \$3,160. Over the past year we have requested additional member pledges in an effort to prepare for those times when our weekly gifts to the Lord fall below the average needed. But, these pledges will not be enough to sustain us over the next 30 years of our mortgage period. To help in this effort the Council has incorporated new pink envelopes in our giving envelope packets replacing the former building fund envelopes, but retaining the "Facing the Future with Faith" logo.

The pink envelopes are now labeled "Mortgage Fund Offering." Please use these envelopes to make any additional gifts, whether you have made a formal pledge or not, that you wish directed towards the reduction of our building debt, and shortening of our mortgage period. Any outstanding FFF campaign contributions can also be placed in these envelopes.

When you see one of these envelopes, remember the love of Jesus Christ and the precious gift given to us so that we may remain confident in our eternal salvation through Him. In thanksgiving, help keep our church in the pink.

Gary Hahn, Congregation Chairman

**Women of Faith
"Hobo Soup" Lunch**

The next Women of Faith meeting will be February 19. Hostesses will be Mary Duncan and Mary Ozburn. There will be a Bible Study by Vary Fischer which begins at 10 a.m. This will be followed by a Hobo Soup Lunch at 12 Noon, and then followed by the meeting at 1 p.m.

Looking Ahead...

Last year, our annual meeting was held in the auditorium at Blackhawk College. This year, as the realization of years of planning, work, and sacrifice; our annual meeting was in our *own* building.

For the past several years, the emphasis has been on *constructing* this building, which is a good thing. But, the problem has been that in *this* congregation, as in almost *all* congregations, about ten percent of the members do ninety percent of the work. That ten percent *here*, has been focused on getting this building constructed and furnished. The more normal congregational functions were put on the back-burner, so-to-speak. Now that the building work is substantially completed, the emphasis for 2008, and future years, will shift to what congregations more normally do: outreach, membership *conservation*, and striving toward more active membership *participation*. And, in *doing* all those things, we don't want to be a typical congregation, with the same overburdened 10% doing 90% of the work. There's work that 100% of the members of Faith Lutheran Church *can* do, and *should be doing* to live lives of service to God, to his church, and to the community-at-large.

Through prayer and participation, with God's help through his Law, Gospel, and Sacraments; we'll be building-up *our* spiritual lives, and reaching out to *others* with the Good News of life and salvation in Jesus Christ.

Pastor Fischer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Roxanne Lain	2/01
James Nuding	2/01
Milton Stapel	2/02
Cal Breedlove	2/05
Melissa Newman	2/06
Lori Gibson	2/09
Shirley Pierson	2/09
Tara Hicks	2/10
Miah Townsend	2/10
Cari Bridgewater	2/11
DeeAnn Krahn	2/11
Opal Kuster	2/12
Nancy Tudder	2/12
Rebecca Ault	2/13
Paula Leezer	2/16
Sandy Gillespie	2/17

Mark Helmkamp	2/17
Sue Cervantez	2/18
Kristin McDonald	2/19
Kari Tavares	2/21
Claudia Croegaert	2/23
Fred Stapel	2/24
Nick Phillips	2/25
Melissa Carper	2/26
June Hull	2/27
Tanner Lain	2/27
Marvin Newman	2/27
James Woods	2/28

Anniversaries

Cheryl & Robert Snyder	2/10
Karen & Milton Stapel	2/29

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Address Correction Requested

“For God so Loved the World, He gave His only Son...” John 3:16