

ST MARTIN'S SAYINGS

February Newsletter – 2019

Lent and Holy Week 2019

Reflections from the Pastor:

When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, he set His face to go to Jerusalem... Luke 9:51

Jesus is on a journey. It begins on the Mount of Transfiguration and it ends in Jerusalem with Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, burial and ultimately his resurrection. Jesus is unwavering on this journey, nothing can block his way. And according to Luke, there are lots of things that come up that try to block Jesus from proceeding on this journey. "Turn back, Herod wants to kill you;" "Turn back, there are all kinds of dangers ahead." But the most insidious of all the dangers comes from the disciples who use the time of Jesus' journey to argue about who will be the greatest and most important when Jesus "takes over;" and even Peter tries to school Jesus on what it means to be a Messiah. But Jesus will have none of it. Jesus pushes past all of the obstacles in his way and continues forward. And while he proceeds he teaches, he tells stories (parables), he heals and he visits some of his most beloved followers. In other words, nothing stops Jesus from loving all those whom he encounters on the way. Not fear, not anger, not lust for power, not insecurity, not even gentle persuasion.

We too are on a journey. We are on a journey of faith; a journey of discipleship; a journey of life. Beginning with our Baptisms we move forward through our lives step by step and along the way we also encounter obstacles that attempt to block our forward motion, that attempt to push us off the path, that attempt to get us to turn back or to go in a different direction. These obstacles at their root are not a lot different from the ones Jesus encountered – fear, grief and loss, anger, our selfishness, wanting to fit in, lust for power or wealth or success, gentle persuasion – all of these things can stand in our way and block our forward motion – can block our growth in faith and our discipleship journey.

Lent is a time for us to pause in our journeys and assess where we have been and where we are going. It is a time for us to repent – that is, to turn around and go in a different direction if we see that we are headed away from God's love and grace. It is a time for us to "return to the Lord our God;" always recognizing that "he is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love!" It is a time for us to assess our priorities: do we put ourselves in the center of all of our priorities or are we open to God's calling for us to love and reach out to others? It is a time for us to take the temperature of our relationships with God and with others. It is a time for a spiritual check-up, so that we can then proceed on our journeys of faith and discipleship, confident in the grace of the Lord and ready to allow God to reach out to others with his love through us.

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Worship for March and April

March 3 – The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord – The season of Epiphany closes with the festival of the Transfiguration. With this event Jesus then begins his journey to Jerusalem and to the cross. We will symbolically "bury" the Alleluia at the close of the service.

March 6 – Ash Wednesday – Worship at 7:00 PM. The traditional service of the Imposition of Ashes with Holy Communion will be celebrated.

Lenten Sunday Worship – Throughout the season of Lent, Pastor Duncan will focus his sermons on the Gospel texts from Luke. We begin on Lent I (March 10) with the traditional Gospel text of the testing in the wilderness from Luke 3.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Services

This year we will offer a program on Wednesday evenings throughout the season of Lent. We will begin at 6:15 with supper. A brief service of Evening Prayer will follow supper at 7:00. The themes for the weeks will be the series of Old Testament lessons that are appointed for use at the Great Easter Vigil. Pastor Duncan will share a brief meditation about each of these lessons.

- March 13 – The Creation (Genesis 1) & The Fall (Genesis 3)
- March 20 – Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 12 and 22)
- March 27 – The Escape from Egypt (Exodus 11-15)
- April 3 – God calls and comforts Israel (Isaiah 55)
- April 10 – Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37)

Holy Week and Easter Worship

April 14 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion – We will celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday with the traditional procession of Palms. The service will also include the reading of the Passion of St. Luke. Holy Communion will be celebrated at all services. We will begin our service outside the church (weather permitting).

April 18 – Maundy Thursday – 7:00 PM - Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar

April 19 – Good Friday Tenebre - 7:00 pm – The Service of Shadows will commemorate the crucifixion and death of our Lord.

April 21 – Easter - 9:00 am Easter Festival Communion Service

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Confirmation / Adult Study Class will continue to take place twice a month throughout March and April. The specific times will be announced in church. Please plan to join us. We are working our way through the Old Testament.

1st Communion – If anyone has a child or children who have not taken their first communion and you wish them to, please contact Pastor Duncan at church or via email. Partaking of the Sacrament is a gift of Baptism for all the baptized and all are welcome at any age.

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Pastor Duncan will be traveling during most of May and into the first part of June. He will be participating in the trip entitled “In the Footsteps of Paul” with the highly respected archeologist and geographical historian Dr. Carl Rasmussen.

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Some thoughts about Ashes on Ash Wednesday

When Christians use ashes on Ash Wednesday, it is not to show how miserable we can make ourselves look, but to remind us that our repentance and forgiveness is based on our Baptism--as is our resurrection from the dead! Therefore, when we are marked with ashes on Ash Wednesday the ashes are made in the sign of the cross. This makes the invisible sign of the cross traced on our foreheads at Baptism visible! In this way we remind ourselves and others that our repentance is acceptable to God, not because we feel so guilty or have repented so fervently, but because Jesus Christ died on the cross for us! Then Lent--which corresponds to the season of Spring--regains its proper meaning of renewal and anticipation of Easter--our Lord's Resurrection, and ours!

SBD+

From the Pres

St. Martin members,

Just wanted to welcome everyone to a new year in our church history. We start off 2019 with a continued focus on spiritual growth, and community outreach.

This is my first time ever being the president of council. I have sat on council for many years, in other positions. I am excited and nervous, as I want to serve you all the best I can. That being said, I know we have things to work on to keep St. Martin on track and growing.

We have been blessed with pastor Duncan as our interim pastor, as we work to find a permanent pastor. The unfortunate reality is that there are very few pastors available with other parishes like us needing the same thing. We stay committed with the call committee and synod for any possible candidates. We will stay the course and be strong as always.

Some of our plans for 2019 is to upgrade the parking lot, after 40 years needs an overlay. Our fund has 2/3 of the cost in hand, and budgeted for the rest, if we do not reach the balance of funds by spring. I would like to look at our facilities and see if anything else should be looked at for future upgrades, and put a plan together. If you have any thoughts or questions in general feel free to talk to me or any council member.

Michael Walter Council President

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Parking lot re-paving is set with Christ Construction as approved by the congregation. Work is set to start when weather warms up and should occur in March or April. Work will take 1-2 days. Council will be in contact with Christ on exact start date and will keep the congregation posted. If you have any questions please see either Mike or Tim.

BUDGETS AND BLESSINGS

St Martin's Financials

January - December 2018

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Offerings | Budget |
| \$79,712.08 | \$75,800 |

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|---------------|----------|
| Disbursements | Budget |
| \$60,218.06 | \$88,537 |

Savings account (Parking Lot Fund)

January - December 2018

\$15,697.46

St. Martin Endowment Fund

January - December 2018

\$69,082.55

2019 Budget

Contributions
\$77,100

Expenditures
\$64,690

The parking lot Goal is \$25000...Donations welcome.
Concerned Christians/Food Pantry

Our next collection day for paper products for the Food Pantry is March 3rd. Items needed include TP, Tissues, Paper Towels, Dishwashing soap & Liquid Laundry Detergent.

The Concerned Christians/Food Pantry is a ministry of the churches of Mascoutah and is under the auspices of the Mascoutah Ministerial Alliance. It is operated by a board comprised of representatives from the majority of churches in Mascoutah. Paul Schorr is our representative.

The pantry itself is located directly across W. Main St from the Mascoutah Post Office. It is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10-12. Phone # 566-2355. On average it serves 65-75 family units per month and the amount of food distributed is dependent on each family size. The largest food donations come from the Letter Carriers drive in May and the Boy Scouts drive in November. All workers are volunteers.

Residents can also be assisted with rent and utilities for up to \$200 per individual per year. This program is a joint effort between the Concerned Christians and St. Vincent DePaul society of Holy Childhood. Those seeking aid are prequalified by a committee which keeps records of individual requests. Those getting aid must attend a "budget class" on a yearly basis in order to receive help. Payment are made to the utility or landlord rather than the individual. Assistance varies each month but often approaches \$1,000.

St. Martin's supports the entity by collecting "paper goods" (TP, tissues, paper towels, laundry & dish detergent on the first Sunday of each month. Any monetary donations are used for food purchases and/or to fund the assistance program.

Contact Paul @ 566-2036 for any questions on needs of the ministry or other ways you can help or feel free to refer anyone needing help to this ministry.

MISSIONS - MARCH 10TH POTLUCK

