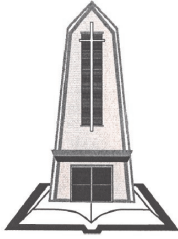


MARCH 9 & 10, 2024

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

RETHINKING THE SOLUTION TO SIN



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

www.stjohnsbc.org

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(989) 684-6442

WELCOME

We welcome all of you as we, by Word, receive spiritual refreshment during our journey of Lent. We especially welcome our guests who have joined us for worship. We ask that you join us in signing the Friendship Register (the red folder in the pew). We look forward to having you join us for worship again.

SEASONAL THEME: RETHINKING RELIGION

ASH WEDNESDAY: Rethinking our priorities.

LENT 1: Rethinking trials, tests, and temptations.

LENT 2: Rethinking suffering under the cross.

LENT 3: Rethinking the worth of worship.

LENT 4: Rethinking the solution to sin.

LENT 5: Rethinking devoted commitment.

While not every religion uses the word “sin,” they all embrace the concept. Every religion acknowledges that mankind’s flawed attitudes or misguided actions are a source of pain, both now and potentially in eternity. So, every religion offers a solution: a set of laws, a moral code, a path to more enlightened behavior. What do they have in common? We are to solve sin through human effort. *Be better! Try harder!* This is the heart of every false religion. Those who correctly understand they will never overcome their sin are crushed by guilt. Those who ludicrously believe they have defeated their sin are killed by pride. True religion offers a better way—one that frees us from guilt and has no room for pride. Jesus teaches that the solution to our sin is not to work harder. It is to trust in the work he has done for us. Salvation comes through Spirit-wrought faith in Christ.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

Presiding Minister

Organist

Choir

Pastor Jacob Reich

Ms. Gail McFarland

Senior Choir (Saturday)

Cover art used with permission.

THE SERVICE

Setting Three (Blue Hymnal pp. 188-198, 171)

The Gathering

OPENING HYMN

409 *Jesus, Refuge of the Weary*

CONFESSION

(p. 188)

LORD, HAVE MERCY

(pp. 190-191)

ANTHEM (Saturday)

Lenten Prayer

The Word

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Grant, O merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

FIRST READING

Numbers 21:4-9

The Lord promised a solution for the bite of venomous snakes. That solution perhaps seems nonsensical. Yet, all those who trusted God's promise lived.

⁴They set out from Mount Hor along the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, but the people became very impatient along the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Look, there is no food! There is no water! And we are disgusted by this worthless food!"

⁶The Lord sent venomous snakes among the people, and the snakes bit the people. As a result many people from Israel died. ⁷The people went to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord to take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed on behalf of the people.

⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Make a venomous snake and put it on a pole. If anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live." ⁹Moses made a bronze snake and put it on the pole. If a snake had bitten anyone, if that person looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

EHV

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 32B *How Blest Are Those*

1 How blest are those the LORD for - gives; how
2 I si - lent - ly con - cealed my guilt, but
3 I then con - fessed my sin to you, my
4 Let all the faith - ful pray to you while
5 You hide me, LORD; you hold me fast in

glad they are to hear their sin is gone, their
then I groaned all day: your heav - y hand, like
griev - ous guilt and shame, and you for - gave my
you may still be found; you place them safe a -
all ad - ver - si - ty, sur - round - ing me with

guilt a - toned, their rec - ord clean and clear.
sum - mer heat, took all my strength a - way.
wick - ed - ness by your most gra - cious name.
bove the flood, se - cure on high - er ground.
faith - ful love and songs of vic - to - ry.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:1-10

God's solution to sin — going from death to life — is offered by grace and received through faith.

¹You were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked when you followed the ways of this present world. You were following the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit now at work in the people who disobey.

³Formerly, we all lived among them in the passions of our sinful flesh, as we carried out the desires of the sinful flesh and its thoughts. Like all the others, we were by nature objects of God's wrath.

⁴But God, because he is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved! ⁶He also raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. ⁷He did this so that, in the coming ages, he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them. ^{EHV}

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 3:16

Choir sings (Saturday)

Pastor sings the appointed verse (Sunday)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

Christ is the solution to sin. Whoever looks to the lifted up Christ by faith shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. ¹⁹This is the basis for the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰In fact, everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, or else his deeds would be exposed. ²¹But the one who does what is true comes toward the light, in order that his deeds may be seen as having been done in connection with God.” ^{EHV}

HYMN OF THE DAY

570 *God Loved the World So That He Gave*
(Saturday - Choir sings st. 2,4)

SERMON TEXT

Ephesians 2:1-10

THEME: ALIVE BY GOD’S GRACE

APOSTLES’ CREED

(p. 197)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(p. 198)

OFFERING

HYMN

574 *The Tree of Life*

LORD’S PRAYER

Traditional (p. 171)

BLESSING

(p. 171)

This Week at St. John’s

Monday	10:00 am 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Event Group <i>Grow With Me</i>
Tuesday	6:30 pm	Church Council
Wednesday	3:15 pm 4:15 pm - 5:45 pm 6:00 pm	Midweek Lenten Service/Jr. Bells play Lenten Supper (cost: free-will offering) Midweek Lenten Service
Saturday	6:00 pm	Worship Service/Lord’s Supper
Sunday	8:00 am 9:15 am 10:30 am 11:30 am	Worship Service/Lord’s Supper/Sr. Choir sings Coffee Hour/Sr. Choir/BIC/Bible Class Worship Service/Lord’s Supper Call Meeting

Announcements

Congratulations to our members Eric Kober and Allison Tuin who were united in marriage in our church, Saturday, March 9th. God's richest blessings, Eric & Allison!

This Wednesday, March 13th, Pastor Larry Seafert (St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin) will be our Presiding Minister. Our focus will be "Misconceptions". Jr. Bells play during the 3:15 pm service.

Don't forget our Lenten Supper, served 4:15 pm until 5:45 pm. This week's menu is: Taco Bar, Refried Beans, Spanish Rice, and dessert; cost is a freewill offering - *children must be accompanied by an adult*. We appreciate any desserts donated for the suppers; there is a sign-up sheet on the hall table. We also have a sign-up sheet for volunteers willing to help with the clean-up.

Easter Flowers: Deadline for ordering altar flowers for Easter is *this Friday*. The sign-up sheet is on the table outside the church office. The flowers may be dedicated in memory of someone or a special event. All dedications will be printed in the Easter Sunday Bulletin. Flowers may be picked up after the 10:30 am service on Easter Sunday, or on Tuesday between 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Easter Dinner Baskets: the evangelism committee is again requesting donations for purchasing and distributing Ham dinners to individuals and institutions in need. The cost of a full meal is about \$25.00; donations will need to be made by **Sunday, March 17th**. Envelopes for donations are on the hall table.

If you know of anyone who could use a little help this Easter and would like a dinner please submit their name to Pastor Reich or the church office. Institutions that will receive meals are Bay City VA, Bay City Women's Shelter, Wellspring, and Emmaus House in Saginaw. Meals will be distributed on Holy Thursday, March 28th at 3:00 pm. Thank you for your support!

Mark your calendar! St. John's School Talent Show, *A Spotlight Spectacle*, is scheduled for March 22nd, 6:00 pm, in the church Fellowship Hall. Light concessions will be offered with proceeds going to the school's music program. All are invited to attend!

Copies of St. John's 2023 Annual Report are now available on the hall table.

Call Meeting: Voters, please circle next Sunday, March 17th, on your calendars. After the 10:30 service that day, we will hold our next call meeting for a new principal/Grade 7-8 teacher. Please be sure to attend this meeting. We also welcome any new voters who have not yet signed our constitution.

Our Easter for Kids event will be Saturday, March 23rd, 9:00 am – 11:30 am. Held in our school, this event is for children ages 3 (no diapers, please) through 6th grade (both members and non-members). We will share the true Easter message with them through a morning of crafts, music, snacks, activities, and an Easter egg hunt. (Children under the age of 3 are invited to the Easter egg hunt at 11:15 am.) Please pre-register! Informational flyers and registration forms are on the hall table and in the school office.

Monetary donations towards the egg hunt may be made using the envelopes marked “Candy Donation” on the hall table.

Adult Volunteers needed to fill eggs. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, March 19th, at 12:30 pm. **Helpers** will be needed the day of the event (8:30 am - 12:00 pm). A sign-up sheet is on the hall table. High school students: this is a great time to earn ‘volunteer hours’ for school.

The results are in! The winner of our Change Challenge fundraiser is....Emma Schleicher’s 3rd & 4th grade classroom! Emma’s room collected \$321.93 - which averaged to \$29.27 per student. We collected a total of \$835.10 that will be split between our Accelerated Reader program and the playground equipment replacement fund. Thank you to everyone who donated!

Registration for the MLS Summer Camps is now open. Visit www.mlsem.org for more information and registration.

MLS Blood Drive: the MLS Student Council is working with the American Red Cross to host our spring 2024 blood drive on Tuesday, March 12th, from 10:00 am to 2:45 pm. Interested adult donors can sign up by visiting www.mlsem.org.

MLS Band Concert: the MLS Bay Street Band will present their last concert of the year on Sunday, March 24th at 6:30 pm in the MLS chapel. Please join us for a very enjoyable evening of music!

Worship Service Attendance	2024	2023
Lenten Service Attendance, 2/28	154	157
Worship Service Attendance, 3/2 & 3/3	342	249
Communion Attendance, 3/2 & 3/3	74	x