



Shining Mountains *news*

"IT IS OUR MISSION, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD AND COMMAND TO GROW IN HIS WORD, TO GATHER AROUND HIS WORD, AND TO GO WITH HIS WORD."

Christ calls his people to look at this world's triumphs and troubles through eyes of faith and see that:

It Isn't a Loss to Carry the Cross!

We often tell ourselves that "things aren't always what they seem." A store promises prices that seem unbelievable and we remind ourselves that there may be a catch or hidden costs. It sounds like a trusted friend might have betrayed us, but we remember to wait and hear the whole story before leaping to a judgment. *Things aren't always what they seem.*

Jesus gave his disciples a powerful reminder of that one day shortly before his crucifixion. As he prepared to enter Jerusalem to suffer and die, he first led three of his disciples—Peter, James and John—up a high mountain, where "there he was transfigured before them" (Mark 9:2). His face and clothes shone like the Sun, and Moses and Elijah appeared there on the mountain with him. Jesus gave his disciples a glimpse of who he really is in all his glory—God's holy and powerful Son.

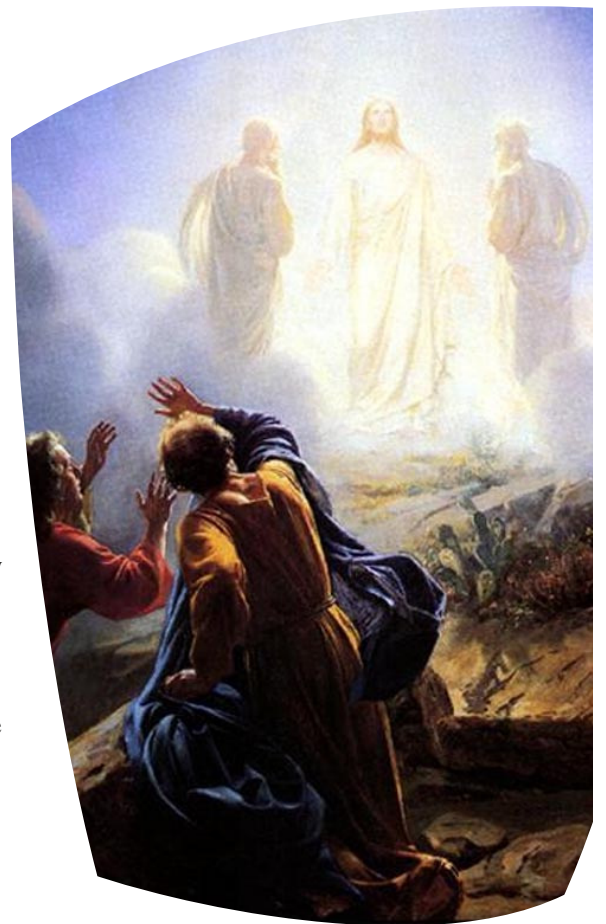
Why? Because things aren't always what they seem. Over the next few months, the disciples would see the one they had come to believe in as "the

Christ, the Son of the Living God" betrayed and arrested. They'd see him mocked and spit on, beaten and killed. They'd watch him die.

And Jesus said the same would happen to them. He let them know that as they followed him they would "be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me" (Matthew 24:9). They would carry their own crosses, just like Jesus would.

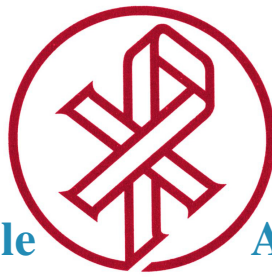
But not yet. Before that happened, Jesus wanted his followers to understand that *even though* Jesus would allow this to happen, he was still the glorious God who had control over all things. His sufferings—and theirs, too—was part of his plan to save souls and would lead to true glory in heaven. No matter how bad things looked, they needed to remember that *things aren't always what they seem.*

And Jesus reminds us of the same truth. Do you carry a cross in your Christian life? Have troubles come to you because of your faith? Do we, at



times, face difficulties as a congregation? Jesus reminds us: *Things aren't always what they seem.* Even though hardships continue to come, none of them take place outside of God's plan and purpose.

If Jesus' suffering and death led to our salvation and his glory, may we always remember as we follow in his footsteps that *it isn't a loss to carry the cross.*



The Prayerbook of the People

A closer look at our hymnal

Hymnals have often been called “The prayer book of the people.” We usually think of the hymns that become near and dear to our hearts—words that often come to our mind even more quickly and memorably than some words of Scripture because of their rhyme and music. The hymnal, though, is much more than just hymns. Every month, this article will take a look at a different portion of our hymnal (Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal) in hopes of casting light on some of its often-overlooked blessings. (For those who don’t have one, copies of the hymnal can be ordered through Northwestern Publishing House at www.nph.net.)

Personal Preparation for Holy Communion

During their catechism instruction, our students learn to recite the following:

Q: *Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?*

A: *Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words, “Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Those words remind us that when we go up to the altar to receive Jesus’ true body and blood, we’re taking part in something so awesome that we want to be prepared for it.

Maybe this scenario seems familiar to you. You get up for church, promising yourself you’ll make it on time. But the kids take longer to get dressed or there’s snow to shovel before you pull out of the driveway. You get to church before the opening hymn ends, grab a bulletin and sit down, drawing as little attention to yourself as possible. It isn’t until you rise for the Gospel reading that you look at the altar and notice—“There’s communion today!”

Life is life, and there will always be busyness. While we can’t avoid that, we can take steps to increase our personal piety and give some thoughtful preparation for receiving the Lord’s Supper.

One way to do so is using the “Personal Preparation for Holy Communion” that’s found on p. 156 in the front of the hymnal.

This one-page gem is set up in a question & answer format. Step by step, it walks us through the chief truths of the Sacrament, leading us to think about and confess our sins (after all, the very point of the Lord’s Supper is forgiveness for our sins), to think about what Christ did to win our salvation, and consider how this Meal affects our daily lives.

The page ends with a brief prayer of preparation.

Many people use this page during the offering to start focusing on the sacrament. Since that time is a bit brief, however, consider some other practices as well. Use a few quiet moments before church begins to focus your mind on worship and the Lord’s Supper. If you have a hymnal at home, use this page of preparation alone or with a loved one on Saturday night before bed. If you don’t have a hymnal, consider ordering one.

Of course, it’s easy to let this simply become another “outward preparation.” True preparation has everything to do with our hearts as we consider who we are, why we need God’s forgiveness, and marvel at the depths of his love for us.

May this personal preparation—or whatever thoughtful, prayerful preparation you choose to follow—make you ever more ready to approach the Lord’s Table in true repentance, and leave his table in holy joy.

Next month: A look at the Devotions of Christian Worship

Updates to Church Directory

While we’ll make every effort to keep our directory up to date, mistakes slip through and information gets changed. To help keep our directory current, please let Pastor know of any changes to your family or mistakes in the information that was listed. Directories will be reprinted every few months with updated information.

Our first correction: Please add “Caren and Nash” to Dennis and Kellie Gentry’s information. Caren and Nash are the Gentrys’ daughter and son. Our apologies for missing that information!



Spiritual Truths in Wood & Stone—part 4 of 5

A five month series that examines how our churches express the truths confessed there

What does a church look like? It depends on *when* you're asking.

In the first days after Christ's ascension, the early Christians met together in the open air under the colonnades that surrounded the temple. A thousand years earlier, God's people worshiped him around the tabernacle—a large tent that housed the ark of the covenant. Throughout history believers have worshiped in catacombs and cathedrals, cozy country churches and big-box mega-churches, in every country and culture around the world.

As we continue to consider church architecture, how do you decide what a church should look like in this place and time?

The past is a good place to start. Worship changed in some key ways after Christ's triumphant ascension. Could it be that the Christians of the last 2,000 years have learned a few things worth passing down to us? The churches of the past have much to teach us about what it looks like for believers to gather around Word and Sacrament.

There's an additional benefit of looking to classic church architecture. In our current age of church architecture in which function is emphasized over form and generic "worship auditoriums" abound, a traditional design helps send the message: *This is sacred space. This is a place that celebrates the past and takes its faith seriously.*

What's true of the outside of a building is also true of the interior. There may certainly be a place for technology in worship—we do want to make the best use out of all the gifts God gives to us. But before we rush to fill a worship space with giant movie screens, consider this perspective from a twentysomething journalism student:

"Amid a culture inundated with bigness and cellular technology, iPods and TiVo, the technologized megachurch is no longer impressive. In fact, many young Christians come to church to get asylum from this worldliness."

That doesn't mean that the present (and future) have nothing for us to consider. We're living in an age of great interest of worship renewal. Orthodox, Lutheran groups are producing wonderful liturgical practices and works of art that can be thoughtfully incorporated into church design.

And technology can serve a wonderful function. For years we've been used to microphones that help many of our members to hear better, as well as MIDI systems that help play our music. By God's grace, those same microphones and video cameras can take our worship and proclaim it around the world through the internet. Advances in MIDI systems can add new levels of richness to our worship. Well-placed lighting systems can add greater richness to special services. The gifts of the present can be brought to bear on our worship that speaks of God's wondrous acts of love in the past.

In all things, God grant us wisdom to understand how the heritage of our past and the gifts of the present shape our worship as we move into the future.

CONCEPTS THAT SHAPE LUTHERAN ARCHITECTURE

Over the next five months, this article will explore the ways these concepts shape Lutheran church buildings:

- *The Means of Grace*
- *Transcendence and immanence*
- *Mutual Encouragement*
- *Past and present*
- *Symbolism*

Rev. Robert Fleischmann to speak on Assisted Suicide Legislation

The State of Montana is considering legalizing or outlawing physician assisted suicide. With Americans living longer, health care becoming more advanced and expenses on the rise it is a matter of increasing importance. For more than 20 years Pastor Robert Fleischmann, the National Director of Christian Life Resources, has spoken throughout North America and written extensively on bioethical issues.

In a presentation at the Bozeman Public Library he will examine the content of this effort, the historical background of similar efforts, and the challenges faced in our society by the issues of advanced health care, quality of life concerns and changing values.

At Shining Mountains' invitation, Pastor Fleischmann will present in the Library's "Large Community Room" at 4:30 pm on Sunday, March 6 (he is also visiting and presenting at many of the other WELS churches in Montana). Since no offering can be collected at the library, there will be opportunity for a free-will offering after church on March 6 for those interested in helping defray his travel costs.





Forty days of reflection, repentance and renewal

The Lutheran church is traditionally a “liturgical church.” One of the blessings that comes with being liturgical is observing the “Church Year,” the pattern of seasons and readings that retell the work of Christ every year.

On March 9th, we enter the season of *Lent* with our Ash Wednesday celebration. The Christian Church has been observing Lent in some form since the mid-300’s AD. (The name “Lent” is from *lengten*, an Old English word for spring, the time of year in which the days grow longer.)

Lent is a forty-day period of preparation for Easter as we meditate on the sufferings and death of our Savior. It also serves as a time to concentrate on the continuing importance of amending our sinful lives. The season officially begins on Ash Wednesday, which we observe with a worship service at 7:00 pm on March 9th.

Ash Wednesday services focus on contrition and repentance over our sins. As we begin our journey through Lent, we turn to the Lord’s Supper for spiritual strength.

For the following five Wednesdays, we continue to celebrate “midweek Lenten services” that allow us to spend more time considering Christ’s final days before his crucifixion and how his love accomplished our salvation.

Lent is a unique season of the Church Year. Throughout our celebration, you may notice the following:

- Our altar cloths (paraments) are changed to purple. Purple has long been seen as a sign of royalty, as well as the color of mourning and repentance. We use purple in Lent because of the purple robe draped on Jesus as the soldiers treated him as a “mock king.”

- We do not speak or sing “alleluia” in our worship. Because of its penitential focus, Lent is a time of “muted joy.” The church has traditionally “put away” *alleluias* throughout Lent, singing them with joy on Easter Sunday. (Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before Lent begins, typically closes with a “farewell to Alleluia.”)
- The *Glory be to God on High* is omitted. In keeping with the theme of “muted joy,” the *Gloria* typically isn’t sung in worship
- The midweek services include a “reading of the Passion History.” The gospel accounts of Christ’s suffering and death are read over the course of the five midweek services.
- Our midweek services express a meditational, reflective tone. While our culture and society isn’t overly given to thoughtful meditation, there is great need to “slow down” and ponder carefully God’s plan of salvation.

Some have observed that while Lent is described as lasting forty days, the season actually lasts a bit longer than that. That’s because the Sundays in Lent were never counted as “fast days”, but instead kept their significance as “Little Easters.” Even in the somberness of Lent, we hold on to our joy as every Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

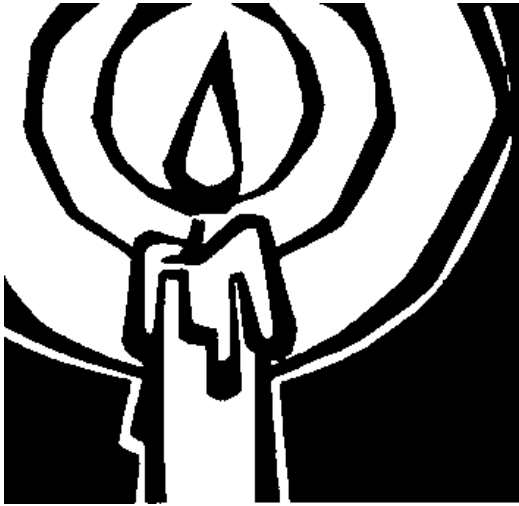
Lent culminates in our celebration of *Holy Week*—the observance of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, culminating in Easter Sunday joy. More will be said about those services in next month’s newsletter.

May God bless your Lenten journey and your Easter joy.

Serving Us in March *Thanks to those who served in February!*

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
3/6	J Hammer / B Thiede	(open)	(open)	Linn
3/9	J Thiede / B Thiede	(Ash Wednesday — The Lord’s Supper is celebrated)		
3/13	R Buchholz / P Agenten	(open)	D & P Pruitt	Marozick
3/16	L Baker / B Ballard	(Midweek Lenten Service)		
3/20	A Pruitt / B Bublitiz	(open)	(open)	McGough
3/23	J Becker / S McGough	(Midweek Lenten Service)		
3/27	D Gustafson / D Gentry	(open)	L & V Baker	Newton
3/30	J Kohler / T Armbrecht	(Midweek Lenten Service)		

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. **Psalm 84:10**



Midweek Lenten Worship

During the forty days of Lent, Christians set aside an extra night a year to focus on Christ's saving activity as he went to the cross (see p. 4 for more information on Lent).

After our Ash Wednesday worship, the following five Wednesdays (Mar 16—Apr 13) are all "Compline" services. These special midweek services strike a quite and contemplative tone as we slow down to consider Christ's suffering and death for all mankind.

Compline services are quiet, peaceful services that are designed to allow us to reflect on all Christ has done. Pastor will use the Bible class hour on March 13 to help introduce the liturgy and explain some of the unique features of Lent. The choir will help lead us through the liturgy on March 16.

Soup suppers will precede the services, beginning at 6:00 pm.



Parent Power Hour #2: Communication Safety

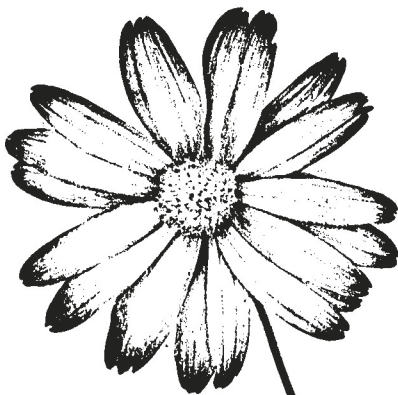
Shining Mountains' second "Parent Power Hour" will be held Thursday, March 10th at 7:00 pm in our sanctuary. Detective Paul Griffin will speak about "Communications Safety."

The presentation will focus on the real concerns and dangers that our families face in a technological age. Detective Griffin will educate parents on how to keep our families safe from internet predators, as well as what limits to set with your children on their use of social media and chat rooms.

The presentation is free and on site baby-sitting will be provided. RSVP to pastor@shiningmountains.org. Please also look for sign-up sheets if you're interested in providing light snacks or drinks for the event.

As we did last time, full-color handouts will also be made up for members who are interested in sharing information about this event with their friends, or posting them in public places.

Altar Flowers



Christian churches have often used live flowers placed on the altar or other flower stands in our worship. The reason is clear: we celebrate life. Christ our Lord was raised from the dead and has promised to raise us, too. The flowers that we use in worship are reminder of his promise of life.

The flowers on our altar are regularly donated by different members as a way of commemorating special events (such as birthdays, anniversaries, or as reminders of loved ones who have gone to glory) or simply as a way of adding beauty to our worship. Our thanks to those who have done so in the past.

If you're interested in donating flowers in the future, just look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex. The cost is \$12, and the money can be placed in the manila envelope on the board.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Seifert, or Dan or Deb Gustafson.

Upcoming Messages

In March we enter the season of Lent—an explanation of it can be found on page four of this newsletter. Below is a list of both our Sunday worship themes and focuses.

May the following schedule help you as you prepare for worship or look for opportunities to invite a friend!

Sundays in March

Mar 6 *The Transfiguration of our Lord (Ex 24:12, 15-18; 2 Pe 1:16-21; Mt 17:1-9)*

Mar 13 *First Sunday in Lent (Ge 3:1-15, Ro 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11)*

Mar 20 *Second Sunday in Lent (Ge 12:1-8; Ro 4:1-5, 13-17; Jn 4:5-26)*

Mar 27 *Third Sunday in Lent (Is 42:14-21; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39)*

Midweek Lenten Worship

Mar 9 *Ash Wednesday (Isaiah 59:12-20, 2 Co 5:20b-6:2, Lk 18:9-14)*

Mar 16 *Midweek Lent #1 (John 13:38—Will you really lay down your life for me?)*

Mar 23 *Midweek Lent #2 (Luke 22:48—Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?)*

Mar 30 *Midweek Lent #3 (John 18:38—What is truth?)*



325 N. 25th Ave
BOZEMAN MT 59718

March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:15 pm Church Council meeting	2	3	4	5
6 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship w/ H.C	7 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship w/ H.C	8 6:30-8 pm Confirmation Class	9 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday / Holy Communion 8:00 pm Choir Practice	10 7:00 pm Parent Power Hour	11	12
13 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship	14 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship	15 6:30-8 pm Confirmation Class	16 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Midweek Lenten worship	17	18	19
20 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship w/ H.C	21 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship w/ H.C	22 6:30-8 pm Confirmation Class	23 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Midweek Lenten worship 8:00 pm Choir Practice	24	25	26
27 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship 11:30—Seminar on <i>The Theology of the Worship</i> space	28 9:00 Sunday School/Bible class 10:00 Worship 11:30—Seminar on <i>The Theology of the Worship</i> space	29 6:30-8 pm Confirmation Class	30 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Midweek Lenten worship	31		