

THE PATHFINDER

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e-mail ctslutheranpf@gmail.com

Phone (715) 762-4107

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Lenten Reflections: Repent and Get on with it

What my children's cheating taught me about sin and the kingdom of God

Amy Julia Becker

A few weeks back, I was stuck inside with all three kids on yet another snow day. All of them wanted to be entertained. None of them wanted to play the same game. In an attempt to avoid a battle and to push off yet another hour of screen time, I agreed to play three games at once—memory match with Marilee, Sorry with Penny, and Candyland with William.

All three of them insisted on going first, which didn't strike me as particularly odd. But then Marilee made a match on her first try. Penny got two of her pieces out, as she drew a "2" and then a "1" from the deck. And William happened to discover that the first card in the pile for Candyland was one which miraculously moved him very close to the end of the game.

It didn't take too long for me to realize that all three of my children had cheated. Each of them had set their games up so they could get exactly what they wanted on their first move. I made them all start over. (Incidentally, they all still won—whether by luck, skill, more cheating, or by virtue of how distracted their opponent was as I bounced between all three games—I don't know.)

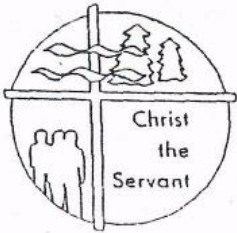
Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, which within the liturgical church calendar marks the beginning of forty days to prepare for Easter. Forty days to focus on our mortal humanity. Forty days to prepare our hearts for Jesus' death on the cross. Forty days to consider our sin.

It seems rather morbid, and certainly there are Christians of all stripes who seem to obsess about sin, who—dare I say it?—almost seem to idolize sin. But then there are Christians like me who don't spend very much time thinking about sin at all. I tell myself that I don't think about sin because I'm so confident in God's grace for me. But maybe I'm like my kids, and my sin, my wrong-doing, my seemingly petty and insignificant self-centeredness, is just easy for me to ignore.

Recently I've been reading a book co-written by Dallas Willard and John Ortberg, [Living in Christ's Presence](#). The book is a lovely series of talks that center on the idea that the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, consists of a simple proclamation that the kingdom of God is already among us. When Jesus announces the kingdom, he says: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is among you." "Repent" is a religious word that literally means "turn around." We use it to talk about confessing our sin, to turn away from sin and towards God.

continued next page

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When I look at that statement, although Jesus leads with "repent!" he doesn't belabor the point. He almost rushes to the next clause, the exciting news that God's kingdom is now among us. It's as if sin is an obstacle, something to get out of the way so the good stuff, the real stuff, can arrive. It's as if Jesus is reminding me to yes, pay attention to my sin, but only in order to get it out of the way, only in order to move it aside and make room for the glorious beautiful goodness to follow, only in order to ask for the help I need to be forgiven and heal.

I made my kids "repent" of cheating not because I wanted to win those games, and not because I even thought a single incident of cheating was terrible. I made them do it differently because I wanted them to learn how to be fair, in things little and big. Because I wanted them to enjoy the game as it ought to be played. Because I wanted to force them out of seeing themselves as the center of the universe. Jesus calls us to repent not because he wants us to dwell on our sin but because he wants to get that barrier out of the way.

Lent heralds the beginning of a season in which we are invited to examine our hearts and get the sin out of the way so that God's grace can pour in all the more. So that God's resurrection power can be all the more present and real in our lives and in the world around us.

For the next forty days, I'm going to try each day to practice repentance—to name one thing that I've said or done or thought that has turned me away from God's goodness. And for the next forty days I'm going to try to practice believing the good news—that God's forgiveness is never-ending, that God's forgiveness is merely the means to the end of knowing God, of participating in God's kingdom on earth and in heaven.

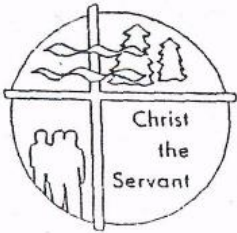
Repent. So that you can believe the good news, the glorious news, that God is among us.



Office Hours for Pastor - March

March 2nd	1:00-4:00 pm
March 4th	2:00-5:00 pm
March 9th	1:00-4:00 pm
March 11th	2:00-5:00 pm
March 16th	1:00-4:00 pm
March 18th	2:00-5:00 pm
March 23rd	1:00-4:00 pm
March 25th	2:00-5:00 pm
March 30th	1:00-4:00 pm

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WELCA News – March 2020

The church calendar has turned again as we entered the Lenten season on Ash Wednesday. We are sharing this time of reflection with the Congregational Church in the form of worship and discussion and soup suppers, alternating hosting and serving duties on Wednesday evenings. The WELCA group will host the March 18th supper. Please mark your calendars and share in the fellowship each Wednesday during Lent.

World Day of Prayer is Friday, March 6. We are hosting this event featuring the country of Zimbabwe. Tammy and Jason Hastings will provide inspirational music, and a salad and dessert luncheon will be served following the noon program. A signup sheet is posted on the bulletin board for salads. Please attend, and invite your friends and neighbors!

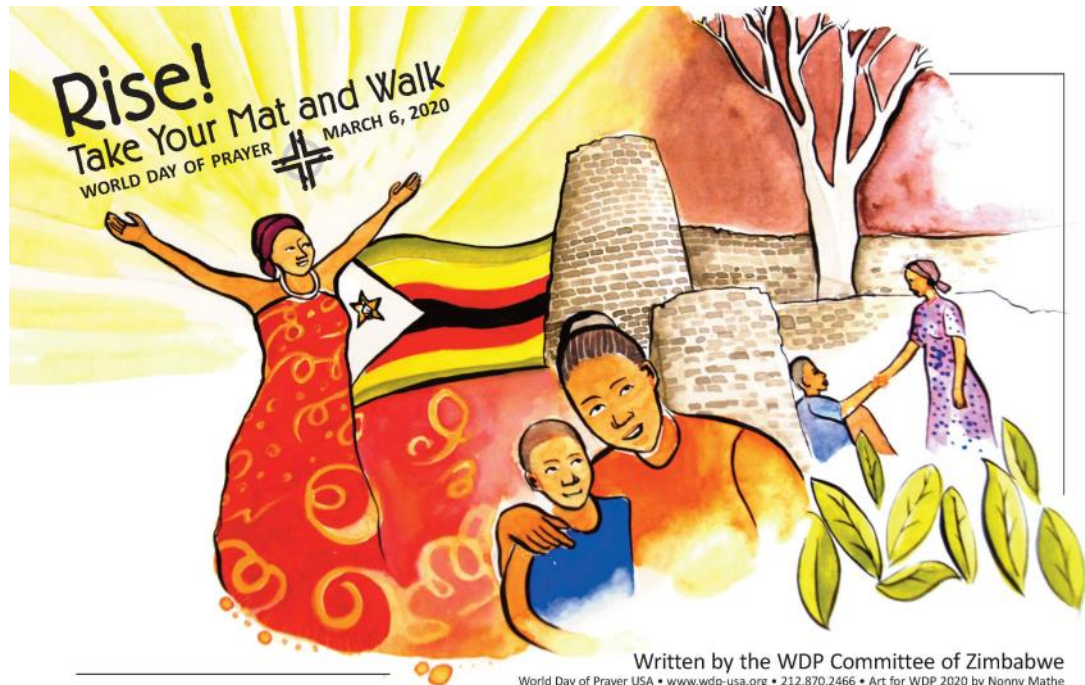
Thank you to Nancy Miller who has volunteered to construct a quilt top that will be donated to the Luther Park Camp fundraiser auction next summer. Nancy made a beautiful quilt last year as our donation, and we appreciate your willingness to make another one this year.

As always at this time of the year we miss our members who are south for the winter, but we are grateful for all who are able to work on quilts and baby blankets from 11 to 4 each Monday. We break for lunch and devotions at noon and simply have a great time together. All are welcome!

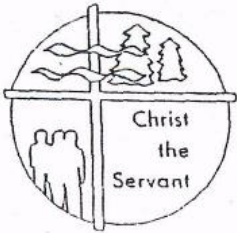
Enjoy the lengthening days and the promise of warmer weather. It won't be long until we celebrate Easter and welcome Spring!

Blessings,

Liz C



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Women's Quilting Group—Monday

March 2nd Quilting 11:00 am—4:00 pm
 Lunch 12:00 pm
 Bible Study 12:15 pm

March 9th Quilting 11:00 am—4:00 pm
 Lunch 12:00 pm
 Bible Study 12:15 pm

March 16th Quilting 11:00 am—4:00 pm
 Lunch 12:00 pm
 Bible Study 12:15 pm

March 23rd Quilting 11:00 am—4:00 pm
 Lunch 12:00 pm
 Bible Study 12:15 pm

March 30th Quilting 11:00 am—4:00 pm
 Lunch 12:00 pm
 Bible Study 12:15 pm

Confirmation-Wednesday

March 4th 4-5:00 pm
March 11th 5-6:00 pm
March 18th 4-5:00 pm
March 25th 5-6:00 pm

Sunday School— Wednesday

March 11th 4-5:00 pm
March 25th 4-5:00 pm

Men's Group—Thursday

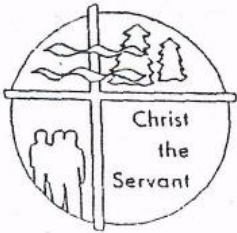
March 4th 4:30 –5:30 pm
March 18th 4:30 –5:30 pm
April 1st 4:30 –5:30 pm

Sunday Bible Study—Sunday

March 1st 11:00 am
March 8th 11:00 am
March 22nd 11:00 am
March 29th 11:00 am



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March Bible Readings

March 1st—1st Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 1:16-18
Ephesians 4:31-5:2
Matthew 6:9-15

March 8th—2nd Sunday of Lent

Numbers 21:4-9
Romans 3:21-25
John 3:14-17

March 15th —3rd Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 35:4-10
Hebrews 12:1-3
Matthew 16:24-26

March 22nd—4th Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 55:8-11
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
Matthew 16:21-23

March 29th—5th Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 53:6-10
Hebrews 1:1-4
Luke 24:44-48

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed... James 5:16.

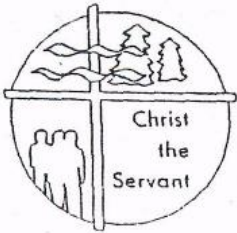
Please remember these people and requests in your prayers.

Health/ Concerns: Dale, Scott, Margaret, Nancy, Ron, Tom, Darlene, Jim, Pete, Adilynn, Susan, Betty, the family of Bob and Marge Kleinsmith, Terry, and Amanda.

Military - Anton ,Andrew, and Natalie.

CTS Church Council, Men's Group, WELCA, Quilting Ministry, Adult Bible Studies, CTS Youth, AIDS orphans in Malawi, Hunger and poverty in the world.

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The Lord's Cupboard-Reminder that the first Sunday of each month is Lord's Cupboard donation day. Please bring items and drop them in the box in the narthex. Some of the items that are needed are proteins such as canned meat, tuna, peanut butter and non-sugar breakfast cereal. We also now have a need for paper grocery bags.



Bible Study Sunday Bible study in March will be a continuation of Back to Basics by Timothy Wengert. Join us at 11:00 am for the study.

40
days
of Lent

Lent-Begins with Ash Wednesday and runs until Easter Sunday on April 12, 2020. We will again be doing 'Soup Supper' with the Congregational church. Christ the Servant will host 3 times beginning on March 4th. Pastor Don and Pastor Gwen have decided to use Holden Evening Prayer this year, so there will be no Bible study like last year. Our topic will be from Philippians 2:5-11 "At the Name of Jesus". We hope you will join us for this Lenten journey. Please sign up to bring soup, bread, beverages when we are at home and dessert when we go to the Congregational Church. The sign up sheet is on the wall next to the office door.

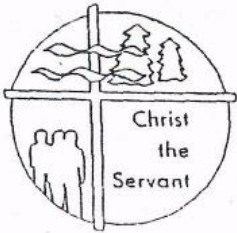
Volunteers People needed to join Barb Lofthus and Pastor Gwen in a hymn sing at Park Manor on March 1 and The Waterford on March 3 both at 2p.m.

Flowers will be available for purchase to decorate our sanctuary for Easter on April 12th. A form can be found in your bulletin toward the end of the month.

Daylights Savings Time begins on March 8th. Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed.



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Lenten Wednesdays 2020

Christ the Servant and First Congregational Church

Ash Wednesday- Feb 26,2020 Each church will have it's own separate Ash Wednesday service. (Christ the Servant 6:30 p.m. service with imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.)

The remainder of the 5 Wednesday will follow the theme of At The Name of Jesus. When you are the host church your pastor will preach on the Scripture lessons below.

The setting for the service will be Holden Evening Prayer by Marty Haugen.

1 st Wed March 4	CTS	Isaiah 53:4-9	Christ emptied and humbled himself
2 nd Wed March 11	FC-UCC	Genesis 12:1-9	Christ became obedient
3 rd Wed March 18	CTS	1 Kings 18:30-40	At the name of Jesus all knees shall bow
4 th Wed March 25	FC-UCC	Genesis 28:10-15	Every tongue confesses Jesus
5 th Wed April 1	CTS	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Let the same mind be in you

5:30 will be soup suppers- Host church makes the soup and provides beverages
Visiting church brings desert.

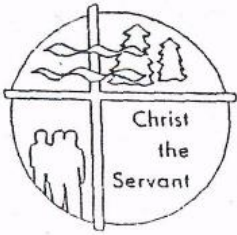
6:30 will be worship

There will be an offering taken at the end of worship. Checks and envelopes will go to your respective church. Loose change and bills will be given to the Lord's Cupboard.

Any questions please call Pastor Gwen at 414-531-7924 cell or 715-769-3535



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CTS Worship Volunteers March 2020

Date	Assisting Minister	Altar Guild	Coffee Hour	Greeter/Usher
March 1st	Liz Carpenter	Jill Nelson	Ann Wojcieszak	Paul & Nancy Miller
March 4th	None	None	Soup Supper	Margaret McCulloch Ann Wojcieszak
March 8th	Mary Rusch	Ann Wojcieszak	Chuck & Barb Schindhelm	Chuck & Barb Schindhelm
March 11th	Service at Congregational Church			
March 15th	Terry Tarras	Patty Tarras	Paul & Nancy Miller	Patty Tarras Barb Lofthus
March 18th	None	None	Soup Supper	Margaret McCulloch Ann Wojcieszak
March 22nd	Mary Rusch	Barb Lofthus	Mike & Pat Brosier	Margaret McCulloch Ann Wojcieszak
March 25th	Service at Congregational Church			
March 29th	Chuck Schindhelm	Patty Tarras	Barb Lofthus	Patty Tarras Margaret McCulloch

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