

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

753 N. CALUMET AVE.

VALPARAISO, IN 46383

(219) 462-7684

WWW.FAITHMEMORIAL.NET

Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community



Sacrificial Love

John 15:9- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

You may have noticed that Lent comes early this year. In fact, the timing of Lent has some calling it an "inconvenient Lent". The reason for this is that Ash Wednesday falls on February 10th, four days before Valentine's Day. This means that if you have loved ones who are in the practice of giving things up for Lent, you may want to double check before you give them chocolates, or take them out for a certain kind of dinner. Accidentally wave temptation in front of someone at the wrong moment and you might end up experiencing a very different kind of sacrificial love...the kind that might involve needing to duck, or spending some time in the dog house.

As "inconvenient" as early Lent might be to some Valentine's plans, I think that it does give us an important reminder that there is a close connection between love and sacrifice. True love often has moments that go well beyond "inconvenient." Love and Lent both involve one person putting another ahead of themselves or putting another's wellbeing and needs ahead of their own. Jesus says in the Gospel of John, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends." Christ certainly gave us the ultimate example of this by humbling Himself, becoming man, dedicating his life to sharing Himself and His Word with us, and then suffering, dying, and rising again, all so that we might spend our eternity in a loving relationship with Him. Very little about Christ's ministry was "convenient," but it certainly was the incarnation of love right down to its core.

So what then of the sacrifices that so many people make during Lent? Jesus says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Christ desires that the same sacrificial love that restored us to a loving friendship with Him now permeate our friendships with others. This doesn't just mean loving those we hold most dearly, like our closest friends and family. This includes the intentional sacrifice of loving and showing love to those whom it may be hardest for us to love, including those who may have hurt us deeply. When in doubt remember Christ's loving and sacrificial words from the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Those to whom we show love may not call us friend yet, but let it be our prayer that one day they will, and that the love of Christ will shine through us to all people.

This February whether you are looking at the hearts of Valentine's Day or the cross of Lent, may both serve as symbols that remind us of the sacrificial love of Christ, and may our lives be a clear example of that love as well. With love in Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoech

Pastor Eric Schoech

A SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY “WHAT’S HAPPENING” AND VOTERS’ MEETING

At the “What’s Happening?” meeting on January 17, Pastor Schoech and the “Health Team” reviewed for the congregation the results of the survey conducted by Natural Church Development, a program which has been used in almost 80,000 churches worldwide to help them meet their goals. You will be hearing more from Pastor and the Health Team which is comprised of Deb Porter, Dorothy Kehe, Mark Price, Jon Dunlap, and Bruce Berner. At the Voter’s meeting on January 17, the congregation approved the Board of Directors moving forward on purchasing and installing a sound system in the sanctuary and to utilize specified funds to do so. The BOD will continue to report progress in that area. We are only about three years away from paying off the Church’s mortgage.

The Board of Directors gave thanks to Darlene Eichstaedt for her 25 years of service as Financial Secretary.



Please join us for soup suppers prior to 7:00pm Wednesday night Lenten services again this year. It’s a nice bit of fellowship, and saves on cooking at home as well. See the sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you would like to bring a salad or dessert. Soup is served at 6:pm, beginning on Wednesday, February 17.



FAITH MEMORIAL GROUP NEWS

Mark Makers and Women Wanting Wisdom will not meet during Lent.

The next meeting of Mark Makers will be on Wednesday, April 6, at 6:30pm at church.

The next meeting of WWW will be on Wednesday, April 20 at 6:30pm with location to be determined.

Sewing Seeds of Love will continued to meet during Lent. Their regularly scheduled meetings are the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 9:00am at church in the sewing room downstairs.

All groups are open to FMLC members, friends and family. Please join us!

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

The Little Things

Only once in the three year lectionary that is used for the scripture readings in our worship services is the story of the wedding at Cana. In Year C, on the second Sunday after the Epiphany, John 2:1-11 is the Gospel reading. Of the four Gospels, only John shares this story about Jesus. At the end of the story, he gives a reason for including it. "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him." Toward the end of the Gospel, John gives another reason, 20:21, "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." What a wondrous thing to know that Jesus did signs and miracles so that not only would his disciples believe in him, but so would we.

Within this story, one wonders why Jesus was at the wedding. Why was his mother there? His disciples were also present. Why did they run out of wine? Surely the maître de could have done better with the planning, or had the disciples crashed the party and there were more drinkers than had been expected. The stone water jars were obvious for the Jewish rites of purification. Why did Jesus' mother come to him and point out the lack of wine. Was she in charge or was she just being a good mom who cared that the party went well. There are many little things about this story that we will never know on this side of heaven.

But there is one little thing from this story that can have a big impact on our own lives and how we live each day – Jesus chose that his first miracle would be to help a bride and groom with something as inconsequential as having enough wine to drink. And not only did he make sure there was enough wine, he also made it better than any wine that had already been served.

Jesus cares about us. Jesus cares about the big things in our lives. Jesus also cares about the little, inconsequential, insignificant, trivial, things in our lives. He cares when the car runs out of gas. He cares when the toilet backs up. He cares when the meat loaf burns. He cares when we have just had one of those days.

No matter if it is big or small, go to him. He cares and loves us so much that he became one of us, so he could go through the worst day ever – death on a cross.

THANK YOU FROM THE CARE COMMITTEE!

Many thanks to those who donated to "Warm a Home" sponsored by First Contact during Advent. The total collected from participating churches to help those in need with heat and rent obligations was \$8725. FMLC contributed \$700 of that total!

We would also like to thank everyone who donated a new or gently used coat for our January coat drive.

During February we will be sending valentines to shut-ins and collecting small lotions, shampoos, soaps and wrapped candy and small -sized bags of chips and cookies for the Pines' bingo prizes.



Love. Grow. Serve.

VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

The annual Grape Cluster congregational Valentine's Day Party will be held early this year due to early Lent. Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 6 at 7:30pm and please join us for food, fun and fellowship. As always, it will be held at the home of Bruce and Marilyn Lindner-

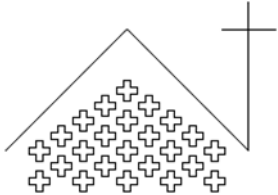
459 E. 900 N., Valparaiso. For directions please speak to Marilyn or call her at 926- 6956.



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**Email:
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CHOIR REHEARSALS

**Sundays, February 7,
14 and 21
11:35-12:05.**

**Wednesdays, March
2, 9, 16
7:45-8:30pm**

**Wednesday, March 23
(if needed)
7:00-8:00pm.**

**Saturday, March 26,
9:00-10:00am.**



FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Sunday, February 7, 9:00am Holy Communion

Ash Wednesday, February 10, 7:00pm Holy Communion

The First Sunday in Lent, February 14, 9:00am Morning Prayer

The First Wednesday in Lent, February 17, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Second Sunday in Lent, February 21, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Second Wednesday in Lent, February 24, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Third Sunday in Lent, February 28, 9:00am Morning Prayer

The Third Wednesday in Lent, March 2, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 6, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Fourth Wednesday in Lent, March 9, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 13, 9:00am, Morning Prayer

The Fifth Wednesday in Lent, March 16, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Sunday of the Passion, 9:00am, Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, March 24, 7:00pm Holy Communion

Good Friday, March 25, 3:00 & 7:00pm Services

The Resurrection of Our Lord, Sunday, March 27, 8:00 & 10:45am Holy Communion

