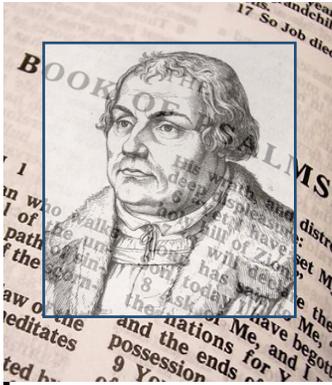


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## Luther, Lent & the Psalms



**ESV Psalm 118:14-24** <sup>14</sup> *The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. <sup>15</sup> Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly, <sup>16</sup> the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!" <sup>17</sup> I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. <sup>18</sup> The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death. <sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. <sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. <sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. <sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Luther referred to Psalm 118, "my own beloved Psalm")*

In our Wednesday Lenten services this year, we will be focusing on the seven penitential psalms, (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143), as well as the topic of confession and absolution.

Throughout his life, Luther paid a great deal of attention to the Psalms. He once called them, "a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended." Psalm 118 in particular was one that Luther fell in love with. Having proved a friend and help to him, when it seemed no one else could, Luther considered Psalm 118, "dearer to me than all the wealth, honor, and power of the pope, the Turk and the emperor."

Luther's love of the Psalms would not stop there. Over the course of his career, Luther's individual commentaries and writings on the Psalms contained enough material to fill three volumes of works. Among these writings was Luther's work on *The Seven Penitential Psalms*. The introduction to Luther's Works Vol. 14 tells us that: "The grouping of these seven penitential psalms as "penitential" seems to have been an early custom in the church; they came to be recited after the hour of Lauds on Fridays in Lent. Although Luther broke with the penitential system of the medieval church, (which included the requirement of penance or good works as part of confession and absolution)...He retained the use of these psalms as an expression of Christian repentance." Given his own struggles with sin, Luther recognized mankind's need to repent of their sins before God, and to recognize and receive God's forgiveness. He considered the psalms to provide valuable assistance in that recognition. Luther also showed great concern for the fact that rather than turning to God as the source of forgiveness, people would often look to themselves and their own works when dealing with guilt. Addressing this serious issue Luther wrote the following:

"After man has thus become aware of his sin and is terrified in his heart, he must watch that sin does not remain in his conscience, for this would lead to sheer despair. Just as [our knowledge of] sin flowed from Christ and was acknowledged by us, so we must pour this sin back on him and free our conscience of it. Therefore beware, lest you do as those perverse people who torture their hearts with their sins and strive to do the impossible, namely, get rid of their sins by running from one good work or penance to another, or by working their way out of this by means of indulgences....You cast your sins from yourself and onto Christ when you firmly believe that his wounds and sufferings are your sins, to be borne and paid for by him, as we read in Isaiah 53 [:6], "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." St. Peter says, "in his body has he borne our sins on the wood of the cross" [1 Pet. 22:4]. St. Paul says, "God has made him a sinner for us, so that through him we would be made just" [2 Cor. 5:21]. You must stake everything on these and similar verses. The more your conscience torments you, the more tenaciously must you cling to them. If you do not do that, but presume to still your conscience with your contrition and penance, you will never obtain peace of mind, but will have to despair in the end. If we allow sin to remain in our conscience and try to deal with it there, or if we look at sin in our heart, it will be much too strong for us and will live on forever. But if we behold it resting on Christ and [see it] overcome by his resurrection, and then boldly believe this, even it is dead and nullified. Sin cannot remain on Christ, since it is swallowed up by his resurrection...."Thus St. Paul declares that "Christ died for our sin and rose for our justification" [Rom. 4:25] (The Treasury of Daily Prayer, 136-137)."

Again Luther saw the *penitential psalms*, and the psalms in general, and the use of confession and absolution both individually and as a church as important ways to communicate this message and do just what he describes here. I hope you will join us Wednesdays in Lent, as we explore these topics further. You can also join us in one of our classes during the Sunday Bible Study, at 10:30, when Deaconess Becky Graef will be leading a Bible study on the seven penitential psalms as well.

*In Christ,*

*Pastor Eric Schoeck*

# rightnow MEDIA

RightNow Media is like "Netflix for the church" because it has a huge library of Christian videos that people can access anytime, anywhere.

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## RightNow Media Video of the Month

### VIKING OUTREACH

This month's recommendation comes from a younger member of our church. It's a humorous take on evangelism across cultures. Humor can sometimes teach when an absurd situation or statement allows you to rethink your own hidden preconceptions. This four-minute video says a lot.

When we do ministry across cultural bounds—whether that is across the ocean or across the street—we often fail to separate the gospel message we seek to share from the culture we come from. This humorous illustration, produced in partnership with the Chalmers Center, is from the "Helping without Hurting" video Bible Study and exposes how not to do short-term missions.

Search for "Viking" in the search tab at [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org).



## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

On Sunday, March 12 from 8:00am-noon Cub Scout Pack 986 will host a Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser downstairs in Fellowship Hall. Cubs will be selling tickets here at church before and after services that day. Advance tickets will also be available until March 11 and may be purchased through the church office. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$4 for children from 3-12 and free for children under 3. Tickets at the door will be \$8 and \$5.

The Cub Scouts plan to use the funds collected to help purchase a new Pinewood Derby track.



## LUTHERAN BASICS

Beginning March 5th we will be offering a class during the Sunday Bible Study Hour that will focus on topics such as Baptism, Communion, Law/Gospel, and other basic and important biblical concepts and beliefs we hold to in the Lutheran church. All are welcome to attend, including those interested in church membership. For more details contact Pastor Schoech.



### FAITH MEMORIAL LADIES' LUNCH

*All FMLC ladies and their friends are invited to lunch on Wednesday, March 1, at Round the Clock Restaurant in Chesterton at 11:30. Please join us!*

## SAVE THE DATE!!!



The Growth and Fellowship Committee is planning a bowling outing for the congregation on April 30 at 1:30. Watch this newsletter and the Sunday bulletins in the coming weeks for more information.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

“Slave or Child”

One five-letter word defined the man – slave. This word gave him an identity. What did it matter if he had once been someone’s son, brother or nephew? All that mattered is that he was a slave who served a master. But now, not only was he a slave, he was a runaway slave. He, Onesimus, had traveled to Rome and found St. Paul, who was in prison.

Paul also found his identity in a five-letter word – child. And not just any child - but a child of God. A son, whose adoption, was purchased by Jesus Christ. Onesimus found a place where his identity could become a new five-letter word – child.

There are few details in the little New Testament book of Philemon. Philemon was the master and he had a relationship with Paul. On one of Paul’s journeys, Philemon was converted to Christianity. We assume that is where Onesimus met Paul.

Paul cares for and loves Philemon. Paul sees him as a fellow adopted son of God. Because of this joint sonship, Paul boldly pleads the case of the runaway slave. Paul would like to demand of Philemon that he receive Onesimus back into the household. But instead, Paul “appeals on the basis of love”, confident of Philemon’s obedience, and knowing that he will do even more than Paul asks.

So, what does happen with Onesimus? While Paul would have liked to keep Onesimus with him, he instead encourages Onesimus to return to his master. Does he? The story doesn’t say. And maybe that isn’t the point of the story. The reformer, Martin Luther, sees something far more important than a factual story about Onesimus and Philemon. Luther views Paul as a “Christ” to Onesimus “pleading the cause of the runaway as Christ has pleaded ours. For we are all His Onesimi, if we believe it.”

In this season of Lent, as our sins cause us to run away from our adopted Father, may our running brings us into the embrace of Christ who will appeal to the Father, on the basis of love, for our freedom.

### FAITH MEMORIAL LENTEN COMMUNITY SUPPERS

As is customary at Faith Memorial, we will meet to enjoy a light supper preceding Lenten Evening Prayer on Wednesdays during Lent (March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5).

Small groups will be assigned to bring main dishes for 40 people and set up tables and chairs if needed. Water and plates/utensils will be provided. There will be a sheet in the Narhex to sign up to bring side dishes. The small group assignments are:

March 8	Brew Crew
March 15	Works in Progress
March 22	Caring with Carol
March 29	Sunday Group
April 5	Young Guns/Couples



**Please note...**

**During Lent, Mark Makers, and Women Wanting Wisdom will not meet.**

**Sewing Seeds of Love will continue to meet on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 9:00 in the church basement.**



# LENT

