From the Pastor…

**Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church LC-MS**

Monthly Newsletter --- February 2020

699 Stambaugh Avenue, Sharon, PA 16146

Phone: 724.347.3620 Little People Pre-School: 724.347.3620 (option 4)

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“THE ROCK and THE SWORD”

“Built upon the Rock of Christ and wielding the

Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.”

You Should Be Sad

“You Should Be Sad,” was the name of a recent song that came across a music channel I was playing. The artist goes by the name Halsey. It is a secular song that’s a famine, not a feast, for the soul; but it struck a chord with me because it reveals the truth of fallen man. The song is told from the perspective of a woman who dated a man. The man was broken (greedy, selfish, and lustful) and she tried to make him whole again by being with him.  However, she was unsuccessful. This woman really wanted to create a man who would love selflessly; she wanted to fix sin without God. When she failed in her efforts, she left him. She ran as far away from the man who could do nothing but hurt her. By the end, it’s clear that the man had no desire to change. He desired only to fill his broken heart with money, drugs, and cars. The chorus kept echoing these words, “I'm so glad I never ever had a baby with you 'Cause you can't love nothing unless there's something in it for you.” She’s sad and she’s angry because the selfish nature of man inhibits true love for anything but the self.

You don’t have to be a Christian to see this. This is revealed by natural law. The artist realizes that parenting requires sacrifice. The father and mother give of themselves to build up their children. This is true of believers and unbelievers alike. But what else has this woman come to realize? She knows that the selfish nature this man exhibits will breed hate which will transfer to even his own children. Children take and take from their parents,

and, without unconditional love for them, the parent

will come to despise even his own flesh and blood.

It is here that we are met with a crisis of the flesh. If one loves only himself, he cannot love another and thereby care for another. Christians have been speaking about this for a long time. There is even a fancy name for it in Latin,”incurvatus in se.” This means the turning inward toward the self. What does that look like, though (outside of the song lyrics I’ve talked about)? Luther said it this way in his lectures on Romans, “But it is easy....to see the depravity of our will in our love of sensual evils and our flight from things that are good, if, for instance, we are drawn toward lust, greed, gluttony, arrogance, love of honor, and we abhor chastity, generosity, sobriety, humility,” (Luther’s Works 25, pg 245). The depravity of our will stems from our inbred sinful nature, which has come from Adam and has been passed down through all generations.

The man in the song *should* be sad! She is right. He should abhor and be deeply saddened by his sin and selfishness, but he doesn’t because he is without faith. Her desire is for a faithful, selfless, and loving man, like the one that God speaks about in the Bible, but she wants to accomplish that conversion without God. Halsey, who wrote the song, said she used to be a Christian, but now she’s renounced the faith she once proclaimed. And yet, she longs for a selfless man.

Can man be fixed without God? The answer the Church gives is, of course, “NO”. The problem is not something outside of us, the problem is that our nature is infected with sin and it turns us inward on ourselves. “ The reason is that our nature has been so deeply curved in upon itself because of the viciousness of original sin that it not only turns the finest gifts of God in upon itself and enjoys them (as is evident in the case of legalist and hypocrites), indeed, it even uses God Himself to achieve these aims, but it also seems to be ignorant of this very fact, that in acting so iniquitously, so perversely, and in such a depraved way, it is even seeking God for its own sake” (Luther’s Works 25, pg 291). The selfish nature will even seek to use God to serve itself! And so we hear again those words, “you can't love nothing unless there's something in it for you.”

So we must ask as Saint Paul does, “Who will save me from this body of death?” Will it be a woman? Will it be a friend? A son or daughter? Or any other person? No, it is God and God alone who turns us from ourselves to Himself. If man remains turned in on himself, he will be in the end given over to the prince of self-centeredness, the devil. As it is written, “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” If you die looking at yourself, you die in unbelief and disgrace. To have life and eternal life, our eyes must be drawn from ourselves and made to rest on Jesus.

God teaches us true love and selflessness by not withholding His Son, His only Son, but giving Him up for us all. This love is the only love that can teach us to love our neighbor without asking for anything in return. As Jesus said, “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48). We know that even the unbelievers will love those who love them back and give to those who will give back. The unbeliever will love when there is something in it for him, but we are called to higher love and purer love than this. We are to be imitators of Christ to love as we have first been loved, without condition.

Even though we aim for this love within our families and communities, we fall short. We fall short of the perfect love of the Father. We should be sad about this, contrite over our sins, but let this never drive us to despair of hope. His love remains. “… If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.” He will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness so that we may again love. Faith makes us better people. We become better neighbors to one another, beginning with those closest to us, our family:  first, to our spouse and, then, to our children; first, to our parents, then to those who are placed over us; first, to our brothers and sisters of the household of faith, then to our community. May it be said of us that we have loved not because of what others could do for us, but freely and without condition since this is the way of God our Father and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

God’s blessings.

~Pastor Jacob Deal

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**LIKE & FOLLOW both our Church and Preschool Facebook pages.**

Remember to like, comment, and share to help us reach as many people as possible.

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**“Stock the Food Pantry Sunday”**

**is February 9th!**

***Let us remember those in need!***

Please consider making a financial donation to this important function of our church. As we shift into the cold of winter, there is often an increase in demand on our Food Pantry.

Let’s try to bring some joy into the lives of others and help them feel God’s blessings and love.

‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:40

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**Scrip/Gift Card Program**

The next due date for orders and payments for the Scrip/Gift Card program is Sunday, February 2nd. Orders and payments are to be given directly to Matt Berent.

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**Thank You for Serving in February:**

**Assisting Elders:** Ralph Dorman & John Dyll. **Ushers:**  Barry Nelson, Jerome Thomas, Mark Gabriel, Jesse Riffle, & John Dyll (alternate). **Altarware:** Clara Krivosh & Cheryl Fedele.

**February Greeters:**

2 ~ John Dyll & Mark Gabriel

9 ~ Rev. Ed & Irene Kucera

16 ~ Anna Mae Daris & Millie Elavsky

23 ~ Cheryl Fedele & Clara Krivosh

***New Greeters are ALWAYS needed!***

***If you would like to be added to the Greeters’ schedule, please speak with Diane. Thank you!***

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**CELEBRATING IN FEBRUARY!**

**Birthdays:**

Mary Chmielewski 2 - 3

Brad Solyan 2 - 3

Beverly Chlpka 2 - 4

Julie Zachar 2 - 14

Judie Dorman 2 - 21

Traudi Sulek 2 - 28

**Anniversaries:**

Joseph & Beverly Chlpka 2 - 10

Gary & Eileen Burns 2 - 24

\*If birthdays or anniversaries have been omitted, please let the church office know. Thank You!

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**Join us Sunday, February 9th**

**following worship for**

**Coffee & Donuts Fellowship!**

**Many thanks go out to Matt & Cathy Berent, this month’s sponsors.**

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The 2020 Altar Flower sign-up sheet has been posted in the narthex. Sponsorship costs $30. Payments may be placed in a pew envelope labeled with your name and wording for the dedication.

The following is a message from **Virginia Lehman:**

*To all those here at Saint Peter and Paul’s, I would like to say thank you for all your thoughts and prayers and your generous contributions to my well-being and your visits.*

*Thank you to Pastor Deal for making the trip down to Passavant to see how I was doing and for offering a prayer and blessing.*

*Please continue prayers that chemo will work for me. I will have a port put in on the 22nd and start chemo on the 29th.*

*They say, “love is a many splendid thing”. I now know Christian Love is awesome!*

*I am blessed to have friends there. God Bless All of You.*

*Love, Virginia*

Those wishing to send **Virginia** “get well” wishes may mail them to her at 92 Wet Track Road, West Middlesex, PA 16159.

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**Welcome, Connor Russell!**

Connor Russell, son of Jenny & Joshua Russell and grandson of Mike & Marie Flaugher, will celebrate a new birth in baptism Sunday, February 2nd. We give thanks to God for this blessing and pray that Connor continues to grow in faith and in knowledge of our Lord’s great love.

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**Please join us at 7 pm February 26th for our**

**special Ash Wednesday Service.**

**Our Home Bound Members:**

***Please keep the following people in your prayers:***

Helen Bender

920 Pleasantview Dr.

New Castle, PA 16101

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Mary Chmielewski

87 S. Neshannock Rd.

Hermitage, PA 16148

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Dan Davis, Avalon Springs

745 Greenville Road

Mercer, PA 16137

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Edna Krajci, **Vista Center at The Ridge**  
3379 Main St   
Mineral Ridge, Ohio 44440  
330-652-9901

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Mary Ann Krajci, John XXIII

2250 Shenango Valley Freeway

Hermitage, PA 16148

724-981-3200

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Marion Roberts

The Lakes at Jefferson, Room 221

7271 W. Market St.

Mercer, PA 16137

717-798-5330

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Barbara Vasconi

880 Mayfield Rd.

Sharpsville, PA 16150

724-962-7960

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This February 4th and 5th, Sts. Peter & Paul’s will be hosting the **SELC District Circuit Conference**. Meetings will be held throughout the day Tuesday and Wednesday with a special Transfiguration Service celebrated Tuesday evening at 6:30 pm. All members are welcome to attend the service.

Special thanks are extended to the elders and all those who will assist with the conference meals and events over these two days.

If interested in lending a helping hand, please contact Diane at 724-347-3620 (opt. 3).

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**EXPRESSIONS OF “THANKS”!**

* At the January 5th Divine Service, two of our members were recognized for their service to this congregation. Many thanks go out to Stacy Brandes for her time served as a Preschool Board member and John Zachar for his decades of service on the Financial Staff. Their dedication to these respective groups is greatly appreciated.
* A special “thank you” is also extended to those who assisted both with the decorating and un-decorating of our church for the Christmas season.
* Remember to check out the beautiful, new floor which has been installed in the downstairs hallway. Many thanks to those who researched options and prepared the area for its installation.

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**Be certain to check out our website:** [**www.saintspeterandpaul.net**](http://www.saintspeterandpaul.net)**.**

Current service bulletins and newsletters may be accessed under the Publications page and there is an audio link to Pastor Deal’s sermons.

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**We are currently seeking sponsors for the 2020 Coffee & Donuts Fellowship.**

If interested, please sign your name on the schedule in the narthex.

On the Sunday you’re scheduled, simply bring in 2-1/2 dozen donuts or pastries and 1 qt. orange juice. Please place items in the kitchen prior to the worship service.

Diane will take care of making the coffee, setting up, and cleaning up.

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**Available in the narthex:**

* 2019 Annual Report (available Feb. 2nd)
* Audit Staff: List of 2020 audit dates and meetings.
* Greeters’ Schedules for the 1st Quarter of 2020.

**Bible Memory Verses**

Have you ever wondered about the origin of the beautiful words which make up our liturgy? What about the basis of our hymns found in our worship hymnal? The source is the same for both: The Holy Bible.

It is to The Bible we should turn, not only to find words of comfort, but for God’s plan as to how our lives should be led. Arm yourselves with these words, and you will see God’s plan for you!

The following are the Bible verses from the month of **January:**

**FOR CHILDREN:**

**Jan. 5:***The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.* John 2:8

**Jan. 12:** *We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.* John 1:14

**Jan. 19:***The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* John 1:17

**Jan. 26:***People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.* Luke 13:29

**FOR ADULTS:**

**Jan. 5:***Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Matthew 11:28-30

**Jan. 12:** *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* Psalm 27:1

**Jan. 19:***But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* 2 Corinthians 12:9

**Jan. 26:***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.* Ps. 111:110

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**February’s Hymn of the Month:**

**“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”(LSB #398)**

1. Hail to the Lord's anointed,  
   Great David's greater Son!  
   Hail, in the time appointed,  
   His reign on earth begun!  
   He comes to break oppression,  
   To set the captive free,  
   To take away transgression  
   And rule in equity.
2. He comes with rescue speedy  
   To those who suffer wrong,  
   To help the poor and needy  
   And bid the weak be strong;  
   To give them songs for sighing,  
   Their darkness turn to light,  
   Whose souls, condemned and dying,  
   Were precious in His sight.
3. He shall come down like showers  
   Upon the fruitful earth;  
   Love, joy, and hope, the flowers,  
   Spring in His path to birth.  
   Before Him on the mountains  
   Shall peace, the herald, go;  
   And righteousness in fountains  
   From hill to valley flow.
4. Kings shall fall down before Him  
   And gold and incense bring;  
   All nations shall adore Him,  
   His praise all people sing.  
   To Him shall prayer unceasing  
   And daily vows ascend;  
   His kingdom still increasing,  
   A kingdom without end.
5. O'er ev'ry foe victorious,  
   He on His throne shall rest,  
   From age to age more glorious,  
   All blessing and all-blest.  
   The tide of time shall never  
   His covenant remove;  
   His name shall stand forever--  
   That name to us is Love.

Text and music: Public domain.

Make certain to pick-up the February issue of ***The Lutheran Beacon*** which is available in the narthex. You may also read the Lutheran Beacon on-line at [**www.selc.lcms.org**](http://www.selc.lcms.org/)**.**

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**REMINDER:** Please let the church office know of any changes to your address, phone, cell phone or your e-mail address!

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**Mission Outreach Project…**

**International Christian Literature Distributors, Inc.** focuses on getting the Bible and study materials to learn the Bible into the hands of Christian leaders in the least-fortunate places of the world. They supply churches and schools of Bible learning throughout the English speaking world. Your old Portals of Prayer, Advent/Lenten devotions, and other materials are greatly appreciated. For more information about ICLD, check out their website: [www.icld.org](http://www.icld.org/). **Please recycle these items by dropping them in the basket in the hallway by the offices. Thank you!**

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**Word of Hope: 1-888-217-8679**

The only 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL Hotline that is distinctly Lutheran, bringing healing found in Christ, to those whose hearts have been broken by abortion.

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**OUR FIRST QUARTER LOCAL MISSION: CAMPUS MINISTRY AT ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH,**

**SLIPPERY ROCK, PA**

Financial donations may be placed in pew envelopes and put in the offering plate. Be certain to note your name and designate that it is for our local mission project.

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**Lenten Devotions** will be available in the narthex the last Sunday of February. Feel free to take a copy for a friend.

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The **Mercer County Hall of Fame**inducted 11 new members at its annual banquet January 18th. One of the inductees was our own **Jerome Thomas**! The following is a reprint of Jerome’s biography as printed in The Herald Wednesday, January 15, 2020.

**Jerome Thomas**

Jerome was one of the outstanding basketball players to come out of Coach Eddie McCluskey’s program at Farrell High School.

He was a key substitute on the 1971-72 state championship team when the Steelers defeated Chester, 56-55.

A starter at center as a junior and senior, he scored 234 and 307 points respectively those seasons and was a fierce rebounder. He was All-Section 3 his senior year after honorable mention as a junior.

He and 2020 posthumous inductee Judson Flint were two of the main cogs in Farrell’s romp to the school’s 10th WPIAL championship in 1974.

Jerome played in the Dapper Dan and Quaker State All-Star Games in 1974.

He also played in the Hoyle Tournaments. He was named Most Promising Player as a junior and Best Appearance as a senior.

He was a member of the championship team in the Everyday E. A. C. Tournament.

In 1971-72, he helped his team win the Lions Invitational Tournament, and in 1973 he was high scorer in the Farrell Summer League.

He went on to letter all four years at Edinboro in basketball. He was an outstanding rebounder—averaging about 9 a game—and helped the team reach the NAIA “Final Eight” at Kansas City Kemper Arena. He held a season field-goal percentage record at Edinboro University that lasted several years. He was invited back to play in the Edinboro Alumni Games for several seasons.

In independent basketball in 1980-81, he helped lead his team to the McGuffey Tournament Championship. He played Little League and Babe Ruth baseball in Farrell and was a member of All-Star teams in both—as a pitcher, first-baseman and outfielder.

**CONGRATULATIONS, JEROME!**



Lent & the “Gesima” Season

The Liturgical preparation for Easter takes place through three periods or steps: The first is the “-gesimas”. These three Sundays before Lent constitute catechesis in the **Grace of God** in which that grace is examined from three perspectives:

**Septuagesima** (meaning “about 70 days”): Grace is undeserved.

The Collect for this Sunday implores God to graciously hear us, who are justly punished for our sin, so that we may be delivered by God’s goodness. The goodness of God is emphasized in the parable (Matt 20: 1-16), where all the laborers receive the reward because of the goodness of the landowner. So we, too, receive the reward of eternal life, because God is good, and Another has borne the heat and burden of the day for us that we might have it.

**Sexagesima** (meaning “about 60 days”): Grace is passively received.

In the Collect, we pray to the God who sees that we put not our trust in anything we do, but mercifully defends us by His power. In the parable of the sower, the seed of God’s Word is passively received in good and noble hearts.

**Quinquagesima** (meaning “about 50 days”): Grace is not easily understood

In the Gospel, Jesus predicts His passion and the disciples “understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” (Luke 18: 34).

The three “Gesima” Sundays begin the Lenten Preparation for Easter. They take on the character of Lent, but mildly. The parament color remains green before turning to violet in Lent. The “Alleluias” are dropped. Pictures and Crosses remain unveiled. Flowers may adorn the chancel. In the Gesimas, this provides a gradual progression of liturgical removals as we approach Passiontide.

**The second step or stage of Lent begins Ash Wednesday.** This second stage ends when the week of Laetare (the 4th Sunday in Lent) is completed. In addition to the omissions and changes that began in the “Gesimas,” flowers no longer normally adorn the chancel, and the crucifix and crosses are veiled. During these four Sundays, the focus is on temptation and faith, and the Christian’s struggle:

* On **Invocavit Sunday**, the Lord is tested in the wilderness.
* On **Reminiscere Sunday**, the faith of the Canaanite woman is tested.
* On **Oculi Sunday**, the people tempt our Lord to show them a sign from heaven.
* **Laetare Sunday** is “refreshment” Sunday. (Flowers *may* adorn the chancel.)

**The final stage is Passiontide**, which begins with **Judica Sunday** (Passion Sunday, the 5th Sunday in Lent), and extends through Holy Week and the Triduum (“three holy days”—which include Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday). Now the focus is expressly on our Lord’s passion. The liturgy is spoken on Judica Sunday to emphasize the intense passion which our Lord endured. (This year, we will be doing this throughout Lent.) This intensity builds until we finally arrive at the empty tomb.

**Please join us throughout the Lenten season Wednesdays at noon and 7 pm for our special Lenten mid-week services.**