



MONONA MESSENGER

MARCH 2019

+ From Agony to Ecstasy +

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

As we now approach Ash Wednesday (March 6th), and the Lenten season, the Christian message fundamentally remains the Word of the Cross. This message is not merely that God kept His promises of old and sent His Son into the world, but above all that God's Son humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of dying on the cross in payment for our sins. It is the story of Christ crucified for our forgiveness. It is the Gospel of the child born in Bethlehem and the man on the cross of Calvary. And that makes it a stumbling block and foolishness to unbelievers. Only to those who are being saved is this message the wisdom and power of God.

The Word of the cross totally condemns us as we are by nature. If God had to suffer in that way and that much in order to take our place and bear what we deserved, then surely we cannot boast about ourselves before God. As Law, the cross is a terrible judgement on us. If we see God's own Son crucified for us, we must also see that we are sinners who were under the wrath and the curse of God. But the cross conveys another more powerful message as well: through the Christ who died on it, God accomplished our salvation. God's wrath and curse fell on Christ instead of on us, so that we who believe in Him might receive God's love and blessing.

To unbelievers, the cross is God's foolishness and weakness. What kind of a God lets Himself be killed? What kind of a God is led like a lamb to slaughter and doesn't even open His mouth to protest? But that is just how God lets us see Him—in Christ crucified. It's a stumbling block for those who look for God to reveal Himself only in glory and power. But for us who believe, Christ crucified is the wisdom of God and the power of God to save us. Christ took our sin upon Himself so that by His suffering we might be saved.

That is the Christian God—the One which enables us to examine ourselves and our lives-styles especially during the season of Lent—the God who became man in Christ Jesus, in order to reconcile the world to Himself. That is the God who loved each of us so much that He gave up His one and only Son for us. That is the God who, through the cross, opened His heart to us fully so that we can now cry out to Him, "Abba! Dear Father!"

So, what are we to do with such love, mercy and grace and with a knowledge that surpasses all human understanding?

From agony to ecstasy: blood, sweat, and tears; heart, hands, and voices. These are the themes and titles of our midweek Lenten series for 2019. Sorry, but such themes as these will not necessarily help you win friends and influence people, get along better with your family members, or be more successful in your profession. After recent destruction from weather events, after Hurricanes and wild fires, after international skirmishes and urban homicides in which so many precious lives are lost, I believe we've all been sobered up a bit to realize that there are more important things in life than pleasure and success.

The season of Lent was established to deepen our faith and understanding of life with God in Christ. I sincerely hope that you will attend this midweek series and so postpone less important things and plan to attend all the Wednesday services.

Our series this year is somewhat unique, I believe. We're going to talk about some very ordinary experiences and ingredients in our Lord's Passion, and in our own lives: blood, sweat, tears; heart, hands, and voices. We will try to demonstrate how the agonies of our Lord produced the great ecstasies of our faith.

Blessings on your Lenten journey!

Pastor Nowak

SWD Office of Mission and Human Care
Mission Prayers for March

Week of March 3 – Please pray this week for **Rev. Gui Kasongo**, who serves at **International Lutheran Church of Zion** and **Gospel Lutheran Church** in Milwaukee. Ask our Lord to bless his ministry to the many immigrants coming to our shores in search of freedom so that they find peace in their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Week of March 10 – Please remember the clergy of the **Hmong ministries** in our District this week—**Pastors Faivneng Her, Blong Vang, Moua Vang and Moses Thao**—as they share God’s Word in the areas of Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Oshkosh and Sheboygan. Pray that God will help them to see clearly through the obstacles and challenges of spreading the Gospel.

Week of March 17 – In this season of repentance include the **Muslim Outreach (POBLO) of missionary Ebou Faye** in South Wisconsin. Ask for God’s direct intervention in the conversion of the many Muslims living in Wisconsin so that they would have everlasting life in His name.

Week of March 24 – Let us thank the Lord for those who serve as parish nurses, volunteer chaplains, youth ministry leaders and other leaders of **specialized ministry** in your parish. Ask the Lord to sustain and increase their efforts to serve people, who have distinct needs, with the mercy and love of Jesus.

Week of March 31 – Recall the grace of the Lord in providing the under shepherd(s) to serve you in the **Office of Holy Ministry**. Pray for their continued energy to faithfully preach, teach and administer the Sacraments while they prepare for the Easter season.

Thank you very much for supporting us on our recent mission trip to Tanzania. God led us on an amazing adventure. We touched the lives of about 45 young adults at the Next Life Foundation. The sewing project went well and was well received. Steve completed the repair project with the help of 15 teen boys! It was a joy to serve God in Tanzania. We ask that you'd keep our "Tanzanian Family" in your prayers as they continue on with their schooling. We also pray that the seeds of faith we planted will blossom.
Steve and Ellen Peck

MARCH 10th, 2019



House of Thrift News: The store is located at 201 Cottage Grove Road. Their hours are Monday through Friday 9 am to 6 pm and Saturday from 9 am until 5 pm. Donations are welcome during these hours. Please call them at 223-1228 if you have any questions or would like to become part of the *House of Thrift* team. Members of Monona work on the 1st and 3rd Saturday and on the 2nd and 5th Thursday of each month.

TLC Groups:

The **Tuesday morning** Tender Loving Care group will continue to meet on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month at Pastor’s house beginning at 9:00 am. The **Thursday evening** group meets in the church library on the 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month beginning at 7:00 pm. This is a great group if you want to strengthen your faith, get to know your fellow members better, introduce a friend or neighbor to our congregation. Everything that is discussed is and remains confidential. Once you experience a TLC group you’ll never want to give it up. Please plan to attend one of these groups.

Lenten Devotions are available from the Lutheran Hour Ministries. “*People of the Passion*” copies can be found on the tables in the Narthex and also in the Welcoming Area. Please take one and also one for a friend.



Lenten Meal – Please mark your calendar for the **Ash Wednesday** supper which will be this coming Wednesday, **March 6th at 5:30 pm.**

Mid-Week Services & Themes 2019

“From Agony to Ecstasy”

Services begin at 6:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday March 6th
Lev. 17:11; 1 John 1:7 *“Blood Will Tell”*
Lenten supper begins at 5:30 p.m.

March 13th *“Sweating It Out”*
Gen. 3:17-19; Luke 22:44; Phil. 2:12-13

March 20th *“His Tears, Our Tears, No Tears”*
John 11:35; Luke 19:41-42; Psalm 56:8; Rev. 21:4

March 27th *“You’ve Got to Have Heart”*
Mark 14:34; John 16:22; Ezekiel 36:26

April 3rd *“You’re in Good Hands”*
Mark 14:41c, 46; Luke 24:39; 1 Tim. 2:8; Luke 23:46

April 10th *“Voices That Will Be Heard”*
Ps. 19:1-4; Luke 23:23; Mark 15:34, 37; Rev. 5:11-13

Steward Builders

A newsletter to help you grow as a steward.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share God's Word so that our members will better understand who we are to be and what we are to do in the light of the Scriptures. It is our hope that this monthly publication will help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and as a Christian steward.

Stewards of Our Time

Are you a good steward of the time God has given you? God created time, and He still rules over that time. It is our responsibility not to waste it and to use it wisely as His faithful stewards. Of all the gifts that God gives us, time is one of the most precious, because we cannot save it, and we cannot have more. Keys to wise use of time include setting goals, deciding on priorities, and making plans based on God's will for our lives as it is revealed to us through study of His Word and prayers for His guidance. Without goals and priorities, we find that we are caught up in the "rat race" of the day and that our lives are out of balance.

Time, as well as other areas of life, is affected by God's principle of sowing and reaping. *"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully"* (2 Corinthians 9:6). If we spend our time unproductively, we will not reap the same rewards had we invested our time wisely. If we sow much, we will reap much. If we want to be proficient at tennis, golf, or playing the piano, we must commit the time and effort to practice in order to develop the necessary skills. The same principle holds in our lives as stewards.

Society pulls at us with all kinds of diversions that crowd our lives with things of no eternal value. What is important to us can be seen by where we spend our time. When we acknowledge God as the giver of time, how can we say we don't have time to do the things He would have us do? Our time is a gift from God, so it is proper and fitting that we use our time in ways that honor and glorify Him.



Stewards of Our Talents

In 1 Peter 4:10 we read, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."* Here we learn again that God wants each of us to use our talents faithfully and responsibly. Paul said, *"Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men"* (Colossians 3:23). We should begin and live each day with the joy and vigor that come from hearts filled with thanksgiving to God for His love, His guidance, His presence, and His strength in whatever we do.

Scripture is full of instances where God has used ordinary people like us to accomplish

extraordinary things. He chose a stammering Moses to lead His people out of bondage, self-serving fishermen, James and John, to lead His Church and spread the Gospel, impulsive Peter's confession upon which to build His Church, and Paul, who spoke of a thorn in his flesh, to be the first great missionary of the Christian Church.

God uses imperfect people, those whom the world considers weak and flawed, to extend His kingdom. When we allow ourselves to be used by God in whatever way He chooses, He takes our meager talents and blesses them, making us examples for others around us. We are not perfect, nor do we know all there is to know about God's Word. Yet, we, like Moses, James, John, Peter, and Paul, are privileged by God's grace to participate in the work of His kingdom.

God has blessed us with gifts of time and talents, but the decision is ours whether or not we will use those gifts for the work of the Lord. Are we open to the possibilities before us? Are we willing to explore and grow? We should be, because, as redeemed children of God, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to use faithfully our God-given talents for God's kingdom. God will always equip us for the tasks He gives us to do. It can be a bit risky or uncomfortable, but He is with us all the way.

"God's work done in God's way
will never lack God's supply".
(Hudson Taylor)

Stewards of Our Money

Of all the gifts that God gives us to manage as His stewards, money is probably the most difficult. Jesus knew the attraction money would hold for us and the effect it has on our lives. He said, "*You cannot serve God and money*" (Matthew 6:24). Having a proper view of money and possessions and managing them in God-pleasing ways are serious challenges that face all Christians.

Jesus also said, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). If money

and the things money can buy become our treasure, God is pushed aside. We can't live our lives with a disclaimer that says, "Lord, I'll serve you spiritually but not with my money." Our relationship with Jesus should impact everything we do, including how we handle our money.



By God's providence, people have and make different amounts of money, but most people face the following tough questions: "How should I spend my money?" "Should I buy on credit?" "How much should I give?" "How much should I save and invest?" What you do with your money speaks volumes about you as a steward. Whether we have little or lots of money, it can be our treasure. Is your money being used as a tool to serve the Lord or a means to satisfy your own desires?

The giving of our money is an important part of being faithful stewards. Mature Christians who are under the control of the Holy Spirit understand the importance of giving and do so willingly and cheerfully. Jesus gave us the greatest and the most perfect gift by offering Himself on the Cross. With hearts filled with God's love for what He did for us, we become "givers" rather than "takers." Giving is an expression of our love for the Lord. In light of what God has done for us through His Son, how can we not give freely to Him?

Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!

The next Healing Service will be held again on Sunday, **March 10th**, after the service. If you have a burden or sickness that you would like to commend to the Lord, this would be a great time to do so. Copies of the service can be found on the table in the narthex for your convenience.

Sunday Morning Bible Study:

Please join us on Sunday's after the service as we begin to study the Book of Daniel.

Monona's LWML group will be getting together again on *Saturday, March 9th*, beginning at 9:00 am to continue with the service project. If you have questions, please call Jana Hoffmann at 244-5154 or email thehoffers3@hotmail.com.

Rebecca's Garden:

Our tutoring program continues to flourish, thanks to the efforts and contributions by many. With the snowbird season upon us, we could use a couple more volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Gary Steingraber.

Wednesday Bible Study:

The book of Exodus is the current topic Wednesday mornings. Feel free to join us if you have the opportunity. We meet in our Library from 10 to 11 am.

Women's Craft Retreat: March 8th through the 10th join other "crafty ladies" at Camp LuWiSoMo in Wild Rose, WI. Spend a whole weekend working on your favorite craft projects without interruptions for cooking, cleaning or anything else. Email them at camp@luwisomo.org for more information and a registration form.

Blood Drive: Our next scheduled blood drive is Tuesday, April 9th from 1-6 pm. The collection site will be at Lake Edge UCC on Buckeye. If you are interested in donating, please contact Ann Rubin at 221-1495 and she will be able to make an appointment for you. Thanks for all of your support in the past with donations and volunteering.

Our Website – Many useful items are available on our website, mononalutheran.org. Under the Commentaries tab are Dr. Krubsack's comments on the upcoming scripture lessons. This gives you the opportunity to preview the lessons before Sunday, review them after Sunday, or read them if you miss a service. Plus they are available to non-members as well.

Prayer Chain

Life presents challenges to all of us, but sometimes those challenges can feel like *it's* just too much. If you are experiencing situations, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, call our Prayer chain. You may give your prayer requests to Angie TerMaat at 608-246-9608, Susan Bartlett at 608-437-5765, or the church office at 222-7071 or call if you would like to become a part of our Prayer chain.

**"Hear my prayer, O Lord;
listen to my cry for mercy."**

MARCH CELEBRATIONS



<i>Lee Allen Retzlaff</i>	1
<i>Nicole Siegenthaler</i>	2
<i>Phoenix Hansen</i>	7
<i>Darren Culles</i>	8
<i>Hilary Merrill</i>	10
<i>Jeff Meyer</i>	14
<i>Melissa Bartlett</i>	25
<i>Sue Neuser</i>	25
<i>Xavier Hansen</i>	29
<i>Sarah Simon</i>	31



Mike & Lynn Reinholtz – 34 years; March 2nd
Molly & Michael Daniels – 6 years; March 16th
Gary & Judy Thompson – 57 years; March 17th

Sunday School meets every Sunday at 10:15 am till 11:15 am. If you would like to volunteer in any way please contact Jeanne Nowak or Ann Rubin. We are short teachers this winter and we have a great group of kids that would love to meet you.

Quilting: Can you tie a knot? Then your help is needed to tie some quilts for Orphan Grain Train. The quilters meet the first and third Thursdays of each month at 9:00 am. Any questions call Angie TerMaat or the church office. Try it – you might like it.

MONONA MESSENGER

Newsletter of: Monona Ev. Lutheran Church, LC-MS

4411 Monona Dr.

Monona, WI 53716

Address Service Requested



Divine Worship

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Monday Evening 6:30 p.m.

Communion Services

1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

Midweek Lenten & Advent

Vespers 6:30 p.m.

NO Monday Worship on Legal Holidays

Sunday Christian Education Hour

Adult Bible Classes 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 10:15 am Sept. - May

Pastor: Rev. Thomas Nowak

Office Phone: 608.222.7071

E-mail: mlc-ms@hotmail.com

Website: www.mononalutheran.org

April 2019

Messenger Deadline

March 21st, 2019

NO LATE ARTICLES

Please submit articles by this date.

Email to: mlc-ms@hotmail.com

or leave a copy on the office desk

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

“Loving Christ, Serving Others through Preaching, Teaching, Reaching”