



**First Hearts   March 2020**

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### **From the Vacancy Pastor**

Think about this: for forty days Jesus was in the wilderness, led there, says St. Matthew, “by the Spirit...to be tempted by the devil.” God was intentionally putting His Son into harm’s way. Temptation can be deadly.

He had fasted for those days, and, says Matthew, “He was hungry.” Who wouldn’t be? He was at a very low ebb physically, and that’s just when Satan showed up.

Our three great enemies—still!—are the devil, the world, and our old Adam, our sinful flesh. Satan seeks to get his hooks into our flesh, and whenever we are at our lowest ebb, He slithers up alongside us. His “suggestions” never really seem like “temptations.” Just suggestions, something to consider. Something to mull over. Might be good...or... perhaps not. Nonetheless there he is with his saccharine voice whispering into our souls, probing for that soft spot.

Inevitably, Satan finds that spot and digs right in. He knows us better than we know ourselves. Oh sure, we have our

guard up. We're onto his sneaky schemes. But then... and how easily!...it happens—we fall. We fail. Again? O Lord, I promised You...but yes. Again. I have failed You, Lord Jesus, again. Again.

Thanks be to God that Jesus stayed the course, empty growling stomach included. Three shots Satan took at Him, but not a one pierced His soul. Not a one landed on the bullseye. Not a one took Jesus down. Rather, each and every time, Jesus spoke the unfailing, unwavering truth of God's Word. He spoke it right into the situation, right into the temptation and like a pin prick of a balloon, He let the air right out of that Satanic "suggestion."

This is where to go whenever Satan beats you up, wears you down, finds your soft spot, and gets his claws into you. Head for Jesus. He knows our every weakness. He knows our frailty. And—get this—again and again and again He picks up the broken bits and pieces of our lives and speaks into them God's Word of truth and life. It is His Word to speak—from His cross and His tomb—His Word of forgiveness, of rescue, of unyielding security in His hands.

In these forty days of Lent, heed the voice of the Good Shepherd, the One Who did not run when the Satanic wolf came calling. He calls you by name—His. By His holy life, His innocent suffering and death, and His triumphant resurrection, He stole you out of Satan's grasp. You belong to Him. When you fail Him and fall—yes, yet again!—He picks you up and draws you close. Never does He turn His back on you! Never!

"One little word can fell him," wrote Luther in that great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress." Speak the word, my fellow-traveler. Say the name. Jesus. Into the loss, the fall, the hurt, the brokenness. Jesus. His Name. Say it all.

Pastor Rockemann



### **Upcoming Events**

Sunday School 9:15 am

Divine Service 10:30 am

Wednesday Soup and Sandwich Supper 5:30 pm

Wednesday Lenten Service 6:30 pm

### **Board Happenings**

3/10 School Board 6:00 pm

3/11 Elders Meeting 6:30 pm

3/17 Planning Council 6:30 pm

3/21 Trustee Workday 9:00 am

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# Monthly Readings:

Season	Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
<i>Lent</i>	March 1, 2020	First S. in Lent	Gen. 3:1-21	Psalm 32:1-7	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11
	March 8, 2020	Second S. in Lent	Gen. 12:1-9	Psalm 121	Rom. 4:1-8, 13-17	John 3:1-17
	March 15, 2020	Third S. in Lent	Ex. 17:1-7	Psalm 95:1-6	Romans 5:1-8	John 4:5-26, 27-30, 39-42
	March 22, 2020	Fourth S. in Lent	Is. 42:1-21	Psalm 142	Eph. 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
	March 29, 2020	Fifth S. in Lent	Ezek. 37:1-14	Psalm 130	Romans 8:1-11	John 11:1-45



## In Other News

### Stewardship

We are at the beginning of Lent. During the Lenten season, the church calls to our attention the sufficiency of what God gives. It points to the sufficiency of God's grace in the atoning work of Jesus. It shows us the sufficiency of faith in Jesus' work for us. It makes known the sufficiency of God's Word in faith and life.

But Lent doesn't just remind us of the sufficiency of God's spiritual gifts, the gifts that pertain to our redemption and salvation. Lent also reminds us of the sufficiency of the physical, temporal gifts of God, those that pertain to this body and life. In other words, it reminds us of the importance of godly contentment and of outward discipline and training of the body.

This outward training of the body teaches us not to give in to every desire of our flesh but to learn to say no to them. And it does this in such a way that if you fail, it is no sin. It is a way to practice without putting yourself into a compromising situation.

The easiest example of this is fasting. When you fast, you are practicing saying no to the desires of your body. But if you fail in this, if you break your fast, you have not sinned. You have, though, learned something about how your flesh works, how difficult it is to fight against it, and how you need help from above in order to do it.

There is another example of this. It is alms-giving. This is an increase in giving to the church and its mission during this time. We all know that our flesh finds security in money and stuff. By committing to give more to the church, you are training your flesh. You are, by this outward discipline, training yourself to be content with what God gives. You are practicing saying "no" to your desires. Again, if you fail, you have not sinned. But you've learned just how powerful your flesh is in leading you instead of you leading it. You've learned how you need help from above in being content with what God gives.

This is why St. Paul instructs young Pastor Timothy in this way:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and[a] we cannot take anything out of

the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” (1 Tim 6:6–10)

Our sufficiency is not of ourselves; it is in God. Let us learn this without sin by training our flesh this Lenten season.

### **55 Alive**

55 Alive will be THURSDAY- MARCH 26th at 12:00 noon with a delicious chicken dinner at \$7.00/person. The date change is due to First Lutheran School having Spring Break during 3rd week of March. Alice Allen from CAC-Community Action Committee will be here to present a program on SNAP - Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program. She will give us information and resources about nutritional food. See you there!

**Easter Lily:** It is time to order Easter lilies to decorate our sanctuary for Easter Sunday. The cost is \$15.00. Order forms may be found in the bulletin or on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Please have your order turned in to the church secretary by **Monday, March 30.**

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### **News from First Lutheran School**

I thought this month I would give you all a snapshot of some of the great things happening at First Lutheran.

ECE is learning about the importance of Lent and all that Jesus has done for us. Since it is February they have also been learning about African American History. They are also eagerly awaiting spring, preparing for their musical and gardens.

Kindergarten has been immersed in our nation’s history, and the culmination of this hard work is their “Living History Museum.” The kindergarteners have researched important Americans such as Clara Barton and John Glenn, and compiled facts into a short speech and will dress up as their American hero presenting all they have learned to visitors to their museum.

First and Second grade has also been working hard in history completing some incredible book reports based on presidential biographies that you can see hanging outside their classroom in the main hall. They also became scientists researching to learn more about a bird skull our computer teacher had.

Third grade is studying Hebrews in religion class and talking about how God can use sinful imperfect people to do great things. In Science, they are en-light-ened by all that light can do. They have learned about refraction, reflection, and how our eyes see.

Fourth and fifth grade are looking outside of themselves and finding opportunities to care for others writing letters to people who may be lonely. Building on that they are reading, *The Bully on Barkham Street*, *The Cay*, and their book reports are helping them to see things from the perspective of someone whose experience might be different from their own. It is all about empathy and loving one another as Christ has loved us.

Sixth grade is delving into the classical world of Ancient Greek history and culture, with a rather heated debate between Athens and Sparta trying to prove their superiority. They are also learning about our incredible planet and how science can be used to support Creationism.

Seventh and Eighth grade are putting the final touches on their research paper while also studying early American history

and looking at the struggles the founding fathers faced. In science, biochemistry and the building blocks of life are the topics at hand while in Art they are turning the world on its head creating some surrealist pieces.

Not only is First Lutheran rocking the academics but our basketball season just finished up and it was great success. Most importantly, our school was recognized at the last two tournaments with the Sportsmanship Award. Christ's love shines through these students on and off the court, and seeing that recognized by others is something to celebrate. Then our Little Lions, which are teams made up of our Kindergarten-Fourth graders have started their basketball season where they learn not just the fundamentals of basketball, but how to be part of a team.

Overall it is a great time to be a part of the First Lutheran family and we are all looking forward to the rest of the year. As always please remember to pray for our mission; teachers; staff; and students; past, present, and future.

Joy and Many Blessings,  
Jessie Irwin, Principal



### Anniversaries:

3: Jim and Linda Perrine

7: John and Beth Crocket

13: Don and Carolyn Weaver

14: Jeff and Stephanie McKenzie

17: Jim and Rosa Beck

25: Gary and Christina Boatman

### Birthdays:

5: Kelly Sternbarg

6: Natalie Brown and Julie Killian

7: Don Yeatts

9: Jana Hotaling

10: Anna Broyles and Lynn Ware

12: Natalie Hotaling

13: Camden Smolter and Lillian Tower

14: Sarah Appleton and Megan Varner

15: Steve Byrd and Amelia Hamilton

17: Ellie Chrapliwy

18: Josh Blumenberg

19: Shirley Watson

20: Ariej' Robbins

21: Hannah Keyes

25: Nathaniel Davis and Rosie Rosen

26: Liam Bales

27: Doug Slifka

30: Adam Breeden, Shirley Eimmerman, and Roger Wright Senior

31: Sean Bales

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