

The March 2026 Epistle



A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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Dear St. James Family,

M E S S A G E from | the V I C A R

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Welcome to Lent. Here are some practical thoughts I wasn't able to include in my Ash Wednesday sermon. Perhaps they will help you focus on these 40 days of preparation for Easter.

Let's start here: Isn't it interesting that when Jesus gives instructions to his disciples about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, he very clearly does not instruct them not to do it?

He could have included in his instructions, "Fasting and prayer and almsgiving are outdated and obsolete. That was for a different time. Now that you are saved by faith, you don't have to worry about that stuff anymore." No, he says, "When you do it...don't do it [incorrectly]. Do it in a better way." By telling them to do it correctly, he assumes they are going to do it.

But why???

Why would we pray?

Why would we intentionally call out to God whom we cannot see, or touch, or hold?

Why would we fast?

Why would we intentionally make ourselves more uncomfortable than we are?

Why would we give our money away?

Why would we intentionally become poorer than we already are?

Let's start by eliminating some really poor reasons to fast, pray, and give.

- First, we aren't fasting to merit God's love. Jesus takes care of that problem. We don't live in a merit-based system with God.
- Second, we aren't fasting to please God. God is already pleased with us. God is our creator and God is our redeemer. We are God's children. God is already pleased with us. That isn't a problem any longer.
- Third, we aren't fasting to get God to hear us a little better so we can get what we want. God doesn't wait for us to do the right thing before he starts to pay attention to us. We aren't that important and God isn't that fickle.

Throw those ideas away. They're too small, too childish, too immature for us. Let's look beyond them to better things.

Here's one of my answers as to why we should take up these disciplines during Lent:

We pray, fast, and give because it reminds us of our total dependence on God. And we need those reminders. We get comfortable and we forget.

The disruption to our daily rhythms provided by these practices are opportunities to remember that *everything* we have and *everything* we are is a gift from God and without God, we would be nothing.

We fast, and pray, and give to understand our utter dependence on God for all things, and as our awareness of our dependence grows, God's life grows in us.

How do we do it?

My suggestion to you if you are looking to include fasting in your Lenten practice is this. Find something, anything, that you can give up and that you will encounter nearly every day between now and Easter. When you encounter that thing, feel the loss and turn your attention to God through prayer.

I recommend a simple prayer when you turn your attention to God. Something like this...

- *Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Amen.*
- *I return to you, Holy Father. Amen.*
- *God, save me. Amen.*

We aren't fasting to merit God's love. We aren't fasting to please God. We aren't fasting to get God to hear us a little better so we can get what we want. We forget who we really are. So, for a season, we voluntarily give up certain comforts to remind ourselves of our total and utter dependence on God.

Stay hungry, my friends.

Grace and peace to you,
Vicar Bryce Hewlett, SAM

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy March, St. James!

I thought we were finally at the start of spring with the warmer weather, but I guess we will have to wait a little longer!

We had a lovely Ash Wednesday service held on the 18th. Ash Wednesday is one of my favorite services during the church year. It is a time of reflection and pause, and focusing our attention and hearts on God. We received the ashes as a reminder of what we are and what we will become. Ash Wednesday is also the start of opening our hearts to renewal through prayer, fasting, and charity. It is a 40-day journey to break away from the noise of daily life and to "rend our hearts," focusing on God's mercy and love.

We have a lot of special activities planned during the Lenten season. With our weekly Lenten meals every Wednesday night, there will also be Holden Evening Prayers and Prayers Around the Cross every Wednesday night. The Wednesday night services are a great way to be able to stop and pause during the hectic work week and turn our focus to God. Let us take these next 40 days to really observe, pray, and focus on what really matters.

Be good. Do good. God bless,

Madeline Schmidt

LENT

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES:

Wednesdays during Lent

February 25th

March 4th

March 11th

March 18th

March 25th

6:00 p.m. Meals

Lenten Meals are coordinated by various church committees. Meals are open to all. If you would like to assist in serving these meals, please contact the church office to connect with our Committees at (563)355-4161.

7:00 p.m. Vespers

-Holden Evening Prayer-

Composed by Marty Haugen

2/25, 3/11, 3/25

-Prayer Around the Cross-

3/4, 3/18

HOLY WEEK

SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES
March 29th-April 4th

PALM SUNDAY	9AM Service <i>No Saturday Service 3/28</i>
Holy Monday Holy Tuesday Holy Wednesday	7PM Vigil
Maundy Thursday	7PM Service <i>with Holy Communion and Foot Washing</i>
Good Friday	12-3PM Stations of the Cross 3-6PM Confession 7PM Service
Easter Vigil <i>Saturday</i>	7PM Vigil <i>(in place of Saturday service)</i>



Good Friday

April 3

12-3PM

Stations of the Cross

The gospels tell us the sky turned black between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. as Jesus hung on the cross. A printed guide and stations will be located in the Lower Level of the church to observe the solemnity of these hours. Participants are welcome to come and go at their own pace.

3-6PM

Individual Confession -By appointment or drop-in -

The order for individual confession can be found on page 243 in the ELW.

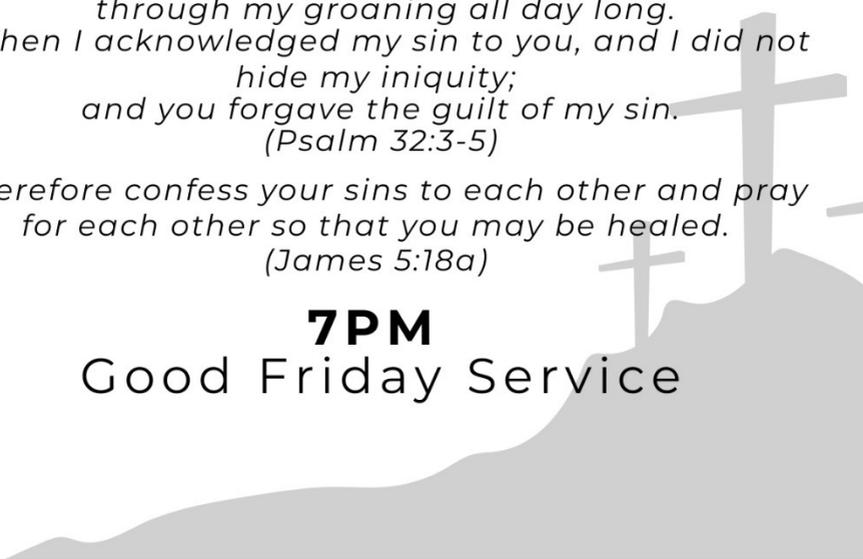
*3 While I kept silent, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.*

*5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not
hide my iniquity;
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
(Psalm 32:3-5)*

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray
for each other so that you may be healed.
(James 5:18a)*

7PM

Good Friday Service



EASTER SUNDAY

APRIL 5TH, 2026

Service	8:00AM
Brunch	9:00AM
Easter Egg Hunt	9:30AM
Service	10:00AM

BIRTHDAYS

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/3 JERRY NICHOLS

3/4 JACK FORARI

3/7 STEVEN MILLER III

3/11 JENNA SCHMIDT

3/13 MARY MEUMANN

3/15 SANDRA ARP

3/16 JIM KRUMBHOLZ

3/18 EDEN BILEDDO

3/20 KRISTEN WENDELL

3/24 MINHON RIDENOUR

3/25 RYAN MARTIN

3/26 MAXINE DUHM

3/29 CHUCK MEYER

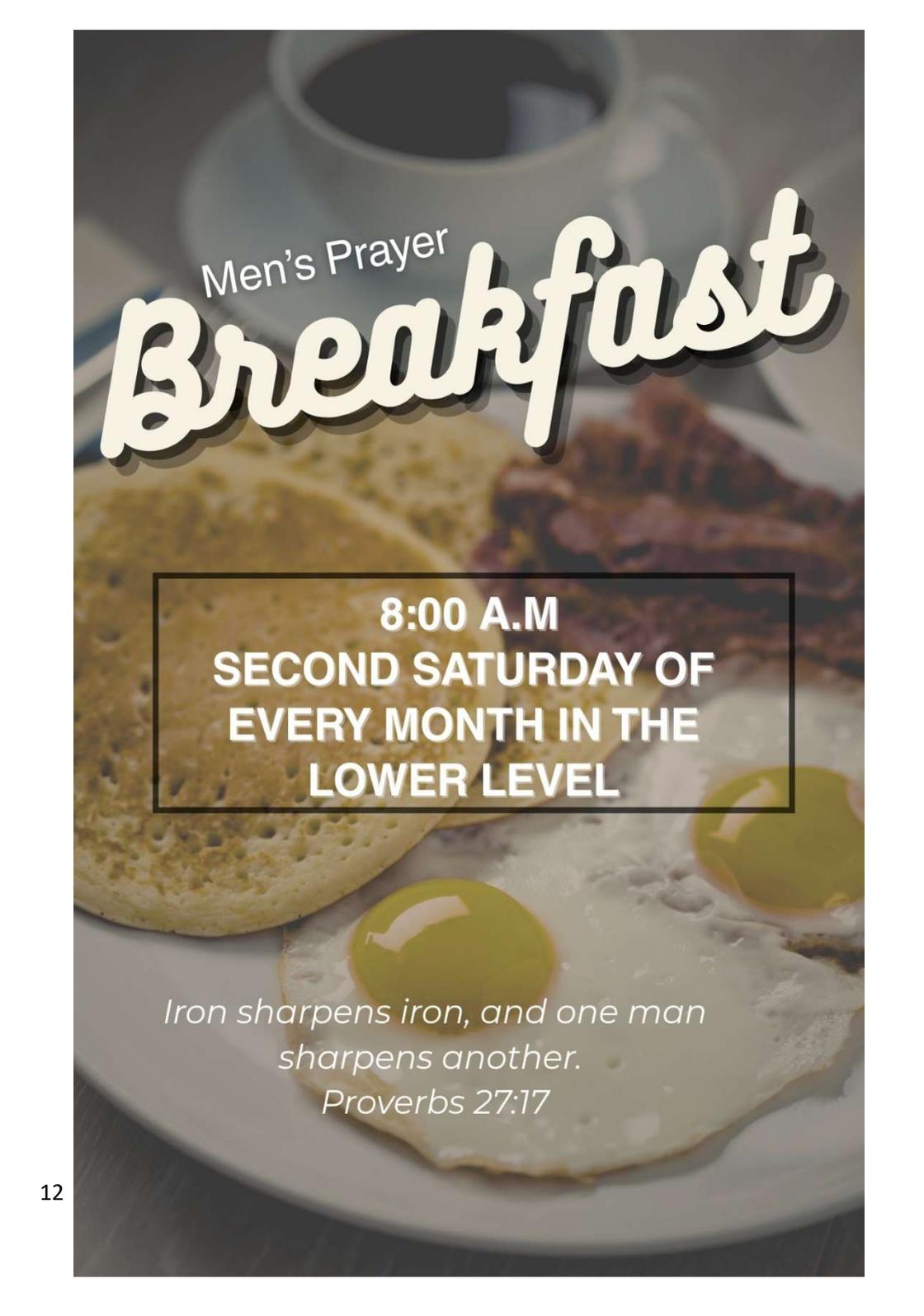
3/30 ED ARP

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

NO MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9AM Worship	4PM Social Ministry Mtg. 6PM Bible Study		6-7PM Confirmation 6-8PM Food Pantry 6PM Lenten Meal 7PM Service	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Saturday Service
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9AM Worship 10AM Coffee & Convo	6PM Bible Study	8AM Worship and Music Mtg. 4PM Property Mtg. 6PM Christian Ed. Mtg.	6-8PM Food Pantry 6PM Lenten Meal 7PM Service	9-11AM Food Pantry		8AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 5PM Saturday Service
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9AM Worship 10AM Council Mtg.	5:30PM Meal at Zion 6:30PM Annual Luther Properties Mtg. 6PM Bible Study	1PM Sarah Circle	6-7PM Confirmation 6-8PM Food Pantry 6PM Lenten Meal 7PM Service	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM GANG 11AM Service at BHCC 2:30PM Bingo at BHCC		5PM Saturday Service
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9AM Worship	6PM Bible Study	12-4PM Quilting	6-8PM Food Pantry 6PM Lenten Meal 7PM Service	9-11AM Food Pantry		5PM Saturday Service



Men's Prayer
Breakfast

8:00 A.M
SECOND SATURDAY OF
EVERY MONTH IN THE
LOWER LEVEL

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man
sharpens another.*

Proverbs 27:17

ST. PATRICK'S DAY



**God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains
creation, bless you now and always.**



Sarah Circle will meet Tuesday, March 17th at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Janene Anderson is the Hostess and Patty Turner is the lesson leader. All are welcome!



St James GANG

The St James GANG will meet on **March 19th** in the Fellowship Hall. Our speaker is Ann McGlynn from Tapestry Farms - It's been quite a while since we've heard how things are going for the immigrants they help. This will be a good subject to hear about these days.

Bring your own lunch, desserts and beverages will be provided. Please sign up to come and bring a guest. See you there!

Pat Larson
563-343-2142



From the Quilt Block

There is a basket in the narthex containing quilt kits. If you would like to help with this ministry and have a sewing machine, you can pick up one or more of the kits supplied, take it/them home and, at your leisure, sew the strips together with ½ inch seam allowances. Return the finished tops to the office at church and look for your tops in finished quilts on the quilt rack in the Narthex.

Our next quilt day will be March 24th from noon to 4:00 pm.

During Lent WELCA will be collecting supplies for Personal Care Kits:

- 1 light weight Bath size towel (20"x40" to 27"x52)
- 2-3 Bath size bars of soap totaling 8-9 Ounces in original wrapping
- 1 Adult size toothbrush in original wrapping Multi packs are accepted 1 metal nail clippers (Attached file Optional)

- *We still have combs left from our last collection.*

Please donate only the items listed. Thank you!

Pieces be with you,

Shirley Richlen



Social Ministry News

Social Ministry will be having a meeting on **March 2nd, at 4:00 p.m.** in the conference room.

We will be serving a meal at Zion on **March 23rd**, and we play Bingo with the residents at Bettendorf Health Care on **March 19th**.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Judy Larson at 563-340-7902!



During January, the Property Committee (and others) came together and trimmed the trees on the property. Because they rented the equipment and did the work themselves (on two different days!) they saved the Church over \$5000!!

Those who volunteered to chip the limbs were:

Jason Forari

Anna Forari

Ron Mekalson

Kelly Crooks

Troy Larkin

Ryan Martin

Kane Schmidt

Dave Schmidt

Fritz Voss

Make sure to give them a big THANK YOU when you see them next!

March Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher
3/1/2026	Jason Forari	Shirley Richlen	Dex Hewlett	Melissa Forari	Anna Forari
Lenten Wed - 3/4/2026	Not Needed	Not Needed	Not Needed	Kelly Crooks	Not Needed
3/8/26	Pat Larson	Judie Brooks	Velvet Collison	Ryan Martin	Ellen Hogbin
Lenten Wed - 3/11/26	Not Needed	Not Needed	Not Needed	Kelly Crooks	Not Needed
3/15/26	Tom Sladky	Ellen Hogbin	Jude Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols
Lenten Wed - 3/18/2026	Not Needed	Not Needed	Not Needed	Kelly Crooks	Not Needed
3/22/26	Judie Brooks	Amanda Southwell	Edi Southwell	Ryan Martin	Shirley Richlen
Lenten Wed - 3/25/2026	Not Needed	Not Needed	Not Needed	Kelly Crooks	Not Needed
Palm Sunday 3/29/26	Tom Sladky	Justina Pessein	Eli Pessein	Kelly Crooks	Ron Mekalson

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138; marybusdvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:

Madlyn Wulgaert; stjamesbett@gmail.com

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;
kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;
madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, Lynn Chamberlain, Bev Chappen, Sandy Henry, Frieda
Houldsworth, **Jeryl Krumbholz, Jim Krumbholz,**
Doug Larson, LaVonne Mienke

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa),

Annette & Rick (Steve & Sue Miller & Pat Sorenson's sister
& brother-in-law), **Becky** (sister of Ellen Hogbin)

Char (Bryce's Grandmother), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister),

Drew (Pat Larson's friend), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley),

Hattie (Frieda's sister), **Joe** (Janene's son-in-law), **Karen and Ed** (Shirley's
Aunt and Uncle), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Lylah** (friend of Noa),

Mark (friend of Jason Forari), **Megan** (friend of Deb Crooks), **Michelle**
(friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's

brother), **Stan** (relative of Fritz Voss), **Stella** (friend of Ellen Hogbin),

Steve (friend of Pat Larson), **Wally** (Frieda's nephew)

Those Whose Duty it is to Protect Others

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)

LT. **Chris** Tribble USN (Erik & Joleen Bakken's friend).

CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)

Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)

Tyler McLaughlin, First Responder (Family of Pat Larson)

*If you need to add or remove someone from
the prayer list, please contact the church office.*