

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

March 2012



The festival of St. Patrick is soon to be upon us.

Just about everyone I know is aware that, in honor of the Saint, it will be the day for the "wearing of the green." And, if the tradition holds true, it will also be the day for green beer, green ties, green socks, and the green dying of the Chicago River.

So, if green isn't your favorite color, you might want to hear about a place where green is in mighty short supply: the Aleutian island of Kiska.

I don't know how it is now, but way back when about the only thing on Kiska was a military base. Here and there a few sprigs of grass struggled for survival, and a small number of hardy shrubs blossomed for a few weeks during the brief summer.

That's it. Kiska had no green trees. Because it was so barren, the post's camouflage unit decided to build a tree. A frame was constructed of wire and canvas. To the trunk they attached some branches, glued on some plastic leaves, and put a fence around it with a sign, saying, "Kiska National Forest."

It was a pretty poor forest, but it was the best they could do.

You know, with all our technology and in spite of all our scientific breakthroughs, we still can't make a living tree from scratch. The best we can come up with is a second-rate substitute. That's true in other areas too.

Since the Fall, humankind has been trying to save itself. In that endeavor we have failed in a monumental way. This is why the Lord sent His Son to do a job nobody else could do. Jesus came to live for us, die for us, rise for us, and win our redemption and our salvation. His unique story is worth telling.

This is exactly what St. Patrick did. An ex-slave, Patrick returned to the land where he had once been robbed of his freedom, so he might tell of the eternal freedom the Christ has won for all.
(From a devotion originally written for "By the Way" and shared on The Lutheran Hour)

May we, as well, share this wonderful, saving message of Jesus Christ with others.

Blessings,

Pastor Dan



What's the Point of Penitence?

One thing people all over the world hate to talk about, is how they might be wrong. Nearly everyone wants to reflect on how they might be right, but if you push on a topic that might be in error, you can get a person's hackles up in a hurry. Nobody likes to be wrong, and even worse, nobody likes to have other people find out how wrong they are. In matters of degree, it's one thing to be wrong and know it... and yet another thing for other people to know we're wrong, and call us on it.

Pride is a dangerous vice, and one that hounds us everywhere we go. Whether we're tempted to be prideful in our work, or in our relationships, or even our churchly activities, that pride can be disastrous. Pride poisons our relationships between fellow believers in the Body of Christ, it tramples on other people to get what we want, and it ultimately shows us to be idolaters... fully in love with, and worshipping, ourselves. From the pastor who refuses to reform false teaching, to the lay person who holds a congregation hostage to their worship demands, or the politicking of clergy and laity for power in man-made bureaucracy, the Church of Christ is no less infected with idolatrous pride than the rest of the world is. It begins when we refuse to be under authority to

anyone or anything but ourselves. It flourishes in the trampling of other people's consciences, and what is due to them in Christian love. It breaches the boundaries of vocation, taking what is not given to them, and abusing the rights of others with overt coercion, passive-aggression, or politics. At its end, when this noxious vine produces its fruit in full season, it brings about the death of old friendships, the undermining of faith, and a heart too hardened to ask God for desperately needed forgiveness. Make no mistake, pride is a deadly sin, and we must be on guard against it everywhere—especially in the Church.

Knowing our weakness and the perilous enemies which pursue us, God has not left us abandoned. Rather, He has given us a gift beyond measure—a means of grace that kills the sin of pride, and begins to heal what pride works to destroy: He has given us repentance. Against our sinful nature which drives us to hide our errors, God gives us a gift of forgiveness through the means of faith and repentance. When Christ's Word reaches down deeply in our hearts and convicts us of our pride and self-idolatry, His Spirit leads us to confess our sins, both to ourselves and to our neighbors... and to our pastors, whose vocation it is to speak Christ's promised Word of

forgiveness and life to the penitent sinner. Without this wonderful gift, we would be left to rot in our calcified pride, ultimately to the damnation of our souls forever in hell—for God will not share His throne of glory with any creature, and certainly not with prideful man. But as our loving God seems always desirous to do, He offers us what we really need, to save us from the hell we work so hard to deserve.

As we enter Lent, I put the question before you, as I must also put it before myself: where is the pride in my life that is killing me, wounding my neighbor, and offending the majesty of Almighty God? Where does my pride lead me to push beyond the boundaries of my vocation, and take liberties with that which is not given to me? Where has my failure with the things properly given to me, been hidden by my pride, and thus left unconfessed, and unforgiven? As we uncover these things in ourselves, and the Word of Christ drives us by faith and penitence to leave our evil behind and embrace the good, we have the sure Word of Christ which also speaks to us forgiveness, life, and salvation. May the blessing of Lent be to us, a death to our pride, and life renewed in Christ. Amen.

Pastor Brad

Worshipping with Intention

How often do we truly worship with intention? Otherwise stated, how often do we enter into worship seeking to receive every blessing being offered therein ?

To be clear, we cannot by any action on our part add one single iota of grace to that which God already freely gives in Word and Sacrament. Just as Salvation comes to us as a free gift of God by Grace through Faith and no effort can compel them, the Blessings found in Word and Sacrament are abundant as given and cannot be increased by any human effort on our part. God is always where he promises to be: in the Word and in the Wine Bread. No matter what we do, we cannot make God “more present.” We can, however, prepare to properly receive Him rightly in faith and repentance.

Consider the following analogy: Imagine that you have been invited to the home of a wealthy chef for dinner. He lays out a

splendid feast prepared with the finest ingredients and offers you the best of everything. Could you increase the bounty of this feast beyond what this great man freely offers? Not at all. On the other hand, there are certainly steps that we could take to get the most out of that great meal, ranging from not filling up on food from a rival chef to how we chose to receive the meal set before us.

Over the next few months, I would like to suggest a few choices that we could make that would enhance our worship, taking full advantage of the blessings being offered us. This month, allow me to suggest that we can all prepare ourselves for Worship. One very concrete way would be to read the Lectionary/Scripture Readings in advance of the service. You may have noticed that every week the Scripture Readings for the coming week are printed in the bulletin. Why not add reading them to your daily devotions? Then when the

Pastor reads and preaches from the text, your mind will already be primed, having considered the themes offered therein.

Another choice I commend to you is to truly use the moments before worship as a time of spiritual preparation. As the Prelude begins, let your conversation cease and turn to prayer instead. Allow your focus to shift from the concerns of the world to those of God. If you are at a loss of what to pray, the Lutheran Service Book in your pew can be an aid; inside the front cover are several prayers appropriate to preparing for worship. As we quiet our thoughts and prepare our hearts for worship we may soon find that we are made into a more pliable clay, ready to be shaped by God through the proclamation of His Word and reception of His Sacraments.

Blessings!

DVP (Denes Van Parys)

Men's Breakfast / Bible Study March 17th

Join us **Saturday, March 17th** at **7 am** for a delicious breakfast, wonderful fellowship, and in-depth Bible Study. We are going through the series “Stuff They Didn’t Teach Me in Sunday School.” This month our topic is: “Joseph and the Amazing – Hey, Wait!!!” (Genesis 37). *Pastor Dan*



Preschool News

www.littlelambstacoma.com

Registration for the 2012-2013 preschool year is underway. We serve our congregation and community families who have 3 year olds or young 4 year old children. We are a Christ-centered preschool with a mission goal of “Sharing Christ, Feeding Lambs.” If you or someone you know is interested in the preschool please visit www.littlelambstacoma.com or contact the church office at 253-473-4848.

Thank you to all the families who came for the “Tea and Talk.” It is very heartwarming to see the relationships grow between preschool and congregational families!

March 4th is Lutheran Schools Sunday and our preschool will again be using the display case at the bottom of the L-shaped stairs below the narthex to showcase our preschool. Please check it out!

Thank you to all the members who give to the preschool through their Thrivent Choice Dollar Donations. It is truly appreciated as an awesome gift from God. Thank you.

As always, please continue to pray for our preschool and families.

Bonnie Jean Huset
Preschool Director / Teacher



Women in Mission

Weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 9:15 am.

Weekly Quilting on Tuesdays at 10 am.

Mites collected on March 11th
Seafarers Auxiliary – March 27th

Lutheran Women and Girls

Washington – Alaska District Lutheran Women’s Missionary League invites YOU to Olympia June 22-24 to attend our convention. TEENS, there are special programs just for you! Have Mom come with you. Young women 18-35 also have special times together with women who are “serving the

Lord with Gladness.” All women of Good Shepherd are urged to “Follow Jesus – Walk the Path” June 22-24. Pray about this. Registration deadline is May 15th. More info available on displays.

Saturday, April 21st is the Spring Rally at Prince of Peace, Lakewood. Plan to attend and hear more about the Convention.

Don’t forget Mites – small amounts add up!

Serving the Lord with Gladness
Jane Oberg

Brunch & Bible Study and Pink Shoe Club

The Women’s Brunch & Bible Study and Girls’ Pink Shoe Club will meet on **Saturday, March 10th** at **9:30 am** with a shared breakfast followed by a Bible Study for the ladies and activities with

Miss Sue for the girls. We will end promptly at 11:30 am. If you need babysitting, please call the office at 473-4848 in advance. All ladies “young” through “old” are welcome to attend.

TAKING ON SOMETHING FOR LENT: LUTHER'S CATECHISMS

Lent is a time for spiritual discipline. Often people will choose to give something up for Lent as a type of spiritual discipline. Instead, this Lent, we will take on something. We will explore the Six Chief Parts of Luther's Catechisms in our midweek Lenten evening services.

- **Ash Wednesday (Feb 22):** The Greatest of These is Love – The Ten Commandments
- **Lenten Midweek 2 (Feb 29):** This I Believe – The Apostle's Creed
- **Lenten Midweek 3 (Mar 7):** Our Father Who Is in heaven – The Lord's Prayer
- **Lenten Midweek 4 (Mar 14):** The Washing of Regeneration – Holy Baptism
- **Lenten Midweek 5 (Mar 21):** We Are Forgiven – The Office of the Keys
- **Lenten Midweek 6 (Mar 28):** We Eat a Holy Supper – The Sacrament of the Altar
- **Maundy Thursday (Apr 5):** On the Night When He Was Betrayed
- **Good Friday (Apr 6):** It Is Finished
- **Easter Sunday (Apr 8):** Don't Seek the Living Among the Dead

Since Luther's Catechisms are considered the "laymen's Bible," you may wish to read the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine from Luther's Small Catechism in preparation for and as a routine during this Lenten season.

Join us this Lenten Season as we Take on Something for Lent: Luther's Catechisms.

Lunch Bunch News

How well do you know some of the other members of Good Shepherd? One of the ways to become better acquainted is through fellowship meetings, like... **THE LUNCH BUNCH!** We meet the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 11:30 am with a devotion by Pastor Dan, followed by a shared meal. For about another hour we have various activities for fellowship, play games such as Bingo, have a speaker, or watch a video of a religious music group, etc. Our programs vary. During the summer

months, we rent a bus from Concordia and go on outings of various kinds. We would be thrilled if YOU would come and check us out. Maybe you might like what we do and plan to attend more often.

Our next meeting is **Tuesday, March 6th**.

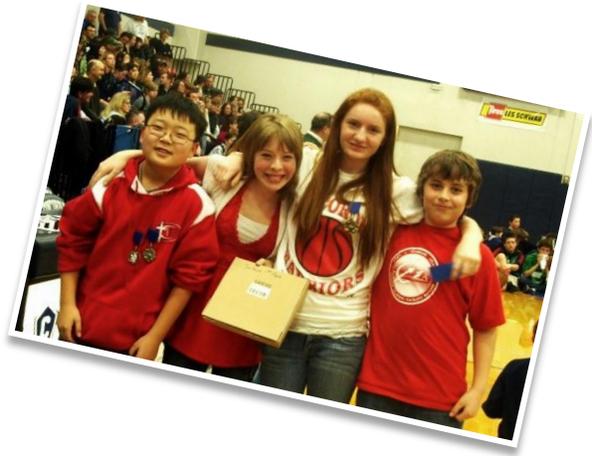
Pastor Ken Boetcher

Church Cleaning & Egg Stuffing Day

Saturday, March 31st, from **9 am – 12 noon** our church members will come together to clean our sanctuary. We are asking for all hands on deck to help with windows, pews, dusting, and more. Please bring cleaning supplies if you have them available.

For our less active members, we are asking for help in stuffing eggs for our Annual Easter Egg Hunt. Donations of candy or money can be brought to the church of office anytime. Thank you to all who will help make this year's Spring Cleaning & Egg Stuffing a great success!

Now enrolling for Fall 2012:



- **The Good Shepherd's Little Lambs Preschool**
- **Concordia Lutheran School**
- **Mount Rainier Lutheran High**

Littlelambstacoma.com or 253-473-4848

ConcordiaTacoma.com or 253-475-9513

MRLH.org or 253-284-4433