



Peace Lutheran Church

3340 Eleventh Avenue South,
Great Falls, Montana 59405

761-7343

The Rev. Steven Schlund, Pastor

Office: 761-7343

Home: 952-4567

www.peacelutherangreatfalls.org

Pastor Schlund: Peacepastor@bresnan.net

Peace's secretary: Peacesecretary@bresnan.net

February, 2016

Why Lent?

February 2016

Lent is a period of forty days (excluding Sundays) which begins every year on Ash Wednesday (sometime between February 4th and March 10th) and concludes on the day before Easter. When I was a young boy, Lent was a big deal. Wednesday evening services were a given. To not attend was unthinkable. Today, it is much different. Lent is NOT a big deal for many people, even active church members. It is no longer a part of our American culture (if it ever was) and may be virtually unknown outside of Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and other liturgical church bodies. Why is this so? Perhaps people don't know the reason for Lent. What *is* Lent all about?

For many people, Lent is all about ashes on the forehead during the Ash Wednesday service. When my son went away to college and attended a local Lutheran congregation on Ash Wednesday, he was incensed to find that the congregation didn't practice the imposition of ashes. He called me and said, "How can you have Ash Wednesday without ashes?" People are excited to get the ashes and may look proudly into a mirror at home after the service to see how their ashen cross is holding up.

For many people, Lent is all about giving up something. Whether it's chocolate, television, or Facebook, people talk about giving up something they normally enjoy (nobody tries to give up Brussel sprouts) for Lent. Often, people will share (whether you ask them or not) how tough their ordeal is and they will proudly proclaim their success in giving up what they gave up when the fast comes to an end Easter.

For many people, Lent is all about Wednesday evening worship services. It is different going to church at night than in the morning. We sing the traditional Lenten hymns and often hear the story of our Lord's Passion. I'm sure some people also think that they are a little better off with God for having gone to church twice in one week when they attend Lenten services. Conversely, some people may not attend Lenten services if they feel no need to since they have put in their weekly hour of worship time on Sunday.

If you think Lent is all about doing things to impress God, you have gravely misunderstood the purpose of Lent. In the Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday, Jesus warns us, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 6:1) If you get ashes on your forehead, fast (abstain from something), or attending extra worship services so that you might get special blessing, Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward." (Matt. 6:16) There is no eternal reward from God for those who are trying to impress Him.

Lent is not about showing God how good and pious we are through our Lent traditions. Lent is about reminding ourselves about how evil and sinful we are through our Lent traditions. The ashes remind us that we are dust and shall return to dust when we die. Fasting or giving up something can, in some small way, remind us of and direct our attention to what Jesus gave up for us. He gave up His throne in heaven to become a human being like us. He gave up His life on a cross to endure death and hell for us and to pay the debt of our sin. Attending extra worship services allow us the joyful opportunity to hear more about God's love and plan of salvation for us in detail, to be strengthened in our faith, and to be encouraged in our lives as we face evil times in the future.

In short, Lent is all about Jesus – His perfect life and sacrificial death for us and for our salvation. Take time to explore and participate in our Lenten traditions. May all of our traditions of Lent – special home devotional books, Wednesday evening worship services, ashes, fasting, and so on – draw your attention to Jesus and strengthen your faith. THAT is why we have Lent.

In Christ,
Pastor Steven R. Schlund

T

H

A

N

K

S

TO

Everyone who donated baby items for the layettes that are taken to the hospital by Denice Combs.

Everyone who made fleece blankets for Denice Combs' layettes.

Val Martin and Gloria Creek for playing the organ during our worship services.

Pat Lewis for preaching while Pastor Schlund was in Fort Wayne.

All those who volunteer to teach Sunday school, Bible class, and midweek classes on Sundays and Wednesdays.

All those people who offer their time and talents to be the elected leaders in our congregation.

Idell Croskrey for changing the banners and paraments.

Everyone on the Prayer Chain for their time and prayers.

Everyone who has donated treats for our fellowship time.

All of the men who volunteer to usher.

Cheri Magnuson for cleaning the Communion linens.

All of the ladies and gentlemen who provide devotions and hymn singing for the people at Park Place, Benefis Extended Care, Highgate House and Bee Hive Homes.

All of the quilters for the beautiful quilts you make all year.

This list is not inclusive. Please accept our apologies if we have missed giving you credit for serving the Lord in any fashion. We know that the Lord knows your service to Him.

Lenten schedule

Places of the Passion - The scenes of Lent are familiar: the upper room, the garden of Gethsemane, the halls of Pontius Pilate, and the hills of Golgotha. These are the places we remember when we meditate on our Lord's Passion. When Jesus enters these Places of the Passion, He never leaves them as He found them. He transforms each into a place of hope, wonder, and salvation. *Places of the Passion* is the theme for our special Wednesday Lenten worship services and Holy Week services in 2016 this year. There will be a soup supper every Wednesday at 6:00 PM. Worship begins at 7:00 PM.

Date	Theme	Text
February 10 (Ash Wednesday)	"A Place At the Table For You"	Luke 22:1-13
February 17	"The Upper Room: A Place of Service"	Luke 22:14-38
February 24	"Gethsemane: A Place of Strength"	Luke 22:39-46
March 2	"The Betrayal: A Place of Eternal Love"	Luke 22:46-53
March 9	"The Courtyard: A Place of Renewal"	Luke 22:54-62
March 16	"The Trial: A Place of God's Will"	Luke 22:63-23:25
March 24 (Maundy Thursday)	"The Last Supper: A Place of Forgiveness"	Luke 22:14-23
March 25 (Good Friday)	"Golgotha: A Place of Simple Love"	Luke 23:33-39

LWML

- ♥ **Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 10 at 7:00 p.m. with a Bible study.** All ladies of Peace are invited and encouraged to come and join us! We will establish a nominating committee for the elections in May. Remember your Mite Boxes!
- ♥ **Thank you to everyone who made fleece blankets or donated items for the layettes that Denice Combs takes to the hospital to be given to mothers who don't have clothes to put their newborn babies in to take them home.** Thank you, **Val Martin**, for showing us how to make the blankets.
- ♥ **We will be hosting the Ash Wednesday soup supper at Peace on February 10 at 6 p.m.** Laura and Ruth will be making soup. If you would like to help in any way, please contact Laura or Ruth.
- ♥ **Remember to bring your new soap for Soap Sunday on the second Sunday of each month.** Soap collected will go to Lutheran World Relief. Thanks for your continued support.
- ♥ **Remember that Purple Pockets are due to Linda Aguiar at the end of March.** This money goes to mission work both locally and afar. Thanks for your continued support.



February Anniversaries

Feb. 1 Ted and Nancy Barnes
 Feb. 4 Bernie and Phyllis Schaaf



Baptismal Anniversaries

February 4 Rebecca Gerard
 8 Jamie Franczyk
 9 Connie Juden
 20 Barbara Clark



INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

John Birkholz
Tami Birkholz, John's sister-in-law who is battling a rare skin tissue disorder
Jane Hering
Connie Juden
Bill and Dorothy Neuman

Our members who are away serving in the military are **Kurt Mueller and Michael Lewis**.

Please pray for these families who have lost loved ones: **June Meier**, whose daughter June Foard died unexpectedly January 14. **Dorothy Furr**, whose mother died of cancer January 15

Game Night set

You are invited to Game Night every 3rd Saturday of the month from 6 to 8 p.m. This month it is February 20. You are welcome to bring a snack to share and your favorite game to play! Come and join the fun!

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2015		
CHURCH INCOME	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
Regular Offerings	\$132,397.96	\$ 133,320.00
Other Income	\$ 5,109.99	\$ 1,080.00
Total Income	\$137,507.95	\$ 134,400.00
Church Expenses		
Personnel/Benefits	\$ 81,205.75	\$ 80,440.00
Administrative	\$ 7,548.55	\$ 8,610.00
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 22,986.05	\$ 24,150.00
Missions	\$ 11,244.90	\$ 11,500.00
Christian Education	\$ 3,710.31	\$ 5,250.00
Total Expenses	\$126,695.56	\$ 129,950.00
Net Church Income	\$ 10,812.39	\$ 4,450.00

Ladies Bible study schedule

With February's arrival we begin our Lenten Walk with the special Wednesday evening services, that enrich our preparation for Holy Week and Easter. Let's make attending as many as possible a priority! This month also marks the start of a new Bible study for the FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS. They will begin studying II CORINTHIANS. Bible class will be held on February 5th, 12th, and 26th from 1-3 pm at the home of Ann Nimmick, 2327 15th Ave. So. Come and join in the new Bible study!

Assisted Living Ministry continues with a devotion and hymn singing meeting at the following locations. Tuesday, February 9th ladies and gentlemen will meet at 11 a.m. at Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave. So. On Friday, February 19th at 11:45 a.m. the group will meet for a no host lunch at Eddie's Supper Club, 3725 2nd Ave. No. After lunch many will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave So. During the confining months of winter residents especially appreciate being visited with God's Word and singing hymns!

Applying Biblical Teachings

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

In this one sentence, Jesus’ words frame the entire Gospel. As literature, these words are unequaled. As substance, they are beyond all human understanding.

If these words said that God loved His Son, we could understand that, for His Son was obedient unto Him, even unto death. If these words said that God loved the heavenly angels, we could understand that, for they serve Him day and night. But these words are spoken to God’s enemies, to humanity, to us. This is beyond our comprehension.

Think about it: God so loved the world, a world that does not thank or praise Him, but disobeys, despises, rejects and reviles Him and His Word, that He gave His only Son unto death to save the world. Out of His love, a love beyond our understanding, without any goodness or worthiness in us, the Father gave and continues to give. It is this love which St. Paul describes in Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

The Son so loved the Father that in obedience at Gethsemane, He prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done” (Matt. 26:42). Then out of love that surpasses all human understanding, He joyously and gladly shouldered all the sins of the world on Himself and laid down His life on the cross as payment for them.

Only in faith, that which is the working of the Holy Spirit through water and the Word, can this unexplainable giving in love be looked upon without being considered foolishness. To lovingly give abundantly over and over to a weak, poor, wretched enemy who constantly is attacking and provoking an overwhelming destructive response is foolishness. But not to God.

To a watching world, Christian giving in love is also foolishness and not understood. Each time the offering plate is passed and Christians give out of love, the world sees this as foolish, misguided and downright stupid. The world’s response echoes Paul’s words to the church at Corinth: “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).

By the power of the Gospel, we give this resounding reply to the world: We believe, without full understanding, that “. . . God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” And because God first loved us and gave, we love Him. In response to His love, we gladly give as we have been given.