



# The AGAPE NEWS (#18)

## THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

A BI-WEEKLY "BLOG-LIKE" NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH



**ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, CALGARY AB – February 22, 2021**

Proclaiming the love of Jesus Christ in Bridgeland since 1913

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**Hello dear SMLC Family and friends!**

I greet you in the holy name of our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

How are you holding so far?

My family and I are doing OK, thank God. Kids are in school, my wife Thais is working from home and all are fairly healthy, including cookie, our puppy.

So yes, we are already in the Lenten period. The time of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with midday prayer on Holy Saturday. Lent is the first part of the "Time of Easter". This season invites us into the story of Jesus' sacrificial death and His glorious resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus gives proof that our salvation has been completed and that our hope for eternal life with God is secure.

Easter was the major celebration of the Early Church, which also set aside a period of preparation to celebrate the feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter). Lent was a period of preparation first prescribed for baptismal

candidates. During this period, the candidates were examined in preparation for Baptism at the Easter (or Paschal) Vigil. Later, these forty days were associated with Jesus' forty days in the desert prior to His temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and with the forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness (Numbers 14:34), becoming a period of preparation for every Christian.

The Sundays during this season are not "of Lent" but "in Lent". Thus, the Sundays retain an Easter tone and may be less solemn than the midweek services that some congregations typically offer. The observances of Lent are concrete reminders of the greater solemnity of this season, yet Lutherans emphasize the Gospel of Christ as central even to this penitential season. Remember: it's not about "stuff you do" to God, but the work God did in Christ to save you from your sins and from yourself!

In Lent, we prepare our hearts to receive our crucified and risen Lord. These are important scripture passages for this period, so you can check them out in your private devotions: Psalm 51, Isaiah 58:6-12, Joel 2:12-13, Matthew 4:1-11, Matthew 6:1-18 and Romans 6:1-4.

#### LENTEN PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS:

- † The church is decorated in violet, the colour of royalty and repentance. This period of repentance is marked by a purposeful turning away from our sin and turning toward Christ for His mercy and forgiveness.
- † Ash Wednesday begins the observance of Lent. Ashes on the forehead is a sign of penitence and a reminder that we, too, shall die and therefore need forgiveness from Jesus. Black may be used to decorate the church on Ash Wednesday.
- † *Alleluia* is the Hebrew word for "Praise the Lord". It is a joyous expression of faith in God. During Lent, we forgo using this joyous response in order to focus on our need for repentance and faith.
- † As in Advent, so in Lent, we do not sing the Gloria in Excelsis in the Divine Service. We do this to focus our worship on repentance.
- † Fasting is giving up eating at a particular meal or time in order to devote that time to prayer and meditation on the Word of God.

† Many churches observe Lent by gathering for midweek services. These additional times of worship and gathering around God’s Word help us prepare to observe Holy Week and celebrate Easter

May God bless your preparations during this holy season and help you focus on Jesus, so you may be blessed. And don’t forget: you are under God’s wings of “agape” (God’s unconditional love towards us, even though we don’t deserve it).

In His service,

Your pastor

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**NOTE ABOUT THE PANDEMIC:** (From the last editions of the Agape News)

We at SMLC continue to be cautious and try to follow the protocols to protect each other. We thank God for the fact that we are still able to come to church for worship and some fellowship, even when all looks different. By promoting this as best as we can, we try to keep God’s three first Commandments. By the way, we have updated our information about our protocols on our website.

**Please note:**

1 - If you have any symptoms, if you feel unwell, please **get tested immediately** and **stay home**: refrain from coming for the worship services. You may watch us from home (our website or YouTube) until you recover fully.

2 - **If you test positive for Covid-19, you MUST call us as soon as possible, especially if you have attended church.** Your church needs to know, we’re all liable and we need to be responsible. You may call either the office, or our chairman Peter Graumann or myself, your pastor. We will never disclose your name. You may find the contact numbers at the end of this newsletter.

And remember: Despite of the bad times we are living these days, we should always trust God’s promises that HE IS WITH US in every situation and a stronghold in every trouble. And “trouble” in all around us! However, our God is stronger than any trouble we may experience! Please continue to pray for our church, our families and for the world. And now...enjoy your reading!

## A SMALL DOSE OF GOD'S WORD FOR YOU TODAY:

(From the Psalm for the Second Sunday in Lent) **PSALM 22**

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you, offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you, offspring of Israel! Psalm 22:23

### AUF DEUTSCH:

Die ihr den HERRN fürchtet, lobt ihn! Ihr alle vom Samen Jakobs, ehrt ihn; und scheue dich vor ihm, du ganzer Same Israels!



## NEWS FROM SMLC.

**1 – BIBLE STUDIES AND LENTEN DEVOTIONS:** As we have now entered the holy season of Lent, we will put our bible studies on hold for this period. Instead of having bible studies, we will have weekly Lenten evening devotions every Wednesday evening. Note: it is not live streaming, but it will be available on our website and YouTube channel, so you can take your time with your family (or by yourself) and watch it until the Holy Week. We will resume the bible studies after Easter.

**2 – BIBLY STUDY FOR YOUTH:** Elizabeth continues to offer online bible study for our youth, every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. Note: There's **movie night every second Tuesday at 7 p.m.** All the other Tuesdays, the bible study starts at 7:30 p.m. Please call Elizabeth if you are interested in those. Cell: 1 (306) 715 1191

**3 – ONLINE "CHURCH SCHOOL":** Mrs. Koreen is gathering our kids for a virtual Sunday School that has been renamed to "church school", because it's actually during the week! If you wish your child or grandchild to participate in a fun and educational activity while in a Christian environment, please contact us to get the login info.

**4 - PRAYER REQUESTS:** Send us your prayer requests. We have a “prayer chain” where a group of people (the “prayer warriors”) pray for your needs.

**5 – ONLINE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:** Our virtual coffee hour (it’s literally just one hour) is an opportunity to see each other, especially those who have decided not to come to the in-person Sunday services. It was my initiative to have us get together in a casual moment where we can just check in on each other and keep our Christian fellowship alive in these times of isolation. We are planning in having this get-together every last Sunday of the month. Please join us, if you have access to the internet...we have missed so many of you! See you on our next gathering, **February 28 at 3 p.m.!**

**6 – ISOLATION: LONGLINESS & DEPRESSION:** During this pandemic, social isolation can give way to feelings of loneliness, depression, and hopelessness. However, you are not alone – here are some resources put together by the Lutheran Laymen’s League Canada that can help. If you have access to the internet, you may click here: <https://www.lll.ca/social-isolation>

**7 – CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS’ MEETING:** You are invited to participate in our online congregational meeting on **March 21<sup>st</sup>**. The meeting will be on zoom, at 2 p.m. that Sunday. If you don’t have access to the internet, you may still take part of the meeting over the phone. The invitation will be sent out soon.

**8 - THANK YOU:** Today I want to thank **OUR COUNTERS**. They assist and serve by counting the plate offerings every Sunday and make sure the offerings go to their designated destination: special or designated funds, weekly offerings, monthly offerings etc. In case you wonder who does this job in our church, here they are: Jim & Karen Williams, Gordon & Marilyn Lemke, Lori Salter, Koreen Graumann, Judy Rubleski, Randy Haynes (and sometimes also Andrea Sovary). We should include also Sherry and Paul Luft who served as counters in the recent past. Big thank you, dear counters! "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy". Philippians 1: 3 & 4

**9 – WHAT’S HAPPENING THIS WEEK AND NEXT WEEK?**

Feb 23 (Tues): Online Sunday School (“church school”) for kids @ 4:30 p.m.

Feb 23 (Tues): Online Youth Bible Study @ 7:30 p.m.

Feb 24 (Wed): Online Calgary Circuit pastor’s “winkel”.

Feb 24 (Wed): Recorded Lenten Devotion on YouTube or our website (evening)  
 Feb 25 (Thurs): Online PPC meeting 7 p.m.  
 Feb 28 (Sun): Lenten Worship services (German at 9:30 a.m. / English at 11 a.m.)  
 Feb 28 (Sun): Online coffee fellowship on Zoom at 3 p.m.  
 March 2 (Tue): Online Sunday School (“church school”) for kids @ 4:30 p.m.  
 March 2 (Tues): Online Youth Bible Study @ 7:30 p.m.  
 March 3 (Wed): Recorded Lenten Devotion on YouTube or our website (evening)  
 March 4 (Thurs): Online Board of Elders meeting @ 7 p.m.  
 March 7 (Sun): Lenten worship services @ regular times with the holy communion

**Names of the upcoming Sundays:**

Feb 28: Second Sunday in Lent (Reminiscere)  
 March 7: Third Sunday in Lent (Oculi)

**10 – TIME TO CELEBRATE: BIRTHDAYS**

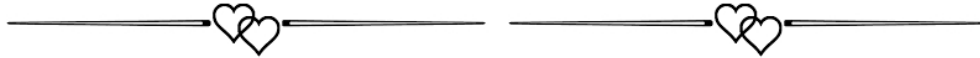
Feb 22 – Steven Cadman  
 Feb 23 – Taylor Becker  
 Feb 24 – Ed Derheim  
 Feb 24 – Paul Rehmann  
 Feb 24 – Al Wolff  
 Feb 25 – Cindy Millar  
 Feb 26 – Theo Dillenberg  
 Feb 27 – David Robak  
 Feb 27 – Christopher Somerville

**NEW BIRTH (BAPTISM) ANNIVERSARIES:**

Feb 22 – Ron Milz  
 Feb 29 – Steven Cadman  
 If any name is missing, please let me know. God bless you all!

**CURRENT & UPCOMING FEASTS, FESTIVALS and COMMEMORATIONS IN THE CHURCH YEAR:**

Feb 23 – Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr  
 Feb 24 – St. Matthias, Apostle  
 March 7 – Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs  
 Look them up, it’s always interesting to learn from those faithful men and women.



## UNSERE DEUTSCHE ECKE! GERMAN BEAUTIFUL HYMNS

Wenn Sie diesen Newsletter am Computer lesen, können Sie hier unten klicken. Hören Sie sich dieses wundervolle Stück von Bach an. Er erzählte die ganze Geschichte der Passion Christi, wie sie vom heiligen Matthäus geschrieben wurde, und verwandelte den Text in erhabene Musik. Dies ist das vollständige Konzert, nehmen Sie sich also Zeit, um es anzuhören. Genießen Sie es!

Matthäus-Passion BWV 244 | (Complete) (Full Concert) (J. S. Bach)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P21qIB0K-Bs>



## AN INSPIRATIONAL STORY

Many years ago, a wealthy man went duck hunting with a hired hand named Sam. They took a horse and carriage, and along the way a rim came off one of the wheels. As Sam hammered it back on, he accidentally hit his finger. Instantly he let go with some bad words. He quickly fell to his knees, asking God's forgiveness. "Lord, it's difficult at times to live the Christian life", he prayed. "Sam" said the man, "I know you're a Christian, but tell me why you struggle so, I'm an atheist, and I don't have problems like that."

Sam didn't know what to say. Just then two ducks flew overhead. The man raised his gun and two shots rang out. "Leave the dead one and go after that wounded

bird!" he shouted. Sam pointed at the duck that was fluttering desperately to escape and said, "I've got an answer for you now, Boss. You said my Christianity isn't any good because I have to struggle so. Well, I'm the wounded duck and struggle to get away from the devil. But you Boss, you're the dead duck!"

That insight fits Paul's description of his Christian experience in [Romans 7:14-25](#).

Struggle is one evidence of God's work in our lives. Forgiveness of sin is available, so don't despair. Remember, dead ducks don't flutter.

–Dennis De Hann, from heavensinspirations.com



## Oh, and now, our “clean joke”:

**The Bible, Through the Eyes of a Child, a continuation from the last Agape News:**

Here's our version of the stories of the Bible if they were to be told by a child.

### Noah

The next important person was Noah. He was a really good guy, but one of his kids was a Ham. Noah built a big boat in his back yard and put his family and a lot of animals in it. He asked his neighbors to join them, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

Next were Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Esau was Jacob's brother, but Jacob was more famous because Esau sold him his birthmark for some pot roast. Jacob had a son, Joseph. Joseph wore a really loud sports coat.





**T**hank you for taking your time to read my newsletter. If you enjoy reading it, let me know!

In His service, **Rev. M. Zeuch**

On February 22, 2021 Anno Domini

Ph: (403) 837-4600

Visit our website: [www.stmatthewlutherancalgary.com](http://www.stmatthewlutherancalgary.com)

### THE STAFF OF ST. MATTHEW

Organist/Pianist: Johnson Philip

Cantor: Dana Salter

Youth Leader: Elizabeth Schieman (306) 715-1191

Secretary: Andrea Sovary (403) 266-1458

Chairman: Peter Graumann (403) 275-2166

Head Elder: Ernest Schulz (403) 239-3966

*Church Office hours are 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday*

Watch us on



*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” Col 3:15*

*„Und der Friede Gottes regiere in euren Herzen; zu diesem seid ihr ja auch berufen in einem Leib; und seid dankbar!“ Kolosser 3, 15*