

PRINTS of PEACE

VOLUME XLXIV, Number 2

FEBRUARY 2021

LENTEN WORSHIP

ASH WEDNESDAY
is Feb. 17th
Services will be held at
10:00am and 7:00pm

Midweek Lenten Worship
services will be on the
following Wednesdays:
2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17
and 3/24 at 7:00pm.

Sunday School Corner



February 2021

Sunday School Lessons

Mark 1:21-28 Jesus heals the man possessed by an evil spirit.

Mark 1:29-39 Jesus reached out to all people.

2 Kings 2:1-12 Elijah is taken up into heaven.

Genesis 9:8-17 God establishes his covenant.

Romans 4:13-25 The promise realized through faith

Stewardship Newsletter Article for February 2021

(Reprinted from the LCMS website)

"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: "But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service. Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK - February 2021



Dear members of Prince of Peace

This has been a sad week for the LC-MS. On Thursday I read: "After much deliberation, the Board of Regents of Concordia College New York has decided that Concordia College will close; classes will cease beginning with the Fall 2021 semester. In addition, the Board agreed to proceed on a formal agreement with Iona College to provide continued education for Concordia's students through a teach-out, and to sell Concordia's Bronxville campus to Iona College."

This is the third of our colleges to close in the last five years. We do few things that are more important than raising up young people to live Christian lives. Luther wrote: "I am afraid that the schools will prove the very gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the heart of the youth." In closing these institutions we are offering young people fewer options of education with a Christian perspective.

As I write this I do so without intending to upset you. It is fundamental to my understanding of life that we face many trials and temptations and that all too often we will fail when we are tried. Despite this we are called to trust that we are partakers in the victory that Jesus won on the cross. Our job is to pick ourselves up and continue on our journey to our Father's side.

In Lutheran theology this is the distinction between righteousness before God (Corum Deo) and either before the world (Corum Mundo) or before men (Corum Hominibus). The world sees the decline in the Lutheran Church's ministry of education and says that we are failures and that is a fair assessment. But just as our standing before God is not lost when we sin so too when we fail we are not condemned to allow that judgment to define the rest of our ministry. In the church we know that our success is based on our relationship with God in Christ.

This does not mean that we can just walk away. If we are called to raise up the next generation in the faith that call mandates that we continue despite our failure.

I'm not a prophet and can't tell you what our church will do that will turn things around but I believe that we can pray for guidance and act on our convictions. The world needs the good news and we are God's voice in this current moment.

We will be entering the season of Lent this coming month. This season has its roots in catechumen's preparation for baptism. That preparation is defined by an admission that we cannot enter into God's presence based on our good works or successes but on the grace of God. The whole ministry of the Church is defined by that grace. On the Wednesdays in Lent we will look at Saint Patrick's Breastplate (the hymn "I Bind Unto Myself Today"), which is a hymn that speaks of our being bound to God by our Baptism.

It is that baptism that gives me the confidence to carry on in confidence that nothing can take away the victory.

Yours in Christ's service
Pastor Kenneth Fosse

**The mission of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is to know Christ
and inspire people to be caring instruments of God
in spreading Christ's love, with joyous enthusiasm, by word and deed.**

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Submitted by Pastor Fosse

“God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does.” — Martin Luther

There is a management theory that believes that people are generally motivated to work for organizations and align their interests with those of the organization and its principals. Even when those interests are not aligned the steward will place a higher value on cooperation than defection. This stewardship theory is contrasted with the agency theory that assumes that people are primarily motivated by self-interests. Both of these theories have limitations and must be qualified but each has an element of truth.

An extreme example of stewardship theory is found in the actions of service people in battle. The most common sense course of action would be to avoid at all costs being in a situation where one's own life is in jeopardy but we know from countless examples of soldiers that many put the organizational goals ahead of their own life. The movie Hacksaw Ridge tells the real life story of Corporal Desmond T. Doss who was a medic who remained on the ridge after the US army was driven off so that he could aid the wounded. It is estimated that he saved the lives of between 80 to 100 soldiers.

So what does this have to do with stewardship at Prince of Peace? We are a gathering of saints called to work together to build up and equip one another to grow in the faith and to compel others by our lives and actions to come to the faith. We know from church history that many people have been converted by the examples of the lives of the faithful irrespective of the doctrinal formulations of the denominations, as important as these are. Similarly many have said that the lives of the faithful have dissuaded them from responding to the message of God's love.

My message this month is first that I want to thank you for all you have done. Thank you for the time you have given to the parish. Thank you for the financial support you have given. Thank you for the compassion and support you have given to others in the name of Christ. Well done good and faithful stewards.

If when you examine yourself you see that you have primarily been motivated by self-interest let me assure you that God still loves you, your baptism has not and never will be rescinded. While you have breath you can still amend your ways and respond to the call to merge your actions with your stated beliefs.

Do so joyfully all that we have in this world and the next are gifts from our heavenly Father. “You have as much laughter as you have faith” (M. Luther, commentary on Romans).

WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At our recent Annual Congregation Meeting held on Sunday, January 24, 2021, two new Board of Directors positions were filled. We welcome Andrew Tess as Director of Stewardship and Sharon Jones as Director of Fundraising.

BOARD MEMBER INSTALLATION THIS MONTH

All members of the Board of Directors will be installed on Sunday February 21, 2021 at both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services. We thank all Board members, past and present, for their service to the church.

The Fundamental Human Condition: A Heart that Defiles

Written by Rev. Dr. Anthony Steinbronn 1/12/2021

Life is all about stories and every person has a story. God, too, has a story – the grand metanarrative – that makes sense of every human story; for the sacred Scriptures make known two kinds of wisdom so that every human being can make sense of, and interpret properly, his or her story in light of His story:

+ a soteriological wisdom: to make us wise unto salvation which is by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15)

+ a hermeneutical wisdom: to help us make sense of life's story in light of His story and the many stories recorded in Scripture (Matthew 13:11, 16-17, 51-52; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Every week, from now until the time of the New Jersey District Convention in mid-May, 2021, we will study a parable of Jesus so that we might benefit from its wisdom and grow in our discipleship as “a wise scribe, trained for the kingdom” (Matthew 13:52).

Matthew 15:10-11, 15-20

10 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” 15 But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” 16 And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

Traveling all the way from Jerusalem to Galilee, several Pharisees and scribes approached Jesus in order to question Him as to why His disciples were not in the habit of washing their hands in the proper way before eating a meal. In response Jesus told them a parable so that they could “hear and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

Later the disciples asked Jesus what He meant when He taught that parable and Matthew 15:10, 11-15 is Matthew's account of His teaching that day.

A defining song of country music was Hank Williams' “Your Cheating Heart,” written in memory of his first wife and her marital unfaithfulness. An even more descriptive country music song about the unfaithfulness of the human heart, sung by Patty Loveless, had this lyrical refrain: “...so blame it on your lying, cheating, cold dead-beating, two-timing, double-dealing, mean-mistreating, loving heart!”

Within the pop genre, many of us are familiar with Bruce Springsteen's song “Hungry Heart” in which the main character is a man with a wife and children in Baltimore. One day he decides to go for a ride and never returns home; instead, he experiences an adulterous affair after meeting a woman in a Kingstown bar. Upon heartfelt reflection, the man acknowledges that he made a wrong turn in life and yet, instead of returning home to his family, he makes his way back to that same Kingstown bar to initiate his next adulterous affair.

A fundamental theme in every person's story is the story of a hungry heart; hungry, not for God's righteous way of living, but hungry for sin. As Springsteen observed in the behaviors of others, “everybody's got a hungry heart.” Paul acknowledged this same universal orientation and guilt before

(Continued on page5)

God when he quoted from Isaiah to God’s people gathered in Rome: “there is no one who is righteous; no not one” (Romans 3:10). “For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

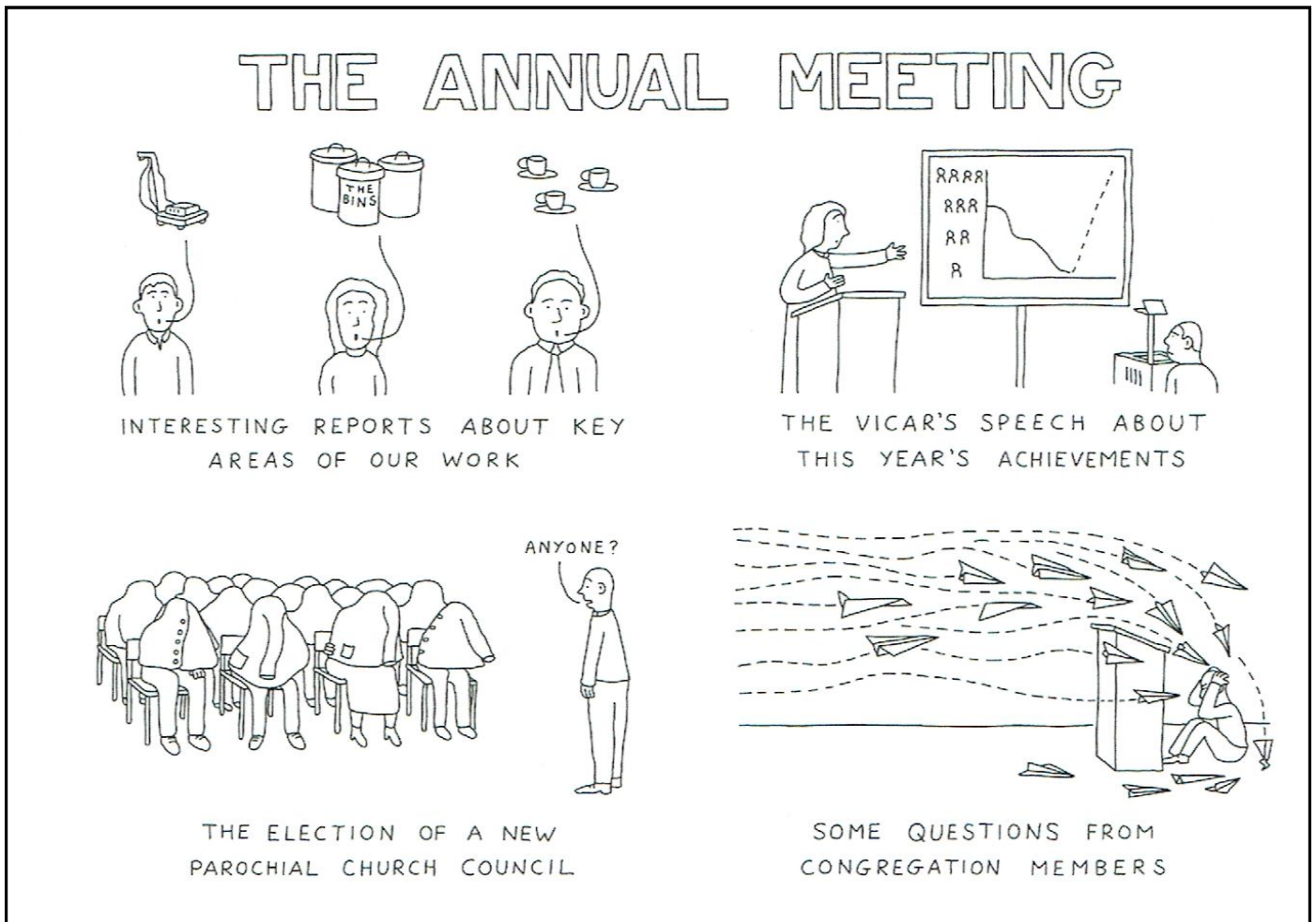
One of the memorable stories from the Scriptures that incorporates several of the sins that Jesus identified that day is the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11): evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality. David had a hungry heart for Bathsheba. He was so hungry for her that he was willing to kill her husband so that he might have her to himself.

God sent Nathan to expose David’s hungry heart so that he could be convicted of his sin before God and before others. David, in his prayer of repentance and faith, asked God to create in him a “clean heart” – a heart that would hunger after God’s righteous design for living (Psalm 51). God, in His mercy, filled the hungry heart of David with His grace and forgiveness.

In closing, let us impress these words from Scripture upon our hearts that address the need of every person for mercy and forgiveness – especially when our hungry hearts accuse and condemn us – that are found in John’s Gospel and his first Epistle:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not condemned...” (John 3:16-18a)

“if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9)



When Prayer Goes Wrong

January 12, 2021 By John T. Pless (reprinted from the Lutheran Witness Magazine)

The Rev. Dr. John T. Pless serves as assistant professor of pastoral ministry and missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He is the author of numerous books including *Martin Luther Preacher of the Cross* and *Handling the Word of Truth*.

Politicians find it expedient to give an occasional nod to God, whoever or whatever they conceive the deity to be. Legislative bodies in the United States have customarily opened sessions with prayer. It is a ceremonial exercise along the lines of the recitation of the pledge of allegiance and is part of the piety of American civil religion that glues many together in bonds of national unity. When Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (Democrat member of the House of Representatives from Kansas City, Mo.), an ordained United Methodist Minister, opened the 117th Congress with prayer last week, he did not so much demonstrate novelty but acted out of the assumption that religion best functions when it embraces pluralism and forsakes all claims to specificity. In such circumstances, prayer becomes a sentimental ornament that decorates national life, offering therapeutic assurance that we are connected in a cosmic web of coexistence.

Yes, at one level, the prayer by Rep. Cleaver might be read as a cute attempt of a clergyman turned politician to be “woke” as he concludes it with not only an “Amen” but also an “Awoman,” never mind that the word Amen, derived from Hebrew, has nothing to do with gender. However, something more is at stake other than grammatical naughtiness. This malformed prayer invites us to reflect more deeply on what it means to pray in accordance with the will of the Triune God and how prayers aligned with that will never measure up to the canons of civil religion.

A now sainted teacher of the church once observed that when orthodoxy goes bad, it gets hard, lifeless and cold as a rock. He continued that when pietism goes bad it becomes soft, decadent and smelly. Now, American civil religion is not the classical pietism of the 17th and 18th centuries, but it does represent a pietism with the endorsement of particular sentiments and a preferred way of life. The strongly held values of American civil religion include tolerance, open inclusivity and self-expression. In the piety of American civil religion, prayer must reflect these three. Rep. Cleaver’s prayer fits the bill, but in doing so, it forsakes any claim to being Christian prayer.

Luther’s distinctions

Martin Luther made many theological distinctions. One of Luther’s distinctions was between “God preached” and “God not preached.” God preached is God as He makes Himself known to us in Christ Jesus, crucified for our sins and raised again for our justification. God preached is God giving us His own name so that we may call upon Him with all boldness and confidence. God *not* preached is unknowable, always distant and inaccessible. When people try to address God not preached, they are abandoned to the echo chambers of their own deluded imagination. They mold God into whatever the imagination dictates. Such is the “God” addressed in the congressman’s prayer, a “God” who is neither here nor there as “the monotheistic god, Brahma, and the god known by many names.” How different is prayer to the God who is the preached God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer offered by Rep. Cleaver was a mockery of prayer as Jesus teaches it. Unlike Rep. Cleaver, disciples of Jesus know to pray in Jesus’ own words: the Lord’s Prayer.

“Amen” does not merely sign off on one’s petitions; it indicates the truthfulness of the prayer itself on the basis of God’s command and promise. The Small Catechism says, “This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen means ‘yes, yes, it shall be so’” (SC, III).

Deceived by God’s name

God has commanded us to pray. In the Large Catechism, Luther reminds us that it is our duty to pray because of God’s commandment (see LC III 4). Luther rightly understands the entire Lord’s Prayer to be the fulfillment of the Second Commandment: “We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks” (SC, I).

Rep. Cleaver's prayer "deceived by God's name" by attempting to identify God apart from His name. He did not address the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed Himself to us by His reliable name, but a god of Rep. Cleaver's own imagination. In Luther's language, this is God not preached. God has not commanded us to pray to gods of other names. In fact, He strictly forbids it.

In the Small Catechism, Luther notes that genuine prayer is founded not only on God's command, but also His promise. God's promise is always prior to our praying. In his "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520), Luther asserts: "For God does not deal, nor has he ever dealt, with man otherwise than through a word of promise, as I have said. We in turn cannot deal with God otherwise than through faith in the Word of his promise" (LW 36:42). There are no promises of God attached to prayers like the one uttered by Rep. Cleaver. God has not revealed His salvation in the concept of a monotheistic God, Brahma, or the multitude of gods manufactured by the human mind.

Christians pray in Jesus' name for He alone is the way, the truth and the life (see John 14:6), recognizing that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Apart from Jesus Christ, human beings have no saving access to God. Luther reminds us that if we seek God apart from Christ, we end up with the devil, thus making demonic prayer a devastating possibility.



**Concordia University, St. Paul Announces
Church Work Student Tuition Guarantee**

*Eligible students will pay \$6,000 in tuition each
academic year*

January 2021 - Concordia University, St. Paul has announced a new church work tuition guarantee that ensures eligible students enrolled in church work programs will pay no more than \$6,000 in tuition each academic year. This move further supports Concordia St. Paul's commitment to prepare more workers for the church as the most affordable church work option in the Concordia University System of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Beginning fall 2021, full-time students enrolled in a church work program will receive a minimum of \$17,900 in combined institutional financial aid each year. Scholarships and grants from a student's home congregation, LCMS District and local community may be stacked on top of this guarantee to further reduce the cost of tuition and living expenses.

The new church work tuition model is available for all incoming and current full-time church work students enrolled in the following programs:

- Director of Christian Education
- Director of Christian Outreach
- Director of Parish Music
- Lutheran Classroom Teacher
- Pre-Deaconess
- Pre-Pastoral

The vital need for future church workers cannot be overstated. Please consider encouraging the young people you serve to contemplate utilizing their God-given gifts in full-time ministry. Thank you in advance for directing any questions pertaining to Concordia St. Paul to Tom Halligan at halligan@csp.edu.

PROPERS PREVIEWS

A look at the readings to help you prepare for worship

February 7, 2021

The Fifth Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 40:21-31 You shall run and not grow faint.

1 Corinthians 9:16-27 Run the good race!

Mark 1:29-39 Jesus reached out to all people.

February 14, 2021

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12 Elijah is taken up into heaven.

2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6 "Being transformed into His likeness.

Mark 9:2-9 Jesus is transfigured.

February 21, 2021

The First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 22:1-18/ Abraham prepares to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

James 1:12-18 "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone."

Mark 1:9-15 Jesus is tempted by Satan.

February 28, 2021

The Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7. 15-16 God renames Abram and Sarai.

Romans 5:1-11 "we were reconciled to Him."

Mark 8:27-38 "Take up your cross and follow Me."

THOSE WHO SERVE

Brandon Chornobroff will be the Elder at the 8:00 a.m. services (unless otherwise noted)

Lynne Berghoff will be the Lector on the first Sunday of each month.

Denise Abdul-Malak, Head Elder, 732-406-1531, schedules Assisting Ministers

FEBRUARY DEADLINE

If you have an article that you would like placed in the March 2021 newsletter, please email it or drop it off in the church office.

The church email address is popchurch@optonline.net.

The deadline is Friday, February 19, 2021

ALTAR GUILD

Lisa Tess, Elba Hillis and Anne McDonnell

Lisa Tess, 732-905-0687,
is Directress of the Altar Guild.

Members serve for one month on a rotating basis.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Please place \$25 per bouquet in a Flower Fund Envelope

(which can be found in the Flower Book)

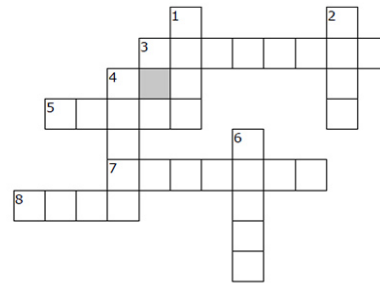
and place it in the offering plate. There is a maximum of three bouquets on the altar each week.

USHERS and ACOLYTES are advised to remain home until further notice.

The Transfiguration

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Matthew 17:5 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 17:1-9



ACROSS

3. A raised part of the earth's surface, larger than a hill
5. A white or gray mass of very small drops of water that floats in the sky
7. Articles of apparel such as pants, shirts, dresses, etc.
8. To have a strong feeling of affection for someone

DOWN

1. Something that is pleasing, enjoyable, or of high quality
2. Having a great distance from top to bottom
4. The sound produced by the vocal organs; what we use to speak
6. The color of snow or milk

HIGH	CLOUD	WHITE	MOUNTAIN
VOICE	GOOD	LOVE	CLOTHES

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Important February Dates to Remember:

- Tues., Feb. 2: Groundhog Day
Candlemas Day
- Fri., Feb. 5: Wear Red for Heart Health
- Sun., Feb. 7: Super Bowl Sunday
- Mon., Feb. 8: Scouting Day
- Sun., Feb. 14: Valentines Day
- Mon., Feb. 15: Presidents Day
- Wed., Feb. 17: Ash Wednesday