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# The Good News

February 2024



*Worship Service  
 February 14, 2024  
 7 pm*



- 7 Dick Schuster
- 9 Andrew Schwartz
- 11 Ellen Fox
- 14 Rose Schroeder
- 16 Beth DeVlaminck
- 22 Lorri Berry
- 24 Steve Popyk

As we all are trying to organize and declutter our homes this month, please remember that we will take your slightly used items for the Rummage Sale. When packing your items to donate, please try not to over pack/over fill the boxes and bags. If the items are breakable, please wrap them and place in a box, so they won't break. The Rummage can be brought into church starting in March. This year, the Rummage Sale will be two days: September 20 & 21.

KIM





ERICH



We held our monthly meeting on January 9. Thank you to Beth DeVlaminck and Mike Gebert for joining Consistory. It is always good to get fresh thoughts and ideas. Consistory is always open for anybody to attend. You may not want to join, but the meeting is open for all. We meet at church and also by Zoom. Consistory has agreed that we would like to bring back the passing of the peace to service. In doing so, the

congregation needs to understand that COVID-19 is still around as is the flu, and there are some people that still do not feel comfortable with a physical greeting. We ask that a simple nod and greeting for now and that the greeting is from your pew. We do not want people getting up and moving throughout the Sanctuary. Our rummage sale will be on September 20 and 21. Specific information on dates for when you can start bringing in your rummage will be forthcoming. The lobby renovation is moving along. Hopefully, painting and flooring will be starting soon. Consistory is pleased to inform the church that we have confirmed that December 15<sup>th</sup>, Conference Minister, Rev. Lillian Daniel, will be our guest minister. Please remember, if there is anything that needs attention (building, service, etc.), please let a member of Consistory know, so we can address it at our meeting.



We all know that Jesus was born specifically to bridge the gap between God and humankind, that his Crucifixion and Resurrection are meant to forgive us of our sins. Does this mean that no action is necessary on our part to partake of this marvelous gift, other than to believe? After all, scripture tells us that "...by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God - not the result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NRSV). This would seem to indicate that only faith is required for salvation,

but let's look at the broader record before we decide.

Jesus's ministry on earth does not begin unannounced. In both Matthew and Mark, we see his way prepared by John, the Baptist, who proclaims that someone important is coming. John's message is clear: the people need to repent of their sins and be baptized as a symbol of this repentance. The message is clear: the kingdom of God is near, but to enter it requires repentance. Oddly enough, even the sinless Jesus requires John to baptize him, to "fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15). When Jesus is baptized, the heavens open and a voice from heaven states its approval. It is after this act that Jesus goes into the wilderness for his forty days of temptation and meditation, which we commemorate with the observance of Lent. Obviously, the actions of John meet with God's approval, and his proclamation of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God is warranted, as is the act that individuals need to commit to enter it: repentance.

Why is this important when looking at Jesus's teachings? If we read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 through 7), repentance is not a theme there, yet elsewhere Jesus emphasizes it. In Luke 15, Jesus tells two parables which emphasize the importance of repentance: the parable of a man who loses one of a hundred sheep and a woman who loses one of ten coins. In each case, what is lost is of more importance than what is retained. The lost sheep is more important than the ninety-nine sheep who are not lost; the lost coin causes more emotional anguish than the nine coins that are not lost. The lesson is summarized thus: "...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7 NRSV). In fact, Jesus sums up his mission in this way: "I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32 NRSV). The righteous who need no repentance are not as valued as the unrighteous who repent. We are never so far lost that we are beyond God, and in repentance we cause heaven to rejoice.

So we see that repentance is a necessary act for the believer in Christ. It was to start with the Jews, but it was not to end with them. "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46b-47 NRSV). So once it has started with the Jews, what happens then? The Book of Acts records how the apostles spread out throughout the area of Judaea and other parts of the Roman Empire and preached not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles (Acts 9 through Acts 15). Repeatedly, scripture states how God is pleased to share the news of Jesus with the Gentiles. Peter himself says, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35 NRSV), and of course we have the living proof of this thesis: Paul himself, who after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), becomes the apostle to the Gentiles.

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During his long career as an apostle, Paul travels throughout the ancient world, including to Rome itself, proselytizing to the Gentiles on behalf of Jesus. And his message is consistent. In describing his preaching when he is on trial before the Roman authorities, Paul says he told his listeners, "...that they (the Jews and also the Gentiles) should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance." (Acts 26:20b NRSV), and "... the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:23 NRSV). Paul does not hesitate to preach Truth to Power, bringing the message of repentance and salvation into the very halls of the Roman Empire. And if the message is good enough for the courts of Rome, shouldn't it be good enough for us? Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!

GAIL

The Lobby Refresh Committee has chosen the contractors for the floor and the painting of the lobby. The new floor has been chosen and ordered, and the paint color should be chosen shortly after this newsletter is published. The target dates for laying the new floor and painting the lobby are in February. The committee will be shopping for furniture during this period as well. Once the painting and flooring are done, the blinds will be cleaned. Secondary improvements such as new signage will be completed after the furniture has been delivered. The overall target date for completion of the lobby refresh is contingent upon how long it will take for the furniture that is chosen to be delivered. It should be noted that the existing furniture will



be removed from the lobby when the new floor is laid and will *not* be moved back in to avoid scratching the new floor. Until the new furniture is delivered, congregants will have to use the Fireside Room for their seating needs.

SUE

It's too cold - remember when we complained it was too hot? Careful what we complain about. I'm counting my blessings as I have power, heat, food and TV/Netflix (I also have reflux - but that's another story). How fortunate we are and yet we complain. Anyway, I feel blessed to have had a wonderful Christmas with my whole family. The holidays are the time when our family always has the most fun. We love to joke and tease and laugh at each other and ourselves. Humor is big in our family. I remember one time when Erich presented his brother-in-law, Mike, with an award for being married to my daughter Debbie for 30 years (the award was a bottle of beer wrapped in aluminum foil with a string tied on it). No one laughed harder than Debbie. Moral - HUMOR can get you thru anything and it will get us thru this cold winter. Just don't let your tears freeze when you step outside!

LIVE

LAUGH

