

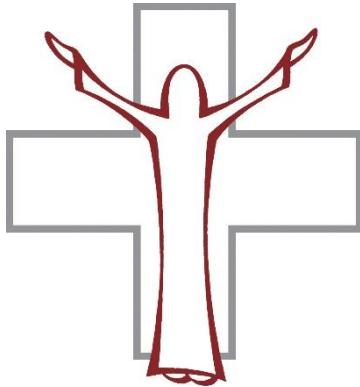
March Newsletter 2024

St. James: WE GROW. WE GO. WE GATHER.

From Pastor Schaeffer:

The following sermon excerpt is from a sermon I preached on [Isaiah 51:4-6](#). The title of the sermon is: *"It's All about ME being for YOU!"*

Do you know where the terms, *"whipping boy"* comes from? In the 17th century Britain's King James' son, Charles, was a spoiled brat. No one, however, was allowed to punish Charles or correct him. So, the king appointed another boy, William Mayer, to be Charles playmate and *"whipping boy."* Whenever Charles misbehaved, William received the whipping that Charles deserved. It miserably unfair, wouldn't you say?



But isn't there is a parallel between that *"whipping boy"* and that of Jesus Christ who became *the "Whipping Boy"* for the whole world! To free sinful people from their sins, God, the Holy Judge, had to punish someone for their sins. Incredibly, God's most treasured possession, God's own Son, *"made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant ... and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"* (Phil 2:7-8) Jesus' life, suffering, and death on a cross are God's clear message to you ... to me ... to all the people of this world, *"It's all about ME being for YOU!"*

Is it any wonder God pleads in verse 1, *"Listen to ME"*? We have a Savior who has offered himself up as a supreme sacrifice for all of us! As imperfect as we are, it is through **Jesus the Just One** that we are forgiven for all our sins. As guilty as we are of breaking God's law, it is through **Jesus, the Righteous One** that we are declared not guilty! As much as we are worthy of drowning in our sins, it is through **Jesus, the Saving One**, that we are rescued from our sins and given new life. As overpowered as we are by Satan and death, it is through **Jesus, the Powerful One**, that we are victorious over Satan and death.

By the grace of God, you, and I and all who trust in Christ as our Savior are members of what God calls in our text, *"My people ... my nation!"* That's who we are! We belong to God! We are God's nation. We possess his Justice. We live by his strength. We are recipients of his righteousness and salvation which will never fail.

God's justice, salvation, and righteousness is not just for you, but for **YOU -- plural!** ... for the whole world! In verse 5 the Lord says through Isaiah, *"The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm."*

Because God has chosen me to be among his people, a citizen in his everlasting kingdom, my life is not about me being for me, but my life is all about ME being for YOU! And you, being chosen by God, are not to live for yourself but your life is all about you being for **YOU** ... being for the people of this congregation, this community, this country, and this world.

She was working on her doctorate in chemistry, the students at the chapel remembered. And they never forgot the time she first visited the student center. She had wandered in and accosted one of the students lounging in the vestibule and said, *"I am an atheist. Argue with me."* To this the other student replied calmly, *"Why, we don't argue with anybody around here. Come on in."* The young woman stayed for three years, even sang in the choir, but did not join the church. Nevertheless, she often admitted the strong pull of the Gospel message, which she somehow couldn't quite accept. At one time she confided to the campus pastor, *"I just can't see believing in all that you do. But sometimes I still feel that God is chasing after me."* (Deffner, p. 103-104)



Yes, God chases after such people, and he sends us after them! As a result, as God's people, it's about **US being for THEM!** ... For people like this atheist university student. We are the ones who present Christ's love with real tears, real joy, real service, real sacrifice. ...

Life is not about **ME being for ME. My life is about ME being for YOU!** Can Jesus' followers be any other way?

Blessings in Christ!

Pastor Glenn E. Schaeffer

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study

Saturday, March 9.

Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m.

All men are welcome!

We Need You to Volunteer

We need your help. We need more volunteers for KIDZ time. The children who attend KIDZ time enjoy it. KIDZ time is a wonderful way for you to get to know the children in our congregation and at the same time, share with them, the love of God. Leading KIDZ time is as simple as reading or telling the children a Bible story and helping the children do a simple craft. Easy to use resources are given to you.



KIDZ time takes place during Pastor's sermon on Sunday mornings. The more volunteers we have the less the burden will fall on a few. Please speak with Pastor Schaeffer about your involvement in KIDZ time.

Rwandan Mission Luncheon: Sunday, March 17th



Sample some Rwanda food. Hear what Pastor Schaeffer will be doing during his Rwandan mission trip in April. Contribute financially to his mission trip.

Please let us know if you plan to attend the luncheon that will take place following the Sunday morning service. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the lobby by the church office. **Please register by Sunday, March 10th.**

Do You Want to have Input into St. James' Ministry and Mission in the Future?



On the weekend of April 12-13th you are invited to participate in a congregational retreat. The retreat will begin on Friday evening (7 p.m.-9 p.m.) and will continue on Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.). The retreat will be held at the Warner Building (downtown Grand Rapids).

We will spend time in prayer and studying God's Word. We will identify the opportunities and challenges we are facing as a congregation and begin to develop a plan to address these opportunities and challenges.

*If you plan to attend the retreat, please let Pastor Schaeffer know by **April 2.***



The week before Easter is called Holy Week and culminates the preparation time of Lent. This week begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Holy Saturday. During these days, we focus on the events of Jesus' life from His entrance into Jerusalem until His glorious resurrection from the dead. Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11). Because the complete account of our Lord's Passion (or a significant portion of it) from Matthew, Mark and Luke is often read, this Sunday is also called the Sunday of the Passion.

On Holy (Maundy) Thursday, the Church gives thanks to Jesus for the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Holy Thursday service closes with the stripping of the altar while Psalm 22 - a prophecy of the crucifixion - is read or sung. This reminds us of how our Lord stripped to the waist to wash His disciples' feet - and how He was stripped and beaten before His crucifixion.

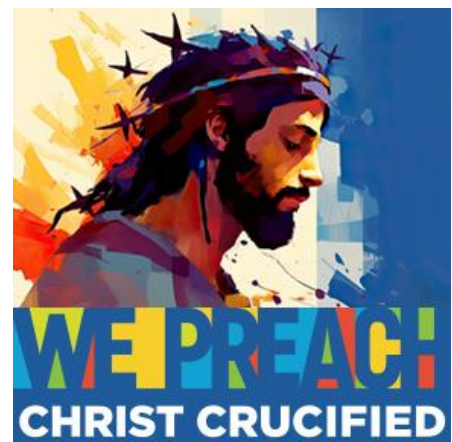
Good Friday is the most solemn of all days in the Christian church, yet a note of joy remains, as the title of the day indicates. On Good Friday, as we remember that on account of our sin the Lord was crucified and died, we give thanks to God that all sin and God's wrath over sin falls on Jesus and not on us, and that by His grace we receive the benefit of this most sacrificial act.

The first celebration of Easter is the Easter Vigil, the evening of Holy Saturday. The Vigil includes a service of light, in which fire symbolizes Jesus as the Light of the world. The service is designed to take the Christian from the solemnity of Good Friday to the predawn joy of Easter.

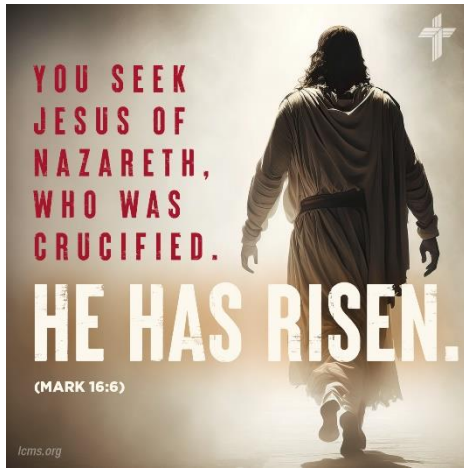
But ... more about Easter ... in the April newsletter!

Holy Week Services

- Palm Sunday**, March 24 at 9:30 a.m.
- Maundy Thursday**, March 28 at 6:30 p.m.
- Good Friday**, March 29 at 6:30 p.m.



Easter Sunday! A Joyous Service You Don't Want to Miss!



Plan to attend our uplifting Easter Sunday service as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead and His promise to us, and believers, that even though we die, yet shall we live!

We will sing Easter hymns. We will be blessed with special music by the musical talent in our congregation. Pastor Schaeffer will wrap up our Lenten sermon series, "Loving Jesus, Be Gracious to Us" with a resurrection themed sermon. We will have a foretaste of the feast that awaits in heaven as we partake of the Eucharistic Meal.

Invite a friend ... a family member ... a coworker ... a neighbor.

Starting April 8th, Monday evening services will become Monday AFTERNOON services.

**MONDAY
AFTERNOON**

The Monday evening service will now be at 4:15 p.m. starting April 8 (on a trial basis). One of the primary reasons for this change is to avoid nighttime driving.

If you haven't attended a Monday service, they are like Sunday's service, although there are some notable differences:

- Holy Communion is served at every service (unless Pastor Schaeffer is away).
- The services are shorter in length of time, with Pastor preaching the same sermon he preached on Sunday.
- Hymns are sung acapella.
- The worshippers are fewer in number.
- We sit at the front of the sanctuary!

If you typically attend the worship service on Sunday, but miss it for some reason, please come out Monday afternoon!

A Little Walking Works



The largest study of its kind researching the “necessary” number of steps to take per day has good news for everyone. The most recent study – involving more than 225,000 people – showed that just 2400 steps per day can help reduce your risk of dying prematurely from heart disease or stroke. That’s the good news for those days where you can’t walk as many steps as you’d like.

The news gets even better if you can walk a few thousand more steps:

- Walk 4000 steps per day and you’ll cut your risk of dying from any cause (not just from heart disease and stroke).
- Each extra 1,000 steps beyond 4000 is associated with an additional 15% reduced risk of dying from any cause. (The health benefits eventually top off at around 20,000 steps.)

The research team from the Medical University of Lodz in Poland and John Hopkins University School of Medicine in the U.S. found that the results applied to both men and women regardless of age and where they lived, and the biggest benefits were seen among those under the age of 60.

Source: Better Health, Winter 2023, Vol. 39, No. 4. (A Publication of Concordia Plans)

Dorcas Society March Gathering

Our luncheon last month was attended by only a few due to the weather, so let’s try this again! We will meet on Thursday, March 14th at 12:30. We will meet at Shots on the River (5760 West River Dr. in Belmont) at 12:30 pm. We will continue a brief discussion of suggestions to keep our senior members connected to the church in worship and other activities. We need your input and help in allowing St James to continue to be a welcoming place for senior members. In order to give the restaurant an accurate count, please RSVP to Rachel Palmer (616-883-6949) or at palmerrm@comcast.net or via Facebook messenger. Please respond by Wednesday, March 13th. If you need a ride, please don’t hesitate to ask. We welcome all women from the congregation.



HOW TO DO ONLINE GIVING--VERY EASY

St. James has changed our online giving tool to Servant Keeper. Servant Keeper is experienced and provides highly secure transactions. We have been using Servant Keeper for many years to manually maintain our giving database.



It will take you about five minutes to set this up. I have detailed the directions below.

1. Go to the church website www.StJamesGR.com. On the upper right side, you will see a tab called GIVE. Click on this.
2. You will need to sign up as a new user, so click on the SIGN-UP tab (upper right).
3. Enter your email. You will need to set up a new account--click NEXT.
4. Fill in your Name, Address, and Mobile number.
5. Select a password.
6. Click on Create Profile.
7. Then Sign In to your account.
8. You will see a list of Gifts--it will be empty.
9. Click on the three stacked horizontal bars next to St. James Lutheran Church.
10. Select Payment Method. Add Payment Method.
11. You can select a Bank Account (checking or savings) Credit Card or Debit Card. Enter your account information. You can enter information for more than one of them if you wish.
12. Click on GIVE NOW to make your initial donation. You can select one of the choices or click on OTHER to indicate your gift amount.
13. If you prefer to make a Recurring Gift--choose SCHEDULED GIFTS--you can select your interval for giving--every week, every two weeks, or once a month.

That is it! Now you don't have to worry about envelopes or checks or cash!

We Thank You for your continued support of the St. James Community. May God Bless You!

Jim Spears, Treasurer
St. James Governing Board

PS: If you have questions or problems with this, please contact me.
Jim: (616)-690-9550 jrspears@gmail.com



Dear Members of St. James,

On March 13th after our Lenten Service, the governing board will be hosting a policy meeting to share and answer any questions of the following policies:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- St. James Tuition Assistance Fund
- ISJ School Board Members Policy
- Canceling Service Policy

Again, these meetings are meant to bring clarity and understanding to the approved policies. Our goal is that awareness of them leads to implementation of them with fidelity. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, Feb. 28th. Copies of the policies can be found on the table in the coat room.

SECOND BEST SALE

Friends in Faith is having a **DROP-OFF** date of Saturday April 22 and 29 here at church. Simply start collecting your donations for the Second Best Sale, load them into your vehicle and bring them to the church on from 9-1 p.m. We are asking for all large items to be brought that day due the inability to store them. We cannot accept mattresses, box springs, analog (tube type TVs), nursery furniture, medical items or any items that are not usable and saleable. Members of Friends in Faith will be here to un-load your car and take everything into church for you! How great is that!?! We also ask that clothing be clean and gently used. Smaller items can be brought to the church any time the church is open. Please call Pastor before you come. If items need to be brought sooner or if you have any questions please contact Walt at 970-7407 or Dale Rosema 262-1390

Set-up for the Sale will begin on Sunday, April 30. VOLUNTEERS are needed on Sunday after Church to set up tables and sorting the items for the sale. Volunteers are also needed Monday and Tuesday for sorting and pricing. They are also needed for Thursday through Saturday to assist customers and clean-up on Saturday. It's a great time to get to know each other and help support our Youth and Church functions. Work for an hour or enjoy the 9-4 day with everyone. A sign-up sheet will be at the entrance by the office. If you have any questions please see Walt Kryzanowski or Dale Rosema

May 4th -6th is the sale

Thursday ,9:00am-4:00pm

Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm

Saturday, 9:00am-12:00pm