

Zion Lutheran Church & School

Newsletter - March - 2019

The Psalms of Lent

As you'll recall, the focus for our midweek Advent services this year (yes... this year! Remember, the new church year began December 2.) ...our focus was "The Psalms of Advent." As we put ourselves in the shoes of the Old Testament believers who were waiting and waiting and waiting for the Messiah to appear, we looked at a number of Psalms that helped us cope with the notion of waiting.

Heading now into the season of Lent, I've decided to do something similar. With the study of a different Psalm each Wednesday, I'm planning to help worshipers focus on the meaning of Lent, contrition and repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and the suffering and death of Jesus, that made that forgiveness possible for us.

The first Psalm we'll be studying is the one assigned for Ash Wednesday, Psalm 51. This is the quintessential Psalm for considering contrition and repentance, as we hear David's own words of sorrow when confronted with his sins of adultery and murder. *"Against You, You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgement."*

Yes, David sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah (and whoever else was in the path of his diabolical plan). But it was ultimately God who was sinned against, who commands us to live sexually pure and decent lives in what we say and do; to help and support our neighbor in every physical need; to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength; to love our neighbor as ourselves.

What David was doing in this Psalm is the very thing John instructs

us to do in 1 John 1:8 *"If we confess our sins, (God) is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

The other Psalms we'll be looking at during our midweek Advent services are the Psalms assigned for the previous Sunday. We'll be seeing how the Psalmist, in each of those cases, finds himself in an undesirable position, with God as his only hope for deliverance.

As we've been doing as of late, you'll have three opportunities for worship each Wednesday during Lent: School Chapel at 8:30a.m., Morning Lenten Service at 11:30a.m., and Evening Vespers at 7:15p.m. And don't forget that Evening Vespers is preceded by a supper that begins at 5:30p.m.

Each Wednesday, all three midweek services will focus on the same Psalm. But each service will approach it a little differently. So, if you want to attend one of the services, a couple of them, or maybe even all three, I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Midweek Lenten Services begin with Ash Wednesday on March 6. Of course, those services will also include the Imposition of Ashes. Other midweek Lenten services during March will be on the 13th, 20th, 27th, and April 3rd, and 10th.

On April 18 we'll celebrate Maundy Thursday, on April 19th Good Friday, April 20th, the Easter Vigil, and on April 21st we'll shed our penitential restraints and break forth with glorious joy for Easter Sunday. More on that next month.

For now, let's look forward to studying the Psalms of Lent.

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor Warneke