CROSSWORDS

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Grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ!

 The first day of March we begin the season of Lent for the year. Lent begins on the day of Ash Wednesday where we take time out to remember the seriousness of our sin. It then continues for 40 days (not including Sundays).

 What do you think about the season of Lent? Is it just a time to get through for you until Easter? Do you view it as not more different than other seasons of the church year? I hope you view this time of the year differently. This is the time of the year we are called to take special time to focus on what God has done for us. There are many ways to do this and everyone has a preferred way, but one of the ways I want to talk about is the tradition of giving something up for Lent.

 I know, many times we think of giving something up for Lent to be a Roman Catholic activity. It is not however, a solely Roman Catholic activity as Lutherans all over practice this discipline as well. What does giving something up for Lent do for us? It helps us to remember Christ. Say you are to give up a pleasure of yours, say candy or TV or eating at a favorite restaurant. These may be things you enjoy but can clearly survive without. The first reason we give something up is that when we want to do those things or eat those items and can’t, we remember how Christ, with all He had in Heaven, gave up what was His to come down and redeem us all.

 The other way that giving something up for Lent helps us is in our devotional life. Our devotional life includes many things from reading scriptures, reading devotions, and praying. When we struggle with our temptations on what we have given up for Lent, we remember why we are doing it (to remind ourselves of the struggles of Christ in His temptations in the wilderness), and we turn to the Lord for strength. This exercise helps to strengthen our faith and helps us to trust in the Lord not only at this time of year but throughout the year.

 Whatever you choose to do for Lent you are free to do or not do in the freedom given us by Christ. Regardless of what you do, I do hope you take time out this year to increase your relationship with the Lord in whatever way benefits you most.

 May God’s richest blessings be on you all!

 Pastor Brian

P.S. I encourage you all to keep attending the midweek Lent services throughout the month. I will be preaching on a series for our Lenten services focused on the Places of the Passion.

 **NEWS AND NOTES:**

* **FAITH SHARING TIPS** (from the Evangelism Committee): 1) Offer affirmations to family members, colleagues and friends for jobs that are well done. Share with them how thankful you are to God for their gifts; 2) Invite someone to come with you to Lenten Worship and to participate in the soup suppers.
* **OUR GIVING:** Need each week: $2,574. Received: 1/29 - $1,628; 2/5 - $2,839; 2/12 - $2,190; 2/19 - $1,905. As of 2/19/17 we are **-** $2,452.
* Don’t forget **SCRIP** cards during the coming weeks. This is a great way to buy gas, groceries, fast food, gifts, etc. and benefit our Building Program at the same time. Orders are due the last Sunday of each month.
* **WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES** are at 12:30 and 7:00 pm. **ASH WEDNESDAY** is March 1st. Beginning on March 8th, **SOUP/LIGHT MEALS** will be served at 6:15 pm, just before the evening Worship. A signup sheet is posted for volunteers for the meals.
* **FYI: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON MARCH 12** (move your clocks ahead one hour).
* When you make a purchase on **Amazon.com**, pick Lutheran Chapel of the Cross as your charity and 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to church. **The web address is: smile.amazon.com.** Check Lutheran Chapel of the Cross, Mt. Pleasant, as your charity and continue on as usual placing your order.
* **2017 LWML PRAYER SERVICE** entitled “LWML Celebrating 75 Years of Commending Christ From One Generation to Another” will be on Tuesday, March 14th at 1:00 pm at Holy Cross (3350 Lathrop). Fellowship and refreshments will follow the Service.

Items for the April Crosswords need to be submitted by March 19th.