

Amaz^{ing}!News

MARCH // 2022



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WILL WE JOIN HIM?

BY NIVEEN SARRAS

It wasn't easy for peasant fishermen in first-century Palestine to make a living. To begin with, they didn't enjoy free access to the Sea of Galilee because the Roman Empire and its elite controlled the fishing industry.

Herod Antipas, a provincial Roman governor, romanized the region and put it under Emperor Tiberias' control, noted Ched Myers in "Let's Catch Some Big Fish! Jesus' Call to Discipleship in a World of Injustice." Antipas wanted to multiply fishing in the waters around Tiberias. He created an industry for commercial export, not local consumption. While the local people depended on fish for their main food, Antipas extracted it for profit.

Fishing also was a costly business because each step of the process was taxed. Fishermen had to get a lease from local brokers, and they had no option but to sell to Antipas' factories,

which exported fish to the entire Roman Empire. As a result, many fishermen became destitute.

Jesus spent most of his ministry in fishing villages like Capernaum, Gennesar and Magdala because there, wrote John Dominic Crossan in *God and Empire* (Harper One, 2009), "the radicality of Israel's God confronted the normalcy of Rome's civilization under Herod Antipas."

Luke 5:1-11, included in our February lectionary readings, tells of a miraculous catch of fish and of Jesus inviting Peter to fish for people. Traditionally, we've understood Jesus' statement, "fish for people," to connote the vocation of "saving souls." But in prophetic traditions, such as Jeremiah (16:16), Amos (4:2) and Ezekiel (29:4), to fish for people implies a divine judgment of God's enemies



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Why did Jesus use this metaphor?

According to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Jesus called on Peter; Andrew; and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to follow him after Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist, possibly at his royal palace in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee's shores. These fishermen/disciples were victims of Herod Antipas too.

This story is not about the disciples changing their vocation from fishing for fish to fishing for people. Rather, it's about inviting them to join Jesus in turning over Rome's unjust social order and replacing it with God's kingdom. Fishing for people is a political and spiritual statement against Roman imperial power. By providing fish, Jesus demonstrates that he, not Antipas, is in control of the lake.

Jesus called his disciples, who were anticipating God's intervention to end the Romans' oppression. Jesus preached the good news about the coming of God's reign to replace the Roman emperor's and Antipas' reign. In *Binding the Strong Man* (Orbis 1995), Myers wrote: "[Jesus] is inviting common folk to join him in his struggle to overturn the existing order of power and privilege."

Will we join him?

ZOAR FOUNDATION GRANT REQUESTS DUE MARCH 31

The Zoar Foundation invites the boards, committees, staff and individual members of Zoar to submit proposals for support of new or expanded ministries of the Church. More than \$100,000 in grant money is available in 2022.

Guidelines, application form and instructions for submitting proposals are available on the Zoar website or in the church office. Application deadlines are March 31 and September 30. To see a list of grants the Zoar Foundation has awarded over the past five years visit our page on the Zoar website at zoarlutheran.com.

The Zoar Lutheran Church Foundation was established in 2007. The Zoar Foundation oversees the Zoar Endowment Fund, Zoar Operating Fund, Kurfis Fund for Youth Ministry, and the Kazmaier Fund for Theological Education. Additional information about the Zoar Foundation is available on the Zoar website (tinyurl.com/zoarfoundation) or by contacting Jameson Czech, Foundation President at jamesonrczech@gmail.com.



from
Pastor Paul
Senior Pastor
pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com

Grace and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.

The season of Lent begins this year with Ash Wednesday on March 2nd. The dates of Lent are set annually by backing up from the date of Easter which occurs on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox – a little factoid that you will probably not remember, but that's ok; it took me having to remember it for a test in Worship class for it to stick!

What is important to remember is that Lent is a reflective season that gives us an intentional opportunity to re-center our lives on the journey of faith. In Lent, through fasting, prayer, worship, and acts of charity, together we take time to consider again the cost that Jesus Christ paid on the cross for our sins. This isn't different from any other season. As Christians, we are always to be living as people who think on Jesus and all he did for us; we are to be people constantly transformed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So why do we place a special emphasis on these things during Lent? Aren't there lots of other Christians who don't focus on Lent? That is (most certainly) true. As Lutheran Christians, we look to the cross as the sign of God's incomprehensible love for us. That doesn't mean we skip Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection, Christ's victorious rising from death to life that Sunday morning two thousand years ago. The difference is that we are intentional in remembering that there is no Easter without the cross. Without the Cross, there is nothing for Jesus to be victorious over.

So we take this time in Lent to embrace the "Disciplines of Lent." Many people have heard about giving things up for Lent as an act of discipline. But here are a couple things to think about during this season to think about.

- If you are spending way more time playing Wordle than reading the Bible each day, maybe Lent is a time to re-evaluate that.
- If the number of hours you spend thinking about March Madness is dramatically higher than those you think about worshipping the Lord, maybe Lent is a time to re-evaluate that.
- If you are spending way more on your cable bill than you are giving in your offering, maybe Lent is a time to re-evaluate that.
- If you can't remember the last time you volunteered to help someone, maybe Lent is a time to re-evaluate that.

This is in no way an exhaustive list; nor does it apply to everyone reading this article. But Lent creates a seasonal space for us to think about the question, "Does my life reflect my faith?" It is so easy for us to go on autopilot in our lives, and in our busy-ness, not look at what we want our lives to be. And unlike our New Year's resolutions which are so individual and so often are forgotten, we share this Lenten journey together so that we can encourage one another in living out our walk with Christ.

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday services at 11 AM and 7 PM on March 2nd. There will be Wednesday Lenten services throughout Lent at both the 11 AM and 7 PM times as well as daily Lenten devotions on Facebook and more. So, please join us!

Peace, Pastor Paul

MARCH YOUTH UPDATE

March 6 – First Communion Classes Begin, during the Sunday School Hour

5th/6th Grade Paint Night! 4 - 6 PM

March 13 – 7th-12th Grade St. Patrick's Day Party! 4 - 6 PM

March 20 – Spring Break!

No Sunday School, First Communion Class or Youth Group

March 27 – 5th-12th Grade Bowling Outing
Time & Location: TBA

First Communion 2022

First Communion classes will begin for all 4th grade youth and older who wish to partake in Holy Communion for the first-time beginning Sunday, March 2nd during the Sunday School Hour. Celebration of Holy Communion for those completing the course will be offered at two different times: Sunday, April 10th at 12:30 PM and Thursday, April 14th (Maundy Thursday) at 7 PM. Stayed tuned to your Weekly Children's Ministry Update for more information.

5th/6th Grade Paint Night

5th/6th Graders and their friends are invited to join us in an evening of spring canvas painting, devotion and fellowship. Sign up is required and can be found in your weekly youth update.

7th-12th Grade St. Patrick's Day Party

7th-12th Graders and their friends are invited to join us for an evening of St. Patty's themed games, cookie decorating, devotion and fellowship. Sign up is required and can be found in your weekly youth update.

5th-12th Bowling Outing

5th-12th Graders and their friends are invited to join us for an afternoon Bowling Outing. More information about time, place and sign up will be coming soon in your Youth Weekly Update: stay tuned!

Vacation Bible School 2022

Save the date for Zoar Vacation Bible School 2022 – Sunday, June 26th – Thursday, June 30th! This year's theme will be Cokesbury Publishing's Food Truck Party! Stay tuned for more information coming soon!



from

Amanda

Director of Youth Ministries

ahoyles@zoarlutheran.com

Greetings Friends,

We have reached again the season of Lent, a time of reflection and also a time in which we remember the sacrifice that Jesus gave for each of us as a symbol of God's undying love and promise. As we venture through these Lenten days, I encourage you to take some time to dive into that sacrifice. Take it BEYOND the cross, review the days leading up to Jesus' death and before his resurrection. How did he behave, what did he experience and feel? What did he know leading to his death? How did his death and resurrection come to be. I find that when we spend time during this season hearing these stories, spending time with them and pondering how they impact us today or what Jesus must have been feeling in these moments, that we begin to better understand God's boundless and unmeasurable love. Though we will never be able to fully describe it we can take this season to reflect, repent and ponder, to rededicate ourselves to our faith and to love others, our communities and ourselves in the way Jesus did. May you find peace, deeper connection to your faith and guidance to share the love of Christ during this Lenten Season.

Peace,
Amanda Hoyles

WORSHIP IN MARCH

The following synopses and introductions have been adapted from our online resource, Sundays and Seasons.

MARCH 4, ASH WEDNESDAY: HYPOCRITES IN GOOD COMPANY

Critics of Christianity often point out that Christians are hypocrites. We publicly espouse a set of rules for living, and just as publicly, fail to live up to those rules. Still, we don't want to be hypocrites or show-offs. In today's gospel, we hear about fasting cheerfully and praying in secret. And yet, as we leave the church building, we bear a public and very noticeable sign of faith right on our foreheads. Lent begins with a visible, unmistakable reminder of who we are: simultaneously mortal dust and baptized children of God. Saints and sinners. Hypocrites and earnest, hopeful Christians.

MARCH 6, LENT I: AN IDENTITY ON WHICH WE CAN RELY

In Luke's gospel, the story of Jesus' temptation comes immediately after his baptism and the listing of his ancestors. Both help confirm his identity as the Messiah. Now Jesus is led into the wilderness, where his identity is tested. Yet, despite these trials, Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit," can stand firm in his identity.

We, too, are given the identity of God's child and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Our baptisms do not protect us from temptation. However, in our baptisms, we are given an identity and the confidence to endure the temptations and challenges our lives are bound to include. In this confidence, we can accept our shortcomings and boldly emulate Christ's own life.

MARCH 13, LENT II: PURPOSE AND PERSEVERANCE

This week's gospel text from Luke presents another temptation for Jesus. The Pharisees approach Jesus with a warning about his safety, telling him to "get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you" (Luke 13:31). We know the Pharisees are "very hostile" (Luke 11:53) toward Jesus, so their warning is not an expression of concern but an attempt to stop his ministry. Jesus will not be distracted or turned away from his purpose. We find inspiration in Jesus' resolve as we seek to live our lives in concert with God's purposes. Jesus' purpose is our purpose. The body of Christ doesn't exist for itself. Instead, the church exists to be a partner with God in God's mission to love, bless, and reconcile the world.

MARCH 20, LENT III: FERTILIZED, FRUITFUL, AND FREE

After the mingled blood and fallen towers, it may be hard to hear the fig-tree parable as the grace-full story it is. But here is Christ himself as a gardener: digging, fertilizing, protecting, and nurturing us. Living in that nurtured garden of Christ, how can we keep from blossoming? Now the good news of Christ's redeeming mercy becomes clear: we are each treated with boundless mercy, not impartial justice. While the world may want to blame the withering tree for its inability to be productive, our Savior wants us to flourish, to share our gifts with the world freely.

MARCH 27 LENT IV: LESS GRUMBLING, MORE HUMBLING

Grumbling! The crowd around Jesus was grumbling because Jesus welcomed those who traditionally had been set apart: tax collectors and sinners. So, Jesus speaks to us today because we often see life as a game with winners and losers. But hear today's humbling good news: God's love is freely shared with all—we cannot earn it; we cannot deserve it. So, when we help a neighbor, assist the afflicted, or acknowledge the overlooked, we do so because Christ first did the same for us.



from
Omaldo

Cantor

operez@zoarlutheran.com

As we begin Lent, I invite us to take our thoughts and fears regarding our mortality and wrap them with the promises of God. Luther's powerful reminder is the message I needed to hear and want to share with all of us today. It comes from his "Sermon at the Funeral of the Elector, Duke John of Saxony, 1 Thess. 4:13–14, August 18, 1532."

"But by all means take care not to let anybody persuade you of this on your deathbed; for then the devil is not far away; he can throw in your face a little sin which reduces all such fine virtues to nothing so that finally you come to such a pass that you say: Devil, rage as much as you please, I do not boast of my good works and virtues before our Lord God at all, nor shall I despair on account of my sins, but I comfort myself with the fact that Jesus Christ died and rose again, as the text here says.

Lo, when I believe this with my whole heart, then I have the greatest treasure, namely, the death of Christ and the power which it has wrought, and I am more concerned with that than with what I have done. Therefore, devil, begone with both my righteousness and my sin. If I have committed some sin, go eat the dung; it's yours. I'm not worrying about it, for Jesus Christ died . . . Thus I am sure that God will bring me, along with other Christians, with Christ to his right hand and carry me through death and hell!" (LW, 51:231).

Peace and Joy,

Omaldo

Z O A R C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S H I G H L I G H T S

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer w/ Staff 7PM LLL Comm.	2 8AM Bible Study 11AM Worship 3:30PM A.L. II 7PM Worship 8PM Uncorked Faith	3 7PM Choir	4 1PM Zoar Book Club	5 9AM Youth Retreat 6PM Worship
6 LENT I 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM SS 9:45AM First Communion Class 4PM 5th/6th Paint Night	7 6PM Property Comm. 7PM Social Min	8 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer w/ Staff 7PM Stewardship	9 8AM Bible Study 11AM Worship 1PM Rachel Circle 6PM Confirmation 7PM Worship 7:30PM YAYA	10 	11 8AM Men's Bfast 1PM Solo Again	12 10AM Yarns of Love 6PM Worship
13 LENT II 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM SS 9:45AM First Communion Class 4PM 7th-12th St. Patrick's Day Party	14 	15 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer w/ Staff 7PM Council Mtg	16 8AM Bible Study 11AM Worship 6PM Confirmation 7PM Worship	17 9:15AM Naomi Circle 7PM Choir	18 	19 9AM Zoar Blood Drive 10AM Prayer Partners 6PM Worship
20 LENT III 8:30, 11AM Worship No Sunday School, First Communion or Youth Group	21 7PM Worship & Music Comm.	22 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer w/ Staff	23 8AM Bible Study 11AM Worship 1:30PM A.L. I 6PM Confirmation 7PM Worship	24 7PM Choir	25 	26 6PM Worship
27 LENT IV 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM SS 9:45AM First Communion Class 5th-12th Bowling Time : TBA	28 7PM Personnel	29 9AM Quilters 3:14PM Prayer w/ Staff	30 8AM Bible Study 11AM Worship 6PM Confirmation 7PM Worship	31 7PM Choir		

for a complete list of events, please check the Z-Blast for weekly announcements

OUR 85+ MEMBER MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

March 3	Vivian Corbin
March 6	Don Underwood
March 7	Jan Odgaard
March 21	Ella Kazmaier
March 24	Shirley Lardinais

ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Paul Reichert
 Cantor: Omaldo Perez
 Director of Youth Ministry: Amanda Hoyles

Administrative Manager: Jen Milligan
 Communications Coordinator: Melissa Ellerbrock
 Secretary: Suzanne Delaney
 Custodian: Paul Cannon

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WE WISHTO THANK OUR SPONSORS

Would you like to place a birthday announcement, congratulatory message, or advertisement in the Zoar monthly newsletter? Send an email to communications@zoarlutheran.com for pricing and availability.

Deadline is the 2nd of the preceding month!





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Senior Pastor

Worship Times:
Saturday: 6 PM
Sunday: 8:30 & 11 AM
Sunday School: 9:45 AM

Be
AmaZed!



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**For where your treasure is, there your
heart will be also.**

— Matthew 6:21

