

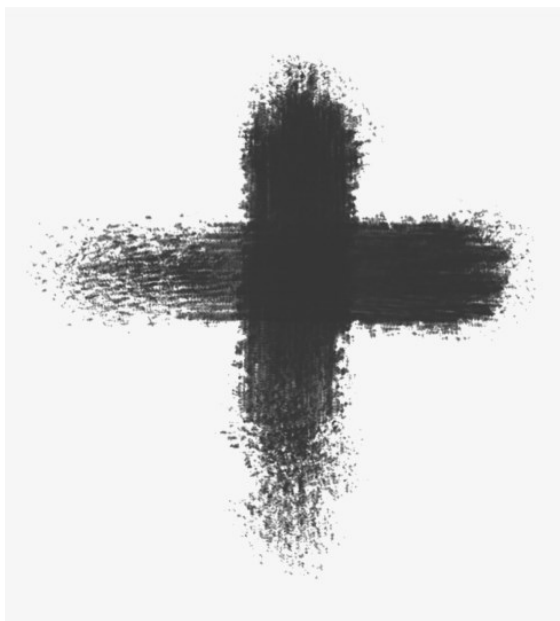


**THE  
CRESTVIEW LUTHERAN  
NEWSLETTER**

**FEBRUARY 2023**

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“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, God, You will not despise.  
Have mercy on me, God, according to Your steadfast love;  
According to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my guilt  
And cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is constantly before me.  
Create in me a clean heart, God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And sustain me with a willing spirit.” Ps 51: 17, 1-3, 10-12

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Having received the following question again only recently, I thought it would be worthwhile to revisit my answer, and share it with all of you in the newsletter. If, after reading my offering you still have questions or concerns about our display of this national symbol, please do not hesitate to schedule some time with me so I can help you to understand my position.

“Why are the flags in the narthex, and not inside the chancel?”

I usually get this question at least once a year, and especially around our annual observances of Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. As a veteran myself, of more than twenty years of service in the uniform of our country, I can assure you I am extremely sensitive to this issue. No one is more patriotic or has greater love for our nation and our flag and what they stand for, than I.

As Americans, we should always show the highest respect and honor for our nation and our flag.

There is no greater nation on God's green earth than that of the United States, and there is no flag more beautiful; a beauty made even grander by the blood, sweat,

tears, hard work and sacrifice of our people for the cause of liberty. Among the world of nations, none are founded on a greater precepts—that all men are created equal and receive their rights and liberties, not from men or governments, but from God.

“... God is not the God of the United States in the sense that He is ours and ours alone. He is the God of all things, and all things, including nations, exist at His pleasure, even the United States.”

For this reason it is meet, right, and salutary that an American citizen show the proper respect and protocol to our flag, such that an American should stand when our flag passes in parade or when it is being raised or lowered; display our flag only during the hours of daylight unless properly lighted; properly retire a

flag that is worn or tattered; and never wear our flag as an article of clothing for puerile purposes (e.g., the wearing of the flag on the uniform of our military or police forces would not be considered improper, while wearing the flag as a decoration or accessory would be considered so).

Our flag stands for the republic, that is, the people and government of the United States. While we pledge our allegiance to our flag and to all for which it stands, we are not pledging allegiance to God Almighty, even if we include the words “under God.” For the “god” of our pledge is a generic “god.” Indeed, he is a “god” to whom anyone can pray, in any place of worship, without the fear of offense. Thus, the Muslim, Jew, Christian, or anyone of any religious faith for that matter, can make the pledge of allegiance with a clear conscience free from guilt at having betrayed their faith.

Such images were forbidden by God to be displayed in the Tabernacle or Temple. Indeed, the tumult and anger were so great against Rome when Caesar had his image placed in the Temple that he

ordered it removed. While our flag is not a pagan image or symbol, neither is it a symbol of our faith in Christ. In fact, many might argue that the flag of the United States is an image of a country and government that has come to mock our God through its laws, such as, its support of the prohibition of Christian prayer in public venues, its support of abortion on demand, and advancing the homosexual / transexual agenda. Such things are certainly not God-pleasing; therefore, they are not in accordance with our faith and confession.

The history of the Christian Church does not call for the tradition of displaying our national or any other flag for that matter. Such displays are only quite recent innovations. Still, according to American custom and tradition proper flag etiquette calls for the flag of the United States to take precedence wherever it is displayed. The national flag is never “lowered” in salute, it is always required to occupy the highest position, and is placed at the right of a stage or the right hand of a speaker, which is called the “position of honor” or “the flag’s

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own right.” All this is certainly proper in a secular setting, but in our worship is it proper to elevate our flag and nation above our God? Is it proper that our flag should take precedence over the signs and symbols of our faith? In such a case, is it not better that we should not display a flag at all?

Finally, our God is not the God of the United States in the sense that He is ours and ours alone. He is the God of all things, and all things, including nations, exist at His pleasure, even the United States. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). He recogniz-

es no race, ethnicity, or national origin. Rather, the Church is under the divine mandate to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in God’s Triune Name (St. Matthew 28:19). Should we, then, lay national claim on what is God’s by hanging a flag in our chancel and claiming God for ourselves alone? We must endeavor to remember that while we are Americans, we are Christians first and foremost. We do not call ourselves an American church; we are the Christian Church and we, like all things, belong to God.

@ @ @ Soli Deo Gloria @ @ @  
-Pastor Parent

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The OSEL Council proposes that our congregation nominate Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison as president of the LCMS at this summer’s national LCMS Triennial Convention. Since he took office as president years ago, he has been God’s instrument in promoting unity in the pure teachings of the Church, protecting the LCMS from straying into doctrinal errors (such as ordination of women, performing same-sex marriages, tolerating abortion, etc.) and kept our focus on Christ and His work. He applies God’s Law when called for, but never to the exclusion of forgiveness in Christ, even when testifying to the Congress of the United States. The Lord has blessed the LCMS with Rev. Harrison’s leadership and we should nominate him for continuing in his office as president. - Alex

## FROM THE LWML

Serve the Lord with Gladness! Psalm 100:2

January mites totaled \$7.24. Mite Box Sunday is always the first Sunday of the month and mites are sent to the LWML Gulf States District to pay for District and National mission grants.

Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow!! The \$2,150,00 goal for the 2021-2023 Biennium was met. As of January mites totaled 2,155,511 for the National LWML mission goal. There are still unfunded Gulf States District Mission goals. The District biennium is 2022-2024.

There will be no LWML Meeting in March. I will be hosting the Emerald Coast Zone Board meeting to plan the Spring Christian Workshop.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

OSELCO LWML Meeting: Saturday, February 4, 2023 at 10am in the Fellowship Hall.

LWML Emerald Coast Zone Christian Growth Workshop, Saturday, April 29, 2023 (Time TBD), Redeemer Lutheran Church, Pensacola

LWML National Convention, June 22-25, 2023, Milwaukee, WI

LWML Gulf States District Convention, April 26-27, 2024, Prattville, AL

-Linda Urda



## OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED AT OSELCO

Serve on a Board - See Alex Franco, Pres.

Sign up for Flowers—See sign up list in the Parish Hall

Sign up for Refreshments—See sign up list in Parish Hall

Serve on the Altar Guild—See Dcs. Heather Bien

Ongoing Project on Campus—See Brian Hull, Trustee

Serve as an Usher—See Julie Blaylock

Sunday School—9:00 a.m. Sunday, Parish Hall

## FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

Luke 10:38-42

The story about Martha inviting Jesus into her home that she shared with her sister Mary and brother Lazarus has always spoken to my heart. I guess it is because I long to be a "Mary," but my life is frequently caught up in our "Martha" world.

Imagine, Jesus and his disciples have come for dinner! That would make 17 people to feed: Jesus, his 12 disciples, Mary, Lazarus and Mary! After welcoming Jesus into her house, Martha proceeds to the kitchen to prepare all the food, but Mary does not follow her to help. Mary proceeds to sit with the others to listen to Jesus. The Bible says that Martha was "distracted" with all her preparations. It is interesting that they both had the same choice, the same choice that we have. They could either focus on Jesus or be distracted by worldly things. When Martha realizes that Mary is not going to help her, she complains to Jesus that she is doing all the work,



all by herself. I love that Jesus does not chastise Martha. In fact, he comforts her by saying, "Martha, Martha." He acknowledges her fretting and reminds her that "only one thing is necessary," "the good part." The "good part" is Jesus. Martha is so busy in the kitchen that she misses the moment to really be with Jesus, to listen to His words, to know Jesus more. We sometimes do the same thing.

Worrying/fretting can short circuit our relationship with Jesus because it causes us to fix our eyes not on Him, but on our situation and circumstances. This preoccupation with our problems magnifies them. However, we have the same choice as Martha; we can choose "the good part." How can we, sinners that we are, do this? What is the solution? Pastor Parent and Deaconess Bien remind us each week that solution is not in ourselves; the solution is to stay in The Word and Sacrament. That is where our faith is strengthened; that is where we find forgiveness for worrying and fretting.

-Jennifer

## Sunday's Readings

(Lectionary)

Date	Old Testament	Epistle	Gospel
Feb. 5	Ex 17:1-7	1 Cor.9:24-10:5	Mt. 20:1-16
Feb. 12	Is. 55:10-13	2 Cor. 11:19-12:9	Lk. 8:4-15
Feb. 19	1 Sam. 16:1-13	1 Cor. 13:1-13	Lk. 18:31-43
Feb. 26	Gen. 3:1-21	2 Cor. 6:1-10	Mt. 4:1-11
Mar. 5	Gen. 32:22-32	1 Thess. 4:1-7	Mt. 15:21-28

### FROM GRACE CAFE

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I hope you and your families had a great Holiday Season I also pray that God Blesses you and yours with a Healthy and Happy New Year.

As most of you already know, we will suspend the Grace Cafe Soup Kitchen as of January 31st. We are hoping to reopen at a later day, but that will depend on all of us. We are in need of volunteers. Ideally we would have six volunteers; four cooks and two servers. Donations will also be accepted from the congregation either monetary or canned goods, pasta, instant mashed potatoes. The reason for the request for food is the food from Destin Harvest has been cut severely due to rising

prices the retailers are not ordering as much for their stock. We serve from 11:00 to 12:00. If you are one of the cooks you will probably want to be there between 8:00 and 8:30 to start prepping your meal. If you just want serve you should be there by 10:00. If you want to volunteer or require more information please contact me at 850 682 0304, landline or 850 685 1112 cell phone.

A big Thank You to all of the volunteers that have helped at the Grace Cafe since it's inception. Thank You and Gods' Blessing on all of you.

-Becky

## FROM THE DEACONESS

In my study of the connection of the spirit, mind and body in the way God has created us, it is apparent that the effect of actual sin does not affect the spirit alone but infiltrates each part of our being. One sin seems to be most prevalent. It is also something that modern medicine has actually acknowledged to cause definite identifiable pathology in the human body and psyche (mind). That is stress, worry, or fretting (whatever you'd like to call it). Worry can cause depression, anxiety and paranoia in the mind. In the body (often fueled by the anguish going on in the mind) it causes ulcers, heart problems, rashes and damaging behaviors such as picking at the skin, overeating or not eating enough, sleeping too much or too little. In my vocation as a Physician Assistant, whenever possible, I try to get to the root of the problem. Why is this thing happening? In this case, in my vocation as a Deaconess, I ask the same: why? Why do we worry? Christ



clearly tells us not to worry. But we do. It is that old nature rearing its unrelenting head; that nature which will be perfected in the final Resurrection. But for now, we are saint and sinner, *simul justus et peccator*. He knows this. That is why he carried it to the cross. Worry, fretting, and stressing are sins that nailed him to the cross. He knows the weight of it. He feels the weight of it just as we are feeling it. And it is heavy. "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for

I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light." When we find rest in our souls, we will find rest in our mind and body.

In His sacrifice, He swaps our heavy burden for his light one. This is the gift given in Word and Sacrament: He takes our sin, in this case our worry, and forgives us and gives us faith that he has it. What's



more, He gives us not only faith that He has it, but also the He takes care of it. Whatever it is, it does not benefit us to worry about it. From the smallest thing to the most important thing. How do we find that rest? Doctor Martin Luther's answer to our worrying is prayer: "With our own concerns and thoughts we torture ourselves and stew over trying to pull this off our neck and to get rid of it. There is an evil and clever devil riding me and other people and frequently playing these tricks on me in my temptation or anxiety, whether it has to do with spiritual or with secular affairs. He immediately butts in and makes you start stewing over it. In this way he snatches us from our prayer and makes us so dizzy that we do not even think of praying. By the time you begin

praying you have already tortured yourself half to death. He is well aware of what prayer achieves and can do. That is why he creates so many obstacles and troubles, to keep you from getting around to it at all. Hence we ought to learn to take these words to heart. We should develop the habit, whenever we see anguish or need, to fall on our knees immediately and to place the need before God, on the basis of this admonition and promise. Then we would find help and would not have to torture ourselves with our own ideas about looking for help. This is a very precious medicine, one that certainly helps and never fails, if you will only use it." *Martin Luther, Sermons on the Sermon on the Mount, 7.11*

Pax Christi, Dcs. Heather

### OSELC Care Group

The Care Group is an extension of the Board of Christian Life and is overseen by Dcs. Bien. This group is in place to see to the needs of our congregation such as during times of illness and death by providing transportation, meals, and sending notes of sympathy and care. The Care Group also tends to the everyday needs like providing hydration and lunch for our workers on Church workdays. If you would like to be called on to serve in the Care Group or are in need of its services, please contact Jennifer Currid or Dcs. Heather Bien.

## Getting Around OSELC

Flower sign up—Sign up poster in the fellowship hall

Refreshments sign up - Sign up sheet in the fellowship hall

Directories—on the back counter in the nave (where Service is held)

LWML mite boxes—on the back counter shelf in the nave

Serve as chairman of a board—See Alex Franco

Serve on a board—See that board's chairman (list is on the back of the newsletter)

Make Offerings Electronically—See Brian Hull

Subscribe to the Lutheran Witness magazine—See Trish Hull

Websites:

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—[www.LCMS.org](http://www.LCMS.org)

Southern District—[www.southeranlcms.org](http://www.southeranlcms.org)

## From the Board of Security Reminder!

Remember to lock the door as you enter one of our buildings if the door is not actively being used. Please see me if you need access to the church building and/or fellowship (parish) hall other than at the usual times the buildings are open. I'll need the following information from you: your preferred 6-digit code, days of the week and hours of the day you want access, your cell phone number, and a brief reason why you want an access code. If you are the last to leave the premises, please check all doors to assure they are closed

## Women's Bible Study

Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

Study of

Psalms

Come join us for a good time of learning and fellowship!

Birthdays:

Pastor Parent	2/7
Bruce Anthony	2/18
Cindy Parent	2/18
Stephen Braun	2/23

### Women's Book Club

Thursday, February 16

11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

See Jennifer Currid for details



## Men's Group

February 21

7:00pm

Pastor Parent's house

All men of the church are invited for a great time of study and fellowship.

6481 Wallannee Way

Laurel Hill

## COFFEE WITH PASTOR



Coffee with Pastor

begins with

Matins at 9:00 a.m.

followed by time with Pastor to get to know him and for him to get to know his flock!

## Save the Date:

Saturday, March 18th

[OSELC LWML Service Project](#)

We'll be making greeting cards to give to the residents and staff of Crestview Manor. All ladies are invited to participate!

## Lenten Midweek Services:

Feb. 22 (Ash Wednesday), March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Soup and Sandwich Supper begins at 6 p.m.

(sign up sheet is posted in the Parish Hall)

Service begins at 7 p.m.

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church



Council Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2023



President – Alex Franco

Vice-President- Brad Bien

Opened in prayer at 6:30 by Pastor Parent

Attendance – Pastor Parent, Alex Franco, Brad Bien, Heather Bien, Brian Hull, Trish Hull, Jeannie Harrison, Julie Blaylock, Linda Urda, Alan Widener, Becky Williams, Jennifer Currid

Jennifer read the December 13, 2022 minutes which the council unanimously approved. We used this opportunity to practice registering our votes through the Teams chat feature.

Reports:

Pastor's Report (Fr Parent)- Pastor Parent and Cindy are most grateful and thankful for all the gifts, well wishes, and cards given to them during the Christmas season. He also appreciates very much the recognition of his third anniversary of serving as our Pastor.

He also reported that he and our church will be hosting a Winkle at the church on Tuesday, January 17th. We will be providing refreshments to be served in the Parish Hall before Soup Kitchen serving begins. Lay people can attend confession from 9:00-9:30 and the worship service that begins at 9:30.

Deaconess Report (Dcs Bien)- see attached.

Treasurer (Brian)- see attached. Additional comments – since the kitchen remodel is complete, he will close the kitchen account at the end of January.

Financial Report (Jeannie)-see attached.

Board of Security (Julie)- Julie recommends that the defibrillator housed in the Parish Hall be carried to the sanctuary for each worship service. A member of the CPR team will carry it back and forth each time. Alex volunteered to do this. It will be placed on the pew closest to the church office. We will follow this procedure until we purchase another one.

LWML (Linda)- see attached. Additional comments- The Our Savior LCMS will meet

in the Parish Hall from 10:00-12:00 on Saturday, Feb 4th.

Board of Christian Life (Jennifer)- The Women's Book Club will begin on Thursday, January 19. All those who indicated that they were interested have been given their first reading assignment.

Board of Education/ Youth (Gervase)- see attached.

Board of Elders (Alan)- no report.

Board of Trustees (Brian)- see attached. Additional comments- Deaconess Heather offered to supply the work day recipients with refreshments and water. Brian readily accepted. The next work day is January 21st.

Board of Social Ministry (Becky) – Up to 80 meals per week have been served regularly at the Soup Kitchen. However, due to a lack of volunteers and the decrease in the amount of food we receive on the food truck, the Grace Café/Soup Kitchen will be suspended beginning in February. The meals for January will be planned around the food that is in our freezers. We will redirect the weekly Soup Kitchen patrons to other locations for weekly meals. Brian will find out who to notify that Tuesday is now available for another church to provide meals. The council commends Becky Williams on the outstanding job she has done over the years in this ministry.

The next "Dining Out" will be held on Friday, Feb. 10th, at 6:30, at the Bavarian's Wirtshaus, located at 24 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE in Fort Walton Beach.

Board of Evangelism (Alex)- no report.

Unfinished Business: Nomination of Synodical Officers (LCMS president, LCMS 1st vice president, So. District vice president)-Alex made a motion for the council to endorse the incumbent LCMS President, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, for the office of LCMS President for OSELC's nomination at the Voters' meeting on Feb. 14th. Julie seconded the motion, and it passed.

New Business: Voters' Assembly Meeting Agenda (& briefers) will be held on Feb. 14th. Alex reminded us that all members may or may not present a report, but all needed to be in attendance to answer questions.

The council decided that it will continue to use Microsoft Teams for two meetings followed by a face-to-face meeting prior to the Voters' Meeting.

Closing prayer by Pastor Parent. Meeting adjourned at 7:30.

**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN  
EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

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