

Bethany Lutheran Church

25430 Bison Road

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February 2021



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Oh God, is it Lent already?

“The cords of death encompassed me,...the cords of Sheol entangled me,...In my distress I called upon the Lord,...from his temple he heard my voice...” Psalm 18:4-6

With these opening verses from Psalm 18 sung as Call to Worship on the 9th Sunday before Easter, thus would have begun Septuagesima. Septuagesima (Latin for 70-ish) was a season in the church year, one of the latest to be added to our calendar, in which our hearts and minds were to be turned towards preparation for Lent. We have since removed it from our church calendar over 50 years ago, but the history is still important and the principles it shares with us in our journey of faith are still relevant. Its purpose for Lutherans was to prepare us to prepare. To make us realize that Lent is coming, that Lent is a part of who we are as Christians, and that we should be mindful of these seasons so that we might get the best out of them, both spiritually, but also physically.

In the 1985 movie, *Ladyhawke*, Matthew Broderick stars as an escaped thief named Phillippe Gaston who is recruited by Etienne Navarre (Rutger Hauer) to sneak into the city of Aquila so Navarre might kill the Bishop who used magic to turn Navarre’s lover, Isabeau (Michelle Pfeiffer), into a hawk by day and Navarre into a wolf at night so that they could never truly be together because the Bishop was jealous and wanted Isabeau for himself. At one point, Isabeau is wounded while in her hawk form and Phillippe is tasked with taking her to a disgraced priest, Imperius (Leo McKern), so he might heal her and nurse her back to health. As Phillippe approaches the gates of the ruined castle in which Imperius has taken up residence, they have this exchange:

Imperius: What do you want?

Phillippe: I was told to bring you this bird. It's been wounded.

Imperius: Oh, good shot! Bring it in, we'll dine together.

Phillippe: We can't eat this bird.

Imperius: What? Oh God, is it Lent again already?”

For many of us, Lent sneaks up on us like a thief. We go to bed on Transfiguration Sunday rejoicing in Christ being revealed to us in all his glory as the only Son of God, only to awaken on Ash Wednesday and think, “Oh God, is it Lent already?” Lent is one of the oldest seasons of the church calendar in which we are to be joining with Jesus and setting our faces toward Jerusalem, making our way towards Calvary. It often gets turned into a season in which we give up something like chocolate, coffee or liquor for those 40 days as good Christians, only to lose out on the spiritual aspects of the journey. During Lent we are often called on to fast, pray and give alms as ancient practices passed down, but what often is missing is that this whole festival season that began with Advent and ends with Holy Trinity Sunday is a time of meaning and purpose. In which each Sunday builds on the next as we focus upon the great Paschal mysteries of the cross, the empty tomb, and Christ in his glorious might redeeming all of creation.

So I ask you, Church, as we have just a couple of weeks until the beginning of Lent, what will you make of it this year? That is a huge question because with Covid it seems as though we have been in a permanent Lent since last March. We have been forced to “fast” in so many ways. We have been made to lose so much in hopes that one day soon there will be a day of relief and redemption. Well, this year

Lent is coming again. Maybe for this important season, to keep it well, instead of denying yourself something, maybe you and I need to take on something. Something that can bring us some relief, at least spiritually. Maybe it is a commitment to attendance at worship each week (either in-person or remotely), that you might be fed through the gifts of God from his Word and Table. Maybe it is taking up the reading of the Psalms over those 40 days (read 3-4 a day, with 2 days devoted to reading Psalm 119). Maybe it is a necessity for you to let go of things that have been dragging you down, pulling you away from your faith life. The point being that Lent is more than food or drink, work and alms. It is a purposeful season that we might turn our gaze toward Christ and his cross to receive the redemption and freedom we might have knowing that on a hill outside Jerusalem 2000 years ago, the Son of God took the nails that he might free us from all the things we think we have to do in order to make ourselves enough, or worthy, or perfect. May Lent be a time for you to cry out to God, knowing he will hear you, but may it also be a time that does not catch you by surprise, but instead may it be marked on your calendar as that countdown to the joy of Easter, knowing that as Christ suffers and dies for you, and as you may have suffered much this year, the tomb could not hold him, and neither shall our fears or pains hold us. For we have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

Happy Septuagesima and have a blessed Lent.

Pastor Carleton Smee

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9:00 AM Quilting/Prayer Shawls	3 6:00 PM Bible Study	4	5	6
7 9:00 AM Worship Svc w/Holy Communion Youth Sunday Pastor Smee	8	9 9:00 AM Quilting/Prayer Shawls	10 6:00 PM Bible Study	11	12	13
14 9:00 AM Worship Svc w/Holy Communion Pastor Carl	15	16 9:00 AM Quilting/Prayer Shawls	17 6:30 PM Ash Wednesday Svc Pastor Carl	18	19	20
21 9:00 AM Worship Svc Pastor Smee	22 6:00 PM Zoom Bible Study	23 9:00 AM Quilting/Prayer Shawls	24 6:30 PM Joint Lenten Svc at Faith Lutheran Church in Staples	25	26	27
28 9:00 AM Worship Svc Food Shelf Sunday Pastor Carl						

February 2021

Team Bramstedt: Amanda & Glen Bramstedt, Joel & Jeanine Pantzke, Brad & Mary Hansen, Mark & Mary Schlangen, Andy & Kourtney Frank, Florence Jones, Mary Tanner, Lois Breden

March 2021

Team Ford: Bruce Ford, Norb & Jan Bueckers, Leone Johnson, Diana Vaverek, Kim Schultz, Gary & Susan Oberton, Tom & Sandy Bjorge, Glen & Theresa Welters, Norma Pantzke



February 2	Pam Bellamy
February 3	Brad Hansen
February 4	Wade Sandbakken
February 5	Elizabeth Oberton
February 7	Dorothy Radke
February 9	Kayla Sandbakken
February 11	Richard Sandbakken
February 14	Andy Cina
February 15	Irene Oldenburg
February 15	Mary Hansen
February 16	Darren Bushinger
February 17	Tania Hendrickson
February 21	Roxie Flicke
February 23	Jim Zetah
February 26	Lucas Hendrickson

Online Daily Meditation - Join Pastor Smee on the church Facebook page, his website, or his podcast, as we look at the texts for the upcoming Sunday. Each day will be a different one of our appointed prayers or readings, trying to see where God is speaking to us as we seek to hear the Gospel when we gather together each week. You can go to: www.facebook.com/FLCStaples, www.facebook.com/CushingBeth, or www.treadweary.com/sounds.html. Or search "The Treadweary Podcast" on your podcast provider.

Contact any Council Member if you have specific needs:

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Bruce Ford 218-575-2335
Harvey Bloom 320-749-2929

Financials for January:

Weekly goal for general offering: \$1,500.00
Received January 3, 2021: \$250.00
Received January 10, 2021: \$1,460.00
Received January 17, 2021: \$580.00
Received January 24, 2021: \$325.00
Avg YTD Weekly Giving: \$680.00

Attendance at Worship: January 10, 2021: 20
January 17, 2021: 18
January 24, 2021: 20

Obituary for John S. Breden

John S. Breden, 89 year old resident of Randall, MN, passed away on Saturday, December 19, 2020 at his residence. A Private Family Memorial Service will be held at Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN, with interment at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery north of Little Falls. Military Honors will be provided by the Randall V.F.W. Post #9073. A Public Memorial Service will be announced at a future date.

John Sievert Breden was born on February 2, 1931 in Richland, North Dakota to the late Sievert and Ida (Kilde) Breden. The family moved to Park Rapids, MN in 1939 and John graduated from Park Rapids High School. He entered into the U.S. Army in 1952 and proudly served during the Korean Conflict, earning the Army Occupational Medal and National Defense Service Medal. He was honorably discharged in 1954. John was united in marriage to Lois Weekley on June 30, 1956 and the couple resided in the Twin Cities area for 14 years. In 1970, they purchased a farm in Parker Township, MN, where they raised their family, selling in 2001. In addition to farming, John also delivered for Lampert Lumber and was an assistant custodian at the Dr. S.G. Knight School in Randall, MN. In 2001, John and Lois moved into their retirement home in Randall. John loved the outdoors, but his greatest love was fishing with his sons and grandson. He also enjoyed gardening with his wife and raising beautiful flowers. John was a kind and gentle man and very devoted to his family and especially to his wife of 64 years. He was a lifetime member of the Randall V.F.W. Post #9073 and D.A.V. Strong in his faith, John also attended Bethany Lutheran Church in Cushing, MN.

John will be missed by many, especially his wife, Lois; sons, Daryl of Randall and Michael Breden of Little Falls; sister, Arlene Norman of Michigan; 4 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren; and will also be missed by several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Sievert and Ida Breden; sister, Helen Bengtson; and brother, Sidney Breden.