

“Growing God’s People”

A Monthly Newsletter of

St. Paul Lutheran Church - Havre, MT & Zion Lutheran Church - Chinook, MT

April 2025



A Message from Pastor Forke

Curvatus in se

Clouds were lying thick on the ground. They were full of snow. The timber was heavy. The sun was a dim light, coming from everywhere. I happened to be searching for a meadow that I thought lay somewhere off to my left. Without the sun I had only myself as a reference point. As a result, I kept turning to the left until I had walked in a big circle. At first, I was dumb founded, and not a little embarrassed. I didn't think I was capable of such a silly error. Now, I recognize that such a curve is a way of life. This is how Martin Luther portrayed the effects of sin. In his commentary on Romans 5 he described the heart of man as, "...so curved in on itself that no man, no matter how holy...can understand it." In fact, theologians coined a Latin phrase to express the depths of sin. "Homo curvatus in se" they would say, that is, "man is turned in on self." Like cloudy days, sin reduces our world to ourselves. That is all that we see, and all that we care about. Every part of the world: people, things, life, become merely tools to benefit self. It is difficult to admit, but I am curvatus in se. The irony of it all is that just as I was too self-absorbed to recognize I was walking in circles in the woods, so I am too turned in on myself to recognize this sinfulness. Paul refers to this vicious circle when he writes about the sinful self in Romans 7:18, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." A flesh that is constantly turning to itself can find no life and do no good thing. So, the Psalmist agrees, "...their inmost self is destruction." (Psalm 5:9) We recognize the futility of the self-absorbed life when we say, "It feels like I'm just going in circles." What happens to individual Christians can happen to their congregations. Congregations can be turned in on themselves. Sometimes we lose sight of the bigger picture of why God gathers groups of believers and places them in specific communities. We run in circles taking care of our needs because we don't see anyone else's needs.

The season of Lent is a good time to examine this deadly circle. If it's all about me, then it will end here. I will never be free of self, and I will die in my sin. Thanks be to God that He sent His Son Jesus to free me from this terrible inward curve. Jesus is the light of the world. Only in Him can we see something other than ourselves. "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (II Cor. 4:6) Through faith in Jesus, our Heavenly Father gives us a reference point outside of ourselves. When our sin is forgiven, we are raised to a new life in the light of Jesus. As you look forward to the day of Resurrection you can rejoice that the Holy Spirit of God is at work in your life. He is always directing you to look outside of yourself. As you focus on the light of the world in the face of Christ Jesus you also begin to see the needs of others around you. As congregations we look into the surrounding communities to see the needs of those who are still turned in on themselves, circled by sin. Forgiven and free we point them to the light of the living Savior.

Pastor Terry Forke, MT District President






Palm Sunday
is
April 13th

2025

APRIL

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Support the Food Bank! Bring your Canned goods to the drop box Located @ each Church Entrance!		1	2 St. Paul 6:00 pm - Lenten Supper 6:45 pm - Lent Service	3 9:00 am - Quilting Group 7:00 pm-Bequest Meeting	4	5 6:30 pm- Bible Study
6 Holy Communion 6:30 pm- Youth Group	7	8 6:30 pm – (Zion) Voter's Meeting	9 St. Paul 6:00 pm - Lenten Supper 6:45 pm - Lent Service	10 9:00 am - Quilting Group 7:00 pm-St. Paul -Council	11	12 
13 Palm Sunday 	14	15	16	17 9:00 am - Quilting Group	18	19 <u>Good Friday Service (Observed)</u> 6:30 pm- @ St. Paul
20 <u>Easter Sunday</u> 8:30 am -Easter Breakfast 9:30 am – Sunday School <u>Holy Communion Services</u> 9:00 (Zion) 11:00 am (St. Paul)	21 <u>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</u>	22	23 	24 9:00 am - Quilting Group	25	26
27 Mite Box Sunday	28	29	30	<u>St. Paul's Sunday Schedule:</u> 9:45 am –Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:00am –Worship	St. Paul Elder of the Month Greg Smith <u>Fellowship Hour</u> Trustees	<u>Zion's Sunday Schedule:</u> 9:00 am Worship 10:05 am- Sunday School