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Redeemed

Thankfully, by the time I had to register for selective service, the Vietnam War had been officially over for several years. But as I was growing up, I well remember my cousins and my friends' older brothers sweating out the draft lottery. The brutality of the war was something I followed on television from tender years – watching Huntley and Brinkley with my *National Geographic* map of Vietnam at hand, which was mounted on an old ceiling tile so I could put push-pins to mark where our troops were engaged in battle. The war wasn't an urgent threat to me like it was to the older teenagers of my acquaintance, but it was not some distant abstraction either. I was deeply concerned by it.

At some point in my youth I received a POW bracelet, like millions of people of the era. I prayed every day for Captain Johnson, long after the bracelet which bore his name broke and the pieces were placed in my jewelry box.

Everyone who lived through the era was aware of the horrendous conditions that befell POW's in that war. I suspect this has ever been so, but it was new to me and the photographs and occasional films of their conditions provoked a deep sense of sympathy for those forlorn men. I imagined what it might be like to be imprisoned in the Hanoi Hilton or in one of the jungle outposts where bamboo cages served as prison cells.

The practice of taking prisoners in times of battle is ancient. So is the practice of exacting a ransom for their release. At the end of the battle, the losing army would have to pay a ransom to have their prisoners released. When we think of a ransom payment, we generally think of a kidnapping and cops and robbers or of the Lindbergh baby, but historically ransoms were paid to release prisoners taken in war. Ransoms were also paid to emancipate slaves. The slave, him or herself, could save up enough to pay off their master and gain their freedom or someone else could pay the price to set them free. One of the ways that slaves were emancipated was that they could be sold to a god. The slave, or a patron, would pay the ransom price to a temple treasury and the slave's owner would transfer ownership of the slave to the god, effectively freeing the slave, but binding him or her to lifelong worship of the god to whom he or she had been sold.

As Christians, we refer to ourselves as those whom Christ has redeemed. Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) During this holy season of Lent and as we look ahead to Holy Week and Easter, we should be mindful of what it means to be the redeemed of the Lord.

Each of us, from Adam to you and me, have experienced ourselves to be slaves to sin and prisoners of our own selfish and alienating ways. Our good intentions and striving are not sufficient to free us from sin and self-absorption, from the evil we do and the good we fail to do. We are bound, imprisoned, enslaved by sin. Paradoxically, we are actually prisoners to self. Try as we might, we cannot free ourselves from the thrall to our own selfish desires and impulses.

God in Christ has offered himself as the ransom to set us free from sin. We can experience true freedom when we trust that God has broken the chains that bound us. We are not trapped any longer in the solitary confinement of our enthrallment with self which alienates us from each other and God. Jesus has shown us the way. When we take up the cross and die to self and sin, we are not destroyed; we are liberated and given new life. Thanks be to God for the sacrifice of his Son Jesus who gave himself completely to release us from sin and its death dealing ways.

See you in Church – Pastor Lynn

*Soup &
 Soul food
 for Lent*

continues until
 April 10



**PALM
 SUNDAY**

April 14, 10:30am

**MAUNDY
 THURSDAY**

April 18, 7pm

GOOD FRIDAY

April 19, 7pm

**WORD &
 SACRAMENT**

April 20, 4pm

**EASTER
 SUNDAY**

April 21, 10:30am

April Worship Participants

Altar Guild

Robin Federmann

Lay Readers

- 4/7 Linda Velazquez
- 4/14 Jeff Rich
- 4/21 Jacob Zdrojewski
- 4/28 Brenda Carver

Ushers

- Clayton Errington
- Andy Federmann
- Ken Kruszka
- Don McMillan
- Donn Mergenhagen
- Jeff Rich
- Kurt Rich

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 4/7 Amy Jo Lauber
- 4/21 Easter-no coffee hour



Regular coffee hours continue on the *first* and *third* Sundays of the month. We can always add additional coffee hours for any other celebration.

LENT
continues...



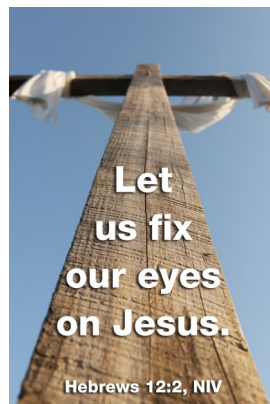
Soup & Soul Food for Lent

You are invited to soup supper and a vesper service each Wednesday of Lent. We are continuing our journey through Lent as we explore The Lord's Prayer.

If you would like to make soup, there are openings on the remaining Wednesday evenings; please sign up.

Volunteers needed for Holy Thursday:

Pastor Lynn is asking for 12 people to participate in the Holy Thursday Tenebrae service as readers. If you can participate, please sign up in the Narthex.



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday
April 14, 10:30am

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service
April 18, 7pm

Good Friday
April 19, 7pm

Holy Saturday Service
April 20, 4pm

Easter!
Celebration Service with Holy Communion

Easter is just around the corner, but so is Thanksgiving. It is not too late...It is not too early... to start saving your coins for Thank Offering Sunday. Coin boxes are always available in the Narthex (wall rack next to table). So, if you haven't, please start one today. All monies go to a local mission in November.

The Mission Committee thanks you!



Jay Cogdill
 John Fogle
 Mel & Ona Hamann
 Family of Jeff Heitman



Sandy Hoffmann
 Nancy Jankowski
 Karen Kaitanowski
 Marilyn Mergenhagen

If you would like prayers publicized here, please contact Pastor Lynn, the church office, or fill out a Prayer Request Form. If you have a more immediate prayer concern, text Michelle Kemp at 245-1692 or call Dolly Errington at 823-6210 to begin the prayer chain.

Happy Birthday!

Nancy Williams 4/5
 Diane Whytas 4/14
 Ken Haberman 4/19

Prayer Requests During Worship

You may write a prayer request to be spoken aloud by Pastor Lynn during that day's worship service. It will also be put in the bulletin the following week. You can find the prayer cards in the pew. Put your request in the offering plate.

Activity Group

There was a full house on March 21st as the Activity Group came together after a two-month winter break for a wonderful afternoon celebrating friendship and fellowship—and St. Patrick's Day!

Join us for the next potluck lunch on the third Thursday of the month, April 18 (Maundy Thursday), at 12noon. All are welcome! Invite a friend!

Ridge Ramblers were here on Mardi Gras entertaining us with their folk/bluegrass music. We enjoyed fastnachts and paczki's!

Thank you to LaDonna Painter, David & Pamela Kaznica, Marilyn Rich and Devon Rich, and all the Ramblers!



Emergency Response Training being offered at St. Matthew's - Fri., April 5, 7pm

This class is offered through the nationwide program called "Stop the Bleed" to teach people how to save a life in critical situations with bleed control techniques. Instructors Debi Thiel, EMS Lieutenant for Boston Fire Co, and Jenny Kane, EMS Captain for BFC, will be the instructors. They will also demo CPR/AED use.

Save The Date!

Saturday, May 4

Progressive Dinner



We will be having a Progressive Dinner on Saturday, May 4th. Dinner hosts are needed for this evening of fellowship. If you would like to host people for dinner at your house, please sign up and include how many people you can accommodate. Another sign-up sheet is for anyone wishing to attend the Progressive Dinner as a guest.

The evening will start at your host's home at 6pm, then to St. Matthew's for dessert at 8pm. Your host will contact you as to what you can bring.

Any questions, please see me.

-LaDonna Painter or call 715-7310.



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Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 9am-2pm, Thurs. 9-12, & Fri. 12:30-3:30pm

Custodians:

David & Pamela Kaznica
716-913-6927 (David)
716-913-7504 (Pamela)



A Simple Way to Serve

2019 MISSION FUNDRAISER

Thursday, April 4—6:00pm at Butera’s

Come check out CIA’s past successes and some exciting plans for this year’s hands-on service initiatives. Support CIA’s efforts, both at home and around the world by attending this year’s event!

Tickets are \$20 per person or \$50 per family. Pizza is included. Cash bar available. You may purchase your ticket at the door or see one of our CIA reps Dawn Goetz or David & Pamela Kaznica.

During Month of April: CIA is partnering with Functional Literacy of Haiti for the 13th year and will buy Creole Bibles for Haitian adults who have just learned to read. Typically, it takes 2 years to graduate from the adult literacy program held at one of 80 FLM sites. In 2019, 1800+ Haitian adults will graduate from this program.

For \$10.00, you have the opportunity to purchase a Creole Bible to donate and sign a label which will be affixed to the bible. They will be presented to each Haitian graduate at their graduation ceremony on a Sunday in June, 2019.

SPRING CONCERT

Churches In Action is hosting a concert at Windom Community Church on May 5, at 2:00pm. Five local churches will be participating with musical groups from bell choirs to praise bands (including St. Matthew’s Praise Band!). A free will offering will help to raise funds for future mission



Work Weekend

Friday & Saturday * May 17 & 18, from 9-3pm * St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy



Friends of Night People

Wednesday, April 3

February Stats

Average Attendance: 70

Giving:	General	Mission
Total Received:	\$11,240	\$406
Monthly Goal:	\$12,646	\$562

Monthly Money Minutes

-by Amy Jo Lauber, CFP®

April

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Isaiah 55:1

I contrast this with St. Paul’s message from 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.’”* Whose message resonates more with you? Do both, depending on the situation?

The prophet Isaiah is inviting people to life with God, for which you need no money to experience abundance. St. Paul’s message is against idleness, for as Christian philosopher Dallas Willard writes, *“Grace is opposed to earning, not to effort.”*

April 2019



Sun

Mon






Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2 Folk Group 6:30pm	3 AA 10:30am <i>Friends of Night People outreach</i> Praise Band 5:00pm Soup Supper & Vespers 6:00pm Choir 7:30pm	4 CIA Fundraiser/ Social 6:00pm (Butera's) OA 7:30pm	5 Stop the Bleed Training Class 7:00pm	6  Word & Sacrament 4:00pm
7 Fifth Sunday in <i>Lent</i> Worship & Children's SS 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:30	8	9 Church Council 7pm Folk Group 6:30pm	10 AA 10:30am Praise Band 5:00pm Soup Supper & Vespers 6:00pm Choir 7:30pm	11 OA 7:30pm	12	13  Word & Sacrament 4:00pm
14 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Worship & Children's SS 10:30am	15	16 Folk Group 6:30pm	17	18  <i>Maundy Thursday SERVICE</i> 7:00pm	19  Good Friday Service 7:00pm	20  Holy Saturday Service 4:00pm
21  <i>Easter!</i> Celebration & Communion 10:30am	22	23 Mission Com 7pm Folk Group 6:30pm	24	25	26	27  Word & Sacrament 4:00pm Scrapbooking 11-9p
28 Worship 10:30am	29	30				

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ
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Our church building is fully accessible.

No matter where you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here!