

Messenger

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Day School
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SPIRITUAL APATHY: ITS CAUSE AND CURE

Spiritual apathy--It's something that most (all?) congregations experience. Satan uses it to cripple and even destroy otherwise faithful, energetic, and well-intentioned congregations. So, what is Spiritual Apathy? It's an attitude of "So what", or it just doesn't really matter one way or another. Its major symptom is the drastic decline in participation in worship services after the very joyful Christmas and Easter celebrations.

Why does Spiritual Apathy occur? Maybe it's because of an attitude of minimalism (attending public worship and partaking of the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion once or even twice a year is adequate ... it fulfills the necessary requirement to be kept on the congregational membership list); spiritual laziness (what difference does it make or who cares, anyway?); or fatigue (our lives are so filled with activities, responsibilities, and other "things" that we are just too tired to attend public worship). After all, "God will understand" we rationalize.

How do we successfully counteract Spiritual Apathy? The answer is so simple that we often miss it. We humbly confess our sinful neglect, gratefully receive God's forgiveness, resolve to correct our wrong in the power of our Baptismal identity as God's children, and prayerfully encourage one another to live as God desires us to live. That is, we do what Satan is trying to get us to not do. We faithfully participate in Word and Sacrament by reading, hearing, and obeying God's Holy Word both individually and collectively and join with fellow Christians of the same confessional conviction in consuming Christ's crucified and resurrected body and blood that are really present in, with, and under the consecrated elements of bread and wine. Both activities point our attention to and give us the strong assurance of what Jesus told His disciples 40 days after His bodily resurrection when He visibly ascended back to His heavenly throne, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." ([Matthew 28:18](#))

Because Jesus is with us we have great comfort and strength as we struggle to move through life confronted with trials and tribulations, heartaches and despairs. The reality of our Savior's presence safeguards us against and protects us from Satan, the world, and our sin-infected selves. No matter what challenges threaten us, we have the blessed assurance that Jesus has already won the ultimate victory for us with His holy life, innocent suffering and death, and triumphant resurrection from the dead. He reminds us of that truth every time we recall our Baptism, by which the Holy Spirit cleansed us from our sins, gave us faith in our Savior, and connected us with His death and resurrection. That's what the divine service is ultimately all about—reminding and reassuring us of God's compassionate mercy and grace that His only-begotten Son gained for us.

Isn't that worth receiving and celebrating regularly ... frequently ... even weekly? Let's combat Spiritual Apathy by faithfully attending public worship and partaking of the Lord's Supper, humbly confessing our sins and gratefully receiving God's forgiveness for them, and daily communicating with God through His gift of prayer. God will be glorified, we will be uplifted, and His Church will be strengthened.

In the Crucified and Risen Christ's name,
Pastor Schaefer

A Note From the Principal

Our school year is half complete. Things are running smoothly so far this school year. We are busy learning the truths of God's Word, as well as growing in our knowledge of other subjects. We hope the Lord continues to bless our school as the year progresses.

Here are a few of our 2nd quarter highlights:

1. The faculty has begun planning for the upcoming MI District Teachers' Conference on October 6-8. We will plan to organize this event with the help of church and school families.
2. St. Peter's Band performed a concert for school and church families. They did a fantastic job. We thank Mrs. Alaniva for her efforts. There is another band concert scheduled for Wednesday, May 19th.
3. The Terra-Nova test scores came to school. Our scores seem comparable/better to last year. We also are comparable/better than most WELS schools.
4. Mrs. Winkler announced to the faculty her plans to retire at the end of the school year. We will be making plans for a retirement celebration.
5. We had our annual Book Fair on December 4th. Special thanks to the Home & School group for making it a successful event. .
6. The students did a fantastic job singing and proclaiming the message of Christ's birth at our Christmas Eve service.
7. The school is planning an Open House on February 28th. The plan is to advertise the event through door hangers and the newspaper. We plan to ask the church and school families to assist in publicizing.
8. Basketball season has started. You have numerous opportunities to see our Eagles basketball teams play. Also, the Boys A-team will compete in the MLS Class "B" Tournament on Feb. 12-13. The Boys and Girls A-teams will compete in the HVL Tournament on Mar. 12-14.
9. We had a new security system installed in school. We thank Howard Alaniva and Matt Golladay for their volunteer efforts.

May God bless us throughout the upcoming Lenten season as we look with humble and penitent hearts at the suffering and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mr. Ryan Roth, Principal

Midweek Lenten Services

For this Lenten season, our Wednesday evening services (six weeks, beginning February 17, Ash Wednesday at 7:00 PM) will focus on the following theme:

General Theme: **Romans 5:19** “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by the one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”

Date and Theme:

February 17 (Ash Wednesday): **Isaiah 59:12-16; Matthew 26:47-56** Mankind is in rebellion against God; Christ undergoes betrayal to atone for mankind’s rebellion

March 3: **Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12** Adam wanted to excuse himself for his sins and blame others. To atone for this, Jesus fell silent before his accusers and allowed them to condemn him

March 10: **Romans 5:17; Matthew 27:15-23** Adam was a murderer, who by his sin brought death to all men. To atone for this, Jesus was condemned to death in the place of a murderer.

March 17: **Galatians 3:27; John 19:23-24** Adam, clothed in the image of God, lost this through sin. To atone for this, Jesus allowed himself to be clothed in our sin, so that we could be clothed in his righteousness

March 24: **Proverbs 9:1-6; Matthew 26:26-28** Adam stretched out his hand to eat from the tree of death. Jesus invites us to stretch out our hands and eat from the Tree of Life

March 31: **Ephesians 5:22-27; Matthew 27:42** Adam, as an unfaithful husband, allowed his wife to fall into sin and so into sin’s bondage. To atone for this, Jesus gave his life for his Bride and so set her free from sin’s bondage

April 1 (Maundy Thursday): **John 13:1-5** Adam, who sinned in a garden, wanted to be like God in his pride. To atone for this, Jesus, who began his suffering in a garden, humbled himself to be our servant

April 2 (Good Friday) **Luke 23:39-43** Through sin Adam locked himself out of paradise. Jesus promised entrance into eternal paradise to the repentant criminal, for he opened the way to eternal paradise through his death.

I encourage all of you to gather frequently in God’s house for these Lenten services. The mercy of God in Christ’s obedience is portrayed in stark contrast to our disobedience.

In Christ’s service,
Pastor Paul Schaefer

YOUTH GROUP

The St. Peter's Youth Group is back in business. After Christmas, the Sunday morning Teen Bible Class was resumed. We are currently having a regular attendance of enthusiastic students studying the truths of God's Word. These lessons are introducing the students to the words they will hear in the Sunday worship service. If you are a teen, please think about coming and growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are also beginning to plan a variety of service and entertainment activities. We are currently beginning a can and bottle drive for the victims of the Haiti earthquake. The donations will go to the WELS Committee on Relief. Please bring your cans and bottles to school or church to support this important cause. We are also discussing doing some entertainment activities. The students are coming up with a lot of great ideas. We will be planning an activity for them to do soon. It is truly amazing to see their excitement and enthusiasm. May Lord continue to bless our efforts.

Pastoral Acts

Below are Pastoral Acts for the months of August, September and October:

Baptism

Noah Marcus Biro

Burial

Sandra McCowan

Loss of Member by Release to Heterodox

Susan Dial

Richard Ringer

Mary Ringer

Richard M Ringer

Sara Ringer

Lindsay Ringer

Loss of Member by Removal

Mark Benner

Sherry Benner

New Member by Transfer from Sister Congregation

Jeremy Rouse

From Emmanuel, Owatonna, MN

Sally Rouse (child: Mariah)

From Emmanuel, Owatonna, MN

Preschool

It always amazes me how much each child changes and grows during the year. Children who couldn't write their names, or even recognize the initial letter of their first name, can now. "Please" and "thank you" come more regularly. Some of the rough social graces and etiquette have smoothed out a bit. Interest and participation in learning experiences has increased. The children are able to retell large portions of the Bible lesson without much prompting. Of course, we have much more on which to work, but progress has been made.

Our Bible lessons for the next few months will show us who Jesus is. Through miracles He showed that even though He was human and looked like us and lived like us, He was also true God. We will see Him as our Savior when He paid for our sins on Calvary and will rejoice at the sight of the empty tomb.

We have been studying the solar system during the month of January. Even I have learned a few new things. (Did you know that stars are different colors? Supposedly, blue stars are the hottest while red stars are the coolest.) I have reminded the students of how the world came to be, how it was created by God and did not evolve after a big explosion in space. It really is amazing to think of all God created when considering the vastness of space. We will wrap up our unit with a trip to the planetarium.

Registration for the 2010-2011 school year begins Wednesday, February 24 for St. Peter's members. Other current and previous returning families may enroll beginning Thursday, February 25. Open registration is set for Friday, February 26 and will continue until classes are full. We are offering two sessions next year:

- 4-year-old morning class: M, W, F from 8:30-11:30
- 3-year-old morning class: T, TH from 8:30-11:30

An open house will take place February 28. Please let anyone who may be interested in preschool know about it. Registration packets will be available the first week in February.

Some dates to keep in mind:

- February 10-11 – Valentine's Day Parties
- February 12 – NO SCHOOL
- February 15 – NO SCHOOL
- February 24 – Preschool registration for Fall 2010 begins
- February 28 – Open House
- April 2-11 – Easter Break

In Christ's Service,

Christine Baganz

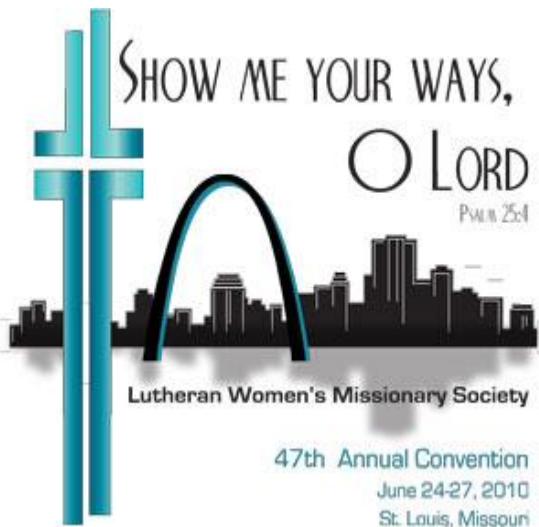
LWMS

Spring Rally: It seems impossible, but here we are talking about the LWMS Alpha Circuit Spring Rally! It will be held on Sat., April 24, at St. Mark's in Flat Rock. A World Mission theme is planned. Election of new officers is scheduled. If you are interested in serving as Vice President, Secretary, or on the Spiritual Growth Committee, please let me know, and I can pass your name along to be placed on the ballot.

Membership Dues: The Circuit Board is aware that some congregations may have difficulty with the 2010 National membership dues of \$75.00. Please contact a Board member if you are interested in sponsoring the membership of a congregation that could use assistance. They will gladly arrange this transaction. What a blessed opportunity to facilitate additional mission support in this way.

Befriend a Mission: March is our "Befriend a Mission" month. Watch for a display in the narthex and notes in the bulletin about how we can offer encouragement to our missionaries at home and abroad.

The LWMS 47th Annual Convention Newsletter is out! It is chock full of information about the upcoming convention June 24-27, at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, MO.



Registrations are due by May 15.

Vivian Hoeft, of Trinity, Saline, is researching Amtrak fares and the possibility of obtaining a group rate if enough of us travel together. It sounds like a fun trip!

LWMS Website: You can visit the excellent LWMS website: lwms.org, for more information. If you would like to receive a short monthly email directly from LWMS, you can sign up at the website too.

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MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The wonderful seasons of Advent and Christmas have come and gone for 2009, but the message of Christ's coming to save us remains throughout the year. The St. Peter's musicians hope your festivities were enhanced by the beautiful music that we prepared and presented for the edification of your faith. Please thank them for their hours of practice for the Candlelight Service and the dedication of their talents to the glory of God. We also appreciate Chris Ward for setting up the fellowship reception that followed the Candlelight Service. This year, all of the school children participated in the service (singing and ringing handbells), as well as the Junior Choir. Thanks to the teachers for their extra effort.

If you would like a DVD recording of the Candlelight Service, please contact Jim Cutler, (734.455.5131 or james.cutler@consultant.com) who edited and packaged the DVD; or Jan Jacobi (248.924.2147 or janjacobi@comcast.net). Thanks to Matt Golladay, who recorded the service.

The Senior Choir and Handbell Choir are mourning the death of Sandra McCowan, who was a soprano as well as a bell ringer. The congregation will miss her lovely solo voice as well as her pleasing personality. Our condolences go out to her family.

The Senior Choir and Handbell Choir are already preparing for Lent and Easter. Ash Wednesday will be here in less than a month (February 17). The adult choirs and the children from our school will be providing music for the Wednesday Lenten services, as well as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday. We hope you will attend these extra worship services.

Huron Valley Lutheran High School will be singing for our Sunday worship on March 21. We appreciate their music every year, as well as the sermon from Pastor Schaewe. The St. Peter's Junior Choir will be traveling to HVL for their Palm Sunday concert on March 28 at 3 p.m. We hope you will attend that concert.

Thank You from Church Council

The Church Council would like to thank our Bd. of Trustees and all other members who have made many repairs and updates to our church and school campus on very limited funds.

Central African Medical Mission

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! As we reflect back on 2009, we can see how God has guided and protected the Medical Mission throughout the year.

On our last day out to clinic before Christmas, we were discussing how strange it was that the ambulance hadn't been stuck in the mud yet. Then we had to take a detour because there was a broken down truck blocking the road. Taking a detour through the African bush rarely ends well. Of course, we ended up getting really stuck about 15 minutes later. We managed to get the vehicle out with a little pushing and a lot of flying dirt.

A severe diesel shortage began in November. Unfortunately, our mobile clinic wouldn't be very mobile without fuel. We took turns waiting long hours at the fuel stations to fill up the vehicles. Once the fuel truck arrived, it was a mad dash to the pumps. We put into practice our best minibus driving skills to make sure we could get fuel before it ran out. Thankfully, the Lord kept us safe in all the chaos. It was a lot of hard work, but by the grace of God we didn't miss a single day of clinic. We were even able to make special trips to transport patients to hospitals and other facilities as needed. What a blessing!

In December, we finally had all our clinic staff back after some vacations, but found ourselves short-staffed at the house. Our daytime security guard caught Chicken Pox from his children and missed almost 2 weeks of work. While he was gone, the gardener cut his hand and needed stitches. The injury caused the two to switch jobs for a while when they came back to work. The funniest sight was the day the gardener taught the security guard how to use the lawn mower. I think most of the grass got cut in the end, some parts two, three, or even four times. Still, there were these strange diamond shaped tufts of grass spotting the entire yard.

We also hosted the staff Christmas party. We decided to try something new and prepared a traditional American holiday dinner complete with roasted turkey and Jello fluff. Yes, Jello fluff! The medical staff enjoyed it so much, they ate every last bite! We even had a trivia game on the history of the Medical Mission. It was a three way tie! We all enjoyed time together to celebrate our Savior's birth.

As I write this letter, the rains are pouring down. We are in the middle of our rainy season. The number of people visiting our clinics has increased sharply and we are trying to keep the pharmacy stocked. I don't know if I've ever made so many trips in one month and the month is not over. We also had some excitement when an earthquake shook enough to wake us from our sleep on January 13th. It measured 4.8 and was located 20 miles northeast of where we live. There was little damage, but all the neighborhood dogs and animals were really upset. We are thankful God continues to protect us.

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God." 2 Corinthians 9:12

God's blessings from Malawi,

Terri Unterholzner