

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Dust you are, but not for long

There is a strange confluence in 2018 of the sacred and the secular. Ash Wednesday also happens to be Valentine's Day, and Easter Sunday is April Fool's Day. Someone pointed this out to me along with sage advice: "As a pastor, please don't link these events together." Sadly, I'm sure that many pastors will not resist the ready-made, but likely poorly-made illustrations.

"Dust you are and to dust you shall return." If your congregation observes the custom of the imposition of ashes, you will hear those words as a cross is inscribed on your forehead. It's not good news. We are dying and our bodies will return to the dust from which we came. It is our fault, our own fault, our own most grievous fault.

In Adam and Eve's sin, we exchanged our love of God for the love of self. There is nothing lovely about death. Ash Wednesday begins the Lenten season with repentance and the knowledge of death.

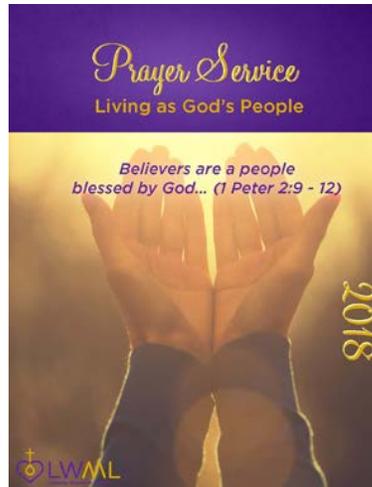
On Easter Sunday, your pastor might link Ash Wednesday to the Resurrection of our Lord by saying, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return, but not for long." Unless you are still alive when Christ returns, your body will be dust in the ground. On the last day, all who have died will be raised. Their bodies will rejoin their souls and believers will go into eternal life with Jesus. Unbelievers will go body and soul into hell for an eternity of suffering and death.

The gift of your resurrection and life eternal is solely because Christ Jesus came to undo your sin. He was selfless for the selfish. He became sin for the sinner. He was righteous and obedient in the stead of the ungodly and rebellious. He lived, died and rose again for you.

He said He was God in the flesh. He outlined exactly what He would do. He said this was for sinners like you and He did what He said. Dust you are because of sin. Alive you are and resurrected you will be because of Christ alone. A blessed Lententide and a happy Easter!

Rev. Bruce Timm
Arrowhead Region Pastoral Counselor

Our identity in Christ



The 2018 Prayer Service, "Living as God's People," is based on 1 Peter 2:9-12.

Many factors come to mind when we think of who we are. In his first letter, Peter continually reminds his readers of their identity. Rather than focus on inane worldly details,

he focuses in on what's most important: our standing in the eyes of God or our place in His kingdom.

Peter reminds his readers of who they were prior to being made part of God's family, contrasting that non-status with the present reality of what God had made them. This was especially important for Peter's readers as they compared themselves to the unbelievers around them, and as they fought to retain hope in what may have seemed like hopeless times.

The 2018 Prayer Service is now available for free download at lwml.org/prayer-service. The Prayer Service is designed to be used at any time, by large or small groups. It is an abbreviated worship service.

It was written by the Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner, 2013-17 English District LWML pastoral counselor. He will serve as a missionary in Israel.

Ladies enjoy style show

An LWML membership-drive event was held in early fall at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in St. Cloud. This event was hosted by Carla Patton, Arrowhead II regional vice-president.

The event consisted of a style show and luncheon, in which an explanation of LWML business rules was given. Each LWML member was encouraged to bring at least one guest who was a member of an LCMS church but not a current LWML member.

The women who modeled were a mix of LWML and non-LWML members. The ladies

enjoyed the styles, supplied by Christopher & Banks, as well as a lunch provided by Ebert and Gerbert's Sandwich Shop. The women had a great time while learning about LWML. The event was a huge success, with 82 in attendance.



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