

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

FASTING

Who receives this Sacrament worthily?

"Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words 'for you' require all hearts to believe."

(The Sacrament of the Altar, Luther's Small Catechism, © 1986 CPH)

Fasting is "certainly fine outward training." Lutherans can fast, but it does not earn you any favors with God or make you more pleasing in His eyes. Christ did all the work of salvation and He declared all foods clean. We do not need to abstain from certain foods or at certain times to please God. Christ alone pleases God.

Why should you fast? You fast for your faith. Fasting is saying "no" to food and "no" to yourself and that is good practice for your faith. As Paul says to Titus:

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age." — **Titus 2:11-12 NIV**

Believing in Christ entails saying "no" to yourself, your sinful desires, your ungodly passions. Fasting says "no" in a small and simple way.

Fasting will make you hungry. One historic practice of Christians is not to eat on Sunday morning before receiving the Lord's Supper. You will be hungry in church and think about food. The first food you eat on the Lord's Day will be the Lord's Supper. In it you will receive the only food on earth that will keep you alive forever — the living and risen body and blood of Jesus Christ under the bread and wine. Your hunger and denial will prepare you to receive the Lord's Supper in faith. Remember though what Luther says. It is not the fasting that makes you worthy. Faith alone in Christ's Words (that this is His body and blood "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins") enables you to receive the Lord's Supper for your benefit.

Fasting is training, practice and discipline. It is saying "no" to yourself and disciplining your body and mind to receive Christ's gifts. Why not try a little fasting this Lent before the Feast of the Resurrection?

Rev. Bruce Timm
Arrowhead Region Pastoral Counselor



The 2019 Prayer Service, written by Rev. Allen D. Anderson, past Rocky Mountain District President, is centered around the acronym for "CARES" and based on Ps. 94:17-19:

"If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. When I thought, 'My foot slips,' your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul."

The 2019 LWML Prayer Service downloads are available at lwml.org/prayer-service. If you are unable to download the service, please contact the LWML office at lwml@lwml.org or 1-800-252-5965 to obtain a paper copy.

'Follow my lead'

Instead of zone rallies, "Follow My Lead" celebrations will be held in Park regions I and II and Arrowhead Region I this spring. The Assembly of Leaders team (who were trained in November in St. Louis) are excited to share new ideas with the women of Minnesota North. (Arrowhead II and Lakeland I and II will hold their leadership training events in the fall.)

The dates for the workshop are: Staples, April 27; Esko, May 4; and Crookston, May 11. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. at all locations. The fee is \$10 and will cover the mileage costs for presenters.

Sharing our abundance

Check out the district mission grants at lwmlmnn.org/missiongrants.html and the national grants at lwml.org/mission-grants. We have chosen to support these grants with our mite box offerings. Please consider how you can help get these grants funded. Sharing the love of Jesus and what He has done for us is so important to each of us as a Lutheran Woman in Mission. The national mission goal deadline is March 31.



We have new logo!

At the Oct. 9 Board of Directors meeting, the board voted upon a new logo for our district, based on the new LWML guidelines.

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