



## True Grit

We need more grit. Of a sort.

Not necessarily the Southern kind of grits that make for delicious eating when partnered with some smoked Gouda or pepper jack cheese and lots of butter.

But the kind of grit that is real, salt of the earth, dependable, and speaks of an honest, come-to-terms character.

In the 1969 movie *True Grit*, John Wayne portrayed just such a U.S. marshal, chasing after the bad guys, getting shot, having to rescue the woman, and endure a side-kick. He was said to have “true grit.” It’s the only Oscar he ever won, believe it or not. Interesting, yes. But still not the grit we need.



There’s an invitation every Lent to get gritty. It starts the day after the unreal extravagances of Mardi Gras, on a Wednesday when we’re summoned to submit to gritty ashes pressed onto our foreheads and told: “Remember, human, that you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

If you’ve ever felt the ashes in the pix (bowl), you’d observe that they’re both dusty and gritty. They mark us, who were originally created from the dirt, as indeed dirty. Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust. Mud to mud (John 9:6). For better or for worse. In sickness and in health. For richer, for poorer. True grit. Repentant.

With the John 9 man-born-blind, Jesus invites us to baptism, a real washing away of the griminess of our sins. Jesus is never surprised by the dirtiness of our lives. He enters right in without flinching. He doesn’t avert his gaze or hide behind pretenses. He’s not easily impressed with how well we’ve washed ourselves behind the ears. He’s real God. For real, gritty people. Really washing away blinding sins-in-our-eyes.

The real God-Man gets gritty as he takes up his own cross, dragging it through the dirt to the trash heap hill of humanity to plant it in the dry ashes of our transgressions. We need him exactly this way. True grit. Ours and him. Together.

Only then clean. At the cross. At baptism.

Let the new gritty clean people arise to life.

– John Eric Karle  
Exploring. Equipping. Encouraging.  
Ephesians 4:11-16

***Surprise the World!***

**Love. Like. Jesus. + Hope for the City.**

# March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> MITES BREADBASKET 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	<b>2</b> 12pm AA 6pm Elders	<b>3</b> 12pm AA	<b>4</b> 12pm AA 1:15pm Lent Vespers	<b>5</b> 12pm AA	<b>6</b> 12pm AA	<b>7</b> 8:07am Men's Breakfast 10am AA
<b>8</b> 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	<b>9</b> 12pm AA	<b>10</b> 12pm AA	<b>11</b> 12pm AA 1:15pm Lent Vespers	<b>12</b> 10:30am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	<b>13</b> 12pm AA	<b>14</b> 10am AA
<b>15</b> 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship 11:45am Oktoberfest	<b>16</b> 12pm AA	<b>17</b> Saint Patrick's Day 12pm AA	<b>18</b> 12pm AA 1:15pm Lent Vespers	<b>19</b> 12pm AA	<b>20</b> 12pm AA	<b>21</b> 10am AA Workday?
<b>22</b> 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	<b>23</b> 10am Newsletter Deadline 12pm AA	<b>24</b> 12pm AA	<b>25</b> 12pm AA 1:15pm Lent Vespers	<b>26</b> 10:30am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch 6pm BOD	<b>27</b> 12pm AA	<b>28</b> 10am AA
<b>29</b> 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship 11:45am Potluck	<b>30</b> 12pm AA	<b>31</b> 12pm AA				

<u>Serving in March</u>	Date	Ushers
<b>Pastor</b> John Karle	March 1	Warner Boortz & Jerry Frederick
<b>Music Director</b> Jason Sims	March 8	Wayland Johnson & Terry Lovdahl
<b>Elder</b> Nancy Kaul	March 15	Willy Noffke & Jon Stringer
<b>Altar Care Team</b> Debbie Frederick and Pat Davenport	March 22	Mark Keyl & Jerry Herrington
	March 29	Warner Boortz & Ethan Potesta

**Online Giving** — Online giving is available to members and friends of Saint John via the 'Give' tab on our webpage. Thank you for supporting our work together in Jesus' name.

**LUTHERAN CAMPUS MISSION** **Campus Mission** — Welcome all college students! We're glad you're here. Please check in with Pastor John (or text/call at 318.332.3352).

**Men's Breakfast** — First Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:07am at Chesterfields located at 4646 Hardy Street. No matter where, the food's always better with friends! Join us!

**Office Hours** — 10am – 1pm, Wednesday and Thursday.

**LWML** — Mites will be collected Sunday, March 1st. Thank you for supporting the Mission Grant Projects selected in convention at the Gulf States District and National Convention LWML.

**Breadbasket Ingathering** — March 1<sup>st</sup> we will be collecting items to help stock the Breadbasket Pantry. Items needed include Jiffy Mix, Peanut Butter, Canned Goods, Mac and Cheese Dinners, and Cereal. Thank you for helping others and Loving Like Jesus.

**2020 Altar Flower Chart** is available for sign-ups today on the wall in the office. Please sign the chart with your name and reason for sponsorship. Sponsorship for altar flowers is \$40; sponsorship for eternal candle is \$15.

**New Pictures for the Picture Wall** — We would love for all members to update their photos for our member picture wall by meeting with Bjorn after worship in the lobby.

**New Offering Envelopes** — General offering envelopes are now available in the pew rack.

**Small Brown Envelopes** for lobby renovation gifts for the 'Accelerated Funding Plan' are available at the mailboxes. Thank you very much!

**Easter Lilies** — Forms are available to support the decorating of the Sanctuary with lilies. Please submit your form, including payment (\$10 per plant) to the church secretary by March 29th. Plants may be taken home after the Easter celebration.

**Fifth Sunday Potluck Meal** — On Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> we're going to celebrate with a potluck meal. As each is able, you're invited to bring a special main dish of your own plus a side, salad, or dessert. Tea and water will be provided.

## Study Books for Sale: Great for Lent!

**Woman: The Forgotten Story** For any woman, identity is important. The question, "Who am I?" will haunt her every decision. Discover again the old story of a beautiful identity, a story of love and sacrifice. The story offers incredible comfort, gives guidance, and teaches everyone who listens a wisdom that saves lives. Cost is \$15.

**The Sinner/Saint Devotional 60 •Days in the Psalms** A 60 day devotional that explores the book of Psalms to help us reevaluate our views on prayer, the law, the gospel, and the psalms. Cost is \$15.

**Lutheran Study Bibles** — We have five regular size print *Lutheran Study Bibles* available for purchase for \$50 each. These resourceful ESV translations with extensive study notes may be viewed in the church office. Larger print versions of the *Lutheran Study Bible* are \$59.

**Couples Devotional Book** — We're encouraging all those who are married (or engaged) to purchase the year of daily devotions by Timothy and Kathy Keller. The devotional is titled *The Meaning of Marriage: A Couple's Devotional* and is based on their earlier book with a similar title. Cost is \$15.

**Young Couples Bible Study** — We are studying *Broken: 7 "Christian" Rules That Every Christian Ought to Break as Often as Possible* by Jonathan Fisk. You can check it out at <https://tinyurl.com/yea5r56a>. If you are interested please contact Christopher Longman at 601.466.0103 or Dewey Case at 601.297.7953. Book cost is \$20.

**Wind Ensemble Concert** — Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm at the Mannoni Performing Arts Center.

**Tuesdays at Trinity** — Free concerts at 12noon in the sanctuary of Trinity Episcopal (509 West Pine Street) followed by \$10 luncheons in the fellowship hall. Concerts include: *Five from Trinity* on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, *Marcos Machado, bass and Yumi Nomoto, piano* on March 10<sup>th</sup>, *The Impromptu Piano Trio* on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and *The Lagniappe Trio* on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Hattiesburg Public School District** is hosting a job fair on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 8am-12noon at 301 Mamie Street. They filling all positions. Apply now at [www.hattiesburgpsd.com](http://www.hattiesburgpsd.com).

**William Carey Presents SHOAH HOW WAS IT HUMANLY POSSIBLE?** This visual exhibit documents the inhumanity of the holocaust and also the humanity of those who intervened at risk of their own lives. The exhibit will be on display February 11<sup>th</sup> – April 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Lucile Parker Gallery located at 512 Tuscan Avenue.

**Festival South 2020** — May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 27<sup>th</sup>.



## ***Reading Romans with Luther***

**Sunday Morning Study Group at 9:15am**

Author RJ Grunewald describes his book this way:

*"It's Luther, but for everyday life. It takes a work that was written hundreds of years ago and puts it in a package that is accessible for the average person, showing that it remains relevant in our day."*

The book contains passages from Luther and Saint Paul, with helpful commentary from Grunewald for better comprehension and personal application of Romans.

Nancy Kaul is the study facilitator of the group that meets in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15am. Cost of the book is \$15.



## **Saint John 2001**

**The St. John Choir has a great new look!**

**Have you noticed that our choir has finally gotten robes. What a great new look for a fine choir.** Pictured from left: Frances Lok, Helga Herrington, Anna Christiansen, Sally Hanson, Seigrid Christiansen, Margaret Gemeinhardt, Christina Keiper (rear) Elizabeth Harrison (front), Elaine Kersh, and Pastor Woodworth.

## **Weekday Bible and Spiritual Study Groups**

**West Hattiesburg Study Group** meets the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 10am at the home of Shirley Thone, 2 Bluebeard Point. (Phone: 228.324.6697) Bring your Bible as we work our way through the book of **1 Timothy** as facilitated by Debbie Frederick. Friends—men and women—are very welcome here!  
Next meeting is Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**The Avenues Study Group** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 10:30am in the Fellowship Hall. The study starting in February is a book on grief and loss titled *"Hope When Your Heart Breaks."* Author Michael W. Newman's prayer for us is that "we find a place of refuge and a point of reference" from his book.

Please join us as we begin learning how to navigate: a loss of relation, death of a loved one, dashed hopes and dreams, or a unique personal experience that has crushed your spirit and caused pain.

The cost of the book is \$15. For more information please contact the study facilitator, Pat Davenport at 769.223.2889. Next meeting is Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.

## Lutheran Women's Missionary League

LWML Mites collected on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> totaled \$70.00. Thank you for supporting the Mission Grants selected in convention at the National and Gulf States District.

"Mites" will be collected next on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be no LWML Business meeting in March.

Coming . . . April 17-19, the 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial LWML Gulf States District Convention in Navarre, Florida. The Theme: "It's Time to Sparkle" (Zechariah 9:16). Erin Alter, the Keynote Speaker at the Friday opening service, is the director of the Short-Term Mission Programs for LCMS International Mission. In 2000, Erin began serving as a long-term missionary in Japan as part of the Volunteer Youth Ministry of LCMS World Mission. In 2004, after her return to the States, her focus is now to connect people to international service opportunities – such as short-term mission trips, including Mercy Medical Team trips. What an inspirational young witness to sharing Jesus with the world! I will be attending the convention as Delegate for Saint John Lutheran, Magnolia Zone LWML. Elaine Kersh will serve as the Alternate.

The Gulf States District LWML Mission Grants approved from the 2018-2020 Biennium have been paid except for one \$1,500.00 scholarship for a recipient not pursuing the remainder of his studies at Seminary. The following "MITES" have been paid:

- Gulf States District Scholarship Fund \$1,500
- New Roof – Camp Dixie, Elberta, AL \$5,000
- Good News Van – Trinity Lutheran, Mobile, AL \$5,000
- Word of Hope – Post Abortion Hotline, Lutherans for Life \$2,500
- Sanctuary Carpet – Bethlehem Lutheran, Prattville, AL \$3,800
- Spanish & American Sign Language Bible Studies – Lutheran Friends of the Deaf \$5,000
- Scholarship Program – Camp Dixie, Elberta, AL \$3,000
- Building a Strong Foundation in the Lutheran Church, Togo \$2,550
- Concordia Seminary International Graduate School Program \$150

What a blessing!!! Thank you for participating on the first Sunday of every month in making this possible. It is wonderful to see these Mighty Mite Grants sharing the Gospel to the world!

The LWML here at Saint John Hattiesburg encourages all women to use their God-given gifts of talent to serve the Lord. If you are new to the church, or have been here a long time, you are invited to come, and encouraged to join in the fellowship of Women in Mission. You are needed!

At the February LWML meeting, members decided to sponsor a light breakfast in the Fellowship Hall, (muffins, coffee cake, fruit, juice, coffee, etc.) on Easter Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. This will be for those members unable to attend the Sunrise service, visiting relatives, friends, and out of town guests. If you would like to help, please contact me.

UNTIL NEXT TIME. . . . "Serve the Lord with Gladness!!!"

*-Shirley Thone*



## From the Altar Guild

### **Lent**

Lent is the 40-day period which comes before Easter. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, we replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities. Lent also recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion.

The Christian churches that observe Lent in the 21st century (and not all do significantly) use it as a time for prayer and penance. Few people today fast for the whole of Lent, although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to surrender a particular vice such as favorite foods or smoking. Whatever the sacrifice it is a reflection of Jesus' deprivation in the wilderness and a test of self-discipline.

### **The Color Purple**

Purple is the symbolic color used in some churches throughout Lent. Purple is used because it is associated with mourning and thus anticipates the pain and suffering of the crucifixion. Purple is also associated with royalty and celebrates Christ's resurrection and sovereignty. Our banners and altar frontal reflect the elements of mourning, suffering, and the royalty of our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

**Worship:** information, thoughts, and reflections on how, why, and where we worship.

Gathering for worship requires a place to gather, and since Old Testament times people have built beautiful buildings to honor God. Almost three thousand years ago, the temple in Jerusalem was dedicated by Solomon. The temple was a place of such splendor that it immediately captured the eye and aroused devotion. The Bible gives exact details of the beauty of the temple. The entire interior was overlaid with pure gold. The doors were carved with cherubim, palm trees, and flowers with all carvings overlaid with gold. A pair of cherubim sixteen feet high, overlaid in gold, were in the Holy of Holies. The temple contained many silver, gold, and bronze lampstands, altar, and other furnishings. It was a place of incredible magnificence.

The earliest Christians, however, did not gather for worship in such magnificence. Being a Christian then was a crime. Christians were often under persecution, and discovery could lead to imprisonment and even death. Christians usually had to worship in secret, and they most often gathered in private homes. That all changed in 313 A.D. when the Roman emperor Constantine declared Christianity a legal religion and brought an end to the persecutions. Since then, Christians have built and dedicated special places for worship. Like the temple in the Old Testament, the early Christian church buildings were often places of great beauty, filled with gold, mosaics and marble. As the number of Christians increased, the need for larger church buildings arose. By the Middle Ages, huge Romanesque and Gothic church buildings were built across Europe with magnificent stained-glass windows, rich sculpture, and Christ-focused art.

Church buildings are meeting places between God and his people. More to come next month.

*Chris Keiper*

Altar Guild Chair



To the members of Saint John Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your support in the Adopt-A-Student program. It is through congregations like you who make it possible for Seminarians like myself to be able to not worry about finances so I can focus on my studies.

My name is Nick Wagenknecht and I am a first-year seminarian in the MDiv program. I am super excited about starting seminary and I am looking forward to upcoming classes and the many opportunities that the Seminary has to offer for me in my ministry.

I am originally from Farmington, Minnesota where I grew up on the farm where I am the fourth generation. I went to a small high school and was evolved in almost everything. I played football, basketball, and baseball. I played in the concert band, pep band, and jazz band. I played the lead role in many musicals and plays and held many office positions in F.C.A, F.F.A, and Student Senate. I spend my free time (if I have any) hunting, fishing, and just living my life to the fullest.

In April of this last year, I began a relationship with a young woman named Hannah Wudtke. We met during our time at undergrad at Concordia St. Paul. We were just friends over the years but felt that God was calling us to be more than friends. On January 31st, 2020, I asked Hannah to marry me and she said Yes! We look forward to becoming one with Christ in May of 2021! She is attending Indiana University in the Optometry Program and we try and see each other every other weekend. I thank God every day for bringing her into my life. As you pray for me, please keep her in your prayers as well.

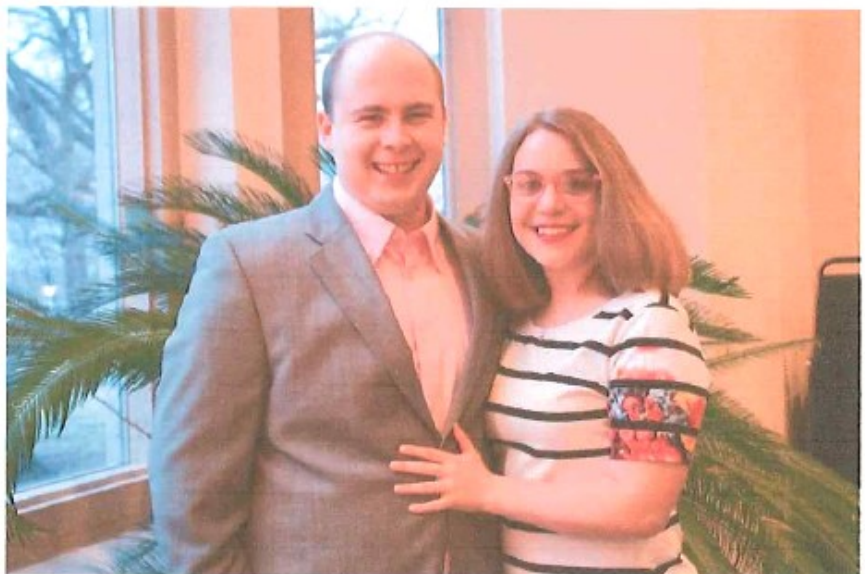
Words cannot describe how thankful I am to have the support from you, and I look forward to keeping in touch with you throughout my time at Seminary and even afterwards. Feel free to reach out to me via phone, email, or regular letter writing is fine with me as well. Thank you again!

God Bless,

Nick Wagenknecht

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# You Are *Not* Our Mission

Excerpt from *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger

Another conversation in my office. This time it was an older couple who were new to the church. They were registered for our next new members' class, but after hearing from some concerned friends about how liberal Presbyterians are, they thought they'd ask me some questions.

They told me they had been leaders in three well-known megachurches, but after a falling-out with the pastor they had been without a church home for several months. They started listening to a Presbyterian pastor via podcast and were so impressed they decided to check out our church (even though they had never dreamt of being part of a mainline church). They loved our church. They told me they loved our emphasis on discipleship, reaching out to the unchurched, and proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom to those who hadn't accepted the good news. Everything they heard resonated with their hearts, and they decided to join. When they told a friend what they were intending to do, he cautioned them because of what he read in the papers. So, they came to see me. I found out that the Presbyterian pastor they had heard on the podcast was Tim Keller, and I explained that he was part of a different Presbyterian denomination. They had only recently learned that there was not only the Presbyterian Church (USA), our denomination, but others they thought they'd be more comfortable joining.

I said to them, "You have heard me talk about our mission to proclaim the kingdom of God to the unchurched. Do you think the people we are trying to reach care what denomination we are in?"

They responded, "Not at all."

"So," I said, "The mission trumps. As long as we can fulfill our mission, we are not going to spend time or energy on denominational worries. For us, it's all about the mission."

"But Tod," the wife chimed in, "the people you are trying to reach don't care about denominational labels, but people like us do. If you want people like us to join your church, you may want to consider switching denominations."

I looked at them and said softly but firmly, "You are *not* our mission."

The husband blinked. I don't think he could believe what he was hearing. He had been a pretty important person in several churches. He knew that I hoped they'd join our church, and he didn't expect that response from me.

I said it again. "You are not our mission. Our mission is to be a community of disciples who proclaim and demonstrate the good news in every sector of society. We want to reach people for Jesus Christ. Our mission is not to help Christians move from one church to our church. You are not our mission. But...*I think God brought you here so that you would join our mission.* You have a heart for the unchurched and desire to see people come to know Christ and experience his reign and grace in their lives. All you have heard has resonated with you, and you have already begun new ministries here. No, you are not our mission, but I think God is calling you to join us in fulfilling our mission."

The husband looked at his wife. "Honey, I think we're Presbyterians."

They joined our church in the next class.

(Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territories*, IVP, 2015, pp. 131-133.)

## Birthdays in March

Glen Stengrim	March 3	Brooklyn Noffke	March 4	Gabby Stringer	March 4
Diahn Lee	March 5	Ethan Reid	March 6	Annette Meyer	March 9
Siera Kirkley	March 10	Tessa Blair	March 11	Terry Lovdahl	March 14
Cameron Karle	March 15	Lynn Pye	March 18	Renee Elledge	March 20
Kyra Johnson	March 29	Alex O'Connor	March 29	James Elledge	March 30



## Anniversaries March

Van and Mary Lowry	52 years	March 14
Warner and Darlene Boortz	38 years	March 20



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