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A message from Pastor Quinn

The Minor Prophets: Malachi

This month we conclude our introduction to the Minor Prophets with Malachi. Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. During the four hundred years following the writing of Malachi's book there was a period of silence when no inspired scripture was written. This period of time is called the "Intertestamental Period." This time set the stage for the arrival of the Messiah and the beginning of the New Testament era. Malachi provides a link from the Old Testament to the New Testament when he prophesies about the prophet who would come to turn the hearts of the people 400 years later, John the Baptist.

Malachi, which means "My Messenger," is the third and last of the post-exilic prophets (the prophets who served the remnant of people who returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). The construction of the temple, under the supervision of Zerubbabel, was completed around 516 B.C. This work and the people's attitude towards it was the subject addressed by Haggai and Zechariah. 58 years after the completion of the temple Ezra, the priest, and several thousand more Jews returned to Jerusalem to encourage temple worship and obedience to the Mosaic Law. In 445 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls (Nehemiah 6:15). As governor, Nehemiah started reforms to help the poor, urged people to avoid marrying their unbelieving neighbors, to keep the Sabbath, and to bring tithes and offerings faithfully. 12 years later, when Nehemiah returned to Persia, the people once again fell into the same old sins. When Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem he discovered that the offerings were ignored, the Sabbath broken, the people married to their pagan neighbors, and the priesthood full of corruption. Many of these same sins are addressed

and condemned by the prophet Malachi. The similarity between Nehemiah and Malachi suggests that the two were contemporaries.

The religious indifference of the people seemed to be brought about by their insignificance as a nation and the fact that their glorious future, including God's arrival in his temple with power, had not yet taken place. The people doubted God's love and justice and so they lost hope. Worship became a mere formality and God's law wasn't taken seriously. Malachi preached against the doubt and indifference of the people and the faithlessness of the priests. He reminded them of the Lord's love and his promises to work out all things according to his good purpose. The problem was not with the Lord, but with the straying people. Like many prophets before him, Malachi reassured the people that the day of the Lord is coming just as God had promised.

The book is made up of a series of running dialogues between the God of free and faithful grace and his uncooperative, sometimes unbelieving people. Through Malachi the Lord reaches out to his people again to draw them to the repentant, expectant faith that will patiently await the coming of the Messiah. Malachi's prophecy concludes with the announcement of the arrival of the great prophet Elijah (John the Baptist) who, after years of silence, would come in the wilderness as the last great prophet of the Old Testament preparing the way for Jesus, the sun of righteousness who brings healing from sin.

Malachi's themes of repentance and the coming day of the Lord make it a wonderful book to study during the season of Advent. Read through it by yourself or with your family this month and see how Malachi's words still apply to your life today.

December Calendar

Dec 2	6:00 PM Soup Supper
	7:00 PM Holy Communion
Dec 5	1:00 PM Christmas for Kids
Dec 6	1:00 PM Congregational Meeting
Dec 9	6:00 PM Soup Supper
	7:00 PM Advent Worship
Dec 12	10:00 AM Christmas Cookie Exchange
Dec 13	12:00 PM Spaghetti Dinner, fellowship hall
	1:30 PM Christmas Eve Rehearsal
Dec 15	7:00 PM Special Voters' Assembly
Dec 16	6:00 PM Soup Supper
	7:00 PM Advent Worship
Dec 20	4:00 PM Christmas Eve Rehearsal
Dec 24	7:00 PM Christmas Eve Festival Service
	9:00 PM Candlelight Service
Dec 25	10:00 AM Christmas Day Worship
Dec 31	7:00 PM New Year's Eve Holy Communion

Special Offerings for the upcoming Holiday Season

Midweek Advent Services MLS Foundation
Christmas Eve/Candlelight/Christmas Day Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund
New Year's Eve Cadillac Mission

Midweek Advent Worship

The season of Advent begins November 29th this year. Our first midweek Advent Worship will be held at 7:00 PM on December 2. The first Advent Worship Service also includes Holy Communion. Offerings for Midweek Advent Services will go to the MLS Foundation. Christmas Festival, Christmas Candle-light Service and Christmas Day offerings will go the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund. New Year's Eve offerings will go to the Cadillac Mission.

Advent Soup Suppers

Realizing that it can be difficult to get a family fed and to church on time for the Advent services which begin on December 2nd, Good Shepherd has a tradition of hosting a potluck soup supper prior to each Advent service. All are welcome. A typical meal has several types of soups, breads, finger foods, desserts and drinks.

Come and enjoy a potluck meal and take the opportunity to get acquainted with your Good Shepherd family. There are sign up sheets for food items on the bulletin board in the church hallway. Hope to see you there.

The First Ever Good Shepherd Christmas Cookie Exchange

The first ever Good Shepherd Christmas Cookie Exchange will be held in the church fellowship hall beginning at 10 AM on Saturday, December 12th. The Christmas Cookie Exchange is open to all ladies of Good Shepherd and their guests.

Cookie Exchange Guidelines

- 1) Please RSVP to Mischael Pitt and let her know how many plan to come, what type of cookies they will bring and inform her of any babysitting needs.
- 2) Please put a copy of your cookie recipe in Mischael's church mailbox by December 6th.
- 3) All Christmas Cookies should be homemade (Please no plain chocolate chip cookies, no bakes or meringues).
- 4) Please make your cookies 2 or 3 days in advance, as freshly baked cookies do not travel well.
- 5) Bring 6 dozen cookies attractively arranged on a platter or in a basket.
- 6) Bring a second large container to take home your new assortment of 6 dozen cookies.
- 7) In addition to your cookies, please bring along an appetizer type dish to pass. Drinks will be provided.
- 8) Holiday attire is encouraged.
- 9) In case of an emergency (your cookies burned or your family devoured them when you weren't looking) You may substitute cookies from a local bakery, but please do not bring pre-packaged store bought cookies.

Ladies Guild Christmas Party

The Ladies Guild Christmas party will be hosted by Joyce Tafel and Barb Seifert at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, December 1st at the home of Pastor and Barb Seifert, 4215 James Drive.

We will begin with a Christmas themed devotion, gather a freewill offering for our Lutheran Elementary School, enjoy a white elephant gift exchange and round out the evening with food, drinks and fellowship.

The intent of having a white elephant gift exchange is that instead of spending money on buying gifts for each other, we would wrap up some item we have on hand and don't need and then donate the money we would have spent on gifts to our elementary school. Of course, there is always the possibility that some-

one else's unwanted item may be just what you've always wanted, but then again it might not. If you do happen to get something really nice, don't rejoice too soon, because someone may "steal" it away from you. That's all part of the fun.

If you want to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a gift wrapped item with no tag or other identifying information.

Christmas for Kids

Christmas for Kids will be held on Saturday, December 5th from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. This promises to be an action packed afternoon featuring The Christmas Story. There will be crafts, games and songs to learn. Kids aged 4 years up to the 6th Grade are invited to attend. Please call 835-4181 to reserve a spot for your child. Teresa Mayville is the coordinator this year.

Christmas Basket Help Needed

Norma Lewis has volunteered to head up the Christmas Basket project again this year, but she could really use one or two volunteers to help with the shopping and assembly of the baskets. If you would like more information or are willing to help, please call Norma.

Norma offers the following list of suggested items for those who would like to donate food for the baskets: hot and cold cereals, canned or dried soup, canned fruit, peanut butter, jam or jelly, pancake mix and syrup, Jell-O, pudding, canned meats, pasta, rice, spaghetti sauce, crackers, nuts, microwave popcorn, juice, baking mixes (cake, brownies, bread, muffins), frosting, boxed dinners like macaroni and cheese, flour, white or brown sugar, hot cocoa mix, coffee, pickles, applesauce, stuffing, etc.

The Elders will deliver the baskets in time for Christmas.

Pennies for Missions

Each year the Ladies Guild sponsors a Pennies for Missions competition. Two teams compete to see which can save up the most pennies in a calendar year. The only rule is that team members are not allowed to buy pennies.

At the end of the year the pennies for each team are totaled, and the team with the most pennies is declared the Winner. As an added element of fun, the Winners and their spouses are treated to a home cooked meal by the Losers (or more politically correct, the Cookers.)

We combine the pennies from both teams and divide the money evenly between a home mission and a foreign mission. Last year we collected over \$300 in pennies and sent them to WELS Small Campus Ministries and to our WELS mission in Pakistan.

Being on a "Penny Team" is optional for Ladies guild members. Guild members who don't want to be involved with the competition and dinner and many other members of the congregation donate their pennies to be divided equally between the teams. If you have pennies you would like to donate, please feel free to give them to any Ladies Guild member or to our treasurer, Diana Johnson.

Spaghetti Dinner Coming Up

The Lady Crusaders Basketball Team will put on a spaghetti dinner on Sunday, December 13th at 12:00 PM. Donations will be received to help defray the rising costs of the basketball season. Please sign up on the school Bulletin Board so we will know how many to plan for.

Campbell Soup Labels

If you are collecting Campbell soup labels at home, please turn them in by Christmas break. If we can turn in our labels by the end of December and have 2,500 points, Campbell will double our points.

Voters' Special Assembly

Tuesday, December 15th will be a special Voters' Assembly. This is the time of year when the budget for the coming fiscal year is adopted and offices are elected to serve for the coming year. This is a very important meeting. If you are a voter, please make every effort to attend. All men over the age of 18 are welcome to become voters. Just speak with one of the pastors or with President Mike Krueger for more information. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM

A Letter from Congregational President Mike Krueger

December is a busy time of year as we prepare for Christmas, but at the same time we are also preparing for the ministry we will be doing here at Good Shepherd in the coming year. The Board of Education has been considering the called workers we will need for next school year. The Boards and Council have been considering our ministry at Good Shepherd next year and preparing a budget to cover the costs of the ministry. These items as well as the current financial situation of the congregation will be reviewed at a congregational meeting that will be held Sunday, December 6th at 1 PM. All members are invited to attend.

On December 15th the voters meet for the annual budget and election meeting. Elections are held for the church officers and open board positions. Church officers are elected for one year terms and board members are elected for three year terms. The names of the men who have consented to be placed in nomination for these positions are posted on the bulletin board. The budget for our ministry here at Good Shepherd will also be adopted at the meeting.

As you prepare for Christ's coming please also take time to give these items prayerful consideration as we prepare for the work we will be doing here at Good Shepherd in the coming year.

Christmas Festival Service

Good Shepherd's Christmas Eve Festival Service. will begin at 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 24th. Whether your child attends Lutheran Elementary School, Sunday School, or both, your child is invited to participate. While most of the singing rehearsal takes place at the beginning of Sunday School each week, tapes of the songs and copies of the words are available and you can help your child/children learn them and review them at home. There will be re-

hearsals on December 13th beginning at 1:30 and ending at 2:30 PM and again on December 20th from 4:00 to 5:30 PM. This is a wonderful opportunity for preparing for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

If your child is in Sunday School or in the Lutheran Elementary School we assume that your child or children will be participating in the service. If your child will not be in the Christmas Eve Festival Service, please call the church office (835-4181).

Scriptures Readings for December

November 30, Advent 1

Isaiah 63:16b, 17; 64:1-8
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:32-37
Psalm 24

December 7, Advent 2

Isaiah 40:1-11
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8
Psalm 85

December 14, Advent 3

Isaiah 61:1-3, 10, 11
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28
Psalm 71

December 21, Advent 4

2 Samuel 7:8-16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38
Psalm 89

December 24, Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20
Psalm 96

December 25, Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-9
John 1:1-14
Psalm 98

December 28, Christmas 1

Isaiah 45:20-25
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:25-40
Psalm 111

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays in December:

December 2 Hayden Beyersdorf
December 2 Kim Arbury
December 3 Bob Lindesmith
December 6 Joanne Atkinson
December 6 Harrison Beyersdorf
December 7 Patrick Brandt
December 8 Noam Pretzer
December 8 Marilyn Schwab
December 8 Ron Shaffer
December 9 Kathy Brandt
December 13 Diana Johnson
December 16 John Pretzer
December 26 Deb McGill
December 27 Evan Marquardt
December 29 Melissa Lehman

Anniversaries in December:

December 30 Matt and Angie Beyersdorf

New Year's Eve Service

The New Year's Eve Holy Communion Service will be December 31st at 7:00 PM at Good Shepherd. Welcome in the New Year of 2010 by spending an hour worshipping our Savior, Jesus Christ.

LES Christmas Vacation

Christmas vacation for LES begins on December 23rd and LES will resume on January 5, 2010.

Christmas Music

No season has the heart-touching songs that Christmas has. While many are old, traditional carols, we also have some beautiful melodies and words in the 20th Century. The carol "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt" was written by two men. Jaroslav Vajda wrote the words and Carl Schalk wrote the melody.

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,

I come in half belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.

In that unlikely place I find him as they said,
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail and in a manger bed,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare;
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

CW 54

Our shut-ins

Please contact the church office for information regarding our shut-ins.

“Keeping Christmas”

Henry Van Dyke

It is a good thing to observe Christmas day. The mere marking of times and seasons, when men agree to stop work and make merry together, is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground, to see that your fellowmen are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always?

But you can never keep it alone.

Basketball Game

MLS Lutheran Elementary School girls' basketball tournament will be held on December 11th and 12th. Good Shepherd's team will play Friday, December 11th beginning at 4:20 PM. They will take on St. Paul's from Livonia.

Back Issues Available for Reading

A member of Good Shepherd has donated a number of back issues of Forward in Christ and other WELS magazines to our library. If you are interested in reading any of these you do not need to sign them out as books are signed out. You are just requested to return the magazines when you are through reading them.

Resurrection Life

“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out.” John 5:28, 29a

Remember these words? “May God the Father, who created this body; may God the Son, who by his blood redeemed this body together with the soul; may God the Holy Spirit, who by Baptism sanctified this body to be his temple—keep these remains until the day of resurrection of all flesh.”

Martin Luther observed, “On that morning my Lord will raise me from my grave easier than Katie can rouse me from my bed.”