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Volume 9 Issue 2

SPS Resource Center
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ResourceGram



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What is Lent?

Lent is the 40-day period of repentance and renewal preceding Easter. Traditionally, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Easter Service. This year Easter falls on Sunday, April 12th. So what is Lent?

For Christians, Lent is an important time for meditation, prayer and penitential (meaning “being sorrowful for sins”) practices. It is a thoughtful time, a time for introspection and to gain a better understanding of Christ’s sacrifice and Resurrection. It is a time to reflect upon the Easter meaning and how Christ lived and died to redeem the world from sin.

Throughout history, Christians have honored and practiced penitence. From the early Church with strict 40-day fasts, to today, where many Christians conduct long periods of fasting, prayer and meditation, Lent continues to be a very important tradition of observance.

Lent is both a personal journey and one that is collectively shared through congregational activity. There are many ways to observe Lent in a more meaningful and deep way. For example, some practices of penitence might include fasting, special commitments, good deeds and service, prayer and reflection, studying of

scripture and participation in worship services.

As you get ready to observe Lent this coming March/April, may you remember the sacrifice Christ made for you and how reflecting on His love will truly transform your life.

“So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making His appeal through us, we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:20

Have a blessed and wonderful Easter and remember, if you seek greater material on observing Lent, please visit the Synod Resource Center.

RESOURCE CENTER:

- Library and Instructional Materials
- Located at Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno
- DIRECTOR: Cindi Eckert
- 559-449-8735
- rspselca@pacbell.net

News! News! News!

On January 15th, a surprise luncheon was held for Delores Wright, the former Director for the SPS Resource Center. Cindi Eckert, the new Director, hosted this lunch as of way of honoring all the years of dedication and hard work Dee has done to make the resource center the valuable place it is today. Dee has applied for a short-term mission position in

Slovakia through ELCA Global Missions where she will teach English as a second language. We send her off with prayers and wishes for success and further wonderful journeys!

NEW SYNOD WEBSITE!

Have you checked out the new website yet? If you haven’t, log on to www.spselca.org. It is

a wonderful website, packed full of great information. And be sure to click on “**Synod Resource Center**”, to the left of the page under “**Synod Resources**”. You can search right online and see what materials we have available! There are also blogs from Bishop Mark Holmerud and his recent trip! Visit this site often, and find just a whole lot of great stuff!



New Resources!!!

Looking for new resources? You can access our current resources by going to the website at:

www.resourcecenterspselca.org

You will see the home page, and use the links to search or scroll down to: **Request Manager Web**. That will take you to the search box. Type in the subject and scroll down. You get a complete list of resources on that subject!

As you plan for the Lenten season, consider integrating the Book of Faith Initiative into your programming. A new devotional resource, Book of Faith Lenten Journey, has been recently released. It will be effective for individuals, small groups, and the entire congregation.

Participants will study the seven petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. Additional worship helps are available to support congregations and small groups who use this resource. For information visit www.bookoffaith.org.

The NEW Lutheran Study Bible is on its way! We have ordered several copies of the new Bible for your review. The Study Bible contains study notes, written by more than 60 Lutheran scholars and theologians. It features an attractive page layout and easy-to-read study notes which present the biblical text in a fresh, approachable way. It is an ideal Bible for use in confirmation classes.

“Ask, and it will be given you, search, and you will find, knock, and the door will be opened for you.”
Matthew 7:7

More Books & Other Resources:



The Hidden Hand of God:

Paperback, companion Bible to be used with **The Hidden Hand of God** Leader/Study Manual for the women of the ELCA. Wisdom stories from Ruth, Daniel and Esther.

Baptism-A User’s Guide:

Authored by Martin E. Marty, this is a great book for those have been baptized, those who are considering themselves for

baptism, and those who baptize or sponsor those being baptized. It will answer questions and open you to the power and promise of baptism in new and perhaps surprising ways.

Book of Faith: Lenten Journey (40 Days With the Lord’s Prayer):

Authored by Henry F. French, this is a forty-day journey with

Jesus. In fourteen short lines the Lord’s Prayer contains the heart and soul of Jesus’ teachings. If you are interested in what God wants *for* you and what God wants *from* you, then you can do no better than spend forty days with this profound prayer.



Check these out....!

40-Day Journey With Martin Luther: Includes a short introduction to Luther’s life, journal writing exercises and daily prayers. A rich resource for personal meditation or small group discussion. Ideal for traveling through the seasons of Advent and Lent.

40-Day Journey With Julian of Norwich: The readers will be inspired by Julian, a celebrated English mystic from the fourteenth century and a recluse at St. Julian’s church in Norwich, whose writings were the first works in English known to be written by a woman. A medieval Catholic,

Julian was seen as a precursor to Martin Luther and other Reformation writers.

40-Day Journey With Joan Chittister: Introduces Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun who is best known for her spiritual writings and powerful actions for peace and justice.

A Few Words From the New Resource Center Director...

A Word from new Director, Cindi Eckert:

I want to say what a blessing it is to have been selected for the position of the Resource Center Director. It is with humbleness that I begin my journey in serving this wonderful Sierra Pacific Synod. My background includes years working with a major publishing company, Publisher's Group West. I am also a writer/author, having my first book published in 2005. Currently, I am concentrating on writing non-fiction Christian based material.

I have settled in nicely at the Resource Center, but like any new person who comes on board, I bring ideas and change. I am committed to doing much ongoing research to bring new and interesting materials into the center. I am very open to suggestions and ideas, and in fact, some of the new material presented in this newsletter were requested by loyal Resource Center users themselves!

As time goes on, I will be updating the layout of the Resource Center. I envision it being a comfortable place where users will have a quiet place to review materials. I will be attending the 2009 Synod Assembly on May 29-30 right here at the Fresno Convention Center! I will look forward to meeting many new folks as I unveil my first "information booth"!

Blessings All!

Resources for Children/

Youth: Have you heard about the new Bibles for children?

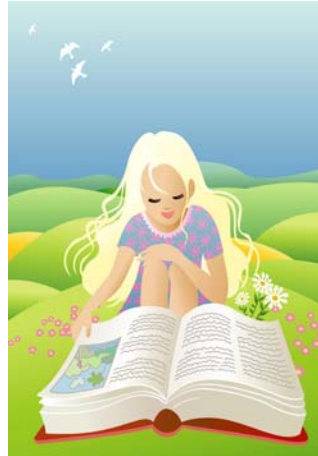
Called the **Spark Bibles**, they feature the NRSV translation. They are designed to engage learners on multiple levels, as they actively engage students in marking their Bibles and making them their own. There will be two versions, one is the **Spark Bible**, designed for children grades 3-6. The second is the **Spark Story Bible**, designed for children ages 2-grade 2. This one has 150 Bible stories and extraordinary artwork, written to be read aloud. I participated in a Webinar, and was lucky to be able to view both of these. I was amazed at the wonderful graphics! I will be ordering copies of each, so you know where to come to view them!

Lent: A Time of Renewal and Preparation: Lent is a time for strengthening family

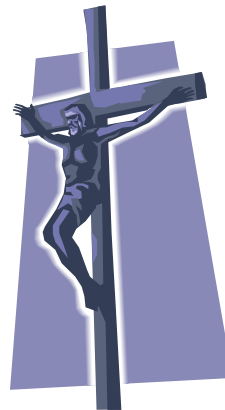


ties. Be sure to include everyone, especially children. Make it a sacred time of prayer, reading Scriptures and stories aloud, attending services and being loving toward others and open to God's will. Encourage your children to draw pictures or write poems about Christ's Resurrection.

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 25th, 2009 this year.



We have a beautiful book titled **The Very First Easter** by Paul L. Maier. The illustrations are wonderful and the book's focus is on the true, miraculous story of Easter.



Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34).

(Note: It is part of our vision to provide resources which are needed for the ministry of our congregations. Many of you call us when you see something interesting. Thank you! Keep the suggestions coming, they are very welcome!)

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:26-28)



PENTECOST: Pentecost Day is celebrated exactly 50 days after Passover, or seven weeks after Easter. What does it mean? The Jewish festival of Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, comes 50 days after Passover. Originally, it celebrated the Gathering of the Wheat Harvest. Later, it became a celebration of God's giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In the Christian church year, Pentecost celebrates the day the Holy Spirit was given to the followers of Jesus, so that they had the power and courage to preach the Good News. That is why Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the Christian church (*from Lutheran Brotherhood*).