



Trinity Tidings

Volume 102

February 2017

This year during Lent, beginning with

Ash Wednesday,

March 1, 2017

we will be looking at

The Salutory Gift—

The Lord's Supper.

Within the solemn halls of the Lenten season, we gather around God's Word in repentance of sins, preparation for our Savior's sacrifice, and thanksgiving for the crucifixion's redemptive power. The theology of the Lord's Supper mirrors this Lenten pilgrimage in many ways.

Each weekly theme reveals a host of approaches for understanding the same sacramental gift: life-giving fruit, nourishment, healing, communion with the saints, a priestly meal, the feast of victory, and

more. Meditate on and embrace these beautiful, biblical images and metaphors of the Lord's Supper in addition to the chief blessing of the Holy Sacrament described in Scripture: *the forgiveness of sins.* The forgiveness of sins, won for the world on Calvary and offered in the Lord's body and blood, truly makes this blessed Supper a "salutory gift."

Ash Wednesday

March 1, 2017

Soup Supper

6:00 p.m.

Hosted by WinGS

Midweek Service

7:00 p.m.

Life-Giving Fruit

Soup Supper sign up sheets will be on the bulletin board in Friendship Hall for March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5

Midweek Themes

March 8

Bread from Heaven

March 15

Healing Medicine

March 22

Blest Communion

March 29

Rest for the Weary

April 5

Nuptial Feast

**Trinity
Lutheran Church
since August 8, 1915**

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Our Mission is to serve God
by outreach to the community
through the spreading
of the Gospel of Christ
by spirit-filled worship,
education, fellowship and service.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.tlc-ms.com

Announcements

If you have an announcement for the bulletin or the Tidings please give it to Sharon in the office. Bulletin announcements are due by **Wednesday morning**.

The Tidings deadline is the **15th of every month**.

Announcements for the screen may be sent directly to Brian or through the church office email, tlsecsharon@sbcglobal.net.

Directory Changes

Please let the church office know if you have moved or have a new phone number or any other changes in your family. Thank you.



REFORMATION
2017 *It's Still All About*
Jesus

River City Food Bank

Is in **GREAT** need of canned fruit, canned vegetables, and pasta.
Please bring items and deposit them in the container in Friendship Hall.
Always **NEEDS** plastic bags and brown paper bags!
We are also in need of volunteers. Please talk to Dottie if you are interested.
Thanks!

Dear Friends,

On November 18, my Lord Jesus called my beloved wife, Melissa, into eternal rest. A few people have asked me what happened that day. I know this is a question many of you have, including myself. I want to address this and tell you of the challenges that I have faced in my relationship with my Lord Jesus these past few years.

Many of you knew Melissa was not a frequent passenger in my plane. However, for some inexplicit reason she did not hesitate to say yes to going on our last two flights. On November 13, we flew to Willows for dinner. It was a nice flight. We ended up flying home in the dark. She posted it on line and commented, "it was a nice flight."

November 18 was a perfect day for a flight to Half Moon Bay. Melissa wanted to visit her aunt/Godmother in Moss Beach, to show her the bedspread quilt she had just finished after working on it for many years. While visiting his mother in Moss Beach, her cousin from Atlanta had been asking me for a flight over the Golden Gate Bridge for some time. So the timing was perfect. Her cousin was here to attend a family funeral in the Bay Area; Melissa and her parents also attended.

When we arrived in Half Moon Bay, there wasn't a cloud in the sky and the winds were normal for a coastline airport. My approach to the airport was normal. Descending to 500 feet, I made a slight adjustment to the configuration of the plane. Though I was still planning on a very smooth landing, immediately after this slight adjustment, I was fighting for our lives. The plane rocked unusually steep to the left & right, with a downward push, leaving the plane in a very steep right turn.

With 40 years of flying experience, I never deviated from the final center line as I found myself on this approach for the last 450 feet. Though applying all my flying experience up to this circumstance, nothing seemed to work. I was trying to climb and level the wings. When the wings began to level, I saw large trees slightly off to the right, in our path. Because events were happening so fast, I felt we were going to hit the trees and there was nothing I could do to avoid them. I closed my eyes, telling God, I'm ready to die.

I felt the initial impact and the spinning of the plane. When the plane stopped, I opened my eyes to find Melissa was not in her seat. I spoke her name, but complete silence filled the air. In shock, I prayed to Jesus to please help her and comfort her. I was unable to move because my feet were wrapped tightly in a web of metal. I heard water dripping, only to find out it was gasoline from the tank located a few feet behind me. Again I prayed asking God that if fire occurred, please make my demise quick. Shortly thereafter, brave firemen arrived to free me from the wreckage. My prayers were never ending, asking God for His help, for Melissa and me.

I was airlifted to Stanford Hospital, with tears running down the side of my face. This flight reminded me of my trip to UC Davis 3 years earlier, due to my bicycle/garbage truck accident. This was the third time in 3 years where I felt God had wrapped His hands around me to protect me. At this time, nobody, including the rescue team, would tell me about Melissa. With the rescue team being silent, I knew in my heart she was with our Father in heaven. I was crying for God to take me also. But He didn't. I was told later, she was near her seat, but I could not see or hear her if she had spoken. Lying so close to me, I felt it was God who prevented me from seeing her.

It wasn't until the next morning when I really felt my soul being ripped apart. Never in my life, have I experienced this kind of pain. One of the doctors at Stanford sat next to me, taking the time to try and comfort me. This pain continued for a few weeks. With my experience in the mortuary field, I was always on the other side, observing the pain of loss. Now that I have experienced this pain, I fully understand those who have walked the valley of death before me. I understand this grief will always be with me, but not as intense or as long. I thought how God felt His pain when His son died for us on the cross. But it lasted only 3 days, because Jesus rose from the dead. That's not fair; my grief is expected to last the rest of my life. Then I realized that because I continue to sin, God feels the pain from my misdoings.

Is God testing me? I have read the book of Job and have jokingly mentioned to many, "just call me Job Jr". Between my bicycle and the plane accidents and having melanoma surgeries on my neck, I realize I'm not the first to have so many hardships in the prime of life that challenges my faith in God or have caused me so much soul searching. Parents who have lost children in wars or by way of diseases or accidents may have experienced an even greater loss. I think of those in the Old & New Testaments where God tested His people. So I stand humbly among them, but in the back row.

God has made me a living witness to testify to others, that He is alive and is watching over us according to His will. We may be angry with His decision; but in the end, it's His will that will be done on earth. I keep thinking who else I can hold on to during these trying times. Science or government has nothing to offer that will help me. My parents brought me up in the Christian faith which taught me to hold on to nothing but God's promise of eternal life. Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Thinking of this verse, there was nothing left on this earth that I wanted to stay here for since I knew Melissa was with our Lord. Since my bicycle accident, leaving me with a dozen surgeries and a very severely crushed hand, my faith has grown stronger in Jesus Christ. I felt the power of His love then and wanted to be with him in Heaven. Maybe that's why I so willingly asked God to take me because I knew I'd be with Him. Several weeks after the plane accident my pain began to heal and now I realize God's plan is for me to remain here to be with my 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

The love that Melissa had for everyone was evident by the number of people who attended her service. From her family, friends, co-workers to students, her love touched everyone in some way. We often talked about the love she had for the children she worked with in the elementary school and how God was using her to show His love to His people. We often reminded each other of the many blessings God granted us. During the weeks that followed her death, my pain was so great that I told Pastor and others that my loss seemed to wipe out the many blessings He gave us. As time ticked away, I realized I should not be angry with God, but thanking and praising Him. Who else could have led me to Melissa? Knowing her and being my wife for 36 years, and being the mother of our children, was the best part of my life.

I don't know how one can understand the loss of a loved one without Christ. I do realize blessings fall on both the righteous and the unrighteous as this is part of God's plan for us. The love that has poured out from everyone to me and to my family since Melissa's death has been astounding and a blessing. At the funeral, many who attended, including pastors, provided me and my family comforting words from the Bible. Because of the grief we were experiencing, those words seemed to be hollow. Hugs and understanding were more appreciative. But as time passes, words from the Bible became assuring to us again.

Now I am praying to God that the loss of Melissa did in fact plant the seed of God's love into many hearts of unbelievers, and that the seed will produce good fruits. The loss of Melissa did not only affect me, but my entire family, in-laws, members of Trinity, and our friends. So I ask that you please continue to not only include me and my extended family in your prayers, but also our Trinity family and our friends. In the past weeks, I have met many who have lost their loved ones as well and are still in pain. Trinity offers (of which I attend) a Grief & Share class. I'm thankful for this class and will help to reach out to members and non-members to attend. There is a lot of pain out there and sharing our grief with others is a helpful way for us to heal and to understand the love of God and His love for us.

I truly feel that when my time comes, I'll be in His presence and enjoying the love that is beyond human understanding. Once one feels the peace and love He offers us, you can't help but wait for your time to be called. I want to thank you all who have kept me & my family in your prayers, for the comforting words, and for the countless acts of kindness you have shown us all.

In Christ's Love,
Steve M.