

LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS

+ Transfiguration 2023 +

On the Cover:

Transfiguration of Jesus

Carl Bloch

1834-1890

Life in Christ

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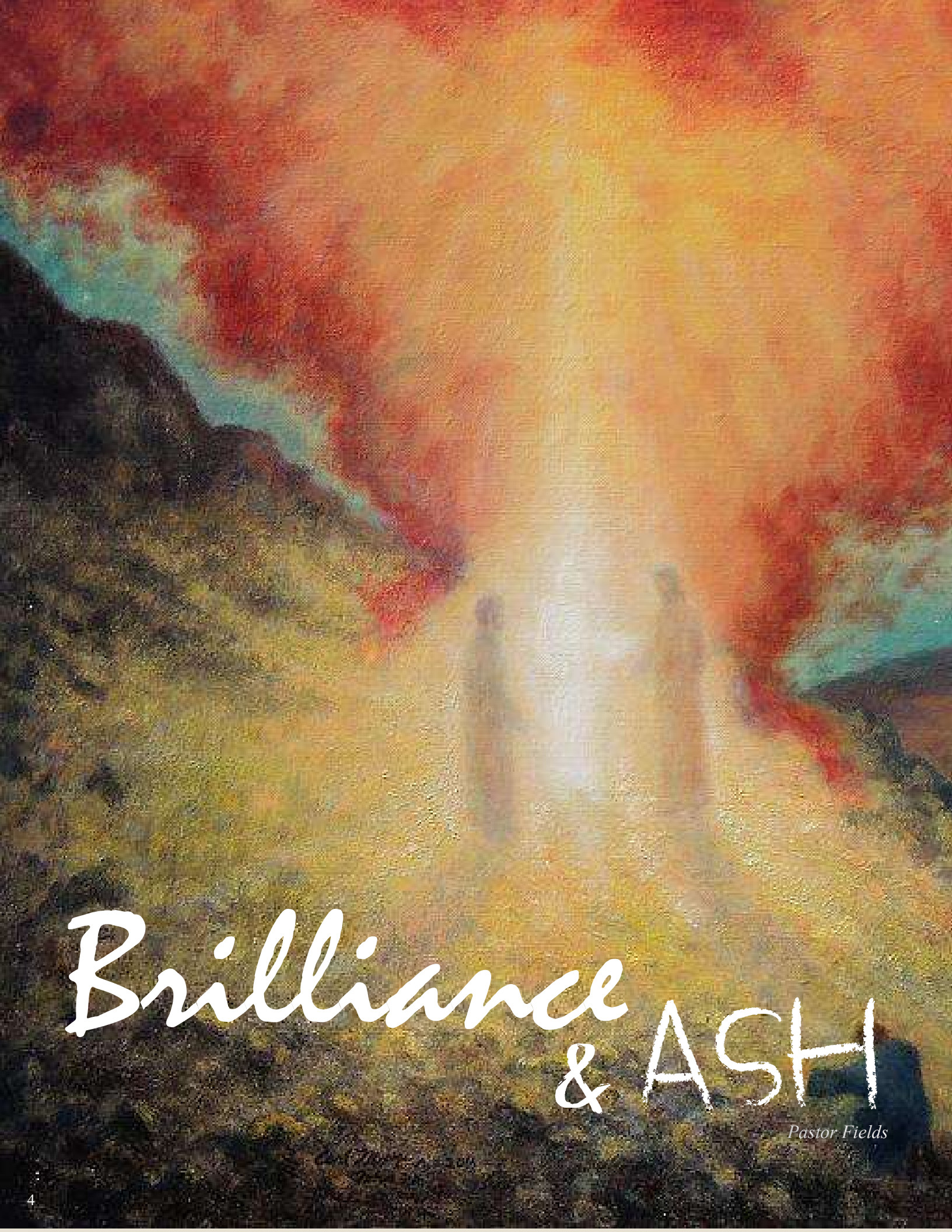
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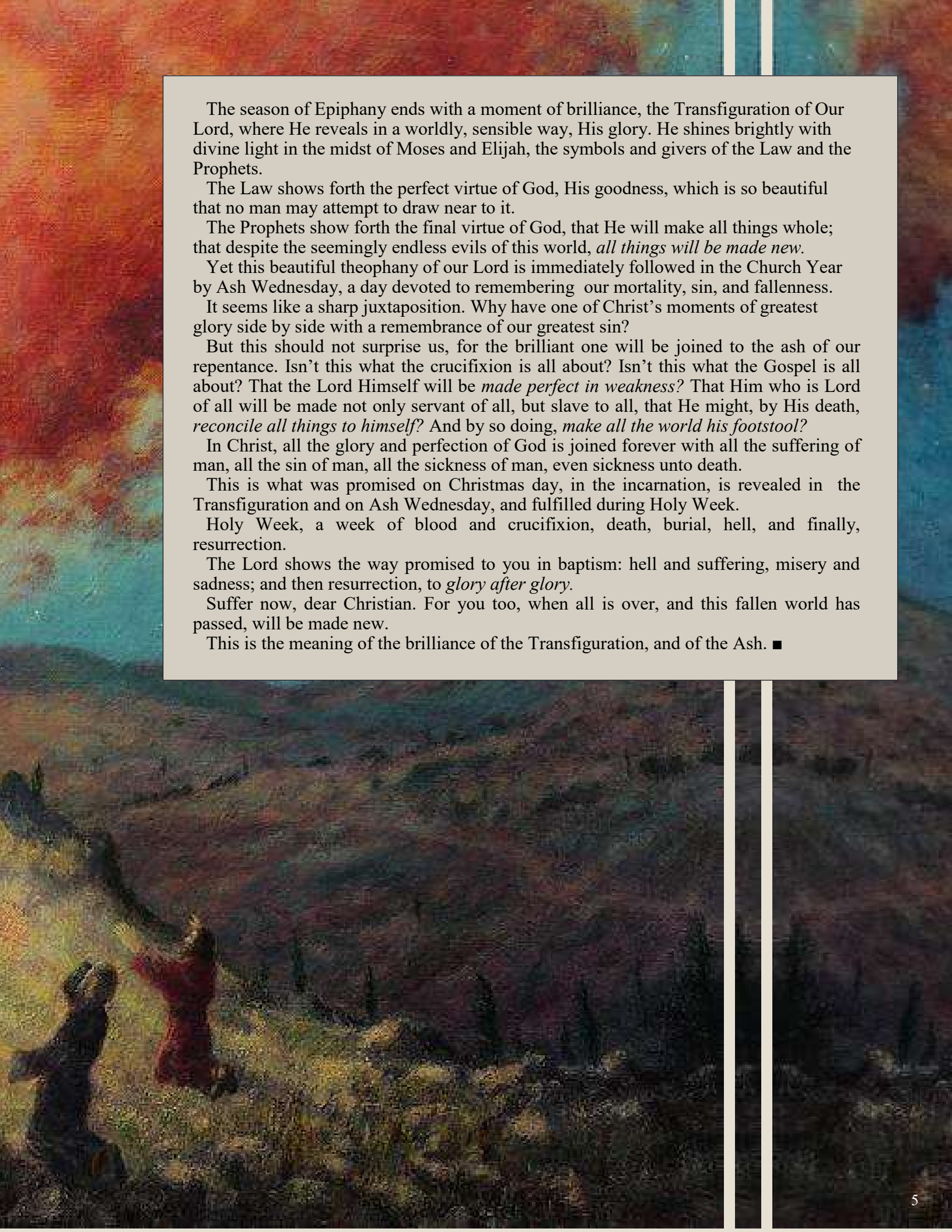
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Brilliance
& ASH

Pastor Fields



The season of Epiphany ends with a moment of brilliance, the Transfiguration of Our Lord, where He reveals in a worldly, sensible way, His glory. He shines brightly with divine light in the midst of Moses and Elijah, the symbols and givers of the Law and the Prophets.

The Law shows forth the perfect virtue of God, His goodness, which is so beautiful that no man may attempt to draw near to it.

The Prophets show forth the final virtue of God, that He will make all things whole; that despite the seemingly endless evils of this world, *all things will be made new*.

Yet this beautiful theophany of our Lord is immediately followed in the Church Year by Ash Wednesday, a day devoted to remembering our mortality, sin, and fallenness.

It seems like a sharp juxtaposition. Why have one of Christ's moments of greatest glory side by side with a remembrance of our greatest sin?

But this should not surprise us, for the brilliant one will be joined to the ash of our repentance. Isn't this what the crucifixion is all about? Isn't this what the Gospel is all about? That the Lord Himself will be *made perfect in weakness*? That Him who is Lord of all will be made not only servant of all, but slave to all, that He might, by His death, *reconcile all things to himself*? And by so doing, *make all the world his footstool*?

In Christ, all the glory and perfection of God is joined forever with all the suffering of man, all the sin of man, all the sickness of man, even sickness unto death.

This is what was promised on Christmas day, in the incarnation, is revealed in the Transfiguration and on Ash Wednesday, and fulfilled during Holy Week.

Holy Week, a week of blood and crucifixion, death, burial, hell, and finally, resurrection.

The Lord shows the way promised to you in baptism: hell and suffering, misery and sadness; and then resurrection, to *glory after glory*.

Suffer now, dear Christian. For you too, when all is over, and this fallen world has passed, will be made new.

This is the meaning of the brilliance of the Transfiguration, and of the Ash. ■



A Lutheran Day of Firearms & Fellowship

Our teacher demonstrates proper technique.



Having a blast! Literally and metaphorically...



Trading notes before we hit the range.



Downright gunslingers.

God and guns! A Christ Lutheran contingent recently trekked out to Raymond for a day of enhanced carry training. They rolled out early on the morning of January 28th to the middle of Mississippi countryside, armed with 9mm's and the American spirit (and plenty of ear protection, of course...). Reagan Hataway, the police chief of Raymond, led our class in half a day of classroom study of Mississippi gun law and half a day of outdoor target practice. The day culminated in a target shooting test—which everyone passed!





Nun with a gun?



A steely-eyed missile man.



At the firing line, and Curt demonstrates flawless technique.





Ready... aim...



Breaking out all the gear as we get ready for the hands-on part of the class!

Grading our targets... we all pass!



Don't mess with Sheila. Twenty-five rounds, and almost all through one little hole in the paper...



Mardi Gras

CARNIVAL

or

Shrove something...

Lutherans, along with most of the Church, celebrate the day before Ash Wednesday with some kind of 'feasting.' In Louisiana, this takes the form of an elaborate season of celebration known as Mardi Gras, French for 'Fat Tuesday.' In most other parts of the world, it is celebrated under the name 'Carnival,' which is a short for the original Latin phrase *carne vale*, literally 'Farewell to Meat.'

In some German and English speaking countries, the celebration is known as 'shrovetide' or in the Midwest 'Shrove Tuesday.' 'Shrove' is an old English word for 'confession.' So the season is known for 'the days before having to confess.'

What all these have in common is the idea of getting in a little gluttony and fun before the season of fasting and repentance which we call Lent.

Some might call this hypocritical, that we should feast and feast because we know that a time of fasting is coming. But as Luther said 'Sin boldly, and repent all the more boldly.'

But apart from Luther's peculiar way of putting things, he references something entirely Christian, *'there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh.'*

And laugh we shall, for such is the way of Christians, to mourn as deep as hell, and to rejoice as high as heaven.

Historically, Christians did not eat meat during Lent, and so all the leftover meat in the household would have to be eaten before Lent, lest it be wasted or rot, hence the need for a great feast, a great carnival, a great 'farewell to meat.' Such fasting is good bodily training, but so is the eating of meat before Lent, and after Easter. What is a goodbye, without a hello? After all, meat comes back after it has gone, as it is written:

'A time to laugh.'


Until We Meat Again!

Pastor Fields

P.S. 'Mardi Gras' is not called 'Fat Tuesday' because on that day you are supposed to get fat, but because on that day you consumed all the leftover 'fats' in your meat. Back in the day, they did not think of anything described scientifically as a 'lipid' as a fat, like olive oil. Fat was what made meat taste good, or so they thought.

P.P.S. The strange Northern practice of having waffles or pancakes on 'Shrove Tuesday' is nonsensical, since neither have meat in them. If you are to have such bready products to celebrate Mardi Gras, make sure to have a side of bacon, or chicken over your waffles. Only then is it theologically correct. ■





In defence of pancakes...

Shrove Tuesday

Sister Sara

P.P.P.S. But Pancake Tuesday is totally valid!

If you have spent time in the Midwest, you know.

While we're busy eating King cake, cattle farmers in Nebraska and factory workers in Michigan are all gathering at their church for the local pancake feed on Fat Tuesday. It seems a curious practice, and few people who hold this tradition dear can probably tell you why they do it, but it has a history! A theological one, at that.

As Pastor's article mentions (see previous page), Lent is a season of fasting and repentance. For hundreds and hundreds of years, Christians everywhere "gave something up for Lent." Before our modern incarnations of this practice—like giving up Facebook or chocolate—the Church actually prescribed things to fast from: namely, dairy, meat, fat (oil, butter, etc.), and alcohol. If a bunny can eat it, you can eat it.

As a quirk of the UK and its daughter countries, a practice developed of making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday to purge your kitchen of milk and oil. Records of this go back as far as the 1400's! Other fun traditions, like the "pancake race" began (story for another time), are carried on in English-speaking countries to this day.

So while you're eating that King cake, why not have a pancake, too? Happy shrovetide!



Ladies Night Out



Our ladies had a tasty night out at the Red8Kitchen last month—complete with pineapple bowls, robots, and of course, the best of fellowship!

If you would like to “host” Ladies’ Night Out (i.e., pick a restaurant and book a reservation), sign up in the Fellowship Hall! All [ladies] are welcome to join us! ■



center for pregnancy choices metro area

On Sunday, January 8th, Christ Lutheran had the pleasure of hosting Erin Kate Goode from the Center for Pregnancy Choices, a faith-oriented crisis pregnancy center in Jackson. During the Sunday School hour, she presented the vision CPC has for supporting life, along with the immense work that has gone into realizing this goal.

The CPC clinic in Fondren engages women directly, providing medical consultation, pregnancy testing, and ultrasounds, and counseling. Additionally, they have support groups for these women and for fathers, as well as parenting classes, abortion recovery, and more.

Not only this, but CPC has undertaken to combat our current abortion culture head on. For





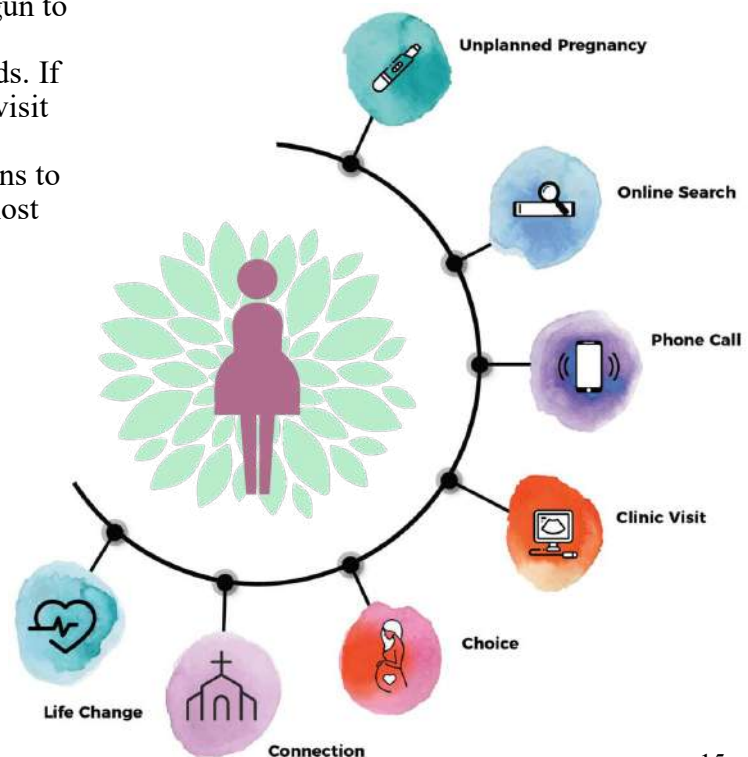
A CPC representative talked to our Sunday school class about the work of Center for Pregnancy Choices.



example, search engines regularly (daily, even) attempt to regulate the promotion of the abortion industry while suppressing women's other options, much less pro-life alternatives. Meanwhile, groups such as Planned Parenthood target schoolchildren as early as preschool and kindergarten with sexually explicit and abortion-oriented programming. CPC is developing ways to turn these cultural trends and normalize a culture of life.

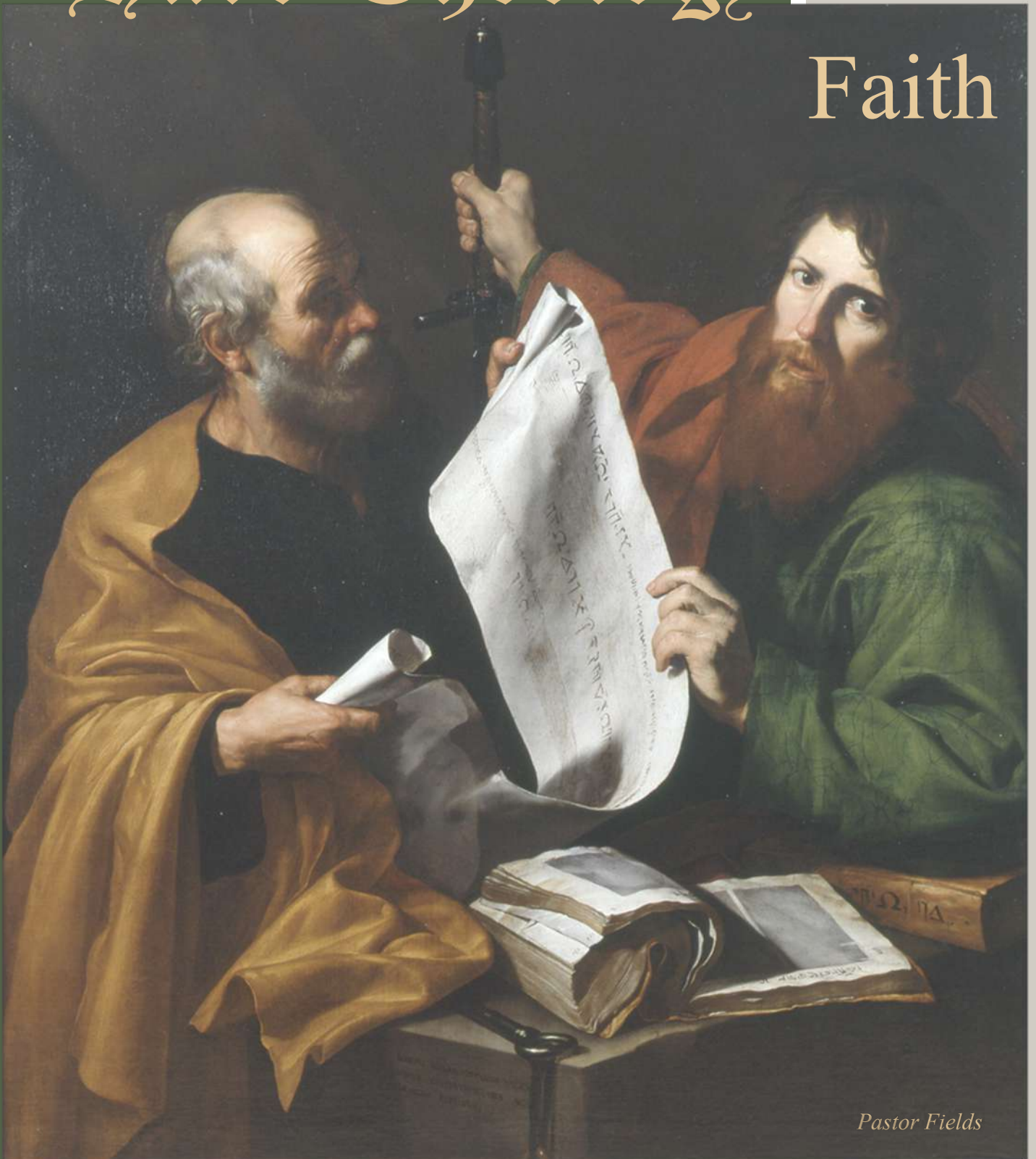
One of the services they offer that impacts our own community is the opportunity for local churches to be involved, whether by financial donations, material gifts, or volunteer opportunities. Christ Lutheran has recently begun to support their work financially, and members of the congregation are welcome to explore their volunteer needs. If you would like more information, contact Sister Sara or visit the CPC website at CPCMetroFriends.org.

Let us thank God that He is working through such means to extend life and salvation to these mothers, fathers, and most especially, to these little ones! ■



Hard Theology

Faith



Pastor Fields

It is, in my opinion, about time to bring this series on Hard Theology, to a close. To many, it may seem that hard theology is about rationalizing a seemingly irrational faith. In fact, to many these days, faith is considered the opposite of reason, or more commonly in our modern era, the opposite of science.

Yet this is a senseless thought, for every theologian that has been 'featured' in this series cannot be called anything but men of reason, though they had faith. To them, there was no contradiction, and to us, there should be none in our minds, for faith is always rational, and true reason leads to faith.

We do not always see how reason leads to faith, but that is because we are unreasonable. We are fallen, we confuse reason with our own vain wishes, and

when our own vain wishes, which we deem rational, do not coincide with the Faith of Our Fathers, we call faith irrational; as if we knew something; as if three millennia of contemplation has been overcome by a few minutes of our self-assured genius. This is the sin of pride.

C.S. Lewis once said 'I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.'

By faith, everything that is nonsensical and confusing in world becomes reasonable. It is merely the job of sinners to find that reason, which is granted to us by faith.

What Lewis said above is just a reworking of what St. Augustine once said:

Fides Quaerens Intellectum.

That is, 'faith seeking understanding.' All hard theology boils down to this. It derives from the conviction that the revelation given by God is given by the God who made all reality, and made it according to His *logos*, His *word*, His *reason*.

We study theology to know the reason behind what has been revealed, that faith

and reason may no longer be opposed to one another, as the modernists demand, but may kiss one another, as two friends who have missed one another for a long time.

To miss someone is one of the greatest sufferings in life. Let us bring two friends together. Though it may be hard; let us do it. ■

Hymn of the Month

Sister Sara

February—

O Wondrous Type!

O Vision Fair

LSB 413

This month we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration—the last feast before Lent. Three days after the Transfiguration Sunday, Pastor traces ashen crosses upon our heads and we enter a season of repentance and fasting. It isn't until Easter that we once more see Jesus glorified.

This must be important, this bookending of Jesus' suffering and Passion with key moments of seeing Him in glory. There are many theological reasons for this, but one is a single word that actually shows up in our hymn title this month: "O Wondrous *Type!* O Vision Fair." Curious... *type* doesn't seem like that interesting of a word, right?

"What type of candy do you like?"

"He's not my type of guy."

"Don't watch that type of movie."

But in theology, *type* doesn't just mean "kind." Rather, *type* means an image, figure, or pattern; it bears the sense of foreshadowing. For example, Peter tells us that Noah's Flood is a "type" of Baptism (1 Peter 3:21): just as the Flood wiped out evil in the earth but preserved Noah and his family by God's grace, so baptism puts to death our own evil and preserves us by God's grace. Another type in the Bible is the Sacrificial Lamb: the priest would sacrifice a spotless lamb to atone for the sins of the Israelites. Here we see a foreshadowing of Jesus as *the* Lamb, who would be sacrificed to atone for the sin of the whole world.

In these types, we see an image of a thing to come. Our hymn begins with an acclamation of wonder, that the types of the Old Testament—namely here, the prophets Moses and Elijah—are fulfilled in Jesus Himself.

We all know the story of the Transfiguration: how Jesus retreated to a mountain with only Peter, James, and John, that they might pray. But suddenly, Jesus is transformed before their very eyes, dazzling white and conversing with Moses and Elijah. Understandably flustered, Peter volunteers to build tents for them right then and there. Then the Father thunders, "This is My Son—listen to Him." And just like that, everything goes back to normal.

Moses and Elijah are each types of Christ. They were considered the greatest of the prophets, Moses having led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and Elijah being basically the only one in all Israel to stand against the evil King Ahab, even to the point of despairing of his own life. The lives of both foreshadowed the life and work of Christ, who would

Fun Facts

This hymn developed out of the liturgical tradition called the Sarum Rite. The Sarum Rite was a combination of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman liturgies, as a result from their mixing after William the Conqueror famously took England in 1066 A.D. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, compiled by Thomas Cranmer and used by the Anglican Church, is based on the Sarum Rite). Although we don't know who authored the hymn, it was specifically used as the Hymn of the Day for the Feast of the Transfiguration.

ultimately lead His people out of slavery to sin, and who alone would stand against the Prince of this World, even to the point of death.

This month's hymn makes that connection in its first line: "O Wondrous Type!" The whole story of the Old Testament, with all its images and foreshadowings, for thousands of years, culminates finally in the person of Christ. He is our salvation. "O vision fair of glory that the Church may share": in this event upon the mountain peak, Jesus shows a foretaste of the glory which awaits Him in His victory, and as well as all us who are united to Him. This preface prepares us to hear the story of the Transfiguration less as a bewildering phenomenon, lest we become a blubbing mess like Peter, and more as a type understood by the longing Christian—ready for the cross to come, but suffering all with the vision of heaven set before us (see Hebrews 12).

The hymn then recounts the story of the Transfiguration in stanza two (which is a combination of two stanzas in the original Latin hymn). Stanza three meditates upon what theologians call "inaugurated eschatology," i.e., the "now-and-not-yet." Here, Jesus shows in our own present moment the joy that awaits us, even in our suffering. Stanza four is our joyful response to such a revelation, and it culminates in the eternal song of the doxology in stanza five, wherein we praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit forevermore, knowing that one day we shall see Him "face to face," even as the disciples did upon the mountain. ■

March for Life



This year marked the 50th annual March for Life, the nationwide pro-life protest against the legalization of abortion. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with its conspicuous lime-green “LCMS Life Ministry” gear, joined the throngs once again on January 20th as thousands marched on the capitol. This year’s march was notably joyful, for it is the first time since the beginning of the march that *Roe v. Wade* has *not* been the law of the land. Mississippians in particular can give thanks that a case originating in our state (*Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*) was instrumental in accomplishing this life-preserving ruling. We continue to pray for our government, mothers in our land, those who have had an abortion, those who are considering one, and most of all, the precious babies being knit together in their mothers’ wombs.

Above: Rev. Christopher Esget celebrates the Divine Service as Lutherans gather in D.C. for the march.

Right & Next Page: LCMS members participate in the March for Life.



Prayer for Those Grieving Abortion Decisions

Merciful Father, You have promised that for Your own sake You blot out our transgressions and will not remember our sins. By Your blessed Gospel, forgive the sins of those who grieve past abortion decisions, and give them certainty that Your Son's absolving blood was shed to cover this very guilt and shame. Give readiness by Your Holy Spirit to pastors and Christian friends, that they may be surrounded by constant acclamations of their deliverance; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Prayer to Remember Those Whose Lives Have Ended in Abortion

Dear Lord, in great sorrow we remember before You the lives of many children that have ended in abortion. We mourn their deaths and cry out to You for mercy. In our despair, fix our eyes on the hope of Christ Jesus, who died for all; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Prayer for Expectant Mothers Vulnerable to Abortion

O God, our merciful Protector, arise with counsel and comfort for all expectant mothers vulnerable or pressured to seek abortion. Give them clarity of mind to see death for the enemy that it is, open their eyes to possibilities when they can see no other option, and give compassion to Your church, that she may be eager and ready to apply the balm of Christ's forgiveness and love to them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. ■



1 JOHN 3

Christ laid down
His life for us.
We love in deed and truth.



THIS MONTH

At Christ Lutheran

VOTERS' MEETING

February 19

This special Congregational Voter's Assembly will convene immediately following the worship service **Sunday, February 19th, 2023** to approve the slate of nominations for the Synodical Convention. All members are encouraged to attend.

~ Altar Flowers ~

Sign up on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board to provide altar flowers in 2023. They are \$45, and you may take them home after the worship service.

Thank you for beautifying the Lord's house!



Spring LifeLight

Beginning
Thursday, February 2
9:30 a.m.

Join us as we delve into a study of
Bible Feasts
on Thursdays throughout Lent!



Artwork in This Issue:

- Cover: *Transfiguration of Jesus*, Carl Bloch.
- Page 4: *The Transfiguration of Christ*, Earl Mott, b. 1949.
- Page 12: *The Pancake Bakery*, Pieter Aertszen, c. 1508.
- Page 14: Photos by Center for Pregnancy Choices.
- Page 16: *Saint Peter & Saint Paul*, Jusepe de Ribera, 1616.
- Page 18: *Design for an organ*, Johann Georg Dirr, 18th century.
- Page 20: Photos by Erik M. Lunsford.





THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

+ February 19 +
10:30 a.m.

The **Issues**, Etc.
MAKING the CASE
CONFERENCE

June 16 & 17 in Chicago, IL



THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

+ February 2 +

Ladies Night Out

Goodlett Home
Saturday, February 11
10:30 a.m.

Please RSVP to Sabrina



A S H
W E D N E S D A Y

February 22

10:30 a.m. | 7:00 p.m.



Saints' Days in February

- 2 Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord
- 4 St. Rabanus Maurus of Mainz, Archbishop
- 5 St. Jacob (Israel), Patriarch
- 8 St. Solomon, King
- 9 St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop & Confessor
- 10 St. Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Paul
- 13 Sts. Aquila, Priscilla, & Apollos
- 14 Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of the Slavs
- 14 St. Valentine, Martyr
- 15 Sts. Philemon and Onesimus
- 16 St. Philipp Melanchthon, Confessor
- 18 St. Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor
- 24 St. Matthias, Apostle

Transfiguration Sunday



February 19
- directly after the voters meeting -

