



Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

April Newsletter

2019

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I Need More...STRENGTH

After several attempts of twisting and tapping, the lid just wouldn't budge. "Honey, can you open this for me?" Her teenage son is eager to flex his muscles. He opens the jar and hands it back to his mother.

Life is sometimes like that jar, isn't it? Sometimes we just don't have the strength we need to tackle what's in front of us. Not the strength it takes to move a piano or change a flat tire, but the strength we need to raise our children or stay married to someone who is difficult to live with. We need the strength it takes to go to work and deal with people who are rude, inconsiderate, and lazy, or to walk to the mailbox that contains bills we'll have difficulty paying. **I need more strength!**

"Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth... He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:28-31).

What should we do when we need more strength? Hand that jar over to the LORD. He has all the strength we need and so much more. After all, he is the One who created the earth and everything in it. More than that, this strong, wise, loving God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The all-powerful God came in human weakness to rescue us from sin and death. He was condemned and crucified. Weakness, right? No! Strength! Jesus used his strength to remain on that cross until every last sin of ours had been paid for. His empty tomb proves it. *"Jesus was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead"* (Romans 1:4). Death has been defeated! The guilt of sin before God has been removed! By trusting in Jesus, life in heaven is waiting for us.

Need more strength? The One who created the earth has it. The One who died and rose for you has it. He is the One who gives us the strength to face each day with fresh confidence. Find that strength in his Word. And then be ready to soar. Be ready to soar on eagles' wings with renewed strength and through every challenge of life! Be ready to soar on eagles' wings to the home that Jesus has prepared for you in heaven!



I NEED MORE...

A Message from our Administrative and Spiritual Growth Pastor . . .

What is Lent really all about?

Jesus is at the center of Lent; who doesn't know that? But *we* are not absent from it; quite the contrary! As far as we are concerned, Lent is about Jesus. But to Jesus, Lent was all about us.

Don't miss how it all begins. Despite knowing that opposition to Jesus had reached a fever pitch and that the Jewish leaders want Him dead, He's more popular now than ever, as the growing crowd of followers for Palm Sunday's procession shows! They tried to get Him to say something that was heretical (false doctrine) so they could discredit Him before the Jews; but their 'traps' failed. They tried to get him to say something that would brand Him as a traitor to Rome; but that didn't happen either. But nobody is under the illusion that they have given up. In all of it, Jesus has showed them to be hypocrites and sinners. But they will have none of it – there is no repentance in them – no fleeing to Jesus for mercy. No, their hatred is only fueled.

Jesus knew it full well on Palm Sunday; and He knew how it would end. He told His disciples again, point blank as He had been saying it for weeks now. He gave the gruesome details even: betrayal, condemnation, mockery, being spit upon, flogging, execution – AND then 3 days later, **resurrection!** Yet knowing what awaited, notice *how* it begins. Jesus leads the procession. Jesus can hardly wait for it to begin – and end. Because for Jesus, it's all about us. He has no need to suffer for crimes; He committed none. But as He would pray in the Upper Room on Thursday, '*for this hour,*' He had come down from heaven – so He might suffer hell's torments *for us*. And He does so willingly.

The disciples are astonished that He goes with such determination knowing what awaits Him there. No doubt the rest of the crowd were afraid of what would happen too. Afraid of what? Of what would happen to Jesus. Would there also be a round-up of those who had anything to do with Jesus? The authorities had already issued orders that anyone connected to Jesus be excommunicated from the synagogue (John 9:22). Or would there be some sort of riot that perhaps He or His disciples would instigate (so little did so many understand Him!)? That would end in a bloodbath at the edge of a Roman sword; for the Romans were always ready to end a little disturbance by the Jews with their swords!

As we relive the 1st Lent, we join the disciples and the crowds in being astonished. How can it be that God is so eager for *our* salvation? How can it be that the Father doesn't spare His own Son with whom He was always 'well pleased'? How can it be that Jesus doesn't stop when He considers the cost in agony to His soul and the torment of His body? How can it be that the Holy Spirit is in full agreement with the Father and the eagerness of the Son for *our* salvation, which He will make ours by His gift of faith by us hearing that gruesome but powerful passion account?

But Lent causes us to be torn too. Part of us, which can barely stand to watch, cries out: 'Don't do it, Lord! I can't stand to see You the innocent Son of God endure such pain which I and my sins caused!' But then there is the other part of us that cries out in anguish saying, 'Go, Lord Jesus! Go quickly – accomplish everything I need for salvation. For if you shrink from it or pull back even a little, then I am lost to hell forever!'

Yes, our soul is torn in two like the curtain in the temple that separated sinful people from a holy God. Separated they remained for generations, until Jesus went to do for us what none of us could do for ourselves; and when He cried 'It is finished,' the curtain in the temple tore in two. For that which separated us from our God was removed; sin, all sin, **YOUR SIN** and mine had been **paid for in full!** And we eagerly await Easter morning, which was God the Father confirming that fact in a glorious way – by raising His Son to life again!!

So, as we prepare for the climax of another Lent, BEHOLD, He goes up to Jerusalem, where all will be fulfilled! BEHOLD, we follow with deepening anguish at what we caused, and at the sight of what we should have suffered for our sins! BEHOLD, we will not leave Him until He relieves us with His victorious cry: 'It is finished!' and the assurance that His resurrection gives – the assurance that what was all about Him (Lent) is really ALL ABOUT US to Him – praise be to God!

Prayer: See how deep His suffering – in His sacred body, in His sinless soul. See how horrible its cause – in the sins of my body, in the sins of my soul. See how perfect His love – for my body, for my soul. Amen.

(modified from the devotion *Up to Jerusalem*, by Daniel Deutschlander in his book [On Giving Advice to God](#), p. 139-141).

Yours in Christ
Pastor Steven Neumann



Financial Summary

Below is our information for March 2019:

Total Budget Needed:	\$36,440.00
Total Budget Received	\$35,047.15

We fell short of reaching our budgetary ministry needs in March by \$1,393.00 (\$278.60/wk).

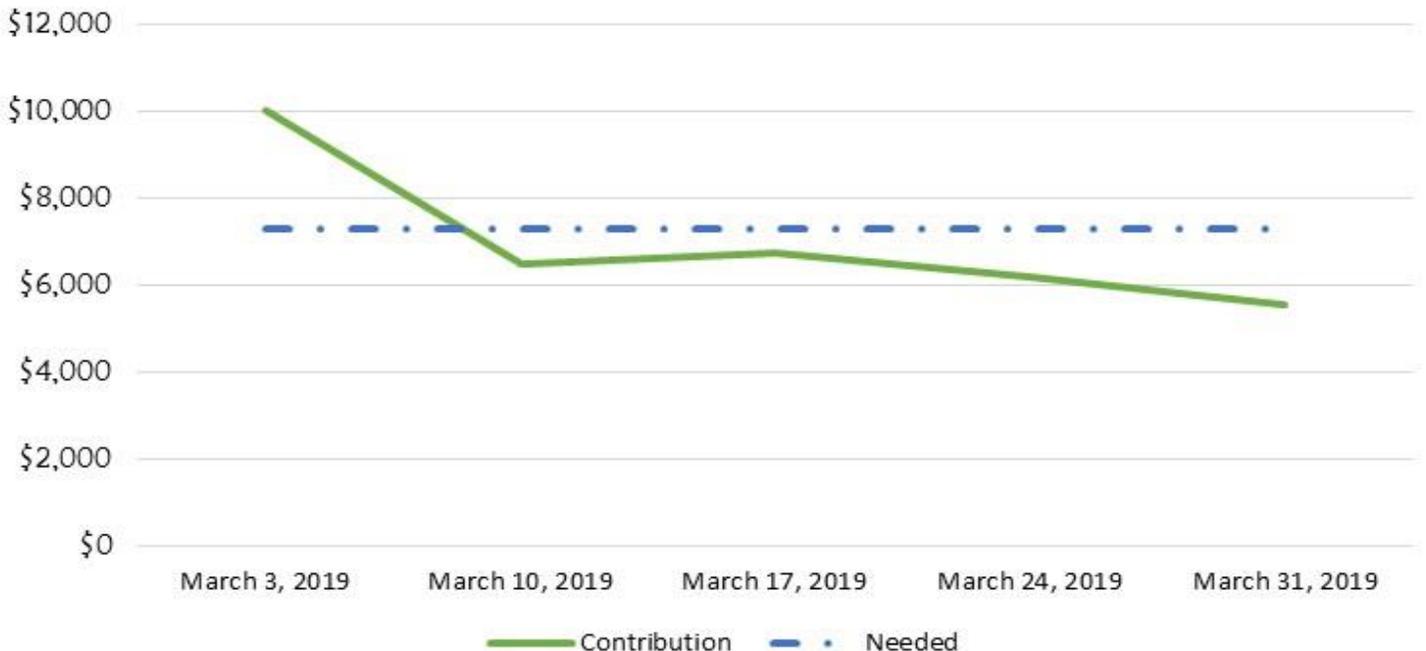
Our current Fiscal Year to Date Budget is: +\$9,310.91 (which is \$232.77/week)



Weekly Total Budget Received

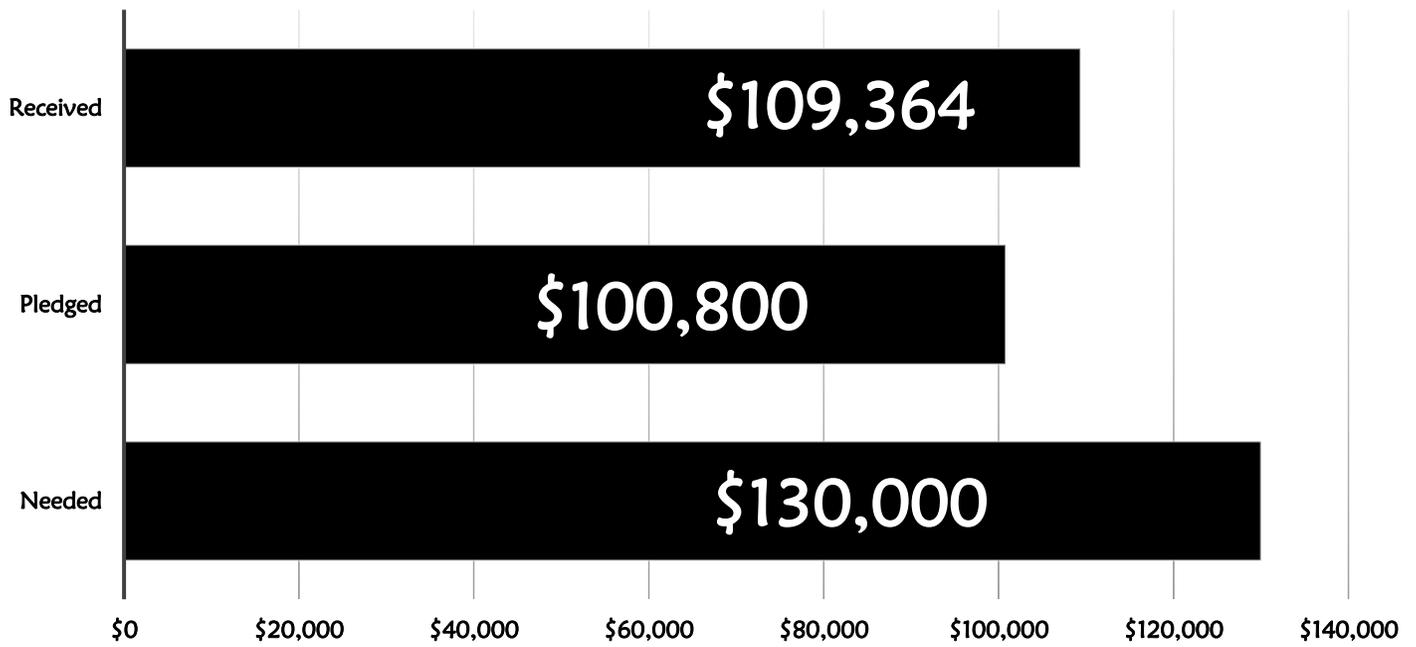
Needed Weekly: \$7,288

Weekly Average for Month: \$8,761.79/Weekly Average for Fiscal Year: \$9,534.98



Capital Campaign

Progress towards \$130,000 our Goal
As of March 31st, 2019



Received & Spent Comparison

(Income & Expenses)

