

Happenings at Hope

March – April

Volume 2, Number 2



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From the Pastor

Dear members and friends of Hope Lutheran Church. Not all movies are created equal. Some are useful for us, and others can be very harmful. An example would be to compare the recent movies, both of which are based on books. One, which the church youth group went and saw, was *Exodus: Gods & Kings*. This was a movie which, not surprisingly, presents a version of the Exodus events of the Bible. I say a version, because not everything in this movie was right from the Bible. As was also the case with the famous Charlton Heston movie, *The 10 Commandments*, *Exodus: Gods & Kings* movie takes some pretty hearty liberties with the Biblical events.

But, in spite of these inaccuracies, this was still a movie worth seeing for Christians. If you made sure to watch it with a discerning mind, remembering that not every single thing in the movie is based on the truth of Scripture, then *Exodus: Gods & Kings* could be an edifying film to watch. This is largely because this movie makes use

of modern technology to present such things as the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. And, something which did remain in that movie, if not entirely from the Bible, was the fact that God extracted His people from slavery in Egypt entirely on His own, without needing Moses or anyone else to help.

Another recent release is the highly-publicized *50 Shades of Grey*. This movie is a reminder that not everything is worth seeing. Not having seen it myself (nor do I plan on doing so) this is a movie that glorifies sexual deviancy, and gives an extremely unhealthy message to young girls about what true, loving, intimacy is. Included in this issue is an article on this written by an ELS member, Dr. Joshua Mears, explaining why this movie is so harmful. The article, unlike the movie, is worthwhile.

So remember, not everything is worth seeing. Some movies can be worthwhile, even if they aren't 100% true, while others have absolutely no redeeming value for us. –Pastor Webber



50 Shades of Deception

The theatrical release of the wildly popular book *Fifty Shades of Grey* is set for February 13, presenting an important issue and a valuable lesson for Christians living in a perverse world. There are many reasons to avoid watching movies with sexual content and to educate yourself and your family about the destructive influence of a highly sexualized culture. If we took *Fifty Shades of Grey* as just that, then perhaps we could say there is nothing new here as our culture has long been inundating us with messages promoting casual sex, hyper sexuality for youth, and the normalization of pornography. However, this movie and its message is particularly insidious because of its redefining influence on sexuality and intimacy.

The main plot within *Fifty Shades of Grey* is that Christian Grey, a powerful and successful businessman, is incapable of having a normal dating relationship, but instead is drawn to sexual encounters with women who allow him to inflict pain and humiliation during sex. For him, the definition of love and intimacy is synonymous with aggression and domination. In this movie, he meets Ana, a young and innocent woman who becomes a willing partner to this form of a sexual relationship.

This strange combination of a romantic love story with a twist of BDSM (bondage, domination, sadism and masochism) sexual fetishes is an extremely dangerous message especially because in the end of the story, this couple becomes married and has a family, thus suggesting that bizarre and unhealthy sexual expressions can be a pathway to

a healthy marriage and family.

Without perhaps belaboring a point that may seem common sense, it is important to stress that this series should be marked and avoided. *Fifty Shades of Grey* uses a deceptive tool to engage the fallen sinful being. God's perfect design for males and females to become one through sexual intimacy is distorted in a tragic and important way.



Without giving a full description of the internal neurochemistry at play when sexual relations occur, I will simply state that God embedded and designed us to experience an emotional state of trust, peace, and security with another being, namely our spouse, during sex. Perhaps you are saying, "What does trust, peace, and security have to do with bondage, domination, and torture scenes of sexual fetishes depicted in this movie?" In research of the underlying mechanisms involved with this sexual fetish, the same neurochemistry pathway is at work. It is the desire to feel safe that could draw one to desire

being controlled and abused. The feeling that one experiences when they are dominated in a sexually abusive encounter elicits some of the same feelings of trust. Or as Psychology Today (1999) says the BDSM fetish "involves a highly unbalanced power relationship. The essential component is the knowledge that one person has complete control over the other, deciding everything for the partner."

One does not need to have a thorough understanding of the rationale for this fetish in order to project the devastating consequences of promoting such a movie and its inherent flaws. Young people who may be confused about sexuality or married couples who may be struggling with intimacy concerns could see this movie and its romanticizing of sexual assault and be more willing to engage in unhealthy, distorted fantasies of aggressive lust.

-Joshua Mears, Psy.D.

(Dr. Mears is a member for the ELS Youth Board and is a member of Heritage Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, MN.)



The Meaning Of Lent

What is Lent? Lent is the season of the Christian church year beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter). Lent is a season to reflect on our own sinfulness and need for a Savior. Hymns and services are generally more somber during this time.

The color purple is generally used in churches during Lent, symbolizing penitence and self-discipline. Purple, the color of royalty, also reminds us of the mocking Jesus endured as the soldiers placed a purple robe on him and placed a crown of thorns on his head.



The somberness of Lent stands in stark contrast to Easter Sunday, or Resurrection Day, when the Christian Church celebrates Jesus' rising physically from the dead as He had promised. During the season of Lent, the liturgy changes slightly. We will not sing the *Alleluia* or the *Gloria In Excelsis Deo* in Lent. These two songs will remain "dormant" during Lent, only reappearing in the season of Easter.

The *Introit* & *Gloria Patri*

So far, in our study of the Historic Liturgy, we have covered the significance of invoking the name of the Triune God, and also the reasons why we need to confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness. Those two parts of the liturgy are the “preliminaries,” if you will—the things that have to be done so that the Divine Service can really start.

Immediately following confession and absolution comes the *Introit*. *Introit* is the Latin word for “entrance,” and reflects how this part of the liturgical service was originally used—as part of a procession. In the old days, the entrance of the pastor or priest who would officiate at the Lord’s Supper was accompanied by the singing of a psalm, concluding with the *Gloria Patri*. The common practice was that this Psalm would be sung responsively (alternating verse by verse) either by a cantor and the congregation or by two choirs.

Now it is true that in our usage and practice of the *Introit*, we do not have a procession in the traditional sense. However, our use of the *Introit* does mark a miniature procession. Prior to confession and absolution, the pastor remains outside the area of the altar. This is because he, along with the rest of the congregation, needs to be

forgiven of His sins before He can come into God's presence by entering the altar area. During the *Introit*, the pastor enters the altar for the first time.

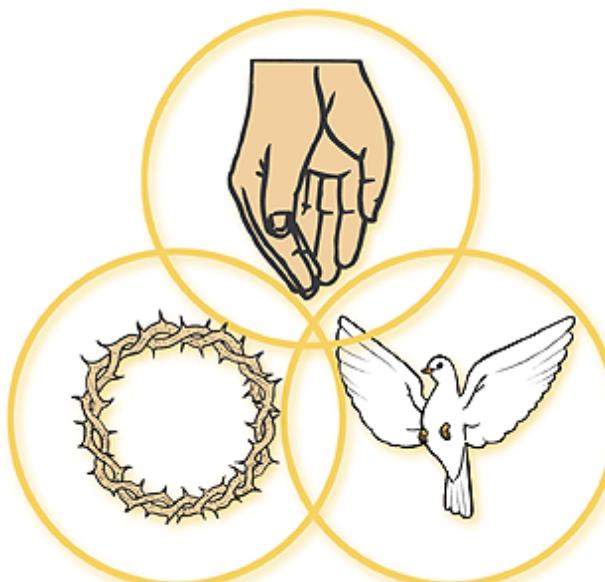
The content of what we sing in the *Introit* also reflects its ancient usage. We no longer sing an entire Psalm when we sing the introit. However, the words for the *Introit* are always taken from a

Psalm, usually the one appointed by the Lectionary for that particular Sunday in the Church Year. And finally, as our ancestors in the Christian faith, we conclude, or follow up, the *Introit* by singing the *Gloria Patri*.

The words of this song are: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.”

No matter what the words of the *Introit* are on a given week, concluding the *Introit* with the *Gloria Patri* emphasizes that the one God who exists and has saved us is the Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We Christians do not glorify just one or two persons of the Trinity. We joyfully confess that we have been created and redeemed by the combined work of the “whole” Triune God.

—Pastor Webber



Parish News

✓ Upcoming Events

- Midweek Lenten Services
 - March 4, 11, 18, 25
- Maundy Thursday,
 - April 2
- Good Friday
 - April 3
- Easter Sunday
 - April 5
- Ladies' Bible Study
 - March 14 & April 4
- Webber Family Moving Day
 - March 7
- Youth Group Ice Skating
 - March 8



Nathan Lujan – March 6th

Brian Larson – April 23rd

Ian Olsen – April 24th

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Divine Service: 10:30am

Bible Class & Sunday School: 9:30am