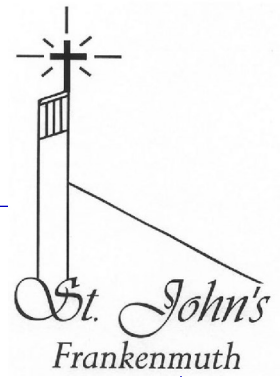
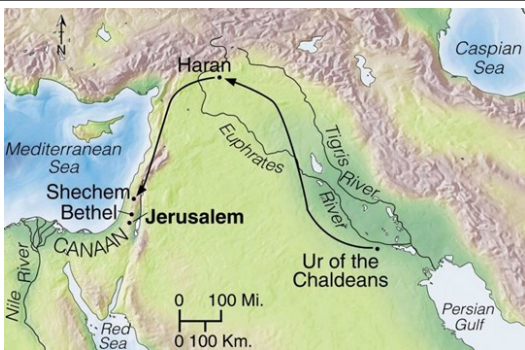


THE VICTORY



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter

February 2021



Going Out of the Way

Compare the two maps above. Both center on the same part of the Middle East, with the land of modern-day Iraq and Syria in the center. The map on the left traces the journey of the patriarch Abraham (Abram at this point) and his family from their home in Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan, which would become Israel. The journey is outlined in Genesis 11:31–12:8. A curious aspect of the trip, however, is that en route to Canaan, the family goes through Haran. They stop there for an unspecified period of time, during which Abraham's father, Terah, dies. After Terah's death, Abraham, his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot, follow God's command to continue the journey and reach Canaan.

A question of geography instantly comes to mind when we see the route. Why go so far out of the way? It's thought perhaps they

stopped in Haran because Terah was not able to travel anymore, so they stayed there until he died. Still, why wouldn't they have been going straight west from Ur to reach Canaan and stopped somewhere in that region along the way?

The answer lies in the map on the right. This map shades in green a region known as the "Fertile Crescent." This crescent-shaped piece of land is special because in the ancient world (Abraham lived around 2000 BC), its fertile soil made it the center of ancient civilizations. Since it was easier to raise food and survive, people could gather into cities, do work outside of farming, and establish trading routes. The route of Abraham seems out of the way because he and his family were following the fertile crescent, though they didn't think of it that way.

(Cont. on page 2)

Worship Service

Sunday at 10 a.m.

Bible Class

Sunday 9 a.m.

Sunday School

Sunday 9 a.m.

Service Broadcast

- ♦ Sunday 8 a.m.
Radio WKCQ
98.1 FM
- ♦ Monday 7 p.m.
Charter Cable
TV
channel 191

Church Office

Hours :

Monday—Friday
10 a.m.—4:30p.m.

Office Phone:

(989) 652-6201

Pastor Patrick
Ernst

(612) 845-9162

(Cont. from page 1)

They thought of it as the natural way to Canaan, traveling through populated areas, areas where food and water could be easily found, and where civilization provided some protection from robbers in the wilderness. To take a straight path to Canaan from Ur would have meant crossing the Syrian desert, at best inhospitable and at worst deadly. It would be like someone today traveling from Michigan to Russia by land and sea over the North Pole instead of around the globe through inhabited places.

Beyond this geographical insight, I want us to think about how out of the way God's plan for Abraham was, even though he traveled along logical routes. Abraham continued to Egypt and then returned to Canaan, making the total journey from Ur to Canaan well over 2,000 miles.

Hebrews, the New Testament book, writes, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10). Abraham endured these long journeys, living in foreign places, never completely settled, because he was living by faith in God's promise. That promise from God was not just to bless Abraham and his descendants, but to bless the whole world through them (Genesis 12:1-3). God blesses us all through Abraham because Jesus, our Savior, was born from Abraham's family. By faith in God's promises, we too live forgiven because Jesus paid for all our sins. We too go out of the way to follow God in our lives. It can be inconvenient from the world's point of view to help people in need, support family members, and be a listening ear for fellow church members going through tough times. But we gladly do it, knowing that God has promised us heaven, a place to settle eternally, the city that has foundations anchored in Christ. On our earthly journey, God gives us the church where we can rest in his Word, be fed with Jesus' body and blood, and gather our strength to continue tomorrow on the way God has laid out for us.

Pastor Patrick Ernst

*Our thoughts
and prayers
Are with you*

I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone~ for kings and all those in authority. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

May God's comfort surround the family and friends of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and give them peace in knowing that their loved ones have found eternal peace.

The following Memorials were made in honor of Elva Kehrberg and Arnold Palmreuter :

General Fund: \$ 400.00

Altar Guild: \$ 50.00



We are surrounded by the theme of “love” during February. Retailers begin the day after Christmas, replacing trees with hearts and garland with candy. Valentine’s Day is celebrated in many ways. Some choose not to recognize February 14th other than another Hallmark holiday. One might ask “Why celebrate and show love with cards, flowers and candy on only one day?”

Others partake in the romance of it all and spoil a loved one. Others have lost loved ones throughout the years and use this day as a special reminder of the time spent together and love shared!

No matter how Valentine’s Day is celebrated in your relationships with a spouse, significant other, children, parents, family and

friends, past or present, keep in mind some insightful verses found in scripture with the word “love” in it. How do you incorporate these verses into your daily life?

We love because he loved us first ~ John 4:19

Love one another with mutual affection ~ Romans 2:10

God is Love John 4:16

Love your enemies ~ Matthew 5:44

Love without reward. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? Matthew 5:46

Did you know?

Martin Luther married Katharina von Bora in 1525 after he helped her flee her convent with her fellow nuns. Martin Luther loved Katie and taught a high view of marriage to Christian believers.



If someone mentions Valentine's day, you probably think of romance, flowers and chocolates and maybe even Cupid's arrow. However, the namesake of Valentine's Day, Saint Valentine, has long been connected to the disease of epilepsy. We Lutherans do not believe the idea of "patron saints," or dead Christians who help us with certain problems in life. Saint Valentine is not someone we should pray to or look for help with epilepsy or anything else. We should pray to God and look for his help in all things. However, we will briefly look at why Saint Valentine possibly became associated with this disease.

There are many theories to explain St. Valentine's connection to epilepsy and it can be tricky to get to the heart of its origins. Historians offer different theories to explain how St. Valentine became an 'epilepsy saint.'

St. Valentine's illness

Some have suggested that there is a strong phonetic similarity in the German language between the words 'Valentine' and 'fallen' - epilepsy was known as 'the falling disease' for centuries. This strengthened St. Valentine's connection in the German language which led to alternative terms for epilepsy such as 'St. Valentine's illness' and 'St. Valentine's affliction,' although we cannot be sure of this.

One theory suggests that St. Valentine supposedly cured someone of epilepsy — a young woman engaged to be married. Another legend tells the story of a bishop named Valentine von Terni who helped the son of a Roman orator and stopped his seizures.



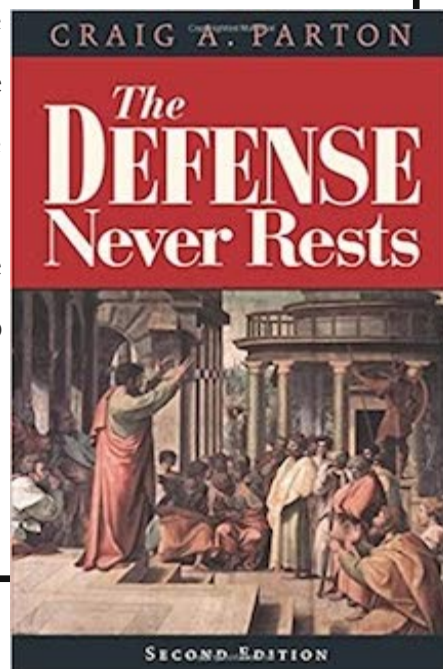
February's book recommendation: **The Defense Never Rests**

By Craig Parton
Jeremy Aiello

This powerful critique of American Christianity chronicles the spiritual pilgrimage of one man and provides a defense of the pure Gospel.

In the first half of the book, Parton explains his spiritual autobiography. Follow his journey from unbelief to American Evangelicalism and Campus Crusade staff work, to his discovery of the Lutheran church. In the chapters after his arrival at an understanding of Lutheranism, he presents a hard-hitting critique of shallow, pop-style worship and theology. Readers will also appreciate Parton's honest, systematic approach to apologetics that tackles the tough questions of how to explain the Christian faith in a way that always points back to Christ's work.

You can order this book online from Concordia Publishing House at cph.org



Emails and cell phone numbers:

The church office continues to request and update email addresses and cell phone numbers to enable the church and committees can keep members updated on events or other timely, important information. If you no longer have a home phone or your cell number is the is the best way to reach you, please contact the church office or slip the updated information into the drop box in front of St. John's after hours.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Love is _____,

Love is _____.

It does not _____,

It does not _____, it is not _____,

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,

It is not easily _____,

It keeps no record of _____.

Love does not delight in _____
but rejoices with the _____.

It always protects, always _____,

Always hopes, always _____.

Love never _____.

R S U N C I A F T L N D M V Y
M R T S F N S G N O R W H P V
V E R S G B G P F E Y X M A D
D I Q E U W L C Q E W E K T V
H C R J D R B W T R U T H I E
D E R W L U T D X G R P H E B
D I L P E R S E V E R E S N X
R A S N L N D Z K Y I H C T F
X F V H S R F Y I P E H A Q R
G Y A K O E G D N K M M Z K Z
O T Z I U N U X D Z R B E Z L
Z S F V L O O I B A Q I F G Z
N A B U R S J R S X G G H J H
B O I P E J U V C O F I I B M
S B X H K L L U R Q L I V E I

ANGERED

WRONGS

TRUSTS

ENVY

BOAST

FAILS

KIND

EVIL

PERSEVERES

PROUD

PATIENT

TRUTH