***The Newsletter of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church***

***Lindy, Nebraska***

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**The Rod and Staff**



**July and August 2020**

**Under Construction**

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.***

* **Galatians 5:22-23 ESV**

Growing up in Minnesota, it was common for me to hear the joke: “There are only three seasons in Minnesota. What are they? Answer: Summer, winter, and road construction.”

I got to thinking about this the other day while driving and observing the many construction crews hard at work, and I reflected on the fact that this joke is all but universal, not just a Minnesota thing. I have heard people from North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and of course Nebraska make the same comment. The cold winters make sure that road construction is a constant need. The combination of road salt, the expansion of water in cracks upon freezing, and general wear and tear wreaks havoc on our highways.

Do we think of ourselves as under construction? Is God working in our lives? If so, in what way?

Lutherans have a way of talking about our relationship with God, expressed by the Latin phrase: *simul iustus et peccator* (simultaneously saint and sinner). What that means is that we can consider ourselves saints of God because of the righteousness of God that we receive as a gift through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our status as saints isn’t because of some righteousness we produce that pleases God.

On the other hand, we are still sinners. While we live on this earth, while we wait for the coming of the new creation that God will usher in, “the old Adam” (our sinful nature) continues to exert his influence. Therefore, all throughout life, God calls us to live out our baptism by dying to sin and rising to new life. Just like winter comes and goes and road construction becomes necessary, we continue to struggle with sin and know our need for forgiveness and redemption. So, we can say that we remain under construction our whole lives, with God filling in our potholes, repairing cracks, smoothing things over.

But is this all that needs to be said? Our focus on “simultaneously saint and sinner” has opened us Lutherans up to criticism by other Christian groups for promoting laxness in Christian life and discipleship. Our focus on being passive recipients of God’s grace has at times led to an indifferent attitude: “Oh well, God just forgives me anyway, so I can remain in my sin and act irresponsibly. God just accepts me as I am, and I have no need to change.”

But is that really a faithful way of thinking? Is that really a biblical way of thinking?

No.

In fact, it is a caricature of the Lutheran tradition.

Yes, it’s true that we don’t earn our status with God by what we do. But our Lutheran tradition also emphasizes that it does indeed matter what we do. What we do is in response to what we have received. In the Augsburg Confession of 1530 A.D., which is the foundational Lutheran confessional document of theology, the sixth article states the following:

*Also [the Lutheran churches] teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will, but that we should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants. Luke 17:10. The same is also taught by the Fathers. For Ambrose says: It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone.*

They included this sixth of twenty-eight articles precisely because they wanted to answer the accusation that Lutherans don’t care about Christian conduct in the world.

We remain under road construction all our lives, with God forgiving our sins, filling in our potholes. But we also remain under construction in a different sense than simply road maintenance. God continues to expand the road and lead us along it. We grow in understanding and maturity as we live in relationship with God, and all the while God opens our eyes to appreciate more fully everything He has done for us. While we live in the world in faith, God calls us to “bear good fruit” as we are rooted in Him.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not venerate (pray to) special people called “saints.” Our Lutheran confessional documents speak against that practice. However, those same documents that prohibit the veneration of saints encourage Christian people to look to the lives of significant Christians of the past as a source of encouragement for our lives in the present. They form a “great cloud of witnesses” as we remain pilgrims and strangers on earth (Hebrews 12:1).



We remember in July and August **Mary Magdalene**, a woman referenced more than once in the New Testament. She is commemorated on July 22.

Not much detail is given about the life of this woman, though curiously more is said about her than about some of Jesus’ male disciples. She is described as being among the women from Galilee who followed Jesus. She was with Jesus during his crucifixion and burial, and she was present at the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning. According to the account in John chapter 20, Jesus directs her to tell his disciples that he is alive. Hence, she is sometimes called “the apostle to the apostles.” Other than that, the Bible only says that Jesus had “driven seven demons out of her.” She is sometimes considered to be the same woman named Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. She is also sometimes identified as the unnamed woman from Luke 7 who anoints Jesus’ feet. Later traditions have also identified her as a prostitute who had been forgiven by Jesus. None of these things, however, are supported by biblical evidence.

*Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and mind and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed of all our infirmities and know you in the power of his endless life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.* (prayer from justus.anglican.com)

**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

***What is Holy Communion?***

*It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself.*

***Where is this written?***

*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul say: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: “Take, eat, this is my body, which his given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: “Take, and drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

**Featured Hymn for July and August**

***Praise to the Lord, the Almighty***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 11*

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,

the King of creation!

O my soul, praise him,

for he is your health and salvation!

Let all who hear Now to his temple draw near, Joining in glad adoration!

1. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things

is wondrously reigning

And, as on wings of an eagle,

uplifting, sustaining. Have you not seen All that is needful has been

Sent by his gracious ordaining?

1. Praise to the Lord, who will prosper

your work and defend you;

Surely his goodness and mercy

shall daily attend you. Ponder anew What the Almighty can do As with his love he befriends you.

1. Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!

All that has life and breath, come now

with praises before him! Let the Amen Sound from his people again;

Gladly forever adore him!

* Joachim Neander, 1650-1680
* Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1828

Note: Joachim Neander, a German Calvinist, at one time a scoffer against the faith, came to believe while still very young. He wrote this most famous hymn before his death at age thirty.

**Monthly Watchword for July**

“And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, ‘Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.’”

* 1 Kings 19:7

**Ushers for July and August:**

* Head Ushers (July):
  + Karen and Randy Hanson
* Ushers:
  + Melvin Barger
  + Brandon Barger
  + Stella Branstiter
  + Riley Eckmann
* Head Ushers (August)
* Tim and Annie Jessen
* Ushers:
  + Carsten and Darci Barger
  + Perry and LaVonne Kolterman
  + Les and Denise Yule
  + Renee Kauth

**Website:** The web address is as follows:

* **www.gselclindy.weebly.com**

**Martin Luther’s Morning Prayer**

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I ask you to protect me this day also from sin and every evil, that in all I do today I may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let you holy angel watch over me, that the wicked foe have no power over me. Amen.

**Birthdays for July and August**

*Note: This list of birthdays is a work in progress, as we are currently trying to gather membership information from the old congregational record into an electronic form. If your name is not listed in the appropriate month, please let pastor know your birthday so that it can be added in the future. If you would not like your name to be listed, simply let pastor know. The birthdays are provided here as a way of giving thanks for the lives of members of the congregation. Happy birthday to all!*

* July 10: Tara Barger
* July 12: Addison Barger
* July 12: Ashley Guenther
* July 14: Jake Eckmann
* July 16: Summer Guenther
* July 20: Scott Eisenhauer
* July 30: Lacey Barger
* August 3: Jim Petersen
* August 6: Gregg McGee
* August 9: Sandra Ziegler
* August 29: Jett Sucha

**Baptismal Anniversaries for July and August**

*Note: Just as it is important to acknowledge the beginning of our earthly lives with our birthdays, it is even more important for us as Christians to remember the day when God has given us a new birthday, a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Lutherans confess that baptism is the means by which God gives us as a part of sinful humanity a new relationship with him, a promise that our faith can look to all our lives. In turn, we are called to a life of repentance and faith that trusts in Christ as our salvation. As with the birthdays, this list is a work in progress. Blessed baptismal anniversaries to everyone!*

* July 1: Annie Jessen
* July 10: Darci Barger
* July 18: Hudson Barger
* July 24: Natalie Peetz
* July 29: Jamie Doerr
* July 30: Gary Ermels
* August 1: Larry Barnes
* August 3: Gary Kumm
* August 3: Venita Sage
* August 5: Matthew Hanson
* August 20: Addison Barger
* August 20: Troy Poppe
* August 23: Elliot Olson
* August 24: Jacob Stewart
* August 25: Tara Barger
* August 27: Kora Poppe

**Worship Schedule**

* July 5: Fifth Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion (Green)
* July 12: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Service of the Word (Green)
* July 19: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion (Green)
* July 26: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, Service of the Word (Green)
* August 2: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion (Green)
* August 9: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Service of the Word (Green)
* August 16: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion (Green)
* August 23: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, Service of the Word (Green)
* August 30: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Service of the Word (Green)

**Calling Sunday School Teachers!**

The congregation is currently in need of a group of people to serve as Sunday school teachers for the coming year and beyond. Our hope is to assemble a committee of perhaps five or even more people who can rotate Sundays and share the responsibility for this important part of the congregation’s life. With a committee of five people, participation in this Sunday school committee would mean that one would only need to teach approximately once a month over the course of eight months. Youth are also most welcome to assist the adults and perhaps be primary teachers on some occasions.

Teaching Sunday school is not difficult, but some preparation is necessary. Curriculum is available on the Sola Publishing website, to which we as a congregation subscribe. **There will be an orientation meeting on Wednesday August 19 at 7:00 PM** where Pr. Tom will provide some information about Sunday school and the curriculum. If that date does not work for you and you would like to participate, please contact Pr. Tom.

Whatever your situation in life, you are encouraged to be a part of this aspect of the congregation’s ministry. If we do not have Sunday school teachers, we will not be holding Sunday school this year. Thank you!

**Important Announcements**

* Unfortunately, the annual ice cream social is cancelled this summer due to COVID-19. We will hopefully be able to resume this tradition next year.
* We have resumed in-person worship at the church as of May 31. We have been taking and will continue to practice the following precautions:
  + Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance to the sanctuary.
  + Bulletins are placed in every other pew in order to encourage some distance in seating.
  + Masks are available to wear if you prefer.
  + We will not engage in any greeting time after worship.
  + For the distribution of Holy Communion, we will do so at the altar rail, with family units invited to come forward on either side. Pastor will use hand sanitizer before the distribution and will drop the bread in open hands. Wine cups are spaced apart in the trays for you to take as Pastor comes by with the tray. Pastor will also wear a mask during the distribution.
* Now that we have resumed our regular worship life, we will continue with a time of adult education, starting on July 26, the fourth Sunday of the month at 9:30. We will be engaging in a study and discussion of the assigned readings from the Bible for that Sunday. We will do the same in August on the fourth Sunday of the month.
* Pr. Tom has begun the practice of recording short devotions of around fifteen minutes each. These recorded devotions involve a time of morning, evening, or afternoon prayer, a Bible reading and brief comment on it, as well as a hymn. These devotions may be accessed on the church Facebook page as well as on the church website: gselclindy.weebly.com
* A Sunday for the presentation of Bibles to children in the congregation will be scheduled in September.
* Confirmation class will resume in September.
* Youth group meetings will resume in September.
* Assuming we have Sunday school teachers, Sunday school will resume in September.
* Beginning with this school year, we will begin with a different set of Bible readings (lectionary) on Sunday mornings. Currently, we utilize a three-year cycle in common use. A new lectionary has been designed in order to give people a greater sense of the progression of the story of the Bible. This “Narrative Lectionary” includes a single main preaching text along with an accompanying reading. It is an opportunity to become more familiar with the Holy Scriptures, hearing the stories of the Bible in chronological order, beginning with the book of Genesis.

**July 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  | 1    Pr. Tom in Lindy | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 6 | 7 | 8  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Church council, 7:00 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12  Worship, Service of the Word  Green | 13 | 14 | 15  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Women’s meeting, 10:00 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19  Worship with Holy Communion  Green | 20 | 21 | 22  Pr. Tom in Lindy | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26  Adult education, 9:30  Worship, Service of the Word  Green | 27 | 28 | 29 30 31  Pr. Tom in Lindy | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | | |

**August 2020**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 2  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 3 | 4 | 5  Pr. Tom away | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 10 | 11 | 12  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Church council meeting, 7:00 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 17 | 18 | 19  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Women’s meeting, 10:00  Sunday school orientation meeting, 7:00 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23  Adult education, 9:30  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 24 | 25 | 26 27 28 29  Pr. Tom in Lindy | | | |
| 30  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30 | 31 |  |  | | | |

Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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