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

***Lindy, Nebraska***

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**The Rod and Staff**



**July and August 2021**

**Churches, Churches, and More Churches!**

***The Eastern Orthodox Churches***

In the last newsletter, I wrote about our own Christian tradition of Lutheranism. With this newsletter, I begin what will be a long series of articles about different kinds of Christian churches. Trying to keep these church traditions in rough chronological order from when they consider themselves to have been founded, I begin by discussing the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition.

**My First Encounter with the Eastern Orthodox**

When I was a senior at Augustana College (now University) in Sioux Falls in 2001-2002, I decided to get adventurous one Sunday morning. Kitty-corner from the campus on Summit Avenue, there was an odd-looking church building that always piqued my interest as I walked by it. Upon closer examination, I discovered that it was a Greek Orthodox church. I knew a little about the history of this tradition, but I wanted to experience it for myself. One Sunday morning, rather than go to a nearby Lutheran church as was my usual custom, I convinced a couple of friends to join me in attending this Greek Orthodox church. Their worship began at 8:00, and so we arrived bright and early.

We were almost the only ones there! A few other people were scattered around the sanctuary. But the liturgy began nonetheless, in Greek. But even though we couldn’t understand most of what was said, the experience was impressive. Incense was burning. The liturgy continued to be chanted. Icons (images) of Jesus were all over the sanctuary. Above the altar, there were icons of various Christian saints of the past. Being in the sanctuary during the liturgy made us feel like we had been transported into another world.

And that was the point. Eastern Orthodox Christians emphasize experiencing the presence of God with all human senses; smell, sound, sight, touch, and taste are all a part of their experience of worship. Worship is designed to take them out of their everyday experience of the world and its time. The idea is that the Eastern Orthodox step out of the world for a moment and get a taste of God’s eternity. A great quote by the Eastern Orthodox bishop Kallistos Ware sums it up: “We see that it is not the task of Christianity to provide easy answers to every question, but to make us progressively aware of a mystery. God is not so much the object of our knowledge as the cause of our wonder.”

As time went on that Sunday morning, more and more people began to fill the sanctuary. The Greek Orthodox liturgy often lasts for around four hours, and we discovered that it isn’t expected that people will attend for the whole time. Most people come a couple hours after worship begins and stay until the end.

**A Brief History Lesson**

In our part of the world (North America), Eastern Orthodox churches are rarely found, and it’s not surprising that many people are unfamiliar with them. Nevertheless, around the world, Eastern Orthodoxy is a major contributor to world Christianity. They, too, are among believers in Christ. And especially in larger cities in North America, you will often find an Eastern Orthodox church of some kind.

Where do these Christians come from? Understanding this requires a brief history lesson. When Christianity began, it took root all around the Roman Empire. In time, some cities became centers of Christian life and thought: Alexandria (in Egypt), Antioch (in Syria), Jerusalem, Rome, and eventually the city of Constantinople (today known as Istanbul, Turkey). These cities became known as “patriarchates.”

Over time, Christians in the western part of the Roman Empire and those in the eastern part developed different customs and traditions. The western Christians used primarily the Latin language, and the eastern Christians used Greek or other local languages. Western Christians looked to the city and the bishop of Rome (who came to be known as the Pope) as their primary authority. Eastern Christians, on the other hand, believed that authority should be shared among the five patriarchates.

The eastern and western parts of the Christian world remained in fellowship with each other, at least officially. But as time went on, the east and the west seemed headed down separate paths. Conflict arose over various issues, but one major issue was the wording of what we call the “Nicene Creed.”

Of course, both the eastern and western churches believed in the concept of the Trinity, which says that we have one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the eastern and western Christians differed a bit on how to talk about the Trinity. The original Greek text of this Nicene Creed from the fourth century (300s) said that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” In the west, Christians added a Latin word to the Nicene Creed, “filioque.” In so doing, the western Christians confessed that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father *and the Son*.” They did this to emphasize that the Son of God (Jesus) was equal to God the Father. At the time, there was a group of people in the west called Arians who believed that the Son of God was not equal to God the Father. Even so, eastern Christians claimed that western Christians had no right to alter the text of the Nicene Creed on their own.

Finally, in the year 1054 A.D., the Pope in Rome (west) and the Patriarch of Constantinople (east) exchanged excommunication, meaning they condemned each other and severed ties. This marked a formal division between Western Christianity and Eastern Christianity. Christians in the West came to be known often as “Catholic,” and Christians in the East came to be known as “Eastern Orthodox” (meaning “correct praise” or “teaching”). Even after the “Great Schism” of 1054 A.D., Eastern and Western churches continued to relate to each other somewhat. But when western Christian crusaders stormed the city of Constantinople on their way to free the Holy Land from Muslims in 1214 A.D., the crusaders from the west slaughtered not only Muslims and Jews, but also many eastern Christians. For several hundred years since then, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches had little to do with each other.

**Some Characteristics of Eastern Orthodoxy**

Like the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches claim to have their foundation in the apostles (disciples) of Jesus, and they believe that their bishops serve in an unbroken line from the apostles. Yet the Orthodox differ from the Roman Catholics in their organizational structure. The Eastern Orthodox do recognize the Patriarch of Constantinople as their symbolic leader, but unlike the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church, this “Ecumenical Patriarch” as he is known does not have the same kind of administrative authority over the Eastern Orthodox as the Pope has over the Roman Catholic Church. There are various Eastern Orthodox Churches that are administered independently, yet they all understand themselves to be in fellowship with each other: Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Bulgarian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, Latvian Orthodox, and so forth. Each of these churches conducts its liturgy in its own language. This is different from the Roman Catholic Church, which, until recently, required its mass to be conducted only in Latin.

The Eastern Orthodox believe that they encounter God in a special way in their liturgy, where Christ comes to them both as the Word of God through the Scriptures and as the Bread of Life in Holy Communion. As already mentioned, the Eastern Orthodox emphasize the use of human senses in worship. Like the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox observe seven things that we often call “sacraments.” However, they usually refer to these things as “mysteries.” The seven mysteries are Holy Communion (administered to the faithful by a spoon where the bread and wine have been mixed together), Baptism (administered to infants by full immersion), Confirmation (administered to infants right after baptism, which they understand as the coming of the Holy Spirit), Confession (private confession to the priest), Holy Unction (anointing of the sick with oil), Holy Orders (ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons), and Matrimony (marriage).

In their tradition, Eastern Orthodox priests can be married, but bishops cannot. Curiously, Eastern Orthodox Christians usually celebrate Easter on a different date than the western Christians. According to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox. But the Eastern Orthodox understood that Easter also had to be after the Jewish Passover celebration. Therefore, Eastern Orthodox Easter is usually at least a week after western Easter, sometimes even later.

Eastern Orthodox Christians believe that God has revealed himself not only through the Bible, but in general through the establishment of the Christian Church and “sacred tradition.” They understand the Bible to be a part of this sacred tradition, which also includes God’s guidance in the decrees of the great church councils. Yet they value the Bible. On the door of the Greek Orthodox church I attended in Sioux Falls, a sign said, “Looking for a Bible-believing church? How about the church that gave you the Bible?”

A lot of the things that we take for granted in our Lutheran churches stem from developments in the eastern part of the Christian world. Our understanding of God as Trinity and other doctrinal issues about the person of Jesus Christ were worked out in a series of councils, all of which met in what is considered Eastern Orthodox territory today. The list of books that comprise the New Testament in the Bible also comes from the eastern Christian world.

**Relations with the Eastern Orthodox**

Over the centuries, there were various attempts by the Roman Catholic Church to reconcile with the Eastern Orthodox, which never quite panned out. But in the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council in the Roman Catholic Church opened the door to greater discussion with their separated brethren in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. As a result, the Pope in Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople nullified the condemnations of 1054 A.D. Even though they continue to disagree with each other on some things, an arrangement was worked out that provided for some limited recognition. If a Roman Catholic is in an area where there is no Roman Catholic Church but there is an Eastern Orthodox Church, the Eastern Orthodox priest is permitted to minister to that Roman Catholic, and vice versa. Even so, the Eastern Orthodox tend to be less friendly to the Roman Catholics than the Roman Catholics are to them. The couple of times I have attended Eastern Orthodox liturgy, the announcement was that Holy Communion is “for those who are baptized Orthodox.”

One encouraging sign of Christian cooperation, however, was a photograph taken at the installation of Francis as the Pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, in 2013. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the symbolic leader of the Eastern Orthodox, was in attendance. The Roman Catholics consider the Pope to the be the successor of the Apostle Peter. The Eastern Orthodox consider the Patriarch of Constantinople to be the successor of the Apostle Andrew, Peter’s brother. Francis and Bartholomew are photographed embracing. Pope Francis addressed Patriarch Bartholomew as “Andrew, my brother.”

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in Eastern Orthodoxy in North America, even among young people. Some are drawn to this expression of Christianity because it is unfamiliar and exotic. Others are drawn to it because they like the meditative and sensory experience that their liturgy provides.

Though Lutherans disagree with the Eastern Orthodox about various things, perhaps especially how we talk about being justified before God, there is much that we share, and we pray for continued understanding and a common witness to Christ in our world.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not 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).



For July and August of 2021, we remember the Bohemian (Czech) priest named Jan (John) Huss (ca. 1369-1415 A.D.). He is commemorated on July 6.

Jan Huss was a controversial figure in his era, as he challenged the church of his time, rebuking the corruption he saw within the hierarchy of the church. He spoke against theological errors that he felt had crept into the life of the church concerning the Lord’s Supper. For example, he demanded that laypeople as well as priests be allowed to drink from the chalice in Holy Communion. He criticized corruption among the clergy. He also insisted that the true Christian Church on earth is found wherever the faithful gather around God’s word, independent of the hierarchy of the Roman Church. Huss was called to the Council of Constance in 1415 A.D. to explain himself, but his safe passage was revoked, and he was condemned and burned at the stake for his views, which were judged by the council to be heretical.

The Czech word “Huss” means “goose.” The legend says that Jan Huss said to his executioners before his death, “If you kill this goose, a hundred years later, God will raise up a swan.” Almost a hundred years after Huss’ death, Martin Luther began his public work in Germany, and many people considered Luther to be the fulfillment of Huss’ statement. Many of Luther’s insights were identical to those of Huss, and so Huss is often considered a forerunner of the Lutheran Reformation. This is why many Lutheran churches in Germany have images of swans on their buildings.

*Almighty God, who gave to your servant Jan Huss boldness to confess the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ before the rulers of this world, and courage to die for this faith: Grant that we may always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.* (prayer from justus.anglican.org)

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson



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

**The Ten Commandments**

***The Fifth Commandment***

*You shall not kill.*

***What does this mean?***

*We should fear and love God so that we do our neighbors no bodily harm nor cause them any suffering, but help and befriend them in every need.*

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Dear members of Good Shepherd,

The church Calf Committee has had several offers for donations from people who would like to be involved with the Calf Project but are not able to house or care for the livestock. Unfortunately, some of these offers to pay for vet supplies and other care items have had to be declined because they have already been taken care of.

As a way of making the project open to participation by everyone, we have come up with an idea for a “Sponsor a Calf Program.” This program would allow anyone who would like to be involved in the project be involved. There have been suggestions to expand the project, but with an aging population, there are fewer homes for the calves. By sponsoring a calf with your donations, these funds will go directly into the Calf Fund, thereby expanding the project without having to deal with the daily chores of livestock. Even with these donations, the Calf Project will remain ongoing as it functions today.

If you would like to sponsor a calf, simply mark your donation along in your weekly envelope or send it to the church. There are no set amounts required to sponsor a calf, just a free will donation. Whether it be monthly or yearly, whatever you are comfortable contributing is appreciated. This way, it keeps the project fun and available to everyone.

The calf project has evolved over many years from a single donated calf to a current 35 head. The money raised from this project helps the church pay for larger expenses and, from time-

to-time, daily expenses and upkeep. This has been an important part of keeping Good Shepherd Lutheran Church a vibrant place to worship in our community.

Sincerely,

The Calf Project Committee and Church Council

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**Shepherd’s Garden**

The Shepherd’s Garden began a number of years ago and has been supported by the dedication of many church members in that time. We include this reminder that the Shepherd’s Garden, located behind the church building, is available in the spring, summer, and autumn for anyone, church member or not, desiring a quiet place for prayer and reflection. In the Bible, gardens appear at significant points. It is our hope that the Shepherd’s Garden can be of service to our world in encouraging people to pray and listen to God.

**“Phishing” Scams**

As we all know, we live in a sinful world. That means, unfortunately, that there are those people who try to take advantage of others. Sometimes this behavior takes the form of “phishing” scams. These are online scams where people send alluring emails or text messages to people in an attempt to gain sensitive information or money. Perpetrators of these scams sometimes impersonate public leaders, including pastors and other church leaders. The impersonator will often send a message to people claiming that they are tied up and cannot talk on the phone, but they need financial assistance or gift cards. If you receive such a message claiming to be from Pr. Tom or some other denominational leader, know that it is a scam and you should delete the message. To my knowledge, this has not been happening among us, but this has been happening with my colleagues around the country, and I simply want to be proactive. Let us be on our guard and “wise as serpents”! (Matthew 10:16)

**Featured Hymn for July and August**

***Go Forth, My Heart, This Summer Day***

***Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 264***

*Go forth, my heart, this summer day, go forth and seek your joy today with thanks for all these pleasures! See all around the earth is new, God has adorned the world for you, with wonderful green treasures, with wonderful green treasures.*

*I cannot keep my own heart still when I see all that God has willed to waken all my senses. So I can sing with all who sing. Let all the highest good now ring which in my heart is dancing, which in my heart is dancing.*

*I think how great my blessings are which you so lovingly impart upon your great creation. And how much greater blessings wait above in heaven’s rich estate. Where golden streets await us, where golden streets await us.*

*O Holy Spirit, dwell in me so I become a living tree with roots so deeply grounded. O grant that I will sing your praise and bear rich fruit through all my days by all your love surrounded, by all your love surrounded.*

Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676; trans. Gracia Grindal (1943-)

*Note: Written by the famous hymn writer Paul Gerhardt, this hymn remains a favorite in Germany today. The season of summer becomes an image of what heaven will be like.*

**Monthly Watchword for July**

“Yet [God] is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being.’”

* Acts 17:27-28 ESV

**Ushers for July and August:**

* Head Ushers (July):
	+ Scott and Christine Eisenhauer
* Ushers:
	+ Melvin Barger
	+ Brandon Barger
	+ Stella Branstiter
	+ Riley Eckmann
* Head Ushers (August)
	+ Keith and Donna Nielsen
* Ushers:
	+ Carsten and Darci Barger
	+ Perry and LaVon 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

**Weekly Watchwords**

Note: These “watchwords” for each week can be considered “theme verses” on which to reflect for the week.

**The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (7/4/21):** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God*. – Ephesians 2:8 ESV

**The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (7/11/21):** *But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”* – Isaiah 43:1 ESV

**The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (7/18/21):** *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.* – Ephesians 2:19 ESV

**The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (7/25/21):** *Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.* – Ephesians 5:8b-9 ESV

**The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (8/1/21):** *Jesus says, “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.”* – Luke 12:4 ESV

**The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (8/8/21):** *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!* – Psalm 33:12ESV

**The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (8/15/21):** *Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* – 1 Peter 5:5 ESV

**The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (8/22/21):** *A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.* – Isaiah 42:3 ESV

**The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (8/29/21):** *Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.* – Matthew 25:40 ESV

**Important Announcements**

* We will continue having a time of coffee and fellowship before worship each Sunday, beginning at 9:30.
* The annual ice cream social will be held this year on July 25 from 4:00 to 7:00. We look forward to this after COVID-19 necessitated its cancellation last year.
* Once again, please take note of the announcement in this newsletter regarding “Adopt a Calf” as a way for people to make contributions to the church’s Calf Project if they are unable to participate in the traditional way involving donating and caring for calves.
* Many thanks to those who contributed to the North American Lutheran Church Disaster Response “Stuff the Truck” event at our joint ESD/Minkota NALC Mission District convocation in Brookings, SD. That event was a great success, and we along with many other congregations contributed significantly to it.
* Pr. Tom will be away for the North American Lutheran Church convocation in Corpus Christi as well as some time for family vacation from July 26-August 10. During that time contact Pr. Dani Jo Bierwagen at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Yankton for any emergency requiring a pastor: (cell) (605) 661-2796 or (church) (605) 665-8848.
* As we began at the beginning of the school year, we will continue using a different set of Bible readings (lectionary) on Sunday mornings. 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. The regular cycle concludes at the end of the school year. In the early part of the summer, there is a series on the Psalms, and the latter part of the summer will focus on the books of Ephesians and Revelation.

**July 2021**

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| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |   |  |    |  1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30Green | 5 | 6 | 7Pr. Tom in Lindy | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30Green | 12 | 13 | 14Pr. Tom in LindyChurch council, 7:00 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30Green | 19 | 20 | 21Pr. Tom in LindyWomen’s meeting, 10:00 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30Ice cream social, 4:00-7:00Green | 26Pr. Tom leaves for NALC convocation in Corpus Christi, will be gone for the next two Sundays | 27 | 28 29 30 31 |
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**August 2021**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 1Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30 (Note: no Holy Communion)Mr. Jim Erickson preachingGreen |  2 |  3 |  4    | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30Mr. Jim Erickson preachingGreen | 9 | 10 | 11Pr. Tom in LindyChurch council, 7:00 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30Green | 16 | 17 | 18Pr. Tom in LindyWomen’s meeting, 10:00 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30 Green | 23 | 24 | 25Pr. Tom in Lindy | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29Coffee and fellowship, 9:30Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30Green | 30 | 31 |  |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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