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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**March 2016**

**Moravians**

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness*

*My beauty are, my glorious dress;*

*’Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,*

*With joy shall I lift up my head.*

* Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), translated by John Wesley (1703-1791)

I received a question recently about the Moravian Church. This is the Christian group to which I refer in these newsletters when talking about the weekly or monthly “Watchword” from the Bible. At the beginning of worship, I always begin with a verse from the Bible that relates to the theme of that particular Sunday. The Moravian Church has selected these weekly “Watchwords” for devotional purposes since the year 1731. Since I always enjoy answering biblical, historical, and theological questions, I will take the opportunity to respond in this newsletter to the question about who or what Moravians are.

Today, Moravians are a “mainline” Protestant church group, and what you would likely experience in one of their churches would not be significantly different from your experience in a typical Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Reformed church. But they do have a unique history.

Moravians today trace their roots to the ministry of a Czech priest named Jan (John) Huss in the fifteenth century, about a hundred years before Martin Luther came on the scene in Germany in the 1500s. Jan Huss spoke out against the corruption he saw in the church of his time, especially against corrupt and immoral priests. He also believed that Christian laypeople should be able to receive both bread and wine in Holy Communion rather than simply the bread.

Jan Huss was summoned to the Council of Constance in the year 1415 with the promise of safe passage. He was told he could air his grievances without fear of reprisals. But when given the chance to speak, the officials went back on their promise. Jan Huss was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake.

The followers of Jan Huss (located in the region known as Moravia) continued their activity after his death. They were sometimes called “Unitas Fratrum” (Unity of Brethren). When Martin Luther began his work of reform of the Church in the 1520s, these followers of Jan Huss (Moravians) viewed Martin Luther as the one who was sent to complete the work that Jan Huss began a hundred years before. A legend says that Jan Huss (his last name literally means “goose” in the Czech language) said before his death: “If you burn this goose, in a hundred years God will raise up a swan.” Moravians viewed Luther as the swan of which Jan Huss spoke, and some Lutheran churches in Germany have emblems of a swan on their church buildings for that reason.

In the eighteenth century, Moravians fled persecution in their homeland and found refuge in Germany on the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, a Lutheran prince. In 1722, they founded a community called “Herrenhut,” meaning “under the Lord’s watch.” Together, they created a distinct church culture, and they sent missionaries around the world to places like Scandinavia as well as to the United States. A young John Wesley (the founder of the Methodist movement) was inspired by the faith and courage of a group of Moravians during a storm at sea while they sailed back to England from America.

Moravians were known for emphasizing a personal relationship with Jesus more so than defining fine points of doctrine for which Lutherans are known. They often meditated on the blood of Jesus in their prayer life, as in Zinzendorf’s hymn quoted above. And so they occasionally came into conflict with Lutherans in Scandinavia and America. Nevertheless, it has been said that if Lutherans were looking at their personal photo album, they would recognize Moravians in a photo of second cousins!

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

As you probably know, 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. We should never assume that we cannot learn something from them. So, each month, I will highlight the life and witness of a significant Christian person from the past.



For March of 2016, the person is a man named George Herbert. He is often commemorated on March 1.

Born in 1593 in England, Herbert became an orphan when he was young. The death of his patron, James I, together with the influence of his friend, Nicholas Ferrar, led him to the study of theology. He was ordained a priest in 1630 and served as rector of Fugglestone with Bemerton, near Salisbury, for three years. He rebuilt the church from his own funds and, known as “holy Mr. Herbert,” was respected throughout the region. His poems breathe a gentle freshness and grace with a profound love of virtue, and some of his hymns are still sung. He also wrote *A Priest to the Temple*; or the *Country Parson*, which describes a clergyman as well-read, temperate, given to prayer, and devoted to his flock. Herbert died of consumption on March 1, 1633, at the age of 40.

Though his life was short and somewhat tragic, Herbert’s life remains relevant because of his example of self-sacrifice and his vision of what the life of a pastor should be: personal faith, commitment to study and prayer, and viewing members of a congregation as fellow children of God who need to be fed with the good news of Jesus Christ.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for March**

***A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 135*

1. A lamb goes uncomplaining forth to save a world of sinners. He bears the burden all alone, dies shorn of all his honors. He goes to slaughter weak and faith, is led to die without complaint; his spotless life he offers. He bears the shame, the stripes, the wrath; his anguish, mockery, and death for us he gladly suffers.
2. This lamb is Christ, our greatest friend, the Lamb of God, our Savior, the one, his only Son, God sent to win us rebels over. “Go down, my child,” the Father said, “And free my children from their dread of death and condemnation. The painful stripes are hard to bear, but by your death they all can share the joy of your salvation.”
3. Of death I am no more afraid; his dying is my living. He clothes me in his royal robes that he is always giving. His love is dress enough for me to wear throughout eternity before the highest Father, where we shall stand at Jesus’ side, his Church the well-appointed bride, when all the faithful gather.

* Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676

*Note: Written in 1647, this Passion hymn reflects on Isaiah 53:4-7, proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the “lamb that is led to slaughter.”*

**Monthly Watchword for March**

Our Lord Jesus Christ says, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love.” – John 15:9 ESV

**What is a “Watchword”?**

The Moravian Church (a close cousin to Lutherans) began the practice in 1731 of selecting daily texts (Bible verses) for prayer and reflection, which continues to this day. Many Christians around the world use these Daily Texts as a part of their prayer life. They are included each year in a book available from Mount Carmel Ministries near Alexandria, Minnesota.

In addition to this, they began to select a theme verse for each week, called a “watchword.” You will notice in the bulletins for worship on Sunday mornings that I include that watchword for each week and begin worship by speaking that verse out loud, setting the tone for worship with that word from God.

The Moravian Church also selects theme verses for each month as well as for each year. Lutherans and other Christians in Germany are much more familiar with using these “watchwords,” and I am glad to have learned of them from my time spent there. For your own reflection, I will include the monthly watchword in the newsletter each month.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer: The Introduction**

***Our Father who art in heaven.***

*What does this mean?*

*God encourages us to believe that he is truly our Father and that we are truly his children, so that we may boldly and confidently pray to him, just as beloved children speak to their dear Father.*

**Ushers for March**

**Head Usher: Ushers:**

Denise Yule Duane and Elaine Barnes

Leslie Yule Norman and Margo Poppe

Troy and Paige Poppe

**For Further Information on LCMC and the NALC**

Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lindy is now a member of two Lutheran organizations: Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and the North American Lutheran Church (the NALC). If you are interested in learning more about these groups, you can visit their websites. For LCMC, www.lcmc.net. For the NALC, www.thenalc.org. Additionally, you can download and read the newsletters of both organizations at the following addresses: http://www.lcmc.net/newsletters and http://thenalc.org/newsletter/

**Bible Study:**

For those available on Wednesday mornings, please feel free to join Pr. Tom for Bible study! Typically we will hold Bible study every other Wednesday, usually the second and the fourth Wednesdays of the month. We will gather between 10:45 and 11:00 and then proceed until about noon.

**Website**

Good Shepherd now has a website! It is basic at this point, but additional things will be added to it eventually. There are already some photos that have been uploaded. The web address is as follows: www.gselclindy.weebly.com

**Scripture Readings and Watchwords for Sundays in March**

**Fourth Sunday in Lent (March 6):** “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” – 1 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV

*Psalm 32*

*Isaiah 12:1-6*

*2 Corinthians 5:16-21*

*Luke 15:1-3, 11-32*

Color: Purple

**Fifth Sunday in Lent (March 13):** “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 3:13-14 NRSV

*Psalm 126*

*Isaiah 43:16-21*

*Philippians 3:4-14*

*Luke 20:9-20*

Color: Purple

**Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion (March 20):** “Let those who fear the Lord say, ‘His steadfast love endures forever.’” – Psalm 118:4 NRSV

*Psalm 118:19-29*

*Deuteronomy 32:36-39*

*Philippians 2:5-11*

*Luke 23:1-56*

Color: Purple

**The Resurrection of our Lord/Easter Sunday (March 27):** “Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here, but has risen.” – Luke 24:5 NRSV

*Psalm 16*

*Exodus 15:1-18*

*1 Corinthians 15:19-26*

*Luke 24:1-12*

Color: White

**Announcement about Upcoming First Communion Instruction**

As was the case last year, instruction for fifth graders of the congregation in preparation for their first Holy Communion will be offered during the season of Lent. The remaining date is Wednesday March 9 at 5:00 PM. It is required to attend both of these classes in order to participate in First Communion on April 3 (The second Sunday of Easter). Contact Pastor Tom with any questions.

**Confirmation Class Schedule**

Confirmation class will not meet during the season of Lent (beginning February 10). Remember that Wednesday evening Lenten services are an opportunity to complete worship notes (a part of confirmation requirements).

**Confirmation Sunday**

The rite of confirmation will be held during the worship service on Sunday, April 17. This is the fourth Sunday of Easter, which is traditionally known as the Sunday of the Good Shepherd. It is fitting, as young people make a public profession of their faith, to remember that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd throughout our entire lives, feeding us with the new and forgiven life that only he can give and drawing us back to him as we go astray in life.

**Wednesday Lenten Worship**

Evening worship will be held during the season of Lent on Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM, beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 10. As with last year, Pastor Tom and Pastor Theresa Jacobson will switch back and forth.

**Committee Meetings**

The music and hymn selection committee will meet on Wednesday April 20 at 7:00 PM.

The membership record committee will meet on Wednesday April 27 at 7:00 PM.

**Holy Week Worship**

This year, the worship service for Holy Week (the week before Easter) will be held on Maundy Thursday (March 24) rather than on Good Friday (March 25) at 7:00 PM. It will be largely the same type of service, reflecting on the passion (suffering) of Jesus Christ.

**March 2016**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  | 1 | 2  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship 10:30 AM with Holy Communion  Color: Purple | 7 | 8 | 9  Bible study, 10:45  First Communion instruction, 5:00 PM  Youth supper, 6:00 PM  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM  Church council, 8:00 PM? | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship, 10:30 AM  Color: Purple | 14 | 15 | 16  WNALC/WOW meeting, 10:00 AM  Lenten evening worship, 7:00 PM | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20  Palm Sunday  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship 10:30 AM with Holy Communion  Color: Purple | 21 | 22 | 23  Bible Study, 10:45 AM | 24  Holy Week worship on Maundy Thursday, 7:00 PM | 25  Good Friday  No worship held | 26 |
| 27  Easter Sunday  Sunday School, 9:30 AM  Worship, 10:30 AM  Color: White | 28 | 29 | 3031  Confirmation  Class, 5:00 PM | | | |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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