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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**May 2016**

**Pentecost**

*For we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

* Acts 4:20 NRSV

Any time we read anything, especially in the Bible, understanding the context is important. Such is the case with the verse from the New Testament listed above.

We human beings take this message seriously, whether we realize it or not. The problem is that we take it out of context. We human beings love to speak about things that we have seen and heard. That’s not a difficult task to accomplish. Our practice of speaking about what we have seen and heard is commonly called “gossip.” I am writing about this not because of any specific concerns about gossip in this community, but simply because it is a challenge with which all humanity contends.

Gossip is a part of life among people of all varieties: young and old, male and female, urban and rural. Gossip has a way of seeping into the cracks of healthy relationships and covering them with the disgusting mildew of conflict and suspicion. Gossip, even if it happens to be the truth, rarely falls into the category of putting the best construction on our neighbor’s actions, something that Martin Luther pointed out in his explanation of the Eighth Commandment in his *Small Catechism*. Psalm 141:3 says it best, and it would do everyone well to use this as a daily prayer: *Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

But this verse of Acts 4:20 doesn’t have to do with gossip as we understand it. Gossip in our world is a way of spreading bad news, sowing strife, creating discord. The “speaking” referred to in this verse has to do with spreading good news, sowing reconciliation, creating peace among people with the peace that God gives through Jesus Christ.

The apostles (disciples) of Jesus named Peter and John were commanded by the Jewish council, led by the high priest, to refrain from speaking and teaching about Jesus, the one who had recently been crucified and raised from the dead. But they refused: *For we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard*, they replied. The “good gossip of Jesus” began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit came upon the twelve apostles of Jesus, giving them the ability to speak about Jesus to those who were gathered. The Day of Pentecost falls on Sunday May 15 this year. It is one of the major holidays on the Christian calendar, even if it isn’t as flashy as Christmas and Easter. Pentecost marks the birthday of the Christian Church on earth as God the Holy Spirit empowered those first disciples to speak the good news. To this day, we believe that God the Holy Spirit fills us with the strength to believe in God’s goodness and gives us the ability to spread that good gossip to the rest of the world.

When we first understand that we have heard good news about God’s gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus, it make us stop and think about the ways that we communicate that good news to others around us. We do so by speaking but also by example. Parents, for example, are the primary forms of influence for their children.

May God strengthen our trust in him daily and empower us to speak and act in ways that spread the good news, the “good gossip of Jesus,” just like Peter and John from 2,000 years ago. And may God *set a guard over our mouths and keep watch over the door of our lips.*

* 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 May of 2016, the person is an early Christian theologian named Athanasius. He is often commemorated on May 2.

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in Egypt, around 295 A.D. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. while still a deacon, he defended the divinity of Christ, the belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “of the same substance as the Father.” This is the foundation of our belief in the Holy Trinity, that we have one God who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From that time on, he championed Christian orthodoxy (right belief) against Arianism, which believed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was created by the Father and therefore less than God the Father. Consecrated as the bishop of Alexandria in 328 A.D., his forty five-year tenure as bishop was one of turmoil caused by civil authorities and heretical churchmen. He was exiled a number of times by his opponents. By his tireless defense of the faith, he earned the title “Father of Orthodoxy.” The third of our three creeds (the Apostles’ and Nicene being the first two) in our church, the Athanasian Creed, is named for him, though Athanasius himself did not write it.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for May**

***Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 166*

1. Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, with all your graces now outpoured on each believer’s mind and heart; your fervent love to them impart. Lord, by the brightness of your light in holy faith your Church unite; from every land and every tongue, this to your praise, O Lord, our God, be sung. Alleluia! Alleluia!
2. Come, Holy Light, guide divine, now cause the Word of life to shine. Teach us to know our God aright and call him Father with delight. From every error keep us free; let none but Christ our master be, that we in living faith abide, in him, our Lord, with all our might confide. Alleluia! Alleluia!
3. Come, Holy Fire, comfort true, grant us the will your work to do and in your service to abide; let trials turn us not aside. Lord, by your power prepare each heart and to our weakness strength impart, that bravely here we may contend, through life and death to you, our Lord, ascend. Alleluia! Alleluia!

* Martin Luther, 1483-1546

*Note: Luther wrote this hymn for the ordination of pastors, and it has been used for Lutheran ordinations ever since. It speaks, however, of the gift of the Holy Spirit for the whole Church.*

**Monthly Watchword for May**

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? [And] you are not your own…

* 1 Corinthians 6:19 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 Second Petition**

***Thy kingdom come.***

*What does this mean?*

*The kingdom of God comes indeed by itself, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.*

*How is this done?*

*God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and live a godly life now and in eternity.*

**Ushers for May:**

**Head Usher: Ushers:**

Keith Nielsen Jerome and Venita Sage

Donna Nielsen Marlin and Pat Kumm

Brad and Cindy Sage

**For Further Information on LCMC and 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, and the monthly newsletter is also available there. The web address is as follows: www.gselclindy.weebly.com

***Connections Magazine:***

A part of the Lenten offering from this year will go toward subscriptions for *Connections Magazine* for each household in the congregation. Printed six times a year, this magazine includes informative and devotional articles for LCMC and NALC congregations. After the first year, we can remove names from the subscription list if anyone decides they would no longer like to receive it. This announcement is simply to make you aware that you will be receiving this in the mail at some point in the near future.

**Confirmation Schedule:**

Confirmation instruction will continue for the year until Wednesday, May 18. Confirmation students can still work on completing their requirements such as worship notes in the summer months.

**Schedule for Holy Communion:**

The Lord’s Supper will continue to be offered on the first and the third Sundays of each month unless otherwise noted. The first Sunday of the month, the Sacrament of the Altar will be received by kneeling (as you are able), and the third Sunday will be offered in a continuous line by intinction (dipping the wafer into the chalice of wine.

**Scripture Readings and Watchwords for Sundays in May:**

**Sixth Sunday of Easter (May 1):** Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.” – John 14:27 NRSV

*Psalm 67*

*Acts 16:9-15*

*Revelation 21:9-14*

*John 16:23-33*

Color: White

**Seventh Sunday of Easter (May 8):** “Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!” – Psalm 97:12 NRSV

*Psalm 133*

*Acts 1:12-26*

*Revelation 22:1-6*

*John 17:20-26*

Color: White

**Day of Pentecost (May 15):** “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.” – Romans 8:14 NRSV

*Psalm 143*

*Genesis 11:1-9*

*Acts 2:1-21*

*John 14:23-31*

Color: Red

**The Holy Trinity (May 22):** “Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – Romans 5:1 NRSV

*Psalm 8*

*Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31*

*Acts 2:14a, 22-36*

*John 8:48-59*

Color: White

**Second Sunday after Pentecost (May 29):** “Declare God’s glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.” – Psalm 96:3

*Psalm 96:1-9*

*1 Kings 8:22-24, 27-29, 41-43*

*Galatians 1:1-12*

*Luke 7:1-10*

Color: Green

**May 2016**

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| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 1  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion  White | 2 | 3 | 4  Confirmation class, 5:00 PM | 5  The Ascension of our Lord | 6 | 7 |
| 8  Worship, 10:30  White | 9 | 10 | 11  Bible Study, 10:45  Confirmation class, 5:00 PM  Church council, 7:00 PM | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15  Worship, 10:30 (Day of Pentecost) with Holy Communion  Red | 16 | 17 | 18  WOW/WNALC meeting, 10:00  Confirmation instruction, 5:00 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22  Worship, 10:30 (The Holy Trinity)  White | 23 | 24 | 25  Bible Study, 10:45 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29  Worship, 10:30  Green | 30 | 31 |  | | | |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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