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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**September 2016**

**Weddings**

*I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*

* *Jeremiah 31:3 ESV*

The social media website *Facebook* has changed how the world communicates. There are positive things about it, but many negatives and challenges as well. One interesting thing about *Facebook* is that it reminds you of things that happened in your life a number of years ago. Just a couple weeks ago, Facebook announced to me that it was nine years ago (August 16) while in Glacier National Park, Montana that I asked Theresa to marry me.

When I began serving as a pastor ten years ago, one of the things that I was most nervous about was performing wedding ceremonies. Surprisingly little time was spent in seminary learning about this practical aspect of ministry. No matter how many times people tell you about what something is like, you are never sure of yourself until you actually have to do it. While my experiences with weddings have been largely positive, it’s easy for some pastors to get cynical about them. They get discouraged when they see so many people throng to the church for weddings and comparatively few make their way to the church doors on Sunday mornings.

My own attitude toward weddings began to change when I realized that I would also be joining the ranks of those who have stood before an official and recited their vows. After a while, couples started flocking to me to get married, and, next to doing funerals, “marrying off the town” was what I became known for. This experience helped me to think of weddings in a different way, a way that expresses our hope as Christian people.

The best way for us to think of our relationship with God is to think of it in terms of a marriage. The Bible often lifts up the marriage of a man and a woman as a way of describing the relationship between God and His people. However, this is a special kind of marriage, one that involves a lot of unfaithfulness on our part, regrettably. In a marriage between a man and a woman, the two people make vows of faithfulness to each other, vows that they promise to uphold “until death parts them.” In our lives as Christian people, it is also a vow of faithfulness that constitutes our marriage with God. The difference is that this is a one-sided vow, a vow from God that comes to affect our own lives, so that we too may live lives of faithfulness and commitment to God. Being a Christian is not something that we have done on our own power. It came from God’s vow of faithfulness as we were baptized, the vow that is spoken to us again and again, that we, sinful people, are opened to the forgiveness that God has prepared for us through Jesus Christ. What’s special about this marriage is that there is nothing that we can do that will make God want to divorce us.

When I talk to people about baptism, I talk about it in terms of a wedding ring from God. It is something that we carry with us as we live so that we know of God’s promise of faithfulness to us, even as we stumble. But God’s promise continues to accompany us throughout life, picking us up when we fall and whispering to us as we go through life, as we kneel for our Lord’s Supper, as we hear the most precious words of our faith: “given and shed for you.” As we hear those words, God whispers in our ears the words from Jeremiah 31, *I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you*.

Blessings in your married life with God and best wishes for a new school year!

* 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.



For September of 2016, it is the Danish Lutheran pastor Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig. He is often commemorated on September 2. I spoke about him in a sermon recently.

Grundtvig was born in 1783 and died in 1872. With courage, he stood up to the Danish Lutheran church of his day for the way he sensed they tried to make faith rational, with pastors preaching sermons about gardening, farming, hygiene, and the importance of vaccines. All these things are important, but they are not the message of the church. He thought faith was better expressed with feelings through poems and music, and he wrote over 1,000 hymns, his most famous being *Built on the rock, the Church does stand, even when steeples are falling*. Grundtvig’s witness reminds us that being the Church and being a Christian doesn’t depend on physical church buildings. Instead, it depends on the rock that God has provided for us in Jesus Christ and our trust in that promise. Our faith in God’s promises can, will, and must remain, even when the outward signs of our faith crumble, wither away, and collapse.

*Almighty God, we praise you for the men and women you have sent to call the Church to its tasks and renew its life, such as your servant Nikolai Grundtvig. Raise up in our own day teachers and prophets inspired by your Spirit, whose voices will give strength to your Church and proclaim the reality of your kingdom; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for September**

***Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 235*

1. Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his statues still! Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
2. Order my footsteps by your word and make my heart sincere; let sin have no dominion, Lord, but keep my conscience clear.
3. Assist my soul, too apt to stray, a stricter watch to keep; and should I ever forget your way, restore your wandering sheep.
4. Make me to walk in your commands, Tis a delightful road; nor let my head or heart or hands offend against my God.
* Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

*Note: One of the many works of the English hymn writer Isaac Watts, this hymn is based on Psalm 119, praying for guidance to do God’s will.*

**Monthly Watchword for September**

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”

* Jeremiah 31:3 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.

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. 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 Sixth Petition**

***And lead us not into temptation.***

*What does this mean?*

*God indeed tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and protect us from this, that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, but pray that when we are tempted in these ways, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.*

**Ushers for August:**

**Head Usher: Ushers:**

Jamie Olson Dale and Connie McDonald

Mica Olson Chris Braunsroth

 Doug and Amy Stewart

**For Further Information on LCMC and the NALC:** You can download and read the newsletters of both organizations at the following addresses: **http://www.lcmc.net/newsletters** and **http://thenalc.org/newsletter/**

**Website:** 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.

**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).

**Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Email Addresses:** Pr. Tom is compiling a list of email addresses for the congregation, and if you haven’t already done so, feel free to send him a message so that you can be included in announcements about congregational life, such as weather cancellations. Also, he is compiling a list of birthdays and anniversaries of members, so feel free to send any of this to his email: tjacobson001@luthersem.edu

**Confirmation Class:** Confirmation class will resume this September, with an informational meeting for new students (seventh grade) and parents on Wednesday, September 7 at 7:00 PM. Class will begin with seventh and eighth graders the following Wednesday (14) at 5:00 PM.

**Sunday School Resumes:** Sunday school will begin on September 11 at 9:30 AM. This is an important part of a child’s learning about Jesus, so please send your children throughout the year. There will also be a “kick off” lunch for the entire congregation after worship on Sunday September 11. There will be burgers and salads, and a free will offering will go to the youth group. Please join us!

**2016 NALC Convocation focuses on "Holy God, Holy Lives"**

The annual convocation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) took place last month (August) in Anaheim, California. This is a brief summary for your information:

* More than 400 NALC members gathered August 10-12 for the 2016 NALC Convocation in Anaheim, Calif., around the theme, "Holy God, Holy Lives."
* Major presentations were provided by the Rev. Dr. Malcolm Guite of the University of Cambridge, England, and musician Steve Bell from Winnipeg, Manitoba. They combined to lead devotions during the Convocation and led a poetic and musical reflection on the theme. Prof. Guite also gave an address entitled, "C.S. Lewis: 'Friendship and Holiness.'"
* The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, a noted Lutheran historian, led a Bible study and was preacher for the Communion service.
* "Holy Families" will be a special NALC emphasis as a part of the 2017 celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. A variety of resources will be available for congregations and families.
* The NALC Mission Festival began the Convocation under the theme, "Faith is Made Whole in Community." Time on Wednesday and Thursday was spent focusing on what it means for the NALC to be a Mission-Driven church. Speakers included Bishop John Bradosky, Pastor Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, and Gary Pecuch of faithwebbing.com. Delegates also focused on developing mission plans for their congregations and Mission Districts.
* Elected to the NALC Executive Council to four-year terms were Lynn Kickingbird of Edmond, Okla., and Pastor Kenneth Kimball of Waterville, Iowa. Pastor David Schafer of Waukon, Iowa, was elected to the Court of Adjudication. The Convocation also ratified the election of four people to the NALC-Canada Section Governing Board.
* North American Lutheran Seminary Board of Regents members were elected. Pastor Cathi Braasch of Elwood, Neb.; Donna Evans of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Pastor Jeffray Greene of Brooks, Ga., were elected to six-year terms. Bishop Paull Spring of State College, Pa., was elected to a four-year term to fill a vacancy on the board.
* 2017 budgets were approved. The Convocation approved a $2 million operating budget for the NALC. Budgets were also approved for the NALC's two designated funds: $140,500 for the Great Commission Fund and $525,160 for the Fund for Theological Education (which includes the North American Lutheran Seminary). Treasurer Ryan Schwarz reported that NALC "income is very substantially below budget." Many delegates expressed concerns about the shortfall and committed to addressing support for the NALC in their congregations or encouraging gifts by individuals.
* The Braaten and Benne Lectures in Theology, the annual theological conference which precedes the Convocation, focused on theological perspectives on the Person of Christ. Five speakers explored the theme from different theological perspectives. The speakers were Dr. Carl Braaten, Dr. Phillip Cary, Dr. Wesley Hill, Dr. Mickey L. Mattox, and Dr. Michael Pasquarello III.
* Video recordings of the NALC Convocation and the Braaten-Benne Lectures on Theology will be available for viewing online at www.thenalc.org. Documents from the Convocation and daily summaries are also available online.

**Collection of Contributions for Bright Horizons in Norfolk, NE**

The church council decided, as one way of the congregation being outwardly-focused, to devote the months of September and October to collecting donations for the Bright Horizons center in Norfolk. They define their mission as: “Bright Horizons is dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault through empowerment, education, social action, and support services.” They provide shelter and other services for women and others in such situations in their need. They rely on donations from individuals and churches to keep themselves supplied. Boxes will be available and labeled in the fellowship hall where items may be placed. They will then be taken to their center in Norfolk. Please consider contributing even something small to the cause. Thank you! Items needed are:

* Kleenex
* Paper plates
* Napkins
* Paper towels
* Bathroom tissue
* Garbage bags
* Diapers (size 3-6)
* Diaper wipes
* Shampoo
* Conditioner
* Deodorant
* Hand soap
* Tooth brushes
* Toothpaste
* Hair brushes/combs
* Hair styling products
* Lotion
* Razors
* Feminine hygiene products
* Hand sanitizer
* Sanitizer wipes/spray
* Towels
* Blankets
* Bedding (all sizes except king)
* Laundry soap
* Dryer sheets
* Dish detergent
* Laundry baskets
* Totes and organizing containers
* Cleaning supplies
* Furniture polish
* Bathroom cleaner
* Surface cleaner
* Food supplies
* Ice melt
* Light bulbs
* Batteries
* Various baby items
* Children’s toys
* Clothing for women and children
* Pajamas
* Undergarments for women and children

**September 2016**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion at altar railGreen | 5 | 6 | 7Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation meeting with new students and parents, 7:00 PM | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11First day of Sunday school, 9:30Worship, 10:30Lunch after worshipGreen | 12 | 13 | 14Pr. Tom in Lindy Confirmation class, 5:00 PMChurch council, 7:00 PM | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion, continuous lineGreen | 19 | 20 | 21Pr. Tom in LindyWOW/WNALC meeting, 10:00 AMConfirmation class, 5:00 PM | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25Worship, 10:30Green | 26 | 27 | 28 29 30Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class,5:00 PM |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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Bloomfield, Nebraska 68718



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