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

***Lindy, Nebraska***

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**The Rod and Staff**



**September and October 2020**

**Challenges and Joy**

***Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.***

* **James 1:2-4 ESV**

When I teach confirmation students at the church as well as adults in my online history courses through the Institute of Lutheran Theology, one question I ask them at the beginning has to do with the meaning of the abbreviations “B.C.” and “A.D.” What does it mean when we place those abbreviations after a particular year? Most students correctly identify the first as standing for “before Christ.” But correct answers about the second are much less common. Most often, people assume that “A.D.” stands for “after death.”

That, of course, is incorrect. “A.D.” cannot refer to “after death” in reference to Christ. If that were true, then the timeline we know would be around 33 years off. Jesus would have died in his early thirties, and so those 33 years of his life would be missing. Instead, “A.D.” stands for the Latin words *anno domini*. This is translated simply as “the year of the Lord.” Our calendar switches from “B.C.” to “A.D.” with the arrival of Christ in the world. The years “B.C.” count downwards, and the years “A.D.” count upwards.

When historians write, they use these abbreviations to specify what year they are referring to. For example, it makes a big difference whether you are writing about 100 B.C. or 100 A.D. It remains necessary for historians to make this distinction, but lately “B.C.” and “A.D.” have fallen on hard times. Many people have abandoned these abbreviations in favor of “B.C.E.” and “C.E.,” which stand for “before common era” and “common era,” respectively. The reason for this is that “B.C.” and “A.D.” are terms of faith. They are rooted in a Christian view of the world, which sees the coming of Jesus as the turning point of history. Not all historians are Christians, of course. Sometimes, there is fear of offending non-Christians. Historians also want to send the message that they are objective in their analysis of history.

Yet it is precisely because “B.C.” and “A.D.” are statements of faith that I continue to use them. I often use “A.D.” when writing the current year, and for that reason some people chuckle at me. “Do you really think anyone is going to assume that this year is 2020 B.C.?” they ask. No, of course not. But I write 2020 A.D. to state my belief that Jesus is still Lord, even today.

This is all the more important now, in my view. So far, the year 2020 has seen its share of challenges, beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic and its wide-reaching impact, which continues today. Then things moved on to riots in the spring, which also continue today. Our country is becoming more divided every day, it seems. Even less serious annoyances have presented themselves: murder hornets, a Saharan dust storm, a coin shortage, and mysterious packets of seeds from unknown locations sent in the mail.

In our part of the world, we have grown used to comfort and convenience, and any deviation from that is a shock to our systems. We have seen in our lifetimes much peace and prosperity, with advancements in medical care and disease prevention. As people of faith, it helps us to look to the past. God has accompanied his people through many trials: persecution, martyrdom, war, and plagues. And He does not promise that those trials will simply disappear when our faith is fixed on Him. Even in the last hundred or so years, think of all the fear and uncertainty people endured: World War I, World War II, debilitating illnesses, other devastating conflicts, and the threat of nuclear annihilation. The world has never been free of trouble, and it will never be this side of eternity. That is why the writers of the Bible consistently point people to reevaluate their lives in the face of their challenges.

Challenges are not always pleasant, but God can use them for our good in the here and now. As James writes in his New Testament letter, trials have the ability to produce a steadfast faith in God. James wants his hearers to rise above the challenges and trust in the work of God on their behalf. We cannot always see the hand of God at work in history. But we have hope that God holds the future because of the One who came among us, born of the virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. His coming, promised long before, was for us today, and it is indeed the turning point of history. Because of that, we live in faith and hope right now. Call me crazy, but in spite of everything that has happened this year, I will continue to confess that it is 2020 A.D., the year of the Lord. This remains true whether we recognize it or not. I pray as always that God will open our eyes to see it as members of this congregation.

*O God, you make the minds of the faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Gelasian Sacramentary, Eighth Century)*

* 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).



For September and October of 2020, we remember the life of Francis of Assisi, an Italian friar and preacher who lived from 1181-1226. He is commemorated on October 3. The current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church took his papal name from this man and is known as “Pope Francis.” He was born into a wealthy family, but he came to reject wealth as the means to obtaining happiness. He and his followers lived a simple life of poverty.

Francis of Assisi is one of the most famous figures in world history, commonly referred to as “Saint Francis” even by those who are not members of the Roman Catholic Church or even Christian at all. His full significance cannot be encapsulated in a brief paragraph. At a time when the church hierarchy in Rome was focused on temporal power and was corrupt, in need of reform, Francis advocated for a simpler message: “To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps.” He encouraged respect for all of creation, including animals. He also sought to reach out to Muslims with the good news of Jesus Christ.

*Most high, good Lord, grant your people grace gladly to renounce the vanities of this world, that following the way of blessed Francis, we may for love of you delight in your whole creation with perfect joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

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

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

***How can the bodily eating and drinking produce such great benefits?***

*It is not the eating and drinking alone, but also the words that accompany it: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, together with the eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and those who believe them have what they say and declare, namely, the forgiveness of sins.*

***When is a person worthy to receive the sacrament?***

*Fasting and other outward disciplines are indeed good preparation, but people are truly worthy and*

*well prepared who believe these words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” But*

*those who do not believe these words or who doubt them are unworthy and unprepared, for the*

*words “for you” require truly believing hearts.*

**Featured Hymn for September and October**

***Sorrow and Gladness***

*(Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home 256)*

Sorrow and gladness both travel together,

fortune, misfortune, they stand side by

side; Gain and adversity follow each other,

sunshine makes shadows and there evil

hides. Gold has no worth after our death;

lay up your treasure in heaven, not earth.

Loveliest roses grow out of the briars,

beautiful flowers grow deadliest fruit. Under

the laughter the heart my by crying, dig

through the joy there’ll be grief at the root.

Deep in the rose sorrow can grow, only in

heaven is life free from woe.

There will my sorrow and fortune be ended,

there will God grant me a crown and

reward. There will I sing and my spirit be

tended, in the sweet mansions prepared by

my Lord. Sorrow will die under God’s eye:

heaven will blossom like roses on high.

Text: Thomas Hansen Kingo (1634-1703)

Trans: Gracia Grindal (1943-)

*Note: This hymn contemplates the mysteries of*

*the Christian life with its mixture of*

*experiences, good and bad. A Swedish folk*

*song used a similar text referring to something*

*like the wheel of fortune, but its center was*

*fate, not faith. Kingo may have wanted to*

*Christianize that notion in this hymn, which*

*holds out the shining hope of the New*

*Jerusalem when all will be well.*

**Monthly Watchword for September**

“That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.’”

* 2 Corinthians 5:19 RSV

**Ushers for September and October:**

* Head Ushers (September):
  + Travis and Shauna Kauth
* Ushers:
  + Dale and Connie McDonald
  + Doug and Amy Stewart
  + Roger Guenther
  + Jarrin Sage
* Head Ushers (October)
  + Cecilia and Reed Eckmann
* Ushers:
  + Dennis and Dixie Stewart
  + Nolan Poppe
  + Jake Eckmann
  + Tatum Olson
  + Summer Guenther

**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 September and October**

*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!*

* September 2: Dixie Stewart
* September 5: Jerome Sage
* September 7: Brandon Barger
* September 8: Myva Scott
* September 11: Kelsey Custer
* September 13: Dennis Stewart
* September 14: Galen Guenther
* September 14: Madisen Petersen
* September 23: Jeff Barger
* September 28: Sarah Arens
* October 1: Connie McDonald
* October 11: Sandra Barger
* October 15: Theodore “Red” Branstiter
* October 17: James Carlow
* October 24: Marlin Kumm
* October 25: Colin Kemp

**Baptismal Anniversaries for September and October**

*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!*

* September 1: Jerome Sage
* September 3: Lacey Barger
* September 12: Mariah Sage
* September 22: Brandon Barger
* October 15: Galen Guenther
* October 15: Mica Olson
* October 15: Kash Poppe
* October 24: Kelly Friedrichsen
* October 24: Jim Friedrichsen
* October 24: Ryker Guenther

**Weekly Watchwords**

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

**Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/6/20):** Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40 RSV)

**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/13/20):** “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” (Psalm 103:2 RSV)

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/20/20):** “Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7 RSV)

**Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/27/20):** “Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Timothy 1:10b RSV)

**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (10/4/20):** “And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.” (1 John 5:4 RSV)

**Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (10/11/20):** “And this is the commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.” (1 John 4:21 RSV)

**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (10/18/20):** “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise. (Jeremiah 17:14 RSV)

**Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (10/25/20):** “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

**Sunday School Update**

As of now, Sunday school will not be held at Good Shepherd this year due to lack of teachers. If there is interest in offering Sunday school, those interested in leading it should plan to meet to discuss a plan of action. Let Pr. Tom know, and he will join the meeting if at all possible to introduce the curriculum and how to access it.

**Important Announcements**

* Unfortunately, due to concerns related to COVID-19, the annual soup and pie lunch and dinner at the community center in Bloomfield has been cancelled. Because this means that the women’s group of the congregation will not be receiving revenue from this event, they request that donations be made to the women’s group so that they can continue their contributions on behalf of the congregation.
* We continue to meet for in-person worship at the church at the usual time of 10:30. We have been taking and will continue to practice the following precautions in light of COVID-19:
  + 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.
* 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
* Bibles will be presented to elementary school youth of the congregation (those in second to fifth grade) on Sunday October 25 (Reformation Sunday).
* Confirmation class will resume on Wednesday September 2 at 5:15 and ending at 6:45.
* Plans for resuming youth group meetings will be finalized sometime soon.
* Beginning on September 13, 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.



**September 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  | 1 | 2    Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 7 | 8 | 9  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45  Church council, 7:00 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 14 | 15 | 16  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Women’s meeting, 10:00  Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 21 | 22 | 23  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 28 | 29 | 30  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | | |

**October 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 5 | 6 | 7  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 12 | 13 | 14  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45  Church council meeting, 7:00 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 19 | 20 | 21  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Women’s meeting, 10:00  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 26 | 27 | 28 29 30 31  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | | | |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

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