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

***Lindy, Nebraska***

Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Jacobson, Pastor; Email, tjacobson001@luthersem.edu; Home phone number (Menno, SD): (605) 387-5196

**The Rod and Staff**



**September and October 2021**

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

***The Roman Catholic Church***

I continue the series I began a few months ago about different kinds of Christian churches. So far, I have written about our own Lutheran tradition as well as the Eastern Orthodox churches. There aren’t too many Eastern Orthodox churches in our neck of the woods, but now we turn our attention to something a little closer to home: the Roman Catholic Church.

**Hometown Rivalry**

Growing up in Canby, Minnesota, there were two major-sized churches in town. There were some smaller churches too, but the vast majority of my classmates belonged either to Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church or St. Peter’s Catholic Church. St. Peter’s Catholic Church operated their own elementary school, but starting in seventh grade, these Catholic students joined the rest of us at the high school. Hence, the divide between us was obvious. Starting in seventh grade, I had to get to know a bunch of new classmates from “that church.” We Lutheran kids considered the Catholics to be kind of weird.

In truth, we all became friends with each other. But we knew that we came from different backgrounds, and we often joked about our religious differences. I don’t think that any of us really understood the specific differences between our religious traditions. What we knew were some superficial details, such as that the Roman Catholic students weren’t supposed to eat red meat or chicken on Fridays during the season of Lent. We never bothered to ask why. That was the extent of our attempt at understanding.

**How Roman Catholics Understand Themselves**

Just like the Eastern Orthodox churches understand themselves to be rooted in the tradition of Jesus’ apostles, so do the Roman Catholics today. They believe that their bishops are the successors of Jesus’ apostles and their priests are the successors of the seventy (or seventy-two) followers that Jesus sent out (Luke 10:1-4). As history unfolded, the eastern and western parts of the Christian world became divided in emphasis and practice. The Eastern Orthodox Christians looked to the city of Constantinople as their sacred headquarters. The Western Christians looked to the city of Rome. They claimed that Rome held special status in the Christian world because the Apostle Paul and especially the Apostle Peter were martyred there in the persecution under Emperor Nero in 64 A.D. In fact, they believe that Jesus’ apostle Peter was the first bishop of Rome, what they consider the pope. Modern-day Roman Catholics maintain a list of all the bishops of Rome (popes) going back to Peter. They believe that the current pope occupies the sacred chair (cathedra) of Peter, and they view the pope as the chief bishop of the church.

In the year 1054 A.D., the western and eastern parts of the Christian world separated from each other in a formal way over certain differences. Those eastern churches became known as the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the western churches were often called Roman Catholic. (As a side note, the word “catholic” is not owned exclusively by the Roman Catholic Church. The word simply means “universal” or “wide-ranging.” In early Christianity, it was used to designate all those churches around the world who held to the universally recognized tradition of the church, not sectarians who invented their own version of the faith). Of course, the Roman Catholic Church today considers itself to be the genuine form of this catholic tradition, but Christians of other types also claim to stand within the tradition of catholic Christianity, including Lutherans.

**The Modern Roman Catholic Church**

While the Roman Catholic Church today considers its roots to be ancient, in truth the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian denominational tradition distinct from Protestant groups (Lutherans, Anglicans, etc.) can be said to have begun with the Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.). This Council of Trent was a response to the challenge posed by the Reformation, which saw the division of Western Christianity. The Council of Trent took a “hard line” against Martin Luther and his followers and provided the basis for the modern Roman Catholic Church.

For much of history, various Protestant churches looked on the Roman Catholic Church with disfavor, and the feeling was mutual from the other direction. Until fairly recently, many Lutherans and others viewed the Roman Catholic Church as essentially a different religion, not just another variety of Christian. Intermarriages between Catholics and Protestants were controversial. When John F. Kennedy was running for president in 1960, he had to give a disclaimer on the campaign trail that his decisions as a president who happened to be a Catholic would not be influenced by the pope in Rome!

A lot changed in the 1960s. When John XXIII was elected as pope, many thought he would be a transitional pope who wouldn’t do much. But in 1962, he convened a new council of the church, known as the Second Vatican Council, which met until 1965. The Second Vatican Council “updated” the Roman Catholic Church for the twentieth century. Major changes were made. It allowed for priests to celebrate the mass (the service of Holy Communion) in the language of the people rather than in Latin. More and more, the local Catholic church began to look like the Protestant churches in a community. The Second Vatican Council also opened the door for dialog with other Christians. Rather than viewing Protestant Christians as heretics (false teachers), it spoke of them as “separated brethren.” To be sure, the Roman Catholic Church continued to believe that it is the genuine representation of authentic Christianity, but the Second Vatican Council struck a very different tone than previous councils.

**Similarities and Differences**

A complete and detailed list of the similarities and differences between Lutherans and Roman Catholics is beyond the scope of a brief newsletter article, but here are simply some key points.

Many Lutherans, upon entering a Roman Catholic Church, will notice immediately some similarities. This is because both Lutherans and Roman Catholics come out of the tradition of Western Christianity. We share our faith in God as Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We also share a commitment to the ancient Creeds (statements of faith), such as the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. Very often, the liturgy (order of worship) is similar. Roman Catholics also observe many of the same rituals that Lutherans observe. The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are important for both groups, though there are some differences in understanding concerning these sacraments. There are so many similarities, in fact, that many Lutherans feel quite “at home” among modern Roman Catholics, and vice versa.

But there are differences too. In no particular order, I will discuss them here. First, Lutherans obviously do not recognize the authority of the pope in Rome. Roman Catholics, like the Eastern Orthodox, believe in a threefold order of ministry: bishop, priest, and deacon. This order is necessary for the existence of the Christian Church, they believe, and the pope is understood as the head bishop. Some Lutherans have officers called “bishops,” but they do not understand the significance of the office in the same way as Roman Catholics.

Second, while Lutherans and Roman Catholics both value the Bible, they differ in how they understand the content of the Bible. Because of historical circumstances, Roman Catholics accept a larger list of books that comprise the Old Testament. These books are sometimes called “the apocrypha,” as their validity was disputed throughout history. Lutherans and other Protestants came to view these books as secondary, not on par with the rest of the Bible, but Roman Catholics today accept them. So, you will often see Roman Catholic literature refer to books like “Tobit,” “Judith,” “Sirach,” and others, which are unfamiliar to many of us. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church considers itself to be based not only on the Bible, but also on “sacred tradition,” which has been handed down throughout the ages. Lutherans have always emphasized that the Bible alone should be understood as the source of our teaching.

Third, Roman Catholics practice what is known as the “invocation of the saints.” Commonly, Roman Catholics offer prayers to Mary (the mother of Jesus, the Son of God) and other significant saints of the past. The way they understand this, they are asking these people who have a close connection with God to pray to God for them. Lutherans rejected this practice, as they could find no basis in the Bible for it. Lutherans have a strong and healthy respect for Mary and the saints of the past, but we view them more as a source of encouragement. Roman Catholics observe various holidays devoted to Mary, such as the Immaculate Conception (the idea that Mary was conceived without original sin to be able to give birth to Jesus) and the Assumption of Mary (the idea that she was assumed into heaven in bodily form upon her death).

Fourth, like the Eastern Orthodox churches, Roman Catholics observe seven things they call “sacraments,” which they believe Jesus gave the church to provide people with grace: Baptism, Eucharist (Holy Communion), Confirmation, Penance (confession), Anointing (sometimes known as “last rites,” though it can be administered at different times throughout life), Matrimony (marriage), and Holy Orders (installing certain people into the offices of bishop, priest, deacon). Lutherans came to see that only two things should fall into the category of things directly instituted by Jesus to give us his gifts: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion).

Fifth, and perhaps most significantly, Roman Catholics and Lutherans differ somewhat on how to understand the gift of salvation from God. Many Protestants have caricatured Roman Catholic teaching as promoting what we call “works righteousness,” the belief that we earn our status before God by the good deeds that we perform. Likewise, Roman Catholics have criticized Protestants for believing that good deeds don’t matter. The issue is more complicated than that. It is true that Roman Catholics have emphasized the importance of Christians performing good works. Actually, Lutherans have as well. Lutherans have said from the beginning that Christians must perform good works, though we do not rely on them for salvation.

Both Lutherans and Roman Catholics believe that people are saved by “grace.” “Grace” means that God is the one who steps in to save us from sin and give us salvation. But the two groups have differed in how they understand grace to function in the life of a Christian. Roman Catholics would say that receiving grace and remaining in a state of grace involve a Christian living out their faith through good works. But this does not change their belief that it is God who has saved them and brought them into relationship with Him through the sacraments of the church. Hence, Roman Catholics tend to think of salvation as more of a *process* throughout life, which is also continued after death. Roman Catholics affirm belief in something called “purgatory,” where people undergo a continued “purification” from sin after death before entering the presence of God. This is also why Roman Catholics offer prayers for the dead. Lutherans, on the other hand, understand salvation as something that is *declared* to us. For Lutherans, God grants us his gift of salvation and then calls us to an obedient life. The doctrine of purgatory was not something that could be supported biblically, and so Lutherans dispensed with it.

There is much more that can be said about this topic. And while there are real differences, I do believe in the importance of emphasizing what we do have in common. I count many Roman Catholics as friends and am grateful for their witness in many areas where we share common interest. Like with other Christian groups, I pray that God would work through our common witness to Jesus Christ for the salvation of the 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).

****

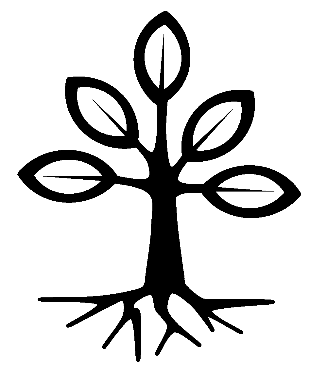
For September and October of 2021, we remember the Danish Lutheran pastor **Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig**. He is commemorated on September 2.

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 that the church was entrusted to proclaim. Grundtvig enjoyed poetry and music, and he wrote over a thousand 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.

Grundtvig is important in our history not only for his contributions to our Christian faith. He is remembered for his contributions to the fields of education, music, poetry, and promotion of Danish culture.

*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 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.* (prayer from justus.anglican.com)

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson



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

**The Ten Commandments**

***The Sixth Commandment***

*You shall not commit adultery.*

***What does this mean?***

*We should fear and love God so that in matters of sex we are chaste and disciplined in our words and actions, and a husband and wife love and honor each other.*

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Shepherd’s Garden**

The Shepherd’s Garden began 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 an email or text claiming to be from Pr. Tom or some other denominational leader, know that it is a scam and you should delete the message.

**Featured Hymn for September and October**

***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 A.D.

*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**

“You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.”

* Haggai 1:6 ESV

**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)
  + Ed and Tina Sage
* Ushers:
  + Dennis and Dixie Stewart
  + 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 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.

**The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/5/21):** *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.* – Psalm 103:2 ESV

**The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/12/21):** *Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* – 1 Peter 5:7 ESV

**The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/19/21):** *Our Savior Christ Jesus, [has] abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* – 2 Timothy 1:10 ESV

**The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (9/26/21):** *And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.* – 1 John 5:4 ESV

**The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (10/3/21):** *And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.* – 1 John 4:21ESV

**The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (10/10/21):** *Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.* – Jeremiah 17:14 ESV

**The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (10/17/21):** *He has told 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 ESV

**The Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost (10/24/21):** *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* – Romans 12:21 ESV

**Reformation Sunday/The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (10/31/21):** *But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.* – Psalm 130:4

**Important Announcements**

* We will continue having a time of coffee and fellowship before worship each Sunday, beginning at 9:30.
* 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.
* **The church council has decided to resume Sunday school in 2021-2022. For now, Sunday school will be offered on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, beginning at 9:30. This will begin on Sunday September 12.**
* **For Sunday school, we need teachers, of course! There will be a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall for people to commit to particular Sundays. It is not difficult, and curriculum is provided. Contact Pr. Tom with any questions. Thank you for your participation in this important part of the congregation’s life!**
* **On Sunday September 12, we will have a tree planting ceremony in the Shepherd’s Garden after worship. If you are in possession of a worn-out Bible that needs to be disposed of in a dignified manner, please bring it with you, and we will bury it next to the roots of the trees. The symbolism here is that we as Christians are called to be trees planted by living water (Psalm 1). As we watch these trees grow into the future, we will be reminded that our lives draw their nourishment from the good news of Jesus Christ and that we are called to remain rooted in it.**
* **We will have a potluck dinner after the tree planting ceremony on September 12.**
* **We will have the annual soup and pie lunch at the Bloomfield Community Center on Wednesday October 6 from 11:00-2:00 (no evening meal this year) with the country store.**
* 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.

**September 2021**

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

**October 2021**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 |
| 3  Coffee and fellowship, 9:30  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 4 | 5 | 6  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Soup and pie in Bloomfield, 11:00-2:00 with country store  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10  Coffee and fellowship, 9:30  Sunday school, 9:30  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 11 | 12 | 13  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45  Church council meeting, 7:00 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17  Coffee and fellowship, 9:30  Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30  Green | 18 | 19 | 20  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Women’s meeting, 10:00  Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24  Coffee and fellowship, 9:30  Sunday school, 9:30  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Green | 25 | 26 | 27 28 29 30  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:15-6:45 | | | |
| 31  Coffee and fellowship, 9:30  Worship, Service of the Word, 10:30  Red (Reformation Sunday) |  |  |  | | | |

Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

89039 539 St.

Bloomfield, Nebraska 68718



**** 