

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2015

Published by the Stewardship Committee

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www.foofchurch.org
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The Pastor's Message

By: Rev. Keith Burk

No message this month.

News from the Church Council

By: Tim Watters

No message this month.

News from the Elders

By: Travis Frerking and Patrick Severson

No report this month.

News from Sunday School

By: Gloria Egger

No message this month.

News from the Outreach Committee

By: Linda Cox

No message this month.

Church Properties News

By: Tim Dorn

No message this month.

Stewardship Thoughts

By: Elaine Maruhn

Stewardship is but a synonym for the life of a Christian who is living rightly with all of his relationships: before God as well as before his fellow creatures. Stewardship is the Christian life and Christian life is stewardship.

FOOF Financial News

By: Brooke Frerking

No report this month.

LWML News

By: Jeanne Krutz, President

Bountiful!

Sow - Nourish - Reap

This was the theme for the National LWML Convention in Des Moines, Iowa. As we entered the Convention Hall for the Opening Service, our attention was drawn to a HUGE cross at the front of the stage. But, this was no ordinary cross. It was filled with dirt which represented us, all God's children. During the opening ceremony all District Presidents were the 'sowers' and planted seed in the dirt. We are to plant the seed of the Word to other children of God. The next morning the seed had been nurtured and the corn was growing. "The seed cannot be reaped unless it is nurtured." This is done through worship and fellowship. Saturday morning the crop had been harvested, and the cross was surrounded with full buckets, baskets, and small wagons of shelled corn. A Mission Goal of \$2,000,000 was adopted, and Mission Grants were selected. Attendance at this convention was 4,636. What an awesome experience to worship and have fellowship with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

The harvest fields are ready to reap, but we must sow the Word, and nurture through God's Word and Sacraments.

Our District is busy with plans for the 2015 Retreat to be held at Midtown Holiday Inn in Grand Island. The date is September 18 - 20. There are great speakers, many vendors, fun activities, and worship and sacrament. Ingathering items to be brought for the Orphan Grain Train are Health Kits and School supplies. The Veteran's Home will be accepting pillow cases, small stuffed toys (i.e. Beanie Babies) gripper socks, Husker Big Red memorabilia, Word Search booklets, or gift cards such as Walmart or Skagway. Plan a weekend with the girls with fun, fellowship, and most important, The Word and Sacrament.

Great is the Father's Love

Prayer Requests

Paul Arne

Rev. Nathan Ristveldt

Terry Tallon

Pat (John Engelhard's sister)

Arlene Tuxhorn

Our shut-in, Julia Gerbig

Please call Pastor Burk 402-984-1958 or e-mail him at kburk58@gmail.com to be added to the prayer list.

Dale Schmidt

Lavelle Schumacher

Bill Boden

Mij (John Engelhard's sister)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY

August 13 Brooke Frerking

August 17 Tim Dorn

August 20 Nick Lovell

August 25 John Engelhard

August 29 Dale Schmidt

August 14 Tim & Dayna Dorn

August 26 Dale & Nancy Schmidt

There will be no September newsletter because of lack of interest by the council and members of the congregation in submitting articles or news to the newsletter.

The SCRIP Program

submitted by Christina Severson

Our next order date is August 11 with delivery on August 18.

Please note the list of items to be collected during the month of August for ingathering under Jeanne's LWML report.

For a fun time, join the Sing-a-long on the last Sunday of each month before worship service beginning at about 8:45. You will choose and sing your favorite hymns, so plan to join in.

Lutheran BELIEF *and* PRACTICE

What About . . .

Death and Dying

By Dr. A. L. Barry
President, The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod
from lcms.org

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christians we have a unique perspective on death, a perspective that is radically different from the world around us. This pamphlet is intended to help you, or someone you know, face death and understand what death is, and how Christians face death and deal with grief.

What is death?

The Bible teaches that death is not an annihilation in which we cease to exist. The Scriptures teach that death is the separation of our eternal soul from our mortal bodies. Our bodies rest in the grave, awaiting the final day when soul and body shall be reunited. At the moment of death, our souls, and the souls of all those who die in faith, immediately are in the presence of Christ, and will enjoy His presence, peace and joy until the great day of the resurrection of all flesh.

Is Death Natural?

It is popular to think of death as something that is “natural.” Some people even are heard to say, “Death is a friend.” Nothing could be further from the truth! Death is a horrible reality. It is the enemy we each face at the end of our lives. Death is the awful curse that fell on creation through the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Through that sin, death came into the world and so death spread to all of humanity because all people sin.

God did not create human beings to die, but to live—to live forever and enjoy Him forever. Death was not part of our created nature, but only something that came about as a result of the sinful disobedience of our first parents—a sinful disobedience that has been passed down to every human being since that time.

Why must Christians die?

Scripture clearly indicates that Christians too must pass through death to life. We learn that our bodies are actually dead right now because of sin (“The body is dead because of sin” Rom.8:10). And so Christians too must die.

The sting of death and sense of God’s judgment are horrible punishments on those who have no faith in Christ as their Savior. They face, at the end of their life, only the prospect of an unknown future, or a terrifying vision of eternal damnation. However, the death of a Christian is not death in as full a sense as it is for the non-Christian. For the Christian, eternal life and joy follows death, for our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who walks with them through the “valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23).

What is the Christian’s response to death and dying?

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” These familiar words of Psalm 23 chart the direction for a Christian individual or family facing the reality of death. Here God identifies our greatest enemy in such times—fear. Since none of us among the living has ever tasted death, we respond to the prospect of death (whether our own or that of someone we love) with fear. Fear is natural.

Now, if fear is the enemy, who is our ally? The Psalmist continues: “For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” Jesus, our Good Shepherd, the One who laid down His life for the sheep, is our companion on the dark, winding road that leads through the valley of the shadow of death. The journey is not optional. Sooner or later each of us, no matter how old or young, will walk that path. This will happen until that day when Jesus comes again—when, at the last trumpet, the faithful will be changed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51–52).

But here is the important part: I walk through the valley. The One who is with us in that journey, who leads us on, bears the scars of death in His living body. He was dead, but now He lives forevermore. All

who believe and are baptized will be saved; they have a share in His victory over death. Christians, therefore, are able to see death not merely as an unfortunate reality to be endured, but as a defeated enemy. The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting are the sure and certain realities promised to all who remain faithful unto death.

What happens after we die?

For unbelievers, there is the “second death” (Rev. 20:14) in which their souls are immediately in the presence of Satan and immediately begin to suffer the torment of eternal punishment in hell, from which there is no possibility of escape. On the day of judgment, their bodies join their souls in hell. Those who trust in the redemption won by Christ our Lord pass from death to life. This is why the Bible uses so many comforting images to describe the death of the child of God. Here are some of the phrases the Holy Spirit uses to describe a Christian’s death: being gathered to one’s people; departure in peace; departure and being with Christ; a turning away from the evil to come; sleep; rest; passing from death to life; deliverance from all evil; and, finally, “gain.”

Gain? How can death be gain? When a baptized child of God passes through death—a son or daughter of God who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God—then death is gain. Through death the children of God pass into an eternity of joy and peace with their heavenly Father.

Each Christian, therefore, may rejoice in the life that Christ has won and gives to him or her through the Word and Sacraments. When we die, our souls await the final consummation of all things on the day Christ returns. We shall receive glorified bodies that are free from tears, pain, sickness and age—perfectly renewed and glorified resurrection bodies.

In these new and glorified bodies, we shall spend all eternity in heaven, enjoying the presence of God and all His saints, forever and ever. The overwhelming joy of this truth is almost too much for us to even begin to comprehend, but it is true!

How do Christians face death?

Christians face death as they face life—with their eyes fixed firmly on Jesus. We cling to the promises of His Word, which, when facing death, seem even more wonderful and powerful. One of the most beautiful promises our Lord gave to us is found in John 14:2–3 where He says, “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

We realize that no matter how our lives may end, there is one thing of which we can be absolutely certain. We shall pass from death to life, from this life to the life beyond, with our Lord. And there we shall rejoin all of our loved ones and others who have gone before us trusting in Christ their Savior.

How does a Christian deal with grief?

Christians should not hesitate to cry. Our Lord wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus. We too find ourselves in tears at the pain of our loss. But we do not sorrow in the same way as those who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep (1 Thess. 4:14). We look forward to a grand reunion with loved ones who have died in faith. Still, we miss them. The separation can seem overwhelming at times. This pain is part and parcel of grieving; it is to be understood, not resisted.

Grieving for most people is a journey. It is a journey from the initial pain of parting, toward healing and reconciliation with our loss. The pain gradually subsides, but the loss remains. Grief has many dimensions and may seem unpredictable in its ebb and flow; yet in Christ we find strength along the way. For in this journey we are not alone.

Christians find that family and friends are God's gifts to help them bear the pain of loss, which at times seems unbearable. Such company is important in dealing constructively with grief. It must be consciously sought out by those who mourn. Most who mourn find it very helpful to tell the story of the death of those they love to family and to trusted friends. The repeated narrating of that story brings release and insight into the joy and sorrow of the parting. Friends and family will want to lend a listening ear and heart for such telling and retelling; it is a rare privilege to be entrusted with such treasures. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Above all, Christian mourners will turn to the worship fellowship of the church and the rich comfort of God's holy Word and Sacrament for healing along the path of grief. For Jesus Christ abides within His church through His sacred means of grace. Through these channels He bestows the riches of His forgiveness, life and salvation now, and to all eternity. One day we too shall stand with that great multitude of heaven who hear these blessed words:

"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

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A STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Busyness is the new black. It's stylish. We spend an inordinate amount of time comparing how busy we are with everyone else. We compare our schedules, our kid's schedules, how productive we are and how much we have because of it to everyone around us. And if we don't do or have what the next guy does or has, we just get busier and produce more so that we can.

This consumes our conversations and thoughts. And this should give us pause: Who is consuming whom, here? Are we the consumer or are we those consumed? It's no accident that our adversary the devil is described as a lion prowling around seeking to devour us, to consume us. He gives us the liturgy of this world, the liturgy of productivity and consumption. For if he can keep us busy in "muchness" and "manyness," he can be satisfied.

And this is why the Lord, after finishing all His work of creation, rested on the seventh day. This is why He established the Sabbath day—to give His people rest from all their work. As they rested, He continued to work for them, to satisfy them, to fill them with His gifts—food from heaven by His Word and Promise.

That day came when from our Lord's cross and in His death, He proclaimed, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And so His work of redemption was complete. And so His body rested in the tomb, the belly of the earth. Though He is the Lord God who always works, yet as the Lord rested on the original Sabbath, now

Jesus kept the Sabbath by resting in the tomb and rising from the dead to live forever. For this is why He came. This is why He became man: to draw all to Himself so that He could give rest and refreshment to the weary and the heavy laden.

The Sabbath is a gift, not a burden. It is a gift of time free from the liturgy of this world, the liturgy of productivity and consumption. Sabbath is time for rest and refreshment, a time free from anxiety to enjoy the gifts God gives, all of them—His Word, His Promises, His Sacraments, His creation, everything. It is a foretaste of the rest we shall enjoy in heaven.

Sadly for many of us rest has become work. It's become drudgery. We long for it but we aren't able to do it because there's so much to be done and so little time to do it. But really what's the rush? Why are we so hurried and harried? Have we forgotten that Jesus is raised from the dead and lives forever?

Sabbath is God's gift of time free from all of the anxiety and hurry of this world so that we can rest, be refreshed by the gifts God gives. Society won't do it for us. They are addicted to the liturgy of productivity and consumption. Though we are in the world, we are not of it. We are the people of God, His own children by water and Word, joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus lives. And so shall we. So rest in the promise of our Savior that sin, death, and time have not hold on you because Jesus is raised from the dead. Jesus lives. And so shall we, forever.



little boy opened the big and old family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Momma, look what I found," the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: "I think it's Adam's suit!"

