



A family of God sharing Jesus and serving Him faithfully

The Bethlehem Record

The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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June 2016

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Our Mission Statement

As members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church who have been granted eternal life through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we worship Him as our Lord and seek to further His work of salvation through word and sacrament ministry in our community and world toward the goal of creating and strengthening personal faith in Him.

The Pastor's Page

"What's That You Say: Confession and Absolution"

Have you ever been following along with the order of service on Sunday morning only to find that you have been speaking the words without actually reflecting on what they mean? Are there parts of the Sunday morning liturgy that are a mystery to you, with words that you don't understand? Do you find yourself wondering why we do certain things or say certain things in the service? If that's the case, please join me in asking a very Lutheran question... What does this mean? As we ask this question and discover the answers, you will find that you will benefit more from what we do and say in the service. As your understanding of what is being said in the service is deepened, you will walk away from Sunday services with a deeper sense of satisfaction and a greater sense of having been fed by the Word of the Lord.

Today let us focus our attention on the words of the **Confession and Absolution** found on page 184 of the Lutheran Service Book.

These words are the start of our service and serve as a foundation for a that is to follow. Let us turn our attention to the Words that we speak...

O almighty God, merciful Father- In this we are addressing the almighty creator of the universe, with the almighty power to create and the almighty power to destroy, but not only is He almighty, but he is also merciful, and not only is He merciful, but He is also our Father. Even as we confess our sins we can find comfort in the fact that God bids us to call Him our Father, for we are His beloved children.

I, a poor miserable sinner- We don't like being confronted the fact that we are sinners. Sure, we're ok with admitting that we are capable of making the occasional mistake, but we really have a hard time with the idea that we are corrupt to the core. We have a hard time with that, but it is true. The sin that we inherit from Adam and Eve permeates everything that we do, so even the good things that we do are tainted by sin. Paul puts it this way in Romans 7:18 "For I know that nothing

good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.” In these words we confess that sin isn’t just a problem with what we do, it is also a problem with who and what we are. The apostle John addresses this in I John 1:8: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you and justly deserved Your Temporal and eternal punishment- These words are powerful words especially when combined with the words “I, a poor miserable sinner.” The reason this wording is so powerful is because it leaves nothing unconfessed. When you speak these words, you confess every sin you have ever committed; you confess every impure thought that you have thought, you confess every improper word that you have spoken, you confess every sinful act that you have ever committed. Do you remember all the sins that you have committed over the course of your life? Do you remember all the sins you have committed over the past week? Do you remember all the sins that you have committed since you woke up this morning? Of course you

don’t. So take comfort in the fact that you don’t need to. You don’t need to, because in these words you are confessing everything, even those sins you have forgotten, even those sins that you have never recognized as sin. This is wonderfully freeing and can be a comfort to a guilty conscience, but please don’t let this stop you from confessing individual sins, the sins that you do know about, the sins that you do remember, because in doing so, you will find even greater relief for your guilty conscience as you hear God’s Words of promise, forgiveness and love applied specifically to those sins.

But I am heartily sorry for them and I sincerely repent of them- In this statement we see the fruits of faith. God’s Word produces faith within us, and faith produces good works within us because we know that we are saved, because we know that our almighty God has used His power, not for our damnation but rather for our salvation. One of the good fruits that faith produces within us is repentance and repentance has two parts, a fact that is reflected in the wording we find here. The first part of repentance is feeling sorrow over our sin, this is sometimes referred to as contrition.

The second part of repentance is that we turn our back on our sins, we “turn around” with the intent to avoid them and do what is right. In these words, remember that your confession here is not the end of what God expects of you, but instead, in faith, you will want to back up your words with actions. Have you done wrong to someone? Confess your sin here, but also resolve to go and do what you can to make it right. Did you give in to a temptation? Confess your sin here, but also resolve to go and do what you can to avoid and resist that temptation in the future. Do you earn your forgiveness with your repentance, with your sorrow and with the actions that spring from your desire to do better? Of course you don’t, you receive forgiveness only through faith in Christ, but this faith produces this repentance in you as you hear God’s Word applied to you and your life.

I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being- In these words the confession of sins comes full circle. We start off our confession with words that point out the fact that God is our Father and that He is merciful. Here in

these words we are reminded of God's merciful actions on our behalf. Because God is merciful He sent His only Son to die for you on the cross. Because God loves you, God Himself took on human flesh so that He could live the perfect life that you cannot. He sent His Son to suffer and die to pay the price for your sins so that you don't have to, so that He could rise from the grave as "the first fruits" (I Corinthians 15:20). This means that you and I rise with Him and receive eternal life instead of eternal damnation. In these words we speak out loud the reality that our hope is not in ourselves or anything that we do, but instead our hope is in our Savior and the sacrifice that He made to save us. These words bring to mind the words of Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all- how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things" and point us to the fact that even as we speak the words of the confession of sins, forgiveness *is already* ours. Forgiveness is yours because Christ died to set you free, He suffered to buy you back from sin, death and Satan. Since He loves you that much, you can rest assured He will not abandon you but hold you as precious and beloved in His sight in this life and the next.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit- You have confessed your sins and as I John 1 proclaims to us "if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You have Christ's forgiveness, you have God the Father's forgiveness and here I stand before you as God's chosen man and proclaim that forgiveness directly to you. Christ Himself gives this wonderful gift to His Church in John 20:23 saying "if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them." The pastor performs this function in public services because he is called to be in the office of the public ministry, because he is called to preside over the public services of the congregation as God's representative. Do you need the Pastor to forgive you of your sins? Of course not. You, as a believer in Christ, can confess your sins directly to God and receive forgiveness directly from Him. However, God loves and cares for you and He

knows that the Satan likes to plant seeds of doubt in your mind. Therefore, He gives you the reassurance of hearing His words of forgiveness spoken aloud over and over and over again to beat down and drive back those doubts and drown your guilt in His flood of forgiveness. The pastor speaks these words of forgiveness and comfort in Christ's stead here in the public service of the congregation, however, this ability to forgive one another in Christ's name was given to the whole Church and you, as Christian brothers and sisters, can forgive one another in Christ's name as you live your lives together, confessing your sins to one another and receiving each other's forgiveness. This gift is for your comfort, and if your conscience is weighed down by a sin that you are struggling with, I encourage you to come to me as your pastor, or go to a trusted brother or sister in Christ, to confess that sin and receive the reassurance of your forgiveness through the blood of Christ.

I challenge you to reflect on these things the next time we go through confession and absolution in the service. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Pastor Judson

June 2016 Stewardship Article

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son” (John 3:16). “God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep” (John 10:11). Love means sacrifice. Sacrifice means a humbling of oneself for the good of another. And this is what the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us: Love means sacrifice.

We love our families. And we love them by sacrificing ourselves for them. We put their needs before our own. We sacrifice our own wants and desires for their good and for their needs.

We love our country. And we love it by pledging our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor to defend her. We ask not what our country can do for us, but what we can do for our country. We make sacrifices for our country’s good and we do it because we love her.

We love our church. And we love our church by giving of ourselves, by sacrificing our time, talents, and treasures in service to it. We volunteer to teach Sunday School, VBS, and other various boards. We help out cleaning and fixing what needs to be cleaned and fixed at the church property. And we give a portion of the income God has given us, so that the lights will go on, and the heat and air conditioning may run; so that a pastor will preach to us both law and gospel and administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper; so that the Word will go forth into all the world through the missionaries we call and send out.

God has called us into these three spheres of family, country, and church. He puts the solitary into a home. No one is an island unto himself. Everyone is put into a family, a country, and a church. In these spheres, God cares for all our needs of body and soul. He employs other members of these spheres to

ensure that we have everything we need for this body and life and for the next.

These callings place a claim upon us, a claim upon our presence, our prayers, our time, talents, and treasures. They give us a duty. That duty is to love. And love means sacrifice. And sacrifice means that we humble ourselves for the good of another.

So then, “let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:7–11). And love means sacrifice.

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Acolyte Schedule June-July

June 5	Grace Chegwidden
12*	Rachel Sebesta
19	Marshall Hurlbut
26*	Mekelle Hurlbut

* Communion service

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LWML Flower Committee

June

Lorelei Dohl, Sophia Schofield

July

Barb Meitler, Cheryl Gier

BOCL – May meeting

The BOCL met on Tue. May 3 at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Tara Kubick, Barb. Meitler, Trey Watson, Ronda Watson, Tyler Gier, Lloyd Gier, Ruth Mueller, and Brock Mueller. Trey opened with prayer. Minutes from previous meeting were read and approved. The next blood drive is scheduled for Wed. May 25, from 12:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. The Mueller's will pass out flyers to various locations in Sylvan. Barb & Ruth will do the snacks. your congregation and your The Council approved putting out a fund box for the endowment fund. Ruth will contact Ramie S. about perhaps having the teens make and decorate the box. The board decided not to have Trey talk about Lutheranism at the Prayer Service since there may be other denominations there. Trey W donated two books named Spirituality of the Cross to the church library. Ruth M moved that we put an ad of congratulations in the Lincoln paper for our two graduating seniors, Barb M seconded, motion passed. Funds for \$42.50 will come out of the endowment fund. Community Day was brought up and will be tabled until the next meeting. VBS dates are being questioned, because of 4-H events for the fair, the leaders of VBS will have to decide on this. Guest greeter for June will be Marcy Hurlbut. The next meeting will be Thursday June 2 at 7:00 p.m. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted Ruth Mueller

Donations to the Bethlehem Lutheran

Endowment Fund can be accepted at any time. Remember a loved one or a special occasion with a contribution to the Fund. Talk to your financial advisor if you wish to add it as a beneficiary in your will.

Any and All contributions are appreciated.

Baptismal Birthdays in June

God's blessings to you for all His gifts of grace that you have received, and we pray for many more blessings for Jesus' sake!



JUNE:

Ashton	Archer-	Terry Lilak
Weston		Warren Meitler
Kolton Compos		Gary Sorensen
Philip Chegwidde		Jeremy Wacker
Cheryl Gier		
Tanner Kubick		

+++++
A note Received in Mail



THANK YOU for continuing to send me the CD'S of your service I am depending on them more and more and I appreciate this service so much. This is wonderful and unique ministry. We rejoice with you at the blessing of receiving a new minister! We pray for him, for your congregation and you CD ministry
 In Christ Bernita Krumbach *(She also included a donation Toward the CD Ministry)*



SUMMER READING THAT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS
 May-30-August 7, 2016
 CPH.Org/READ

- Enjoy a CPH discount coupon for summer shopping
 - Check out booklists for every age, including adults.
 - Kids in the program will receive a special congratulations kit in the mail upon completion.
- Your household will be entered into a prize drawing the time of completion for a chance to win a free Amazon Echo, the new adult coloring book The Garden of Eden, or one of three Kindle Fire HD6" tablets. Keep reading words and the WORD all Summer Long

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Bethlehem LWML

Meeting June 1 2016

The bi-monthly meeting of the LWML was held on Wednesday evening June 1st, at the Parish Hall. Justine Dohl opening our evening with prayer and a short topic entitled “Milestones of Faith”. During this Bible Study, we looked at milestones in our Christian lives, and particularly at the Means of Grace. We reviewed the truth that our Lord is beside us and guides and directs us in His Word through every mile of this road of life. We rejoice in our salvation through the perfect life, suffering, and death of our Savior Jesus, as He sanctifies and renews us in faith day-by-day,... or mile-by-mile!

In absence of our President, Shelly, as Vice-President, called the meeting to order with only 7 members answering roll call. Secretary Lois read the minutes of the April meeting, follow by the correspondence letters. Treasurer Ramie then presented the treasurer’s report. She reported the total balance on hand as of June 1, 2016 as \$3536.30, with \$1453.74 designated in the cookbook fund, \$1436.26 designated for funeral luncheon fund, and \$646.30 in the general Home Fund. Both the Secretary minutes and the Treasurer’s report were accepted as read.

Committee reports

Funeral Luncheons—Friday June 3rd, we will be serving a noon luncheon for the family of Dewey Pounds, following the funeral service in Wilson, and the cemetery service at the Sylvan City Cemetery, and for the benefit of ‘somewhere for the family to gather’. They will pay the church \$50 for the rental of the Parish Hall and they will give the LWML a monetary gift for serving the luncheon. On Saturday, June 25th, There will be a memorial service for Marly Heine at our church at 10:30a.m., with a noon luncheon to follow.

Flowers—those taking care of the flowers for the church and watering of the plants for July will be Lorelei Dohl and Sophia Schofield.

For July, Cheryl Gier and Barb Meitler will be in charge.

Networker—Euni Thaemert reported that the new LWML Quarterlies are in our church mailboxes.

Watering Outside—May 22-June 4 Annie Dohl June 5-18 Ramie June 19-July 2 Emilie and July 3-16 Coleen. They are also to water at the parsonage until the new pastor arrives

Old Business:

There was no convention report by the delegates as they were not present, but several others gave reports of the highlights of the convention. Seven of our members attended the Spring Rally at Natoma on May 1st, nine members attended the Lucas Methodist women Spring Tea event on May 4th in place of our Bible study night. Graduation gifts were bought by Ramie and given to Tanner Kubick and Bayleigh Broeckelman from our congregation.

New Business:

We discussed cleaning the parsonage before our new pastor arrives. We will be notifying the BOCL, that some will assist in helping to clean. The classrooms in the school also need a good cleaning before VBS begins some will also help the BOCL with that.

The Kitchen Committee will present ideas at the July Voters’ meeting for up-grading the kitchen appliances. Following decision on this project the LWML will discuss helping with some financial assistance.

Our LWML is scheduled to host the June Birthday party at Lincoln Park Manor on Thursday, June 23rd. Lorelei already has the entertainment for this, so we are responsible for helping serve and furnishing cupcakes for the party. Each LWML member is to bake and Frost 12 cupcakes for the party, and we need 4 or 5 members to help serve—let President Coleen know if you can help. It was decided to use the cupcakes that are left for the funeral luncheon for Marly Heine on the 25th.

Shelly has applied for a Thrivent Action Team grant, which has been accepted by Thrivent. It will be a Church/Parsonage Beautification Landscape project, and this event will take place on Saturday June 18, at 9 a.m. - a work day at the church. If the supplies exceed the amount of the grant, the LWML will pay the overage.

Bethlehem LWML Cont.

We decided to buy new church bags for the children and new items to put in them. We will order 15 bags and fill them.

We are going to plan a baby shower for Katie and Ethan Lyne- the date will be announced later. We need a committee.

We need to increase our Mite giving. Please bring your Mite offering every month, even when we have Bible Study.

Our annual Bazaar is only 4 months away—the date is Saturday October 1st, be thinking of what you would like to bring/bake/bargain table items. Set up will be the day before on Friday Morning. We are again having items on the cement slab between the Parish Hall and school, so if you have some large items/furniture to bring that will be great. Proceeds from the slab items will go to the church treasury. We will need outside help from the congregation!

A Correspondence brochure from Lutheran World Relief was read and looked at. We have decided to put together 25 school kits for LWR with help from the Sunday School teachers and kids, The bags/back-packs will be ordered to use for the school kits. Ramie is going to talk this over with the Sunday School teachers.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Bethlehem's 135th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday August 21st. A committee is in place for this. The LWML will help, if needed.

The NATIONAL LWML Convention is next year in June in Albuquerque New Mexico. Make plans to attend.

It was announced the ordination and installation of Candide Craig will be on Sunday, July 10.

The next meeting of the LWML will be on Wednesday evening July 6th with Emilie Wacker in charge of Bible Study. Hostess will be Barb Meitler. On August 3rd, Bible Study & devotions will be led by Marmie Schultz and Ramie is the Hostess.

The meeting adjourned with reciting The Lord's Prayer Shelly was our hostess serving refreshments of cheese/sausage/cracker, relishes, & cake.

Respectfully Submitted, Lois Walter, Secretary

The Evangel in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia—(Mekane Yesus Seminary) The month of May has brought some very big and exciting changes to our plans here at Mekane Yesus Seminary. We had originally planned to focus exclusively on language training until the early part of next year, and then to begin teaching classes for the seminary. Now, after discussions between the leaders of our two church bodies, it has been decided that it is best if we start working with MYS sooner. So, Rev. Rabe and I are starting to take on some of the duties as seminary faculty now. (We realize learning the national language is still important, so we will continue studying Amharic on a part-time basis.) We have both joined a faculty committee to rewrite the catalog for the Master of Theology Program. We are both also acting as readers for Thesis papers submitted some of the Masters students. We will begin teaching this year in the fall semester. I will be teaching two classes at the Master's level; Worship: Theory & Practice and Personal Development. Personal Development is a class that will focus on things like the pastor's personal devotional life and how that affects his ministry. In the spring semester, I will teach Advanced Hermeneutics (a Masters level course) and Exegetical Methods (a Bachelor level class). Those are both classes on how to rightly read and interpret the Bible. There are many things about this decision that have me excited. First, I get to start teaching at the seminary much sooner than expected. Second, the classes assigned to Rev. Rabe and to me are all classes that will significantly help shape these students into Lutheran pastors and teachers. Third, by the end of the year, between the two of us, I think we will have taught students in all four years of the B.Th. program and both years of the MA program. We will have gotten to know and teach all of the student classes in the seminary. Our Lord has moved quickly to open the door for us to significantly impact the next generation of pastors, teachers and the Gospel message they will take out to the people of Ethiopia even sooner than we thought we could.

Thanks be to God!

Coming Events at Bethlehem

Also available online at www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org

July 10--- Ordination and installation of Candide Craig

July 13-17 – Vacation Bible School

Our Weekly Worship schedule:

11a.m. – Worship Service (Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays and some festivals)

No Sunday School or BLT's Bible School until September

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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