GOOD NEWS

FROM CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

JULY 2023

FROM THE PASTOR

Our synod will come together in convention at the end of this month. We do this every three years (this time four). We come together to plan for the future and look at the past, both good and bad. If you've ever been to one of our conventions, you will know that we don't agree on everything. Chances are there have been times you have been happy with discissions made and times you have been disappointed.

This year a couple of the bigger topics are going to be Communion issues and our university system. These will by no means be the only issues delt with (I would encourage you to keep an eye on lcms.org under convention issues). And just because something has been delt with does not mean we will all understand it the same.

When this happens our church has ways to deal with the issues. One of the ways things are worked through is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). This is a commission of some of our top theologians that are given topics of concern to research and explain in a way that is faithful to Scripture and our confessions and understandable. Even with all the time, study, discussion and care that is put into the issues that touch our church, there are times when there just isn't a clear, common understanding and people are going to do things that cause concern to others.

Over the years, I have had people (members of both Trinity and Christ, members of other congregations, non-LCMS people and pastors, both LCMS and others) talk with me and share their concerns about a variety of topics. Some of the talks were about things that happen here, others about things that happen outside our doors. I too have gone to others voicing my concerns about actions, practices and concern for others. In most cases buy the time we have finished talking we have come to an understanding that all parties are able to work with. But not always. Some times one or both party are unable to accept the perspective of the other.

This is why, **if** we want to change things here at Christ Lutheran, it quite often takes a long time. We not only want to consider how it affects us here, but also how it affects our other LCMS churches in the area and across the synod.

Every once in a while I will have members notice things that are happening at our other churches. Sometimes they want to know why. Other times they want to know if we might be interested in doing similar things. Still other times they bring concerns about how those actions affect our theology. One recent example of this was from the South Dakota District pages of a recent Lutheran Witness. It was an article about Zion Lutheran (in

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BIRTHDAYS

JULY

02 Matthew Wedeking
05 Genevieve Deardoff
07 Nora Brack
09 Constance Bartlett
13 Heather Johnson
14 Robin Holtz
17 Innocent Nshizirungu
23 Jerome Ommen
24 Hannah Meyer
28 Mary Meyer
29 Mason Hericks
29 Stephanie Preheim
29 Carlie Wetzel

ANNIVERSARIES

JULY

30 Steven and Tina Counts

The WORD of the LORD ENDURES FOREVER

Study the Bible with the Church,
Past and Present

A daily, verse-by-verse Bible Study
hosted by
Pastor Will Weedon
thewordendures.org

Lutheran Doctrine: Christ-Centered, Cross-Focused

Issues, Etc.
Talk Radio for the Thinking Christian
www.issuesetc.org

Sacred Music 24/7
LPR
lutheranpublicradio.org

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR FROM LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

July 2, The Visitation "We may think our prayers are small in relation to the magnitude of the problem of abortion. Not so! … Educate yourself, your children, and the people you know … Support leaders who embrace these words, 'All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness' … We have the most hopeful message the world has ever heard. You know it. God does big things with small stuff. How can we be so sure? Shiphrah and Puah, Jochebed, Miriam, and Moses … and especially Jesus. Amen." *Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

July 9, 5th Sunday after the Trinity "Announcing a pregnancy, feeling a fetus kick, cradling a newborn, attending a Baptism, what happens and what we experience defy description. Grieving and believing over a terminal diagnosis, listening to an aged neighbor's wisdom and reminiscences, holding a loved one's hand at a hospital bedside, singing hymns and reciting Scriptures as a relative enters eternity, the encounter exceeds even the beauty and power of words." *Pastor Michael Salemink, Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

July 16, 6th Sunday after the Trinity "Waiting is difficult; in Christ, we have the now and not yet. But as we learn and relearn to wait on Him, we find joy in His good work and patient craftsmanship in our lives. Though under construction, God works through us to bless the world. May you find great joy in fruit-bearing as you faithfully wait on HIM." *Michelle Bauman, Y4Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

July 23, 7th Sunday after the Trinity "Jesus, who is all Man and all God, becomes one of us in order that all of us might become one with Him. Finally, a sigh of relief, a cry of joy, even, a shout of thanksgiving! God is on the throne. Amen." *Rev. Dr. John Nunes, Guest Speaker on "The Lutheran Hour" – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

July 30, 8th Sunday after the Trinity "The Church is under an incredible assault, but perhaps never has the opportunity been greater. The question is whether we wish to take it, whether we want to be salt, or whether we'll just mark time, leaving nothing but ruins for those who follow in our footsteps." *Rev. Peter Scaer, Concordia Theological Seminary – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*



HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED OR ABOUT TO MOVE?

Please make sure that you notify Pastor if you would have any changes in your address, phone number or your email address. There are times when we may need to contact you. It can also help save money on postage. Thank you!

Go … Sell All You Have?

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, "You know the commandments." And he replied, "All these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Luke 18:18–22).

When we hear this story, this question comes to mind: is Jesus speaking to us also, or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor?

As good Lutherans, we answer, "No!" But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor? The simplest explanation is this: if we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn't excuse us from using our money for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family and society. We are members of all three of these by birth. We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from our Baptism into the church. We are born into a family, and our duties to others stem from our birth into that family. Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our own birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have and all that we are ought to be pressed into service for the church, the family and society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and we would falter in fulfilling our duties.

So, consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You save for college for your children, and provide food, clothing and shelter for the members of your family.

But the station that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits, from off the top, the best, even as Abel gave the best of his flock.

This requires forethought. It means that you sit down and make a plan of what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems that there are other more immediate and pressing things.

And this is all the more necessary now as we enter into periods of time where giving is low due to high unemployment or where restrictions on meeting in church limit opportunities to give. If we love God and His gifts of forgiveness given through the means of grace, which we receive at church and only at church, then we will support it, just as we love our country and our family. For all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son to death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What's more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of church, family and society are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three at birth.

Don't let the church, your divine family, be an afterthought or even ignored. It is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation through Word and Sacrament.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



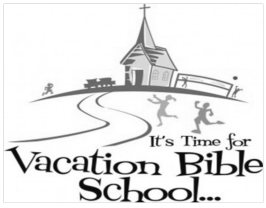
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
June 29, 2023

	04/2023	05/2023	06/2023
Deposits:	$ 33,425.03	$ 18,665.83	$ 13,367.76
Disbursements:	$ 17,541.89	$ 55,944.60	$-12,744.63
,			
Deposit Breakdown:			
General Fund:	$ 28,139.03	$ 15,509.83	$ 12,887.28
Designated Funds:	$ 5,286.00	$ 3,156.00	$ 480.48
Monthly Budget Requirement:	$ 19,912.15	$ 15,929.72	$ 15,929.72
Mortgage Balance as of 06/29			$ 87,794.19



IN OUR PRAYERS

Mildred Corey, at home
Helen Kriz, Bethany Lutheran Home, Brandon
Lisa Johnson, health issues/wellness
Susan Powell, at home
Leslie & Constance Bartlett at home
Elva Clauson at home



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

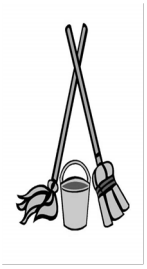
We will be holding VBS Sunday, July 23rd—Thursday July 27th this year from 6:30 pm—8:00 pm. If you have children that you would like to register, please take a registration form for each child, they are found on the credenza in the Narthex. Please turn a completed registration form in the offering box in the Narthex.

We will need some volunteers who would like to help out with VBS. If you would be interested in volunteering or would have questions, please see Pastor Nix. We may also need some items donated for snacks, or decorations. If you would be interested in donating anything, please see Pastor Nix.

SUMMER HELP NEEDED



With summer schedules changing, we are in need of help with mowing the lawn and some of the simple cleaning duties at the church. If you are able to volunteer for any of these duties, please let us know. We will create a schedule so people would know when they have signed up and we would know we have the required coverage. The church will supply the mower, gas, cleaning supplies and equipment.



KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



What is the Invocation?

At the beginning of the Divine Service, you will hear Pastor say: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" as he makes the sign of the cross. This is the Invocation. The word "invocation" comes from a Latin word that means "to call upon."

Why do we begin the Divine Service with the Invocation?

The Small Catechism says that the right way to use God's name is to "call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks." The Invocation and the sign of the cross begins the Divine Service by "calling upon" God who, through the power of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, called us to faith in Jesus. When we call, He comes to be with us, giving us His wonderful gifts of salvation!

Can I call upon God in this way in my own daily devotions?

Of course! Speaking the Invocation and making the sign of the cross is a wonderful way to begin and end your daily devotions. Go ahead and try it!

Parents: During the service, help your children listen for times when the Pastor speaks the name of our Triune God. Practice speaking the Invocation and making the sign of the cross with your children during family devotions. Remind them that this reminds us of our Baptism.

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lcms.org | 888-THE LCMS

First Vice-President (three-year term)

June 29, 2023

President Harrison selects five candidate finalists

In accordance with Bylaw 3.12.2.6 (a), President-elect Matthew C. Harrison has selected for the office of First Vice-President the following five candidates from the list of 20 highest-ranking and consenting nominees generated through the nominating ballot process. These five names will constitute the ballot for First Vice-President, to be elected at the convention on Sunday, July 30, 2023:

- Allan R. Buss
- Christopher S. Esget
- Jamison J. Hardy
- Peter K. Lange
- Richard L. Snow

UPCOMING 2023

- July 23– July 27 VBS
- Sept 10 Voters Meeting
- Nov 05 Daylight Saving Time Ends, 2am
- Nov 23 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am
- Dec 06, 13, 20 Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 20 Children's Christmas Service 7pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service

HIGHER THINGS

Higher Things Conference will be on August 6th—7th in Spearfish, SD. (Any More Info?)

From East to West

LSB 385 | study by Larry A. Peters

Introduction

Christmas is a season of paradoxes: A virgin bears a son … the Lord of creation finds no room in the inn … God delivers His Son and the world sleeps … angels announce it to shepherds … the King born to sit on David's throne is welcomed by Magi … the King of kings is born to be the servant of all. This Christmas hymn picks up many of these paradoxes and puts them into our mouths to sing. Though we want to reconcile these seeming contradictions so that things are nice, neat and tidy, the Church is called simply to confess them and own them by faith.

The Hymn of the Day for both the Second Sunday after Christmas and the Visitation of the blessed Virgin to Elizabeth is an old one. As we sing it, we add our voices to the myriad of those who came before us, who met the mystery of the incarnation with joyful faith.

❙ How do we fulfill the promise of these words to-

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The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, having received 52.32% of the votes cast, is the president-elect of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) for a fifth term of office, 2023–2026.

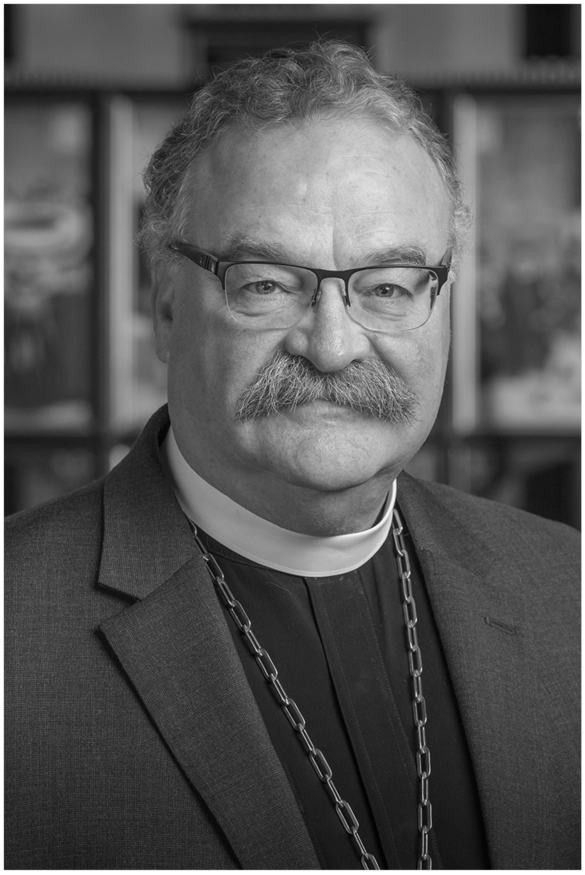
The nominations process for the position of Synod president began last fall with the mailing of nominating ballots to all congregations of the Synod. All nominations were required to be submitted by Feb. 28, or five months prior to the start of the Synod convention, when the ballots, received by an outside auditor, were tallied and delivered to the Secretary of the Synod.

The resulting candidates were the five ordained ministers who received the highest number of votes in the nominations process and who consented to serve if elected: Harrison, the incumbent president; the Rev. Dr. Patrick T. Ferry, former president of Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor; the Rev. Richard L. Snow, president of the LCMS Nebraska District; the Rev. Peter K. Lange, LCMS first vice-president; and the Rev. Benjamin T. Ball, LCMS sixth vice-president.

The election took place, according to Bylaw 3.12.2.4, starting June 17 (six weeks prior to the convention) via internet balloting provided by YesElections (formerly Election-America). The 6,053 pastoral and lay voters validly registered by the congregations and parishes of the Synod (Bylaw 3.12.2.3) before the deadline (electronic registration by March 19) or their substitutes (as validly submitted before June 9) served as the voters for this election. Of those, a total of 5,000 votes were cast, constituting a vote percentage of 82.60% of the electorate.

The results of the ballot tallied and reported to the Secretary of the Synod by YesElections are as follows:

- Harrison was voted president-elect with 2,616 votes (52.32%);
- Ferry received 1,593 votes (31.86%);
- Ball received 341 votes (6.82%);
- Snow received 318 votes (6.36%); and
- Lange received 132 votes (2.64%).



Harrison said, “Serving as president for 13 years has made me keenly aware of my weaknesses and sins. The job has pushed me to the brink on many occasions. The personal cost to my wife and family has been incalculable.

“Yet these very crosses drive us to Jesus. Thanks be to God for His blessed free Gospel of salvation in the blood of Christ! I appreciate, to no end, your prayers, and I am deeply honored to serve you, the LCMS — the church whose public confession I believe with my whole heart. It is upon that confession I shall stand on the last day before the judgment seat of Christ (FC SD VII.29-30), a sinner forgiven.”

LCMS Bylaws instruct the Secretary of the Synod to notify the candidates in the Synod’s presidential election of the results of the balloting at least two weeks prior to the convention. The candidates were informed earlier today, June 21, of the results of the June 17–20 ballot.

Additional information about the election result will be published in the second issue of *Today’s Business*, which will be available at the beginning of the convention.

For more information about the election or candidates, see lcms.org/convention/elections.
The 68th Regular Convention of the LCMS will take place July 29–Aug. 3 at the Baird Center (formerly the Wisconsin Center) in Milwaukee under the theme “We Preach Christ Crucified.”

(Continued from page 5)

day?

- Look out at the Church assembled on Christmas Eve and see there the assembly of nations at the manger. Where do we fit into the words?

Exploring the Scriptures

The Readings appointed for Christmas 2 and the Visitation are very different. Christmas 2 begins with Joseph, son of Jacob, bringing his family to Egypt for a surprise reunion (Gen. 46:1–7). The suffering of Joseph had a godly end — faith that trusts God's gracious will is vindicated (1 Peter 4:12–19). Matthew 2:13–23 records another Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, being warned and taking Mary and Jesus to a safe refuge in Egypt while a crazed and fearful Herod orders a murderous rampage. In contrast to this, the Visitation begins with Israel's dead stump and the shoot God sends forth in His Son (Is. 11:1–5). It moves to the call to trust the Lord and remain patient in tribulation (Rom. 12:9–16). In the Gospel, Luke records the details of blessed Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth (herself surprised to be pregnant with John the forerunner). It culminates in Mary's song, the Magnificat (Luke 1:39–56).

- What do we find in common in both pericopes?
- How did God turn Joseph's suffering into good?
- How did God protect His Son and the Gospel from His enemies?
- How does Mary's song tie the two events together?
- How did God vindicate those who trusted in Him?

Mary placed herself under God's merciful care when reason and emotion would have led her to panic and fear. We too face suffering and upset, things that defy reason or explanation, and inspire doubt and anxiety.

- Can we trust God in all things?
- Will God really work all things for our good?
- Is this what we meet in Bethlehem? Is this exactly the example of God working good from what the world would write off as something to be avoided?
- Joseph and Mary trusted in the Lord when everything else said to fear. They were moved by this trust to joy in God's promise. How do we meet life's challenges with the same holy joy in the Lord?

Exploring the Hymn

Background

Little is known about Coelius Sedulius (c. 450), the author of this hymn. He probably lived in Rome. A convert to Christianity, he most probably remained a layman (though some suggest he was ordained). Though his writings were well known and popular, only two of his hymns survive. This hymn text is part of an acrostic poem of twenty-eight stanzas arranged according to the Latin alphabet. We have an eighth-century edition of the full text. The poem gave birth to two hymns: LSB 399, "The Star Proclaims the King Is Here," and LSB 385, "From East to West."

The hymn was well known, appointed in the prayer book of priests (breviary) for Christmas. LSB 385 is the second version, by translator John Ellerton (1826–93). The translation is more thematic than literal.

- How does it feel singing a hymn that was sung for more than fifteen hundred years prior to your singing it today?

Text

"From lands that see the sun arise / To earth's remotest boundaries" became "From east to west, from shore to shore" when the Latin became an English text. Like the call of the psalmist, this hymn summons the singer to awaken to God's merciful purpose hidden in everything that happens and to respond with the joyful praise of those who trust He knows what He is doing.

- How is Christ's birth an event for the whole world and not merely for those who believe in it?
- "The holy child whom Mary bore" (st. 1) is not the Savior of the few but the Redeemer of the whole world. How does the appearance of the Magi emphasize this from the very beginning of the Gospel's story?
- Note the paradox of Christ the King, who is born of a lowly virgin and laid in a manger (Luke 1:35; 2:7). What does this say about our Lord? His ministry? The promise of salvation?

The heart of the Christmas message is the great mystery of the incarnation. God takes flesh, wears a diaper and nurses at Mary's breast. This is a scandal to many, a conundrum to some and a stumbling block to others. Note the way the hymn avoids explaining and instead confesses this great mystery.

- Can one confess Christ without explaining the unexplainable mystery of the incarnation?
- How do we confess this in the creeds?
- Notice stanza 2; instead of explaining the how, why

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town). In the layout there is a picture of Chez Shoup (former member of Christ) giving the children's message during the worship service. The topic of children's messages during church has come up here at Christ before, and for a variety of reasons we do not do them. I can attest to the fact that Chez does a wonderful job of teaching and working with the children and families at Zion. The individual that brought this to me was looking at it from the perspective of one of those before mentioned CTCR documents, "Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice". A discussion was had discussing how our faith would have them deal with this in a Christian manner. That is how we work with issues we do not all agree on. We look to scripture to see the best way to work through what is put before us.

In Christ, Pastor Nix

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is confessed: "His fallen creatures all to save."

- How do we own this mystery?

God cannot be contained in temples or buildings built with hands, but He has chosen to live in our flesh and bone — born like us in every way except sin. Mary is the "chosen vessel" (st. 3) of Christ's humanity — He takes His flesh from her.

- Compare Luke 1:47–50 with stanza 3. How are they parallel? What is Mary's greatness (Luke 1:49)?
- Early Christian heresies tried to downplay Mary's role. Orthodox Christianity has refuted this, insisting that Mary is Theotokos, God-Bearer, Mother of God. How does this confess the biblical truth? Is this for Mary's benefit or does this protect the truth of the Son of God and His incarnation?
- What kind of honor to Mary detracts from Jesus and dishonors her own words? What kind of honor rightly honors both Mary and Jesus?

Note the unlikely visitors to the manger: shepherds. This is no accident. Christ was born to fulfill God's promise to shepherd His people (Ezekiel 34). "He will tend His flock like a shepherd" (Is. 40:11).

- How important are shepherds to this story?
- What comfort comes from knowing Christ was born to shepherd God's people and lead us home to Him?

Making the Connection

This hymn confronts us with the fact that Christmas is not just for Christians. We say it in the Nicene Creed: "who for us men and for our salvation [He] came down from heaven" (LSB, p. 191). It is one thing to say it but another to meet it in the diverse faces of those who gather as the children of God. The cross is the means through which the many are made one and redemption is made for all people.

- Can you get to the cross without the manger? Can you get the manger without the cross?
- Is there a Savior who is not born of the Virgin by the Holy Spirit? Is there a Savior incarnate for only the few? Does Christmas ultimately lead to Calvary?
- To call Mary blessed is to believe in Jesus her Son. In what way is Mary, who first believed in Christ, the mother of all believers?

In Closing

So we meet the paradox. God comes in flesh through the blessed Virgin Mary. He is come for all or He comes for none. The Virgin sees this glory and calls us to stand before the manger, recognizing God in flesh and blood, rejoicing in the grace given to us there, and trusting in Him for our salvation. Here is the shepherd the Father sent to save His people, and from east to west we come.

- Sing or read aloud together LSB 385.

Prayer

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your Son and made known through her Your gracious regard for the poor and lowly and despised. Grant that we may receive Your Word in humility and faith, and so be made one with Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for the Visitation).

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