



APRIL 2016

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Corpus or No Corpus, That is the Question!

As you read this, you might think that I have lost my marbles. “Why is pastor talking about crucifixes when we are in the Easter Season and celebrating Christ’s resurrection? I knew it! He is a closet Roman Catholic!” In response, I leave you with the response as posted on the Synod’s website in the Frequently Asked Questions section:

Q: Is the use of crucifixes a Roman Catholic practice? Doesn’t the empty cross provide a better symbol for Lutherans? How does the LCMS feel about using a crucifix in church? [Note: A crucifix is a cross with a statue of the crucified Christ on it].

A: A common misunderstanding among some Lutherans is the opinion that a crucifix, or the use of a crucifix, is a “Roman Catholic” practice. The history of Lutheranism demonstrates that the crucifix was a regular and routine feature of Lutheran worship and devotional life during Luther’s lifetime and during the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy. It was also the case among the founding fathers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. If you were to visit most of the original congregations of the LCMS in the United States you would find lovely crucifixes adorning their altars, and, in addition, beautiful statues on the altar of Christ and the four evangelists or other such scenes. There is nothing uniquely Roman Catholic about this. Many Lutherans and Lutheran congregations use crucifixes. Crucifixes are used in the chapels of both of our seminaries and our International Center.

Lutheranism has always considered the crucifix to be a powerful reminder of the sacrifice our Lord Jesus made for us and our salvation, on the cross. A crucifix vividly brings to mind the Apostle Paul’s divinely inspired words, “We preach Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23).

Interestingly enough, while there is certainly nothing “wrong” with an “empty” cross, the practice of using an “empty cross” on a Lutheran congregation’s altar comes more from non-Lutheran sources. At the time of the Reformation there was conflict between Lutherans and Reformed Christians over the proper place of pictures, images, statues and the like in the church. Lutherans stood with historic Christendom in realizing that such art in the church was not wrong, and it was a great aid for helping to focus devotional thoughts on the truths of the Word of God. No greater truth can be found than the death of Jesus Christ our Lord for the world’s salvation.

The “empty cross” is not a symbol of Christ’s resurrection, as some say, for the fact is that the cross would have been empty regardless of whether or not Christ had risen from the grave. The point to be kept clear here is that both an “empty cross” and a crucifix symbolize the same thing: the death of Christ our Lord for the salvation of the world. Many feel the crucifix symbolizes this truth more clearly and strikingly. That has been the traditional opinion of historic Lutheranism, until the last 50 years ago, due to the influence we will now mention.

Some Lutherans began to move away from crucifixes during the age of Lutheran Pietism, which rejected much of Lutheran doctrine and consequently many Lutheran worship practices. At the time, Lutheran Pietists, contrary to the clear position of Luther and the earlier Lutherans, held that symbols such as the crucifix were wrong. This was never the view of historic Lutheranism. In America, Lutherans have always felt a certain pressure to “fit in” with the Reformed Christianity that predominates much of the Protestant church. Thus, for some Lutherans, this meant doing away with things such as crucifixes and vestments, and other traditional forms of Lutheran worship and piety. It is sad when some Lutherans are made to feel embarrassed about their Lutheranism by members of churches that teach the Word of God in error and who do not share Lutheranism’s clear confession and practice of the full truth of the Word of God.

Lutheranism has always recognized that the use of any symbol (even the empty cross) can become an idolatrous practice, if in any way people are led to believe there is “power in the cross” or that a picture or representation of a cross has some sort of ability, in itself, to bring us into relationship with Christ and His Gospel. Any of God’s good gifts can be turned against Him in this life and become an end in themselves.

Lutherans have never believed that banning or limiting proper artwork in the church is the way to prevent its improper use. Rather, we believe proper teaching and right use is the best way, and the way that is in keeping with the gift of freedom we have in Christ to use all things to the glory and honor of God. Thus, many Lutherans use and enjoy the crucifix as a meaningful reminder of our Lord’s suffering and death. It might interest you to know that our Synod’s president has a beautiful crucifix adorning the wall of his office, constantly reminding him and visitors to his office of the great love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In short, and this is the most important point of all, there is nothing contrary to God’s Holy Word, or our Lutheran Confessions, about the proper use of the crucifix, just as there is nothing wrong with the proper use of an empty cross, or any other church symbol by which we are reminded of the great things God has done for us. We need to guard against quickly dismissing out of hand practices that we believe are “too Roman Catholic” before we more adequately explore their use and history in our own church.

In Christian freedom, we use either the crucifix or an empty cross and should not judge or condemn one another for using either nor not using either symbol of our Lord’s sacrifice for our sins.

Pastor Peck

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More from Pastor’s desk---

On Sunday Mornings at 8:45 a.m. we will continue our study of the Formula of Concord. So that you can read and prepare for each class, as I am sure you will, here is a list of the articles that remain to be discussed, in this order:

1. Article V - The Law and the Gospel
2. Article VI - The Third Use of the Law
3. Article VII - The Holy Supper of Christ
4. Article VIII - The Person of Christ
5. Article IX - Christ's Descent into Hell
6. Article XI - Predestination/Election
7. Article XII - Other Factions (Heresies) and Sects

FROM YOUR STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

Is life more that you can handle right now?

Are you adjusting to a new job, a change in marital status, a serious illness, the death of a loved one, or just experiencing a lonely or difficult time in your life?

Could you benefit from having someone who would listen and care and walk with you through this difficult time?

There Is No Need To Struggle Alone!

Everyone goes through difficult times. Having someone to care, to listen, to share God's love with you can help you get through the confusion, stress, or loneliness you may be experiencing. God does not intend for you to struggle alone.



The Jelly Bean Prayer

RED is for the blood He gave.
GREEN is for the grass He made.
YELLOW is for the sun so bright.
ORANGE is for the edge of night.
BLACK is for the sins we made.
WHITE is for the grace He gave.
PURPLE is for His hour of sorrow.
PINK is for our new tomorrow.
A bag full of jelly beans colorful and sweet,
Is a prayer, is a promise, is a special treat.

HAPPY EASTER!
HE IS RISEN!

*LWML Spring Prayer Service
 Monday, April 11, 2016*

**I WILL SAY OF
 THE LORD
 "HE IS MY REFUGE
 AND MY FORTRESS
 MY GOD
 IN WHOM I TRUST."**

Psalm 91:2

Soup supper - 5:30 p.m.

Prayer service 6:30 p.m.

Peace Lutheran

5675 Field Street

Arvada, CO

All ladies welcome to attend!



Lutheran Women In Mission

Bountiful! * Sow * Nourish *

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times; having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

THIS IS THE LWML

Women in The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod . . . each a Christian person, beginning "where she is" to

DECLARE GOD'S GLORY:

In the Home – finding time for private prayer and Bible study . . . reflecting Christ's love in service to her family . . . listening, understanding, and strengthening her loved ones. . .

In the Church – searching the Word in Bible study groups . . . working within the organization of God's people . . . joining to praise Him in the circle of the redeemed. . .

In the Community – reaching out to the lonely neighbor, to the sick and deprived at her doorstep . . . prayerfully considering the talent of her time for service in institutions.

To the World - bonded into a national organization . . . mites prayerfully given for the mission of the church . . .

**TOGETHER IN CHRIST,
Sharing the Word!**

Mission of the Month

RMD Debt Assistance Program--The Rocky Mountain Debt Assistance Program was formed to address our new pastors' high educational debt loads. One of the recipients responded, "I am writing to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the District's debt relief of \$819.00 – nearly 5 months of loan payments." Let's keep our pastors in our prayers as we give our mites to support this \$7500 grant.

MITE SUNDAY – April 10

LWML BAKE SALE – APRIL 24

The Time is NOW to connect with the younger generation in our church by developing a relationship with them. One by one. It is our trust and hope to share the mission of the LWML with Emily Peck. How can we do this? Wheat Ridge Lutheran Women in Mission would like to send Emily to the District LWML Convention in June in Colorado Springs to participate as a Teen Representative. We are asking your help in providing and buying baked goods at a Bake Sale on Sunday, April 24. Proceeds from the Bake Sale will help

with the registration, meals, and housing costs for this convention. She is our future!

LWML Celebration Sunday – April 10

Lutheran Women in Mission praise the Lord for opportunities to share His message and love with people in all walks of life throughout this community and the world. **Sunday, April 10** the LWML invites you to join us in celebrating the joy of serving the Lord with gladness in this congregation. Wear Purple!

Please join us:

--at **Sunday morning Adult Bible Class** on April 10 for a special guest speaker, Rev. Craig Donofrio. He is a missionary who will be serving in Prague, Czech Republic.

--at **Worship**, together we offer our praise to God for the opportunities we have had to share His message and love with people in all walks of life throughout our community and the world.

--at **Brunch**, to be provided and served by the LWML following worship.

In gathering

In coordination with the District LWML Convention in June, we will collect food and novelty items to fill boxes to send to our US Military Soldiers. One or two of the listed items below will be your admittance to the Brunch. If you should forget your item, you may bring it anytime throughout the month of April.

Suggested novelty items:

--Card games, kid's toys, soft cover books, magazines, squirt guns, water balloons, puzzle books, Sunday funnies,

Suggested food items: (no chocolate)

--Single serve drink mixes, fruit Roll Ups, Hard candy, Single serving bags of chips/crackers, Tootsie Pops and Tootsie Rolls, Sunflower seeds, nuts, and Microwave popcorn packets

Travel size personal items:

--Lotion, Deodorant, foot powder, sunscreen

All items will need to fit in a USPS Flat Rate Box

MITE SUNDAY WILL BE APRIL 10th
Be sure to bring in those filled boxes!

Christian Education

We hope you had a beautiful Easter Day and a Springtime full of bright sunshine, warm breezes, colorful blossoms and joyful praises to our resurrected Lord!

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION will hold its monthly meeting at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, April 5. Any member of WRELC is welcome to attend.

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL sends our weekly offerings to **Tennyson Center for Children**. The Tennyson Center serves children ages 5-18 who are in crisis, particularly those suffering from abuse and neglect. In the past, we have visited this facility with our Sunday School children. The staff there are wonderful and they help many children. Our prayers are with them and the work they do.

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Such talented students in our midst!
Drawing done by **Matt Maag**
We praise God for blessing Matt with such talent!

Spring Cleaning
April 16 through April 23 All Days
9:00 am-12:00pm

Our building and grounds are in need of annual sprucing up and cleaning. Please schedule some of your time to help us.

A list of needs will be in the church narthex. Do anything on the list, plus any work that you think should be on the list. When completed, mark it off.

The building is open all days 9-12 for inside work. All times are available for outside work.

You may need to use your own equipment/tools. If a need arises to purchase items, keep receipt for reimbursement.

Questions, direct to Bob Brazell, Roger Osterberg, Don Kugler, or James Broscheit.

Thank you in advance for your help.
Board of Church Properties

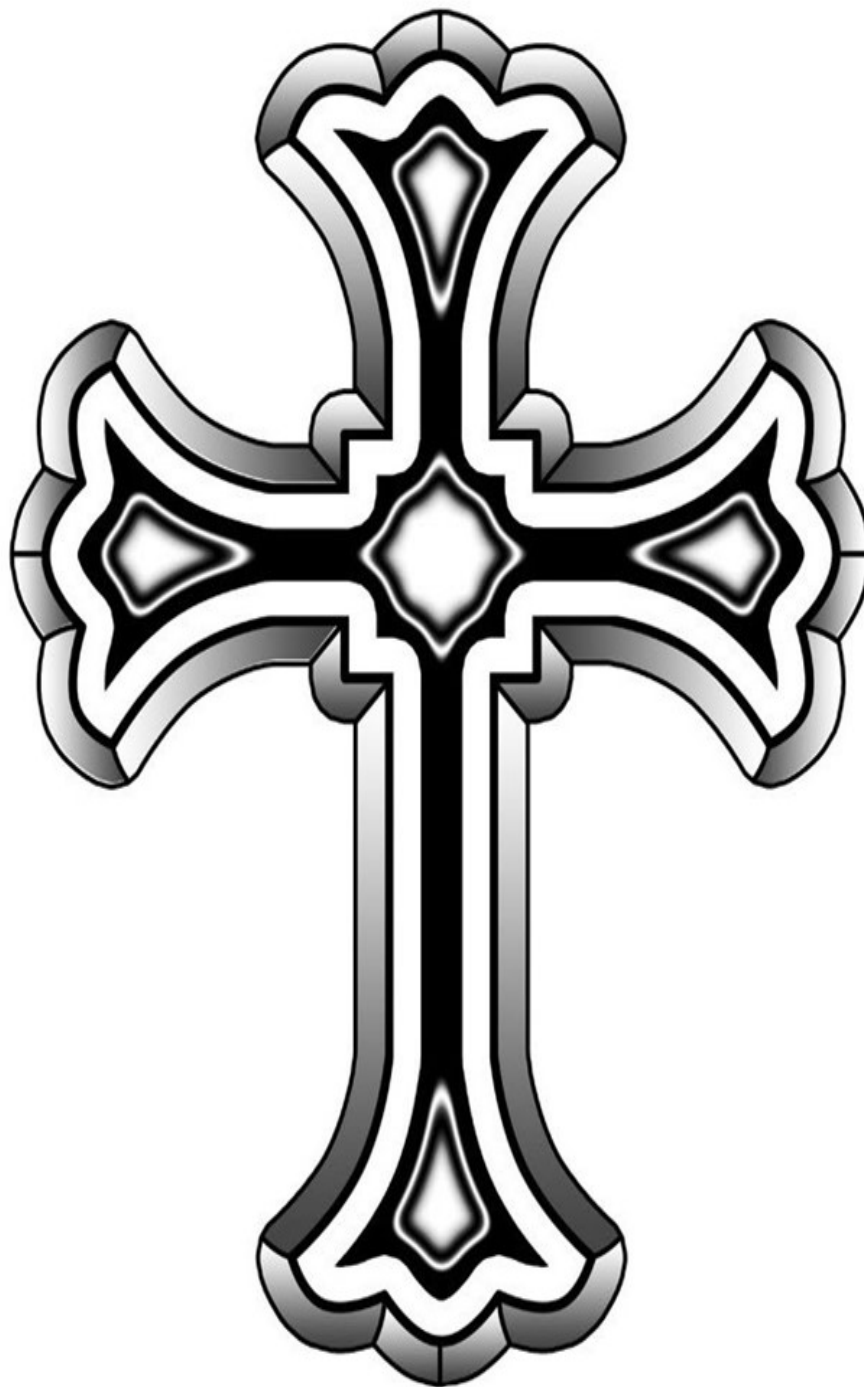
A HUGE THANK YOU!
We would like to thank all the cooks and crews who provided the delicious soups and desserts for our mid-week Lenten meals. Also thank you to all who contributed to the Matthew 25 Fund. A total of \$306.00 was collected! This money is used by Pastor to help people in need—members and non-members alike. **THANK YOU AGAIN!**

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NOTICE

"I'm SO confused! When do I turn in my newsletter article??? The date keeps changing!"

To avoid confusion, the deadline to submit all dates for calendars, articles for the newsletter, etc., etc., will be the 15th of the previous month. So for the May newsletter, the deadline will be April 15, and so on. Hope this helps! **PLAN AHEAD!**
Questions? Call the office.



Heroes of the Bible

**Vacation Bible School
June 20 - 24, 2016**



Chorus

From Handel's "Messiah"

Music and Text: George Frederick Handel, 1685- 1759

Scriptural References: Revelation 19:6, Revelation 19:16 and Revelation 11:15

If Handel's father had had his way, the "*Hallelujah Chorus*" would never have been written. His father was a down-to-earth, practical man who was determined to send his son to law school. Even though Handel showed amazing musical ability as a child, his father refused to allow him to take lessons. When he was eight or nine years old, a duke heard him play the organ following a worship service. Handel's father was immediately requested to provide formal musical training for him. By the time Handel turned 12, he had written his first composition. By the age of 20, he was the talk of England and the best paid composer on Earth.

Audiences for Handel's works were unpredictable, and even the Church of England criticized him for writing biblical dramas to be performed in secular theaters. Upon facing a concert with very few people in the audience Handel is known to have said, "Never mind. The music will sound better due to the improved acoustics of a very empty concert hall!"

After a wealthy friend, Charles Jennings, gave Handel a libretto based on the life of Christ, he received a commission to compose for a benefit performance to raise money for a hospital in London. Handel set to work on August 22, 1741. He was so absorbed in the music that he rarely left his room, hardly stopping to eat. He wrote 260 pages in just 24 days. Sir Newman Flower, one of Handel's many biographers, said, "Considering the immensity of the work and the short time involved, it will remain, perhaps forever, the greatest feat in the whole history of music composition." Handel's title for the commissioned work was, simply, *Messiah*.

Messiah premiered on April 13, 1742. A year later, Handel staged it in London. Even though controversy coming from the Church of England plagued Handel, the King of England attended the performance. As the first notes of the "*Hallelujah Chorus*" rang out, the king rose. Following royal protocol, the entire audience stood, too. This began a tradition that has lasted for more than two centuries.

Handel's religious beliefs have confused many historians. In a time when Christian musicians typically worked for local churches, this composer of secular opera, chamber, and orchestral music did not fit the usual pattern. Yet raised as a Lutheran, Handel was a devout follower of Christ. A few days before Handel died, he stated his wish to die on Good Friday. He lived until the morning of Good Saturday, April 14, 1759. His close friend, James Smyth, wrote, "He died as he lived--a good Christian, with a true sense of his duty to God and to man, and in perfect charity with all the world."

Handel didn't write *Messiah* for the music historians or classical music geeks. He wrote it to tell the story of Jesus to ordinary people through music. The "*Hallelujah Chorus*" is instantly recognizable, even by those who do not consider themselves to be Christians.

By Sheila Fornall