



MAY 2021

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From the Pastor

In the flesh He came to this spinning globe of ours. Flesh like you, flesh like me, He came to his own creation. Born from His mother raised by His earthly father. Skinned knees and blathering first words; this is the God before whom we kneel. This is the God whom we sing praises to. ... But of course He didn't stay an infant; no human does. He grew and learned and learned and grew. He did the things of a kid and the things of a youth. He struggled as a teenager and became His own man in His twenties. ... But this we all know of course. ... We know also that He lived this life of ours in perfection; under the law and yet never once transgressing it. He taught and preached and healed and performed signs. He ate with the likes of thieving tax collectors, had his feet washed by the hair of a woman you wouldn't be caught dead having a conversation with, and managed to infuriate almost every person who thought they had this thing called life figured out; who thought that they had the designs and desires of that Creator God figured out; who thought they knew the way to be found in the good graces of the King of the universe. To these types Jesus wasn't too popular.

To the cross He went, and then to the grave; dead as dead can be. His disciples were terrified once again; terrified and angry and confused and doubting. But to them He appeared again, risen from the dead, nail-marked hands outstretched to place their fingers into; offering comfort to terrified souls. He was with them again; appearing in the upper room, and on a beach, and on a hill. And up on that hill He ascended into heaven; never to be seen again by sinfully earthly eyes.

His death won atonement for the sins of the world. We know that to be true, because He promised it to be so. His death paid the ransom for the enemies of God to be bought back by this Creator in the heavens in whom we had no assurance as to who He was. ... Turns out He is good. And gracious. And merciful. And loving. Turns out He isn't that tyrant that we might all fear Him to be, but instead a compassionate God who spares not even His own Son to reconcile back a fallen creation; to reconcile back a world full of His enemies; to reconcile back the likes of you and me. You know, the type of people who find themselves neck deep in the same sort of sin that they promised they would be free of yesterday. The type of people who can't offer one single day or one selfless act of thankfulness and praise without tainting it with selfish sin. The type of people who deserve to left for dead and yet have been promised eternal life instead.

This is the God we have. And this is the one we have sitting on the throne; sitting there in the flesh, your flesh and mine. Nail marks still visible in hands and feet. Spear thrust still gapping in His side. This is the God we shout praises to, clap our hands for, sing loud songs to: the God of Creation who deserves our praise because of His omnipotent power yet became man and made Himself the God of salvation by taking on the form of a servant.

And it is in this way that He reigns this Ascension Day: as the God of Salvation. Not as a God who dismisses your sin. Not as a God you turns a blind eye to your sin. Not as a God who says, "To ere is human." Because to ere is not human.

He is human and He committed no sin. He doesn't reign with all things placed under His feet so that He can justify sin, but so that He can justify the sinner. ... And this He does for you and for me. And for this we clap our hands and shout for joy and sing at the top of our voices. For the God of creation is our God of salvation.

And as He reigns in heaven He dwells with us on earth; splashing us with crystal clear water, feeding us with fleshly bread and bloody wine, and speaking words of absolution over us. In all of this He takes our sins away, removes them from East to West, forgives them for His own sake. He declares this on His throne in heaven and we receive Him each Divine Service. ... The Ascended King finds it in Himself to eat once again with poor miserable sinners. This is why the Christian has such great joy on the Day of Ascension. Christ isn't gone, He is right here. And for this we shout Alleluia! ...

**In the name of Jesus,
Rev. Eli**

What We Believe—Augsburg Confession

Article XX—Good Works (Part 2, Paragraphs 11-22)

Note: This is another key article in the Augsburg Confession. Article XX offers more details about faith and works than what was previously written. Lutherans insist on the biblical truth that our good works do not save us. So they are sometimes accused of opposing good works. This article sets forth the Bible's clear teach that good works are the fruit of faith, not the cause of our salvation. Rome continues to insist that people are saved by God's grace, but not through faith alone. This teaching dangerously encourages people to believe they are able, even in some small way, to contribute toward their salvation. This diverts their focus from Christ and His merits to their own works. It also leads to despair, doubt, and uncertainty when people come to realize the enormity of their sin and wonder if in fact they have done "enough" to merit or deserve God's favor. After setting forth the proper biblical distinction between faith and good works, the Augsburg Confession asserts very clearly that our good works are necessary, not to merit grace, but because this is God's will for our lives. God's gift of saving faith enables us to do good works. (See also Ap XX; SA III XIII; FC Ep IV and SD IV.)

This doctrine about fiat is presented everywhere by Paul, "By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

If anyone wants to be tricky and say that we have invented a new interpretation of Paul, this entire matter is supported by the testimony of the Fathers. Augustine defends grace and the righteousness of faith in many volumes against the merits of works. Ambrose, in his book *The Calling of the Gentiles*, and elsewhere, teaches the same thing. In *The Calling of the Gentiles* he says, "Redemption by Christ's blood would be worth very little, and God's mercy would not surpass man's works, if justification, which is accomplished through grace, were due to prior merits. So justification would not be the free gift from a donor, but the reward due the laborer.

Spiritually inexperienced people despise this teaching. However, God-fearing and anxious consciences find by experience that it brings the greatest consolation. Consciences cannot be set at rest through any works, but only by faith, when they take the sure ground that for Christ's sake they have a gracious God. As Paul teaches, "since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Romans 5:1). This whole doctrine must be related to the conflict of the terrified conscience. It cannot be understood apart from that conflict. Therefore, inexperienced and irreverent people have poor judgment in this matter because they dream that Christian righteousness is nothing but civil and philosophical righteousness.

Until now consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works. They did not hear consolation from the Gospel. Some people were driven by conscience not the desert and into monasteries, hoping to merit grace by a monastic life. Some people came up with other works to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. That is why the need was so great for teaching and renewing the doctrine of faith in Christ, so that anxious consciences would not be without consolation but would know that grace, forgiveness of sins, and justification are received by faith in Christ.

Something Worth Reading

The Resurrection Fact: Responding to Modern Critics—Edited by John J. Bombaro & Adam S. Francisco

In the first century, the resurrection fact faced both Jewish and Greek audience with a challenge, the challenge of a new reality: Christ, the risen Lord. Since fact are by definition was witnessed, proclaimed, and recorded, the fact stands for all generations. In answering critics, a defense of the resurrection consists not only of a response by way of negation (e.g. Christianity is not this), but also through positive affirmations (this is Christianity). In this book, the reader will find both. However, it is our hope that the final word retained would be the one that stands for something rather than against something. Together, our words stand for something positive not negative, namely the good news that the one true God has now taken charge of the world, in and through Jesus and His death and resurrection.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

The Parish Planning Council appointed the following church members to our nominating committee for the June election: Pastor Eli, Brian DeLaet, Ray Bickner, and Lucy Simons. The committee has met two times in the month of April. They are actively eliciting candidates for board positions and officers. Interested members may contact any member of the committee to add their names to the list of nominees.

The deadline to submit your name is May 30, 2021.



THANKS for using the Loyalty Card: King Soopers has sent us \$405.63 from their Loyalty Card Program for the period January 1st through March 31, 2021. Altogether 29 Households participated.



Welcome to all women of the congregation!

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10

MISSION OF THE MONTH - Making Jesus Known in the United States Ethnic Communities - \$100,000

There are many ethnic church workers enrolled at each Concordia Seminary in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIT) or center for Hispanic Studies (CHS) programs. Both share the mission to make Christ known in their respective ethnic communities. These students often have strained financial circumstances, making it difficult to pay for this necessary education. This mission grant will assist these devoted students and church workers by funding their education costs.

Please help fund this project by dropping your money into the Mite Box.

MITE SUNDAY is May 16

We invite you to support our many mission projects, national and district with your gift at the coffee table in the narthex. Thank you!



Mite Goal for 2019-2021 Biennium: \$2,100,000.00

Amount Received: \$2,204,724.35

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

LWML 2021 National Convention

Running the Race....Looking to Jesus

June 24-27, 2021

Lexington, Kentucky

Due to Covid restrictions the Rupp Arena, where the LWML Convention will be held, can only allow a limited number of people to attend at this time. Registration is shut down at this time with 2,000 registered. The Board of Directors anticipates that the percentage allowed will increase.

LWML Spring Ingathering - Layette Kits to benefit Orphan Grain Train

Look for additional information in the Newsletter for items that are needed for the Layette Kits.

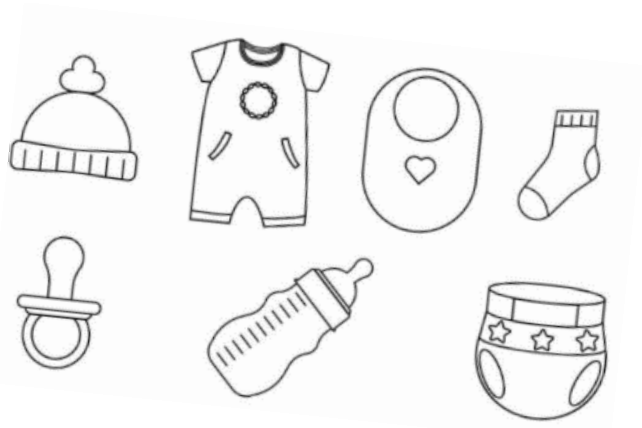
LWML Meeting is Saturday, May 8 at 9:00 am. We will have an election of officers. All women of the congregation are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

LWML Spring Ingathering - Layette Kits to benefit Orphan Grain Train

These layette kits will provide families with needed items for a newborn and provide hope and assistance to those who are in need. Orphan Grain Train gives compassionate response to those in need in the US and Abroad.

Layette Kits include:

- 2 Diapers (cloth or disposable)
- Baby wipes (travel size)
- Pacifier – new
- Bottle - new
- Sleeper
- Onesie (1-piece underwear)*
- Receiving Blanket*
- Blanket*



*Clothing and blankets can be new or gently used
Please no baby powders or lotions due to Customs restrictions.

You can donate one or more items or a complete kit. If you donate a completed kit, please wrap/fold all contents in the blanket.

Deadline for donations, Sunday May 30

The members of LWML thank you for your continued support of our activities.



The Ascension of Our Lord
Divine Service
Thursday, May 13, 2021
6:30pm



10% Endowment Funds Requests

During our June 2021 Voters Assembly Meeting we will vote to approve requests to spend the most recent 10% disbursement from our Endowment Fund. Members wishing to make requests from this amount of \$7,085.00 should submit them in writing or email to the Church office, ideally by May 31st. Email to office@wrlutheran.org or drop them off. Questions please contact the office or Brian Echtenkamp. This a wonderful blessing for our congregation, and Thanks Be to Him for what he provides!

Happy Birthday

- 1 – Kathy Jensen
- 3 – Kay Stefan
- 5 – Kenneth Ranum
- 8 – Dennis Hofts
- 9 – Trevor Griego
- 12 – Juliene Hendricks
- 13 – Patricia Wulf
- 14 – John Rolf
- 15 – Jocelyn Robinson
- 15 – Alan Simons
- 18 – Catherine Bell
- 24 – Ralph Gaide
- 25 – Lou Nelson
- 27 – Lori Maag
- 27 – Sue McGlaughlin
- 29 – Brekken Lundin
- 29 – Ariana Martinez



Happy Anniversary

- 13 – Dennis & Jolene Weddingfeld
- 29 – Monte & Sherri Lowrey
- 30 – Allen & Patricia Wulf



Baptism Birthdays

Eady Broscheit
Addison Griego
Juliene Hendricks
Sue Hink
Brooke Lundin
Kaytlin Pacheco
Kayla Pacheco
Kenneth Ranum
John Rolf
Collier Thompson
Tom Wonnacott