



JULY 2021

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## From the Pastor

*"Prayer is just as strictly and seriously commanded as all other commandments: to have no other God, not to kill, not to steal, and so on. Let no one think that it makes no difference whether he prays or not... Prayer is not left to my will to do it or leave it undone, but it shall and must be offered at the risk of God's wrath and displeasure."—Martin Luther from the Introduction on the Lord's Prayer, Large Catechism*

This sounds like an odd thing to hear; that prayer is commanded by God. But as Martin Luther teaches us in the Explanation to the Second Commandment, "We should call upon [God's Name] in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." ... This is what God demands of us when He says, "**You shall not misuse the Name of the Lord your God!**" We must call upon God's Name in prayer and petition. We must take our requests to Him; for not only is this His desire, but it is His command.

We often forget that God's commands are given to us for our benefit. God does not arbitrarily throw out instructions and guidelines just for the fun of it. He does not sit in heaven and write out strict directives for us to follow just to amuse Himself. All of God's Law, all of His commands, are given to us for our good... And so it is with His command to pray.

Prayer is something that a lot of us let slip by the wayside. Perhaps we are too lazy. Maybe we think that we aren't worthy. Maybe we feel as if God won't listen to our sinful words because they are not eloquent enough. All of these excuses are nothing more than ways to sinfully justify our lack of prayer. ... God's Law is not optional; and so neither is prayer.

We also must understand that such a command is not given just so we may turn it into a work. Remember Jesus' parable about the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax collector. As the Pharisee used prayer as an opportunity to build himself up and belittle his neighbor; the tax collector stood off in a corner with his eyes buried in the ground and begged, "**God, be merciful to me, a sinner!**" ... This is what prayer is! It is the blessing that God has given to us sinful people to address our Lord and God and lay before Him all of our troubles and burdens. It is the gift of being able to approach a holy God, a God whom we sinful creatures should never have the chance to address, and ask Him for all of our daily and spiritual needs.

God desires this and He knows that we need this. It is to our benefit and our eternal good that we have this opportunity to come as a child of the Father and ask Him for His grace, mercy, forgiveness, and favor. And let us also know that because God has commanded prayer from us, we can be assured that He will hear our prayer as well. As Luther tells us in his Large Catechism, "For in addition to this commandment and promise, God expects us and He Himself arranges the words and form of prayer for us. He places them on our lips for how and what we should pray [Psalm 51:15], so that we may see how heartily He pities us in our distress [Psalm 4:1], and we may never doubt that such prayer is pleasing to Him and shall certainly be answered."

God gives us prayer. God commands us to pray. God promises to hear us when we pray. God promises to answer our prayers because of the death and resurrection of Christ. ... Let us pray...

**Rev. Eli Lietza**

## What We Believe—Augsburg Confession

### **Augsburg Confession Article XXI: Worship of the Saints (paragraphs 1-4)**

Our churches teach that the history of saints may be set before us so that we may follow the example of their faith and good works, according to our calling. For example, the emperor may follow the example of David [2 Samuel] in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings. But the Scriptures do not teach that we are to call on the saints or to ask the saints for help. Scripture sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Atoning Sacrifice, High Priest, and Intercessor [1 Timothy 2:5-6]. He is to be prayed to. He has promised that He will hear our prayer [John 14:13]. This is the worship that He approves above all other worship, that He be called upon in all afflictions. “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father” (1 John 2:1).

## Something Worth Reading

### Grace upon Grace: Spirituality for Today—John W. Kleinig

“Joy is also the rather unexpected bonus of prayer. That is the promise of Jesus in John 16:23-24, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be full.”** ... Joy is the by-product of prayer in the name of Jesus. It comes from the exercise of our faith in Him. It comes from praying together with Jesus and speaking to the Father as those who share in His Sonship. It comes from receiving the blessings that Jesus has won for us by His death and resurrection. The joy of prayer is the joy of receiving grace upon grace, one blessing after another, from God the Father.”



## *Lutheran Worship 101*

### Overview (Part 2)

(For Part 1 see last month's newsletter!)

When speaking of worship, the Third Commandment comes to mind. It is helpful to review the Small Catechism and its teaching on the Third Commandment. This commandment states: **“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”** *What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.* (Luther's Small Catechism)

(The following points come from the discussion of the Third Commandment in the Small Catechism.) The Sabbath was the day, the seventh day, that God had set aside in the Old Testament as the required day of rest and worship. And as noted in the SC, “Sabbath” means rest.

So, for the people of Israel, the Sabbath was the day set aside for sacred use. "Set aside" is another way of saying that the Sabbath was holy. How is the day kept holy? We gain insight in this by examining the meaning of the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer: **"Hallowed be Thy name."** The meaning of this petition tells us: *"God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity..."* The Sabbath day is holy not by our resting but as the Word of God is present. And as the name of Jesus is called upon in the Invocation, Jesus, the Word made flesh, is present as well. God through His presence in the Word makes the time holy, sacred.

But hasn't the Sabbath been done away with? In Jesus, the Law of the Sabbath has been fulfilled, but that does not mean that it is done away with. The Sabbath points to Jesus, who is our Sabbath Rest. Matt. 11:28 *"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Also Heb. 4:9-10)

In worship we "rest" while God does the work. Through the Word of forgiveness spoken by the pastor in the Absolution, in the Sacraments and finally in the Word, read and proclaimed, God brings us rest through the power of the Gospel in the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus. In worship, the heavy burden of guilt and sin is removed. That is our rest.

While the Sabbath requirements of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in Jesus, the church gathers at a particular time and place that has been set aside for worship. The time and place are made holy by the presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament. The church gathers to be fed and nourished and to find its rest in Christ.

And now with this overview, it's time to look at what happens as the people of God assemble in the sacred time and place. With the next installment we will begin a closer look at the Divine Service. *SDG*



Smoker Challenge: Hear ye hear ye! It has come to our attention that an unnamed member of the ACTS Board has claimed to be the supreme smoker cook in all the shire. In order to provide a fair and balanced venue to address this challenge, the ACTS, Church Relations, Properties boards *and* the LWML have agreed to work together to sponsor a festival. We will combine the festival with a work/cleaning day for the church and grounds. Said festival will be held in the second half of July. We will provide further info as the details are worked out. 2020 was a dreary year. Let's lift our spirits and enjoy our fellowship and community in 2021 with good food, good drink and elbow grease. Smoking gurus should apply to Carol Mathews to coordinate meats and stipends for the potluck. Casting of lots to predict the winner is frowned on, but I have heard that the loser will have to smoke his own crow.

Keep checking your Sunday bulletin for further details.

## STATE OF THE CONGREGATION JULY 2021

It has been a difficult year for all of us. The uncertainty of the times has been wearing on all. We thank all for their efforts to guide us all through these trying times. Everyone has done their best to hold us together in our worship. The Lord has truly blessed this congregation! He has made us stronger and even more resilient than in the past.

It has been exceptionally difficult for our friends from Redeemer. We are saddened that they had to close their doors this year. There is an old saying; When the Lord closes one door, he opens another. Let us all make Wheat Ridge Lutheran your open door and heartily welcome all our friends from Redeemer! We look forward to being your new church home and will work diligently to make you feel “at home”.

It is time now to look forward and set new goals to meet the future needs of our church family. All members are always invited to attend the Parish Planning Council meetings and add to your church leadership’s efforts to guide our congregation in God’s work. If you cannot attend, the meeting minutes will always be posted on the bulletin board at the back of the narthex. We wish for all of you to be involved in, and informed, of this church’s leadership actions. We are here firstly to serve the Lord, and then the earthly needs of this congregation.

Please help us in our efforts to produce a new church directory. It is so helpful to be able to introduce our new members to the congregation and assist the existing members in figuring out who are all those new faces in their family. Pictures are taken between services.

Church boards and officers will always be listed on the bulletin board by the library. We hope you will be able to find a niche that fits your talents in serving the Lord. We can always use additional help and ideas to improve our efforts in making this community work for all. Unlike the army, it is good to step forward and volunteer.

It will be interesting to see what happens as we face the challenges of the new year. Christians are under attack around the world. We must hold steadfast in our beliefs as Missouri Lutherans! Now if I can just get our property director to fix things faster, life will be good.

Larry Mathews  
Executive Director



### **Library News**

The library is pleased to announce that the rolling cart will be in the narthex on Sundays with new acquisitions, Pastor Eli's recommendations, Librarian favorites, and seasonal suggestions for you to peruse.

### **New Acquisitions**

- THE EXECUTIONER'S REDEMPTION, by Rev. Timothy Carter—The true account of one man's journey from executioner to pastor.
- ALIVE BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, by Kim Bastien—A beautiful concept book to help adults lay a foundation for the sanctity of life and that God knew and loved you before you were born.
- HAMMER OF GOD, a novel by Bo Giertz
- CHRONICALS OF THE KINGS, by Lynn Austin, Historical Fiction author,
  1. THE STRENGTH OF HIS HAND—Legacy of Hezekiah
- THE RESTORATION CHRONICLES, by Lynn Austin, (This series chronicles the Israelites return to the promised land following their exile in Babylon)
  1. RETURN TO ME
  2. KEEPERS OF THE COVENANT
  3. ON THIS FOUNDATION

### **Coming soon:**

From well-respected historian, Eric Metaxas:

- BONHOEFFER, Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy
- 7 MEN AND THE SECRET OF THEIR GREATNESS
- 7 WOMEN AND THE SECRET OF THEIR GREATNESS
- AMAZING GRACE: WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

From Kenneth E. Bailey:

- JESUS THROUGH MIDDLE EASTERN EYES, Cultural Studies in the Gospels

**Remember the Adult Summer Reading Program goes through the middle of August**





# **Multi Family Sale** **Wheat Ridge Lutheran Church**

**8600 West 38th Ave, Wheat Ridge**

**August 12-14**

**LWML Fundraiser for Playground  
Equipment Update**

**Save the Date!**

**Donate your Stuff !**



*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*

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) welcomed 2,787 people to the LWML Convention in Lexington, Kentucky, June 24–27, 2021, under the theme "Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus." The convention theme was based on Hebrews 12:1–2. The voting body for the 39th Biennial Convention of the LWML adopted a \$2,150,000 mission goal for the 2021–2023 biennium. This goal, by the grace of God, will fund 28 mission grants as women and men respond in prayer and offerings during the next two years.



### **MITE SUNDAY – July 18th**

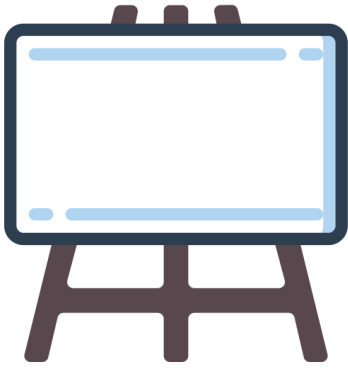
#### **Be a missionary and Share Jesus' Love!**

Each of you, giving and praying for our Mission Grants both national and district, brings the Mission Goals closer and brings the hope of Jesus to others.

We invite you to support our many Mission Grants with your gift of Mites at the fellowship table. Thank You!

The Wheat Ridge LWML is now collecting new and gently used clothing for Orphan Grain Train. If you have any clothing items from baby all the way up to adult, please drop them in box marked Orphan Grain Train.

**The next LWML meeting will be Saturday, September 4th at 9:00 am. All women of the congregation are invited!**



The Wednesday Bible Study Class wants to give a special thank you to all members who contributed to the white board fund. Thanks to the Memorials Committee for the contribution. Thanks to Larry Mathews for all the leg work and getting the white board ordered. And thanks to Larry and Pastor for putting it together. It's a fine edition to Wheat Ridge Lutheran Church.



## ADULT CHOIR CAMP

Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Fellowship, Team-building,  
And LOTS of Music!

Lunch will be served!

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Ascension Lutheran Church in Littleton is looking for a full-time Administrative Assistant, to start early to mid-August 2021. The Administrative Assistant serves the church by providing administrative and secretarial services to the Pastor, other support staff, boards and officers, volunteers and congregation. The position is 40 hours per week and reports to the Pastor. Salary to be determined.

If you are interested in this position, please contact the office (303) 794-4636 or email [alutheran@aol.com](mailto:alutheran@aol.com) for a complete job description.