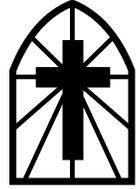


ST. JOHN LUTHERAN LCMS, REV MAYNARD TOENSING, JR., PASTOR
11400 WEST PANAMA ROAD, CRETE, NE 68333



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION Share the Joy of His News by growing inward through God's Word, Sacraments and fellowship and by growing outward through words, actions, and mission outreach.

VOLUME 34 ISSUE 6

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My father's favorite number is three. For a long time, mine was six. I don't really have a favorite number now, so I will borrow my dad's. Three. Three years. It has been three years that I have served as your pastor. It is wonderful to be in service to you according to God's grace.

Three is a good and godly number. It is the number of the Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, they are one. One God in Three persons. An eternal truth revealed in God's Word and yet beyond our comprehension. How can God be One and yet Three? Thank the Lord we are saved not by understanding, but by believing this; by faith in God's Word and faith in Christ.

So what has been most important in the last three years? For me, I'm going to copy again; not from my dad but from St. Paul. 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (ESV): "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." It's all about Jesus—the Son of God made flesh who came to save us from sin. He died and rose again so that we might live forever in harmony once again with God.

Grace and mercy. The grace of God is that we get what we do not deserve—heaven and a multitude of gifts. Mercy is not getting what we do deserve—we have been pardoned of sin in Christ and we are no longer bound for hell. The mercies of God are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). And as we receive from God, so we are to be in grace and then be gracious in our service toward others.

This is the Gospel message that is clear and to be clearly proclaimed in all seasons and all circumstances. And right now, it might seem hard to do. God calls us to wisdom—His wisdom of standing for what is right and good according to His commands and holding out His love toward others, with wisdom, love, justice, and mercy.

Our nation and our world experiences the ebbs and flows of unrest and pandemic and famine and conflict in greater and lesser degrees. Underlying all unrest is the sin and sinfulness that broke the world back with Adam and Eve. Satan was there then. And Satan is still stirring all things up to cause disorder and chaos and fear and anger and helplessness surround us.

BUT ... we have Christ; rather HE has us—in His care and love. He prays for us and we learn to pray for the good of our souls, our families, our communities and for all people everywhere. We pray for violence to end. We pray for reason and wisdom among all people. We pray for wars to end and for healing of divisions. We pray for an end to the pandemic and an end to poverty. Most of all, we pray that everyone might come to faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Jesus our Lord said the world would be troubled and in constant conflict until He comes to restore all things to their right way (see Matthew 24). It is often hard to accept that we must wait on God to fix things. It is hard to accept that He does not do as we want Him to do now. He will fix things. Conflicts will come to an end. Peace will be restored—He will do it. In His time. In His way. And faith trusts Him even when we cannot see the results we would like to see now. We trust in Christ alone for salvation. We live according to His commands. We seek to do His will which is being faithful to His Word and promises—and this includes prayer and patience.

What will the next three days, three weeks, three months, three years, etc. hold for us? As individuals? As a congregation? We don't know. But this we know: Christ Jesus lives and God is with us in His grace. We have salvation in Jesus' holy and precious name. We are bound for heaven and spared from punishment. We can rest in Him even when all around us is in unrest. Nothing can separate His love from us (Romans 8:31-39). God keep you in Christ who was crucified, yet who lives for you and you with Him.

Peace to you in Jesus' name, Pastor Toensing

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JUNE BIRTHDAYS & BAPTISMS

BIRTHDAYS

2 Wendi & Austin Haufle
3 Terry Dittmer
4 Emma Hoyer
6 Susan Tremblay
7 Greg Kalkwarf, Ella Jo Hughes
8 Verna Schultz,
9 Devon Reitz, Dewayne & Henry Slama
12 Madison Hestermann, Kelli Jordan
13 Garrett Reitz
14 Jeff Hollman, Verna Louch
17 Roger Koch, Hunter Persing
18 Wally Wild

19 Theodore Muff, Jacob Wohl
20 Trevor Wagner
21 Kimberly Scott
23 Ariana Munro, Morgan Wohl
24 Kyle Ochs
25 Amanda Easley, Dave Musil, Elmer Reetz
28 Colton Homolka, Cinder Johnson
29 Steve Vanasperen, Victoria Rethmeier
30 Patricia Behrens, Cindy Hoyer, Heath Dewey

BAPTISMS

1 Tonya Clark, Rylee Pospichal
3 Doug Karl

4 Nick Ellingson, Michael Ellingson, Diane Kahle, Kenneth Kastanek
5 Irelynn Kirkpatrick, Shirley Vosika
7 Ken Behrens, Darleen Dittmer
8 Gwendolyn Dewey, Eric Dewey Jr.
9 Carsyn Ziemann, Samantha Wagner
11 John Haufle, Lane Wendelin
15 Caleb Markey, Charlie Slama
19 Andrea Pomajzl, John Reitz
20 Greg Kalkwarf
22 Elliott Reitz
24 Emma Hoyer, Bob Renner
25 Michael Gropp
28 Terry Dittmer, Verna Louch

CHRISTIAN SYMBOL—Olive



The olive branch is a symbol of peace, harmony and healing. Olive trees provide shelter, as well as oil used for ointment and consecration. The olive branch also represents deliverance from hardships and anxiety because a dove brought an olive leaf back to Noah's ark after the flood ended (Genesis 8:11).