

The Grace Lutheran

Newsletter of Grace LCMS – Greenwood, Arkansas

May 2026

From Pastor's Desk...

Celebrating Mother's Day— Luther Style

Martin Luther could regard any day as Mother's Day. The value he placed on the maternal vocation stood in sharp contrast to the views of his contemporaries. The Roman Church had barred its clergy from marriage and its procreative fruit. Women were thought holier if they became nuns rather than wives or mothers. Martin Luther fought against this idea for much of his life. He wrote: *The godless world is moved neither by God's ordinance nor by the sweet nature of little children who are produced in marriage; it sees only the shortcomings and hardships in marriage—it does not see the great treasure and benefit that is in it.*

Luther valued motherhood highly, recognizing its origin in the very design of God's creation. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) was, in Luther's estimation, "more than a command, namely, a divine ordinance which is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore." In brief, God created women for motherhood: *The saintly women desire nothing else than the natural fruit of their bodies. For by nature woman has been created for the purpose of bearing children. Therefore, she has breasts; she has arms for*

the purpose of nourishing, cherishing, and carrying her offspring. It was the intention of the Creator that women should bear children and that men should beget them.

Luther frequently celebrated the blessings of children and the wonderful calling of motherhood.

This quotation from Luther is just as jarring today as it was in the sixteenth century. In Luther's day, church authorities had despised motherhood and privileged celibacy. Today, society has transformed motherhood from a badge of honor to a symbol of disgrace. Sure, Hallmark still sells plenty of Mother's Day cards, but just as this celebration can be neatly scheduled on the calendar, so also motherhood must fit the schedule of one's busy lifestyle, rather than *vice versa*. Our "pro-choice" world insists that true womanhood requires the ability to choose against motherhood. But if motherhood is to be a choice, ***shouldn't it be God who does the choosing?*** After all, it is God who puts to death and brings to life (Deuteronomy 32:39), and it is God who opens and closes wombs (Genesis 29:31, 30:22).

Luther frequently celebrated the blessings of children and the wonderful calling of motherhood. For example: *A pregnant woman is a divine work, giving birth, etc. Marriage is the fount of the entire human race, and nevertheless this sacred origin of life is concealed and held in contempt, such that it has the reputation of being a fleshly, worldly way of life. If all the leaves in the meadow of Torgau were to speak in tongues,*

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Pastor's Pen, continued...

they could not adequately preach the praise of marriage or the turpitude of celibacy.

Along with this, Luther makes the point that giving birth is not enough; **parents must also raise those children.** *“But it is not enough that a child is born...for heathens also bring forth children. A person has to raise children to the service, praise, and honor of God.”* Well does Luther understand the responsibility of Christian parents: *But the greatest good in married life, that which makes all suffering and labor worthwhile, is that God grants offspring and commands that they be brought up to worship and serve Him. In all the world this is the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. ... Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal.*

Luther also acknowledged the hardships of marriage and procreation. He was not ignorant of the difficulty, in this sin-saturated world. Couples would have a hard time living together. Husbands would have a difficult time being the loving heads, while wives would have a difficult time submitting to their husbands. As Luther warned: *The devil always finds a pretext to be against this estate, for he sees both the original sin and the unhappiness, trouble, and toil that are ascribed to it. He can use these two things well, and wants to make marital life more difficult for everyone or even destroy it. For that reason, we must lift this estate*

even higher, praise and honor it even more, adorn and embellish it, just as God Himself does.

Luther understood that it was through marriage that God blesses all the institutions of the earth, and that it was through marital procreation that children should be born, and the church would prosper. ***If the devil were to destroy motherhood, he would achieve a great victory against the church.*** There would be fewer children being born, and fewer being raised in God's Word, which would mean fewer pastors, teachers, and missionaries. There would also be fewer men who knew how to care for women and children with compassion and sensitivity, since those men themselves would never have been raised by a mother. *(Hmm... kind of sounds a lot like the world we find ourselves in today, doesn't it?)*

Whether you are a mother or not, surely you know of someone who is. Whether today is Mother's Day or not, remember that any day can be. Offer your encouragement and support. You'll find plenty of suggestions for that in Holy Scripture and the writings of the man who worked so earnestly to restore the church to its biblical foundation, Martin Luther.

Pastor Zirbel

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Christ is Risen!

He is risen Indeed!

Alleluia!

May Birthdays

3 Joe Henderson
6 Gail Kennedy
Connie Goines
17 David Woodruff
18 Ciara Fleer
19 Nathaniel Pinckney
20 Carley Zirbel
22 Tammy Fondron
27 Kathleen Pinckney

*Happy
Birthday!*

May Anniversaries

5/24/2009 Perry & Connie Goines

Life in Christ...

Pastor Zirbel's Wednesday Bible Study continues in the study of our Lutheran confessions – The Smalcald Articles, aka Luther's "Last Will & Testament." All are encouraged to attend the study at 10:00am.

LWML will meet for their regular May meeting on Tuesday 5/5 at 12:30pm at the church. Please speak with Linda Hansson if you need more information.

Happy Mother's Day

May 10th

Lord, Your Word tells us to be anxious for nothing, but instead to bring everything to You in prayer. And so, we pray for mothers everywhere. Some mothers know You as their Savior and Lord. Others do not know You. We ask for Your forgiveness when we fail to do Your will. We pray for Your Holy Spirit to touch the hearts of those who do not know You and give strength to those who do. Help Christian mothers everywhere live faithful lives as they serve, care for others, and share their faith in today's world. In Jesus' Name. Amen

Remembering in Prayer:

Let my prayer be counted as incense before You, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! Psalm 141:2

For the sick – Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, look with favor upon those who suffer illness and infirmity. Assure them of Your mercy, deliver them from the temptations of the evil one, and give them patience and comfort in their illness. If it please You, restore them to health, or give them grace to accept this tribulation with courage and hope.

For those who grieve – Heavenly Father, into whose keeping we entrust our loved ones, help us to look to You in our time of sorrow, remembering the cloud of faithful witnesses with which we are surrounded, Grant that we may one day share in the joys of those who now rest in Your presence.

For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and the Sacraments.

For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

For those outside the Church that all would repent and live. Merciful God, take away their iniquity, and turn them from their false gods to You, the living true God. Gather them into Your Holy Church to the Glory of Your name, through Jesus Christ.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God!



Lutheran Church
18218 US Highway 71 South
Greenwood, AR 72936

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Worship Opportunities:

Sunday Worship 8:00 & 10:15 AM

Sunday School 9:00 AM

Wednesday Bible Study 10:00 AM

*For by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of
God, not a result of works, so that no one may
boast.*

Ephesians 2:8-9