

# PASTORAL MUSINGS

20 July 2022

***I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)***

Dear Saints of the Messiah,

I am writing this Pastor's Page a few days before the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist on 24 June 2022. God's richest blessings to all of you in the name of the One of whom St. John the Baptist proclaimed, ***"I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire"*** (Matthew 3:11). He is the One who said of Himself ***"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"*** (John 14:6). He is the beloved Son of God, our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Word of God above is from St. Paul's second letter to St. Timothy. It is a charge to the young pastor, Timothy, to all who are called into the Office of the Holy Ministry until the return of our Lord, and by extension through their teachings, to all the children of God. It is a charge to proclaim the Word of God, the Word of Truth, in all its truth and fullness. It includes a warning that there will be a time when God's people will not listen to Him and will seek for themselves teachings that line up with what they want to do with their lives; ***"teachers to suit their own passions."*** There have been many a time since when this has been true, including our own time. To counteract false teachings, sound teaching must be proclaimed. Most crucially, pastors must, especially amid so much pressure to do otherwise, remain faithful to the true proclamation of the Word of God as the Church has understood it throughout her history. To that end speaks St. Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) in the reading for Wednesday – Easter 6 from the *Treasury of Daily Prayer*.

What but the Holy Church is figured by the ark [of the covenant]? Consider how the four rings of gold in the four corners extended toward the four quarters of the globe, and by these it is declared undoubtedly to be equipped for journeying with the four books of the holy Gospel. Consider, too, the staves of shittimwood (acacia wood) that are made to be put through the same rings for carrying, because strong and persevering teachers, as incorruptible pieces of timber, are to be sought, who by cleaving ever to instruction out of the sacred volumes may declare the unity of the Holy Church and, as it were, carry the ark by being let into its rings. For indeed to carry the ark by means of staves is through preaching to bring the Holy Church before the rude minds of unbelievers by means of good teachers.

And these are also ordered to be overlaid with gold, that, while they are resonant to others in discourse, they may also themselves glitter in the splendor of their lives. Of these sturdy staves it is added, "They shall always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them," (Exodus 25:15) because it is surely necessary that those who attend upon the office of preaching should not recede from the study of Scripture. For to this end, it is that the staves are ordered to be always in the rings, that, when occasion requires the ark to be carried, no tardiness in carrying may arise from the staves having to be put in. But let the staves remain ever in the rings, that teachers, ever meditating in their own hearts the words of Holy Scripture, may lift without delay the ark of the covenant, teaching at once what is required.

*(bracketed and parenthetical additions are mine)*

Here, St. Gregory is reminding us that it is crucial for pastors and teachers of the Church, as well as for all the people of God, to remain true to the Holy Scriptures so that the teachings arising out of the Church remain true. We all are to not only recognize but also speak out against all falsehood in the Church and in the society in which we live.

Two of the last three Presidents of the United States of America have publicly acknowledged their support for same-sex marriage and have called for full acceptance and pushed for the public teaching of this "alternative" lifestyle. They maintain this support is borne out of love and concern for those who have chosen this lifestyle, who remain committed to a monogamous relationship, and who desire to be accepted in society as any committed, monogamous heterosexual couple are accepted. They indicate that they came to this conclusion after much thought and seeking advice from others. Presidents Obama and Biden are to be lauded for their love and concern.

However, they are making a crucial, and ultimately deadly, mistake. They are forgetting that there is a God who has created all that is and as the Creator has ordered all of life as He knows is the best for His creation. They are forgetting that all true love is borne out of the love of God the Father for His creation, a love that is brought to creation through the redeeming work of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. They are forgetting that we creatures do not have the right to tell the Creator how we desire to live our own lives but are to obey His commands. They are doing, and encouraging others to do, what St. Paul warns against in his letter to the Romans.

***For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.***

***Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.***

***For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.***

***And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:21-32)***

Human sexuality is a gift from our heavenly Father, who is our Creator. Sexual activity is a gift that is to be enjoyed within the blessed bonds of marriage between one man and one woman for life. It is the way through which God blesses His human creatures with the gift of new life. Any kind of sexual activity that is outside of the bonds of marriage between one man and one woman is against God's will for our lives. The Bible is clear. It is a sin, a sin no different than any other sin. A sin that needs the healing gospel balm of forgiveness that is found in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

The message of the Church to those practicing sexual immorality, any and all sexual immorality, is the same message she proclaims to all people, all sinners; the message of our Lord Himself after His Baptism: ***“Repent and believe in the Gospel”*** (Mark 1:15c). The Word of God teaches us the truth that all human beings are born with a sinful nature that results in sinful thoughts, words, and actions. Sexual activity outside of the divinely blessed bonds of marriage between one man and one woman for life is just one of many sinful situations human beings encounter in this life. All people are sinners in need of the grace and mercy of God for forgiveness and salvation. All people are sinners that need to repent of their sinfulness, receive the forgiveness of God the Father, and be strengthened by God the Holy Spirit to live a holy and upright life in Christ.

The most important message the Church can bring to anyone trapped in a sinful life is the promise of forgiveness, redemption and eternal life through the person and work of Jesus, along with the freedom to live by the Spirit of God, not ruled by sinful passions (see Galatians 5). This is why God sent His Son into the world. The Church is to love all people into a right relationship with God the Father through the suffering, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus, the Christ, by the power Holy Spirit. The Church is to speak lovingly and clearly concerning the sin of sexual immorality and all other sin.

The Church encourages all her people to exercise their duty as Christian citizens to be informed concerning the issues of the day. We are called by God to be knowledgeable about the teachings and practices of our society and the stances of our politicians. We are to support and promote that which is according to the Word of God and stand against anything that is contrary to the Word of God. We are to do so to be responsible participants in society and the political process.

The Church is not, and neither are her people to be, beholden to political stances or platforms but to the true and right preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the Church's mission. Therefore, let us accept all people where they are and refuse to leave them there. Let us loving reach out to all people with the Word of God as each situation merits and share with all people the love of God in Christ Jesus. May our Lord and Savior grant us His wisdom, patience, strength, and peace to do as He has called us to.

All praise, honor and glory be to the One True God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**In the Messiah's Service,  
Pastor Scott**



**Dear Friends and Members of Messiah Lutheran Church,**

I have a shameful confession to make, I am a sinner!

For as long as I can remember, I have been a sinner and though I try my best to resist, it just comes natural to me. Satan is alive and well. I relate totally to the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans and echo his confession:

**“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. (Romans 7:15-19)**

“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24-25)

And now the absolution through Jesus:

**“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death”.**

**(Romans 8:1-2)**

**“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”  
(Romans 5:1-2)**

These words of Paul touch my heart every time I read them, they are an echo of my very soul. Praise be to God, I am justified by grace alone through faith in Christ Jesus who died and rose again for me that I might be forgiven and have a reservation in Heaven.

I am truly Blessed and rest in His Peace!

To find that peace and assure your reservation, I encourage everyone to worship together in our Sanctuary each and every Sunday morning and whenever the doors are open, and to receive forgiveness through Holy Communion regularly. Also Sunday School is not only for the kids, you know, we call it "Adult Bible Class".

**"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God". (Romans 10:17)**

May the Joy and Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill our hearts and minds as we seek His will in our lives each and every day!

**In Christ's service and to His glory,  
James Richter**

## **VBS**

A very big thanks to all who helped and volunteered with this year's "God's Wonder Lab" VBS! It was a huge success as we were able to minister to 30 children for 5 days! It would not have been possible without you! All Glory to God in the highest!  
-Sharon Schrader



## **ATTENTION!**

Our church/MDO playground needs some repairs, and we would like to gather a group of individuals to assist with the work to be done. We will schedule a date depending on your availability, but must it be completed before August 15, 2022. Please reach out as soon as possible to help! Your church and its children appreciate you! Thanks!  
Please contact Sharon Schrader.

## **Continue Giving Your Offering While On Vacation!**



*My Weekly  
Tithes and Offerings*

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Summer means vacations and absences from your home church. Did you know that you can make one-time or on-going offering donations through our church website or the Vanco Mobile app? On the homepage of our church website <https://messiahlcms-cc.org/> just click on the red give button and follow the instructions.



## **LWML**

We will not have a monthly meeting for the month of July. Thank you and enjoy your summer!

## **Lutheran World Relief School Kits**

It is that time of year again when school supplies are on sale. The Women of Messiah will begin collecting items for school kits. Education is one



**Lutheran World Relief**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty. Consider what happens when a family cannot afford school supplies for all of their children. Or, consider a family who lost everything in a hurricane or other disaster. How can they prioritize what their children need for school when they're scrambling to find food and shelter? Education is a critical tool to overcoming poverty. All the data shows that education is a critical piece of the puzzle for creating healthier, more prosperous futures for children— and especially for girls. And did you know that returning children to school as soon as possible after a disaster reduces the long-term effects of trauma? Education is hope and empowerment. You can help more children access it by making Lutheran World Relief School Kits! A collection basket is in the narthex and supplies will be collected through September. Items needed for each school kit include:

- 70 sheet notebooks of wide-ruled or college-ruled paper (4 needed per kit); no loose-leaf
- 30-centimeter Ruler or one w/inches & centimeters
- Unsharpened #2 pencils
- Black or blue ball point pens (no gel ink)
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser, 2 ½"
- Crayons, 16 or 24 count

## **Spotlight on Mites**

These national LWML Mission Grant Projects are supported by your mite giving

### **Ministry Vehicle Fund, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone      Lutheran Bible Translators — \$70,000**



Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) uses literacy programs within the local language communities to give people the skills to read the newly translated Bible which results in a personal relationship with God. When they can read God's Word in their local or heart language, they know that God speaks their language and hears their prayers. Local personnel in Ethiopia and Sierra Leone, identified as partners with LBT, help teach their people. The long distances between the language communities have treacherous and hazardous terrain. The money from this grant will help purchase robust, reliable vehicles. Trainers will be able to travel to God's people who are waiting for the opportunity to learn to read the saving words of the Gospel in their heart language. This will impact multiple language groups in both countries.

## **Showing God's Love in the International District, Albuquerque, New Mexico    God Cares About You Mission — \$98,000**

Albuquerque's International District is home to an ethnically diverse and disadvantaged population with a high crime rate. God Cares About You Mission, which is supported by nine area Lutheran churches, is transforming lives both now and for eternity.

Their outreach includes a clothing bank, children's ministry, food bank, back-to-work program, Christian fellowship, meals, Bible studies, worship services, street evangelism, and counseling.

Currently, the programs are only offered three days a week and they want to expand to six days. With this expansion, they need to add a services director and kitchen manager to better manage the programs offered. Help is sought for their salaries. With the funds from this grant, God Cares About You can expand their ministry and reach more with Christ's love.

## **Reaching the Homebound with God's Word    Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc. (DBA Worship Anew) — \$100,000**

Lutheran Ministries Media reaches the homebound and aging with the life-saving message of the Gospel through the weekly broadcast ministry of Worship Anew. With an aging population, the need exists to have accessibility to faithful teaching and understanding of the Bible as taught in our creeds and Lutheran confessions. The broadcast currently reaches areas of New York, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. Lutheran Ministries Media wants to expand their broadcast area by securing on-the-air broadcast time on a new nationwide station and also enhance their online presence. The grant funds will be used to pay the broadcast fees and the internet expansion.



## **OUR MILITARY**

Cheyenne Wilson, HS3 – USCG – Camp Lejeune, NC

Dillon Anderson, PFC – Fayetteville, NC

Brandin Diamond, SSG – USAF – Deployed, Japan

Cristopher Diamond, PV2 – USAC – Deployed, Korea

# MEETINGS

**ELDER'S:**

Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup> – 7 pm

**LWML:**

No July Meeting

**COUNCIL:**

Thursday, July 21<sup>st</sup> – 7pm

# July Servers

Elder: Devereaux Brewer

Acolyte: Whitney Larson

Altar: Devereaux Brewer

# Flower Schedule



July 3 –

July 10 –

July 17 –

July 24 – Schrader Anniversary

July 31 –