

Bethlehem Star

THE NEWSLETTER OF
BETHLEHEM
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
(THE LUTHERAN
CHURCH-MISSOURI
SYNOD)

1515 SOUTH LOOP 256
PALESTINE, TEXAS 75801
REV. DAVID L. ADLER, PASTOR

OCTOBER 2016
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BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT: Steadfast in the Word, Bethlehem Lutheran Church shares Christ and serves people with friendship in His love in all God's world.

What's Wrong with America—Part 3

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance," fellow sojourners!

This past August I began answering the question "Are you concerned about the direction America seems to be going?" OF COURSE I AM, but the family member who first asked me the question was a little surprised by the reasoning behind my answer. What IS wrong with America?

FIRST, a lack of spiritual leadership in so-called "Christian" homes, especially among men.

SECOND, a lack of obedience manifested in a lack of obedience manifested by lack of commitment. I recently heard someone joke, "Why do people change churches? What difference does it make which church you'll skip on Sunday?" I've been asking the following question for over 36 years ... Why in the world would you belong to something you didn't support? ...no one has answered it yet! If you are a Christian and can't (for other than being homebound or other health reasons) attend the church you belong to, at least be honest and find one you can attend.

THIRD, a lack of Biblical knowledge among Christians. People do not know their Bibles ... they don't know doctrine ... and they don't know what their church officially teaches. Their lives are duplicitous and so, for example, they vote for political candidates who support abortion, homosexuality and other social evils, not realizing that NOW they have become accessories to both murder and immorality. And without sincere repentance, they receive the Lord's Supper to their own judgment (*cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30*)

Last month I shared the alarming results of a survey. Over a decade ago, Lutheran Brotherhood (now a part of Thrivent) conducted a survey, asking Lutherans some very basic doctrinal questions. In this article I will examine the survey results from a Biblical and confessional point of view:

5. "A child is already sinful at birth." (49.8% disagreement)

This is a Lutheran and, therefore, a Biblical statement.

The Scriptures declare this:

Psalm 51:5 *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."*

Romans 5:12 *"As through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned ... (v. 18) as through one man's offence judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation."*

Ephesians 2:1-3 *"You were dead in trespasses and sins ... and were by nature the children of wrath, just as the others."*

In the Augsburg Confession (which all LCMS pastors swear to uphold) we read:

II. Original sin.

It is also taught among us that since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mother's wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod also affirms this statement:

"We furthermore teach that sin came into the world by the fall of the first man, as described in Gen. 3. By this Fall not only he himself, but also all his natural offspring have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth, dead in sins, inclined to all evil, and subject to the wrath of God."

Pastor's Message [continued]



GOD'S HOLY WORD

The Scriptures affirm: Romans 3:28, 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law' (which says, 'Love your neighbor')

G O D ' S



W O R D

If we hear this truth, 'A child is already sinful at birth,' then one must conclude the next statement is wrong. The corruption is so deep that no change in behavior will correct the problem.

4. "People can only be justified before God by loving others." (48.3% agreement)

"Loving others" will be a fruit of faith, but it can never be the cause of our justification or forgiveness.

This is Roman Catholic teaching. Natural religion leads us to trust in our own works. This is the doctrine from which Martin Luther broke when he learned the Gospel. Lutherans have made it clear that nothing we do justifies us before God. Article IV of the Augsburg Confession states:

"It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake through faith."

The Brief Statement concludes from the doctrine of original sin:

"Men are unable, through any efforts of their own or by the aid of 'culture and science,' to reconcile themselves to God and thus to conquer death and damnation."

The Scriptures affirm: Romans 3:28, 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law' (which says, 'Love your neighbor').

The next statement must also be rejected.

3. "God is satisfied if a person lives the best life one can." (56.2% agreement)

In the absence of the Gospel this is the

best hope that one can have. But it is no hope at all. "By the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin", Romans 3:20. In struggling "to live the best life he could", St. Paul had to confess the failure of himself and everyone else. "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

God is satisfied with us only in Christ. "God shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied", Isaiah 53:11. "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased", Matthew 3:17. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ", Galatians 3:27. God is satisfied with me only when Christ covers over my wretchedness.

I'll discuss the last two survey questions next month.

[... to be continued]

[If you do not agree with the positions stated here, I ask that you at least consider the arguments and put the best construction on my actions, my motivation, and my concern to be faithful 1) to Scripture and the Confessions, 2) to my ordination vows, and 3) to fulfill the great commission's goal of "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (St. Matthew 28:20).]

+ + +

I look forward to seeing you each Sunday morning ... worshiping and studying with you ... lifting up and exalting our great God with you! Come with a smile on your face, a bounce in your step, your Bible in hand, and that friend you personally and intentionally invited. Also, bring a joyful, eager attitude to be touched by the Living Risen Christ, together with a hungry heart for spiritual vitality and victorious living that comes each time we encounter God's renewing presence in Word & Sacrament!

שלום עליכם

(Peace [Shalom] be with you)

Church Happenings ...

LWML EAST TEXAS FALL ZONE RALLY FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, CORSICANA SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST

Registration cost \$6.00. Bible study from Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything" presented by Pastor Joe Mashburn. We will carpool from our parking lot at 7:30 a.m. so please let JoAnn Tugwell or Donna Hughes know if you plan to attend. All ladies of Bethlehem are welcome.

If you missed a Sunday, you can visit Bethlehem's web-site at www.belctx.org



THE LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Lutheran Witness subscriptions will expire on December 31, 2016. The subscription cost is \$13.65. For those who have a current subscription, it will automatically renew. If you would like to start receiving The Lutheran Witness or wish to cancel your subscription, please notify the church office by OCTOBER 9TH.

IT'S FOOTBALL TIME AGAIN!!

The youth are parking cars for the Palestine Wildcat football games as a fundraiser this year. The cost is \$2. October game date is the 21st. If you would like to help, please see Yanneth Harris.



To Jody and Mary Bowden:

On behalf of our BLC- youth I want to say thank you for your service as youth director. Thank you for demonstrating grace, love and patience with our children, for putting in countless hours. Thank you for being a man and a women of impeccable character and integrity and being the example for our children, for modeling generosity, for your great faith in what God can do. Thank you for all that you do.
Yanneth Harris

PAINT PALESTINE PINK FUN RUN SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST 7 AM

Bethlehem will once again have a rest stop in our parking lot for the Paint Palestine Pink Fun Run. We will set up at 7 a.m. and be handing out bottled water. We need workers, cases of water and a cooler with ice. Contact Donna Hughes for details. Please come out and help this worthy cause!



LWML BAZAAR AND BAKE SALE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

The LWML ladies will hold their annual bazaar and bake sale Saturday, November 5th, 9am - 2pm at Bethlehem. In addition to handmade items and collectibles, they will offer a delicious lunch along with baked goods for sale. There will be outside vendors who bring their talents to share. Spread the word to friends and neighbors! Remember, the proceeds will benefit various projects for Bethlehem and the community! Come and support the LWML ladies!

Embracing our COMMUNITY

SOCIAL CONCERNS



Please join us in showing our appreciation to our community emergency men and women on Thursday, October 20th from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. All help is appreciated. We will be posting what you can do to help in Garber Hall. Please see Lana Bowden or Megan Taylor for more information and how you can help.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Our "Sow the Word" and disaster response presentation by Dr. Lou Jander went well. Thanks to all who attended. As the committee works out details, we will keep the congregation informed.

Our "Caring for the Caregiver" presentation was held on Saturday August 27. It was well attended by members of Bethlehem and the presentation was well received with a lot of interaction by those in attendance. We are grateful to Cyndi Gamble for her work! Although there was no participation by non-members, we plan on analyzing what we did and work on improving it.

We are in the process of locating a new supplier for our church signs. The plan is to purchase and install 4 more around Palestine. Please see Don Fortner or Paul Stephenson to see how you can help.

The church office received the following message in regards to the hospice bags we place in the hospital: "Thank you for the bag you leave at the hospital. It meant a lot to me."

And finally make a note; Saturday, October 15 is our fish fry to help fund community service organizations in the Palestine area. Randy Teets is heading it up, please see him to see how you can be of service. Your help will be appreciated! We will have a door offering to use as seed money to fund the event on Sunday October 9. If you would like to donate to the cause beyond the door offering, please note on your checks "Fish Fry". We estimate the cost to be between \$500 and \$700.

God has truly blessed our committee, with an enthusiastic group. Please continue to pray for his guidance and that He would get the glory!

REMEMBERING IN PRAYER

“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

HEALTH NEEDS

MEMBERS:

Gladys Collins - recovering from a stroke

George Nelson - recovering from a stroke

Pastor Roy Southard - treatment for cancer

FRIENDS:

Mike & Kathy Abrahamson - [Jackson's friends] - Kathy's health

Cheryl Bailes - [Mary Unk's daughter] - upcoming foot surgery

Michael Brummerhop [Marcy Hogan's cousin] - accident

Shirley Carnahan [Steve & Mary Unk's friend] - health concerns

Vernon Denman - [James Taylor's friend] - loss of mother

Melvin Fogle [Jo Ann Tugwell's brother-in-law]

Bill & Ava Hogan [Milton Hogan's parents]

Gena Lawense [Albert Harris's sister]

Steve & Katie Lund [former members] - ongoing health concerns

Janet MacKenzie - recovery from surgery 8/31

Clarence Mindrup - [Patti Lestig's father] - cancer treatment

Gaile Nivens [Alicia Hutton's aunt]

Debbie Noonan [friend of Marcy Hogan] - ongoing health concerns

Lori Owens - [Julie Schoppe sister] - lung disease

Bonita Randall [Neva Shugart Broad's niece] - ongoing health concerns

Hazel Reed [daughter of Battalion Chief Nathan Reed] - blood disorder

Floyd Ruhnke [Marjorie Smith's cousin] - health concerns

Phyllis Shafferkoetter - [Mary Unk's sister] - blood clots in lungs and leg

Rebecca [Randy & Sandy Teets daughter]

Randy Stover- [Tugwell's friend] - recovery from triple bypass surgery

Tim Walther [Melanie Jackson's brother] - stroke

Michelle Warren [Mike Smith's niece] - recovery from auto accident

Orville & Cookie Wilbanks [friends of the Hughes']

Gene & Patsy Worsham [Tim's parents] - ongoing health concerns

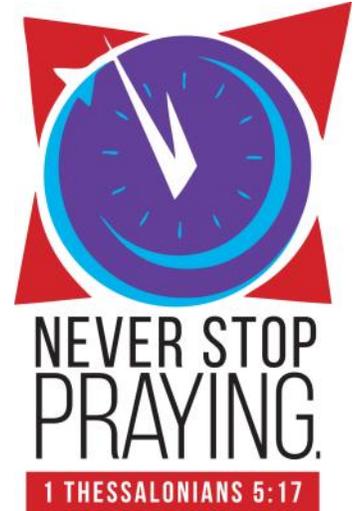
HOMEBOUND

Opal Garber, Benjamin Garcia [Robert Garcia's brother], Nicki Hightower, Dorothy Jackson, Martha Kaudelka, Neva Kosted, Ardelle Samford, Dean Sands, Johnnie Weaver, Connie Wunderlich

THOSE SERVING IN OUR NATION'S ARMED FORCES

Members Kyle Lawson and Kyle Shepherd, as well as Robert Garcia [Juanita's son], Jason Payne [Kay Wickliffe's son] and Jeremy Stafford [Marcy Hogan's nephew]

Please inform the Pastor and the Church Office regarding the status of submitted prayers so we may be timely and up-to-date in petitions to our gracious God.





"THE LUTHERAN HOUR RADIO MINISTRY"

The Lutheran Hour can be heard on the radio Saturday at:
6:30 AM on 91.9 FM KAVX Lufkin, TX
Sunday at: 10:30 AM on 97.5 FM KTTB Tyler, TX
Sunday at 12:30 PM on 91.5 FM KHCB Madisonville, TX

Online at www.lutheranhour.org

DATE: October 2, 2016
TITLE: "The Only Way to Live: By Faith!"
TEXT: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4
SPEAKER: Rev. Gregory Seltz

God cares about you, listens to you, and answers your difficult questions with grace and compassion.

DATE: October 9, 2016
TITLE: "Lord, Give Me What I Need -- Give Me Faith!"
TEXT: St. Luke 17:11-19
SPEAKER: Rev. Gregory Seltz

You don't have to settle for what the world hands you. You can live by faith in the Son of God who heals, forgives, and restores.

DATE: October 16, 2016
TITLE: "Know This Word -- Your Life Depends on It"
TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16
SPEAKER: Rev. Gregory Seltz

The Bible provides a strategy for survival in an uncertain world. It can break hearts of stone and replace them with living hearts open to God's truth.

DATE: October 23, 2016
TITLE: "Running the Race of Faith"
TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:6-8
SPEAKER: Rev. Gregory Seltz

Because Christ has already won the victory for us, our race of faith is worth the struggle of the run.

DATE: October 30, 2016
TITLE: "The Best Bequest"
TEXT: St. Luke 12:19-21
SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

A legacy of faith is the best bequest, giving the gift of Jesus to those who come after you.



Church Council Meeting - September 13, 2016

Gil called the meeting to order. Pastor opened with devotion and prayer. Minutes read. **Motion by Melanie, 2nd by James to accept. Motion carried.

REPORTS

VP- Albert reported plaques will be mounted soon.

Financial Secretary- Mary Lou reported August income \$11,136, expenses \$11,076. Excess \$18,185. Loan balance \$65,969 & CEF report.

Treasurer- Mary Lou gave account balances, income report, budget report for August and year-to-date. **Motion by Albert, 2nd by Steve to accept financial reports. Motion carried.

Elders- James reported average attendance in August was 80, no changes.

Christian Education- Melanie reported good Rally Day, kids enjoyed assisting. Sunday School going well; need Mid-Week teachers.

Evangelism- Jerry reported Adopt A Highway cleanup went well, 25-30 helped; Caring for Caregiver was very good, but not outreach as hoped; only members attended, no-one from community. Dr Jander gave Sow the Word program and Disaster Response on September 11th; have Gospel of John to share and give out at Homecoming. Fish Fry October 15th.

Stewardship- Steve reported on budget process, board chairmen need to get requests turned in by end September. Will vote on 2017 budget in October. Church Mutual insurance for 2017.

Property- Jim reported new LED lights installed, plan to sell old lights. A/C working, still learning demand control.

Social Concerns- Megan reported light lunch when Dr. Jander was here. Will set date to honor EMS, firefighters, police. Will help with Fish Fry.

Youth- Yanneth reported on football parking, Homecoming, 6 kids, cook and activity, gave out suckers "God Loves You." Activities for community. Plan to design T-shirt, make classrooms more inviting and kid friendly, paint. Ok from council. Junior High retreat in October in Dallas.

Pastor- funeral and interment of Robert Garcia; LWML Sunday Oct 2nd; acolytes; really good Catechism class. Circuit meeting September 15th in Longview. Children's Christmas Service on December 18th.

OLD BUSINESS

Steve- Old lights from Luther Hall for sale, \$50/each.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve looking at energy audits, checking on electric rates, energy load; return air ducts in sanctuary. May do audit next spring/summer.

Gil mentioned goals. Will check with Mundt Music, get estimate on sound system to present to voters at October meeting.

Gil suggested projects, pave parking on Southside of church, build portico at front, check on CEF loan. Discussion followed, Jerry suggested spending money on outreach to community instead.

**Motion by James, 2nd by Jerry to adjourn. Motion carried. Pastor closed meeting with benediction.

Present: Gil Daughtrey, Albert Harris, Jim Broad, Jerry Hartenberger, Yanneth Harris, Megan Taylor, Steve Unk, Mary Lou Daughtrey, Donna Hughes, Melanie Jackson, James Taylor, Pastor Adler.



LWML East Texas Zone Fall Rally, Sat., October 1, 2016, Faith Lutheran Church, Corsicana. Registration, cost \$6.00, at 8:30 a.m. (Carpool from our Church, 7:30 a.m.) Bible study from Philippians 4:6: *“Do not be anxious about anything”* presented by Pastor Joe Mashburn. Business meeting will include election of zone officers and approval of Bylaws. Offering will be donated to the Navarro Food Bank, to include a check for \$50 from our society. After lunch/break, Pastor Mashburn will conduct the communion service.

Paint Palestine Pink – Annual Walk (to provide mammograms to women and men of Anderson County & surrounding areas), Sat., October 1. Bethlehem has again been designated as the first “rest stop” of the walk. Set up at 7:00 a.m. Bethlehem has three young people who will participate in the walk. Come out and encourage the walkers. For more information, contact Donna Hughes.

LWML Sunday will be celebrated on October 2. Message: **“Come and see**, Psalm 66:5 and John 1:35-51, featured on the new banner made by Sandy Smith, Mary Unk. Lay Readers: Lea Rosier, Sandy Smith. LWML members will serve as ushers and all others will be greeters. Flowers will be placed on the altar to the Glory of God for His many blessings. *And yes, Make it a Purple Day!* LWML pencils and mite boxes will be available after the service.

Annual Bazaar, Saturday, November 5, 9am to 2pm, Luther Hall

Handmade items / collectibles for yourself and for gifts, in addition to a delicious lunch including dessert and drink. Don't forget the baked goods for sale! We will again have outside vendors who bring their talents to share. Spread the word to friends and neighbors! We need the support of the whole congregation to make this a successful Bazaar. Remember, the proceeds will benefit various projects for Bethlehem and the community! Set up Wed. night, & on Thurs. morning, 9:00 am (because on Friday we'll be baking and cooking for the big day).



Kroger Community Rewards – Use your Kroger card each time you make purchases at Kroger. Our LWML receives benefits that are used for our projects. Thanks to all who participate.

CARD FRONTS *Hooray!* We filled a box and sent it off to the children of St. Jude Ranch for their fundraising efforts. Thanks to everyone for saving card fronts! Keep bringing in those cards!

Here's what to do: Gather all kinds of greeting cards. (Please note: Because of copyright laws, Hallmark, Disney or American Greetings cards will NOT be accepted.)

Only the card front is required, and it must measure 7" by 5" or smaller. Make sure there are no personal, written messages on the front or the back. There's a collection box in Garber Hall.

CALENDAR

◇ October 8, 9:00 am - Workday for Bazaar, completing projects: Come have fun crafting - together.

◇ Next LWML Meeting: October 9, after Church.

Ladies of all ages, YOU are invited to attend and perhaps become a member of our society, Willing Workers of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. We usually meet after church on the second Sunday of the month. There are no dues, but we collect donations for MITES and for our general fund.



T-SHIRT DESIGN-Design your most creative, inspirational, thought provoking BLC t-shirt.

The shirt you wear makes a statement, whether you notice it or not. A shirt's design, colors, and theme can be what jumpstarts a conversation amongst your peers or strangers. Your T-shirt can be the icebreaker to start a conversation, and evangelize to others.



CRITERIA-T-shirt entries must represent BLC-Youth as a whole. Its design should be able to spark interest from peers and strangers in order to evangelize. T-shirt entries must have a Christian-based theme. Since this is an evangelistic tool, t-shirts must have a purpose! Be creative and make a bold statement but remember to keep the sacredness of the message you want to convey. Designs may be printed on both sides, but is not required. Designs needs to be submitted before **October 16, 2016**. **BE CREATIVE! Originality rules! HAPPY DESIGNING!**

BLC kids coming together for teaching, fun, fellowship and outreach on 9-16-16.

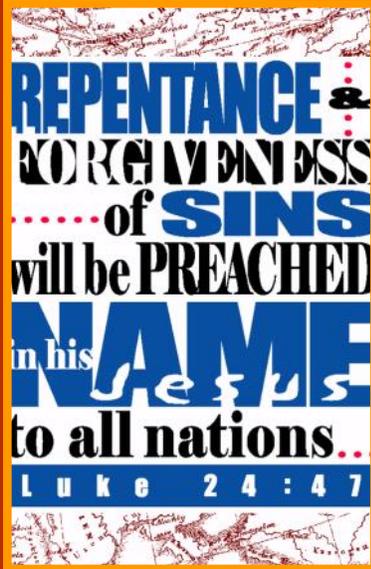


To the BLC community:

Thank you for giving me the chance to serve as youth director. My mission is to provide youth programming in which the youth will be excited to be a part of where all the kids feel accepted, wanted, and comfortable enough to invite their friends along. I want to make the youth group a place where the kids grow as individuals while exploring ideas, values, and faith within the context of a supportive community. My goal is to find mission opportunities for the youth, and help discover their spiritual gifts and to create an environment that leads our children to encounter and experience God in a powerful way to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and His Church.

With your support and the power of God we will see great things happen in not only the Youth Group but the life of the BLC church.

Metanoia Is A Necessity For The Church



"If the church today is to be the church, it must diligently protect its spiritual integrity. This begins with what the Greeks called metanoia ..."



"A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world - and might even be more difficult to save." —C. S. Lewis

The monastic orders of the Dark Ages could not have modeled communities of character if they had looked like the troubled world about them. Today, in a new age darkened by the collapse of character and the dissolution of faith, the church cannot model the Kingdom of God if it is conformed to the kingdoms of man.

Too often in recent years the church has suffered from the same collapse of character that is so widespread in our culture. Too often the church has been apathetic, marked by individualism, and constrained

by the love of self rather than the love of Christ.

If the church today is to be the church, it must diligently protect its spiritual integrity. This begins with what the Greeks called **metanoia**, which means a change of mind - and is translated in the New Testament as **repentance**.

The repentance that God desires is not just contrition, or acknowledgment and confession of our sin. It is also a daily attitude and perspective.

- ✦ Repentance is the process by which we see ourselves, day by day, as we really are: sinful, needy, dependent people. It is the process by which we see God as He is: awesome, majestic, and holy.
- ✦ Repentance is the essential manifestation of regeneration that sets us straight in our relationship to God and so radically alters our perspective that we begin to see the world through God's eyes, not our own.
- ✦ Repentance is the ultimate surrender of self. It is a radical change of mind that goes beyond spiritual stirring and inklings of interest. Unless there is metanoia, God has not been allowed to take control. An unrepentant Christian is a contradiction in terms.

- ✦ Repentance is the first of Martin Luther's 95 Theses: When our Lord and master Jesus Christ said 'repent', He willed that the entire life of believers be one of repentance.
- ✦ Repentance is the first word of the Gospel. It is the centerpiece of John the Baptist's message. Repent and believe were Jesus' first words in the account of Mark, and His last words to the disciples commanding them to preach repentance and forgiveness and forgiveness of sins.
- ✦ Repentance for Christians, is both individual and as a body. Each person needs to reflect a life of repentance just as the corporate church needs to model that same attitude of faith and life.
- ✦ Repentance is a rare message in today's church because it requires confrontation with an uncomfortable subject - sin. And sin does not sell well in our feel-good culture. When sin gets personal, people get skittish. Only the conviction of personal sin, however, brings us to Christ.

From *Against the Night* by Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn. Copyright © 1989, 1999 by Fellowship Communications. Used by permission of Vine Books, an imprint of Servant Publications, P.O. Box 8617, Ann Arbor, MI 48107, 1-800-458-8505.

Charles W. Colson served as special counsel to President Nixon from 1969 to 1973. In 1974 he pleaded guilty to charges related to Watergate and served seven months in federal prison. The story of his conversion to Christ, told in the worldwide bestseller *Born Again*, has been followed by 14 other books. Chuck is best known as founder and chairman of Prison Fellowship, which is the largest prison ministry in the world.

Ellen Santilli Vaughn, who collaborated with Chuck in writing this book, is former vice president of executive communications for Prison Fellowship. She also assisted him on seven other books, including *Loving God and The Body*. She also wrote [The Strand](#).

STEWARDSHIP

Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. If you believe this gospel, if you stand upon it, and cling to it, you are saved. Trust in this is the dividing line. It defines, either positively or negatively, all men. It separates and divides Cain from Abel, Job from his so-called friends, Abraham from Abimelech, Isaac from Ishmael, Jacob from Esau, David from Saul, Daniel from Belshazzar, Joseph from Herod, Lazarus from the rich man, and the tax collector from the Pharisee. What defines men is not whether they are good or bad, but whether or not they believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

The problem with man is his heart. Our hearts are fallen and predisposed to think that we can impress God. We think that if we do all the right things God will reward us, and we will escape evil. We think that God will be impressed with our gifts, that our prosperity and goodness is evidence that God loves us or that it should motivate God to love us.

But we know better because God has blessed us with the faith of Abel, Job, and Abraham. We know that God's grace in Christ saves us, not our works.

We know that God is not impressed with our giving. He is not impressed when we give him that which is already his. God doesn't benefit from our giving and He doesn't need it. But our neighbor does need it. And God delights in us growing more and more like Him. He blesses us, and He invites us to bless one another with our giving: so that the Gospel may be proclaimed, so that the poor may be fed, so that all God's work through the Church may be done.

So consider God's priorities in comparison to your own. And be honest. Reevaluate where you are and where God has called you to be. Look into your own bank statement. Would any accountant think that the Church was your priority? He would see a spreadsheet filled with where your money actually goes: into house and clothing and cars, into eating out and beauty supplies and entertainment. Indeed, much of it wasted on frivolous things. But would he find great percentages going to the church?

Figure up the percentage. Put it in relation to the proportion of your income. What percentage of your income do you give for the mission of the church: the preaching and teaching, the baptizing and communing, the help for the weak and poor brothers of Christ? Is it even enough for a deduction when you file your income taxes? The widow gave all she had and thought nothing of it. She was glad to do it. The rich man gave what to him was meaningless, trifle amount and desired a plaque in his honor. Why is it that the less we give the prouder we are and the more credit

we expect?

All your works, even your monetary gifts, done in faith please God now for Christ's sake. No matter how great or small, frequent or infrequent. They are all washed and cleansed by grace through faith on account of Christ. Whatever you do from faith in God pleases him for the sake of the Son. So reevaluate your generosity in the light of the grace of Christ. Freely you have received, freely give.



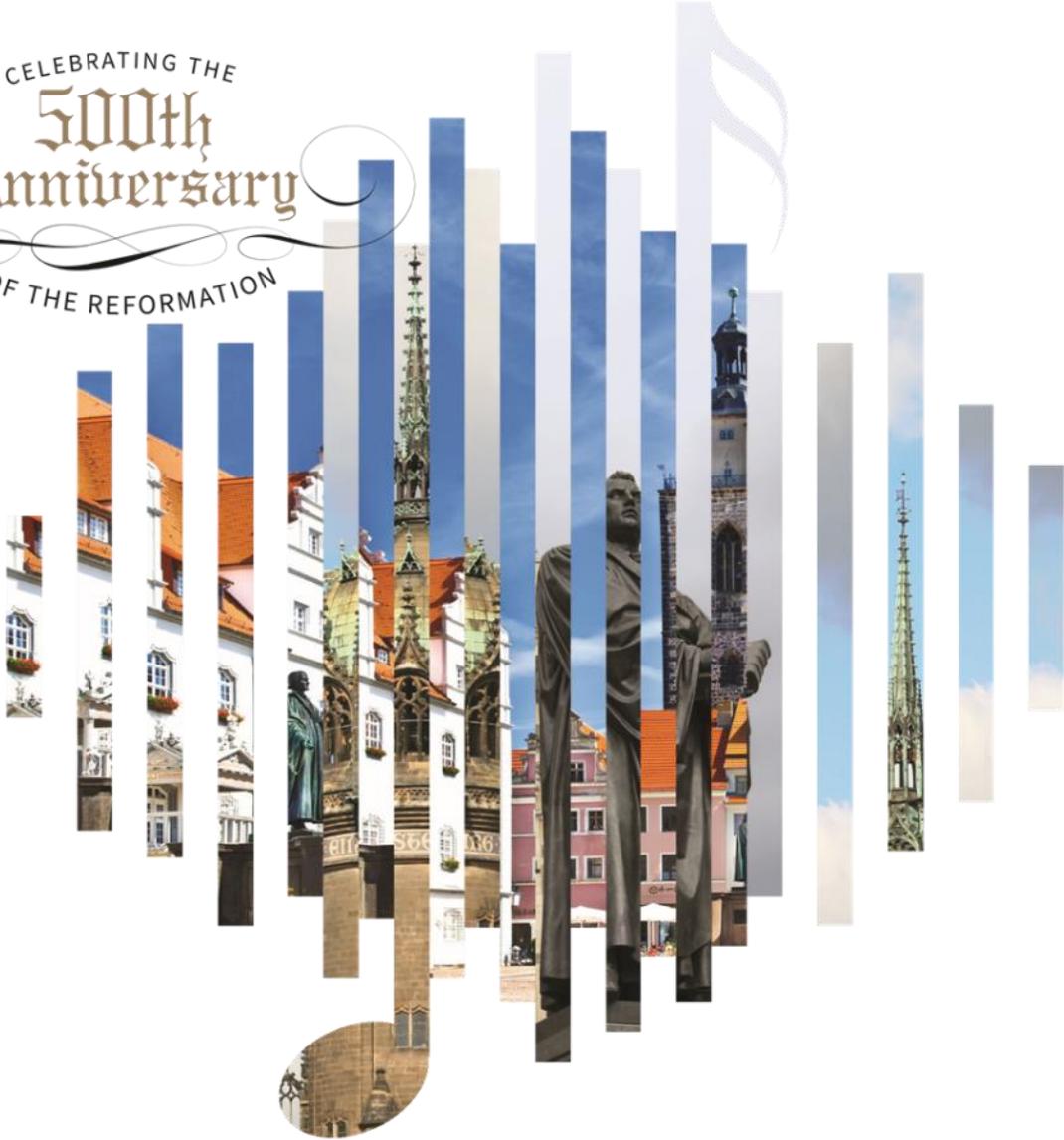
 "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give,  not reluctantly or under compulsion,  for GOD loves a cheerful giver."
2 C O R I N T H I A N S 9 : 7

TENTH

Lutheran Hymn Festival

MORTON H. MEYERSON SYMPHONY CENTER — DALLAS, TEXAS
OCTOBER 16, 2016

CELEBRATING THE
500th
Anniversary
OF THE REFORMATION



Sola Gratia Sola Fide Sola Scriptura

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LEADING THE FESTIVAL — RENOWNED ORGANIST AND COMPOSER **DR. DAVID CHERWIEN**

FEATURING HYMNS WITH TEXTS AND TUNES — **DR. MARTIN LUTHER**

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Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses

October 7 - Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Pastor Moving from the Old World to the New, Muhlenberg established the shape of Lutheran parishes for America during a 45-year ministry in Pennsylvania. Born at Einbeck, Germany, in 1711, he came to the American colonies in 1742. A tireless traveler, Muhlenberg helped to found many Lutheran congregations and was the guiding force behind the first American Lutheran synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, founded in 1748. He valued the role of music in Lutheran worship (often serving as his own organist) and was also the guiding force in preparing the first American Lutheran liturgy (also in 1748). Muhlenberg is remembered as a church leader, a journalist, a liturgist, and—above all—a pastor to the congregation in his charge. He died in 1787, leaving behind a large extended family and a lasting heritage: American Lutheranism.

October 9 - Abraham, Patriarch Abraham (known early in his life as Abram) was called by God to become the father of a great nation (Genesis 12). At the age of 75 and in obedience to God's command, he, his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot moved southwest from the town of Haran to the land of Canaan. There God established a covenant with Abraham (15:18), promising the land of Canaan to his descendants. At the age of 100 Abraham and Sarah were finally blessed with Isaac, the son long promised to them by God. Abraham demonstrated supreme obedience when God commanded him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. God spared the young man's life only at the last moment and provided a ram as a substitute offering (22:1–19). Abraham died at the age of 175 and was buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which he had purchased earlier as a burial site for Sarah. He is especially honored as the first of the three great Old Testament Patriarchs—and for his “righteousness before God through faith” (Romans 4:1–12).

October 11 - Philip, Deacon Philip, also called the Evangelist (Acts 21:8), was one of the seven men appointed to assist in the work of the twelve Apostles and of the rapidly growing early church by overseeing the distribution of food to the poor (6:1–6). Following the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip proclaimed the Gospel in Samaria and led Simon the Sorcerer to become a believer in Christ (8:4–13). He was also instrumental in bringing about the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–39), through whom Philip became indirectly responsible for bringing the Good News of Jesus to the people on the continent of Africa. In the town of Caesarea he was host for several days to the Apostle Paul, who stopped there on his last journey to Jerusalem (21:8–15).

October 17 - Ignatius of Antioch, Pastor and Martyr Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch in Syria at the beginning of the second century A.D. and an early Christian martyr. Near the end of the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117), Ignatius was arrested, taken in chains to Rome, and eventually thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. On the way to Rome, he wrote letters to the Christians at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, and also to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. In the letters, which are beautifully pastoral in tone, Ignatius warned against certain heresies (false teachings). He also repeatedly stressed the full humanity and deity of Christ, the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper, the supreme authority of the bishop, and the unity of the Church found in her bishops. Ignatius was the first to use the word catholic to describe the universality of the Church. His Christ-centeredness, his courage in the face of martyrdom, and his zeal for the truth over against false doctrine are a lasting legacy to the Church.

October 25 - Dorcas, Lydia, and Phoebe, Faithful Women These women were exemplary Christians who demonstrated their faith by their material support of the Church. Dorcas (also known as Tabitha) was well-known and much loved for her acts of charity in the city of Joppa, especially for her making clothes for the poor. When Dorcas died suddenly, the members of her congregation sent to the neighboring city of Lydda for the Apostle Peter, who came and raised her from the dead (Acts 9:36–41). Lydia was a woman of Thyatira, who worked at Philippi selling a famous purple dye that was so much in demand in the ancient world. She was also a “worshiper of God” at the local synagogue. When the Apostle Paul encountered her in prayer among other proselyte women, his preaching of the Word brought Lydia to faith in Christ. She and her friends thus became the nucleus of the Christian community in Philippi (16:13–15, 40). Phoebe was another faithful woman associated with the Apostle Paul. She was a deaconess from Cenchrae (the port of Corinth) whom Paul sent to the church in Rome with his Epistle to the Romans. In it he writes of her support for the work of the early Church (Rom 16:1).

October 26 - Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, and Paul Gerhardt, Hymnwriters Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) was a pastor in Germany during the Great Plague, which took the lives of 1,300 of his parishioners during a six-month period. In addition to his heroic pastoral ministry during that time of stress and sorrow, he wrote the texts for “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” and “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright,” known, respectively, as the king and queen of the Lutheran chorales. Johann Heermann (1585–1647), also a German pastor, suffered from poor health as well as from the ravages of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). His hymn texts are noted for their tenderness and depth of feeling. Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676) was another Lutheran pastor who endured the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. By 1668 he lost his pastoral position in Berlin (for refusing to compromise his Lutheran convictions), and endured the death of four of his five children and his wife. He nevertheless managed to write 133 hymns, all of which reflect his firm faith. Along with Martin Luther he is regarded as one of Lutheranism's finest hymn writers.

BETHLEHEM STAR ☆

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE...

Lutherans place their faith in the Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - who has made us, redeemed us, and empowers us for Christian living.

We believe Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, who came to earth as a man, suffered and died in our place to win for us forgiveness of sin, and who rose again to life, assuring us that we, too, can live with Him eternally.

We teach that we come to stand in right relationship with God not through our own goodness or righteousness, but through our faith in Jesus as Savior. Faith alone receives the full promises of God.

We believe that the two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, were instituted by Christ and offers forgiveness of sin to all who receive them in faith.

Concerning Baptism, we teach that infants should also be baptized, since they, too, are sinful and need God's grace. God can work faith in them, even though they are too young to intellectually grasp the Gospel.

We believe that the body and blood of Jesus are truly present in the Lord's Supper through miraculous means, and that only Christians who share our belief should commune with us.

We believe that God speaks to the world through His Word in the Bible.

We believe that God loves every person and intends for all a life of dignity and meaning.

We assert the vital importance of the Christian congregation as the community of believers in which the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments rightly administered.



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If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, would you be so kind to simply write "Refused" and then place it unopened in your mailbox. That way, we'll be certain to remove your name from our mailing list, and you will be helping us to use very precious resources most wisely.

Thank You!



OCTOBER 2016



My Duty To My Church

1. My duty is to **ATTEND THE CHURCH** ... Spiritually alive members go to church ... Spiritually dead ones don't. "Thou livest and art dead." (Rev. 3:1)
2. My duty is to **EXTEND THE CHURCH** ... By visitation and invitation, by friendliness, by caring for new converts, by cultivating a missionary vision both at home and abroad.
3. My duty is to **DEFEND THE CHURCH** ... Seven great dangers face the church: The infiltration of error (2 Tim. 4:3,4); the danger of wrong leadership (2 John 9); the snare of worldliness; the peril of complacency, (Rev. 1:18); the bane of cliquishness, (1 Cor. 3:4-8); the demon of disaffection.
4. My duty is to **COMMEND THE CHURCH** ... We commend the church by what we are, with consistent Christian lives; by what we do, with actions speaking louder than words; by what we say...words that are gracious, loving, kind, and hence glorifying to our Lord.

God's Share First



Tithes and offerings

beyond the tithe to fulfill a higher law ... the law of total commitment ... the law of LOVE!

Question: Does the New Testament teach tithing?

Answer: The New Testament teaches full response to the love of God in Christ. Jesus said that He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. St. Matthew 5:17.

Jesus does say that we should tithe (St. Matthew 23:23). But His teaching goes

GENEROUS GIVING:

Makes Glad the Heart;
Lifts the Spirit;
Fills the Life with Love

We recommend percentage giving to its members as a starting place for financial growth in the Lord. We believe that regular systematic giving is called for in the New Testament living. We urge our members to set aside a definite percent of their income to covenant with the Lord for this and to ask God to lead us on to total commitment.