

**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.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance, fellow sojourners!

Perhaps you have noticed that after the last Table has received Christ's body and blood in the Service of the Sacrament, it takes a bit longer for me to cover the sacramental vessels and continue with the Post-Communion Canticle. Allow me to explain.

I have been diligent and purposeful in making necessary changes in the worship practices at Bethlehem. This is so that we ARE what we say we are, a Liturgical and Confessional congregation. I have also tried to be cautious about too much rapid change and correction. Honestly, there were not many necessary changes, most dealt with style, not substance. Nonetheless, one of the changes I felt necessary was in the treatment of consecrated bread and wine after the Communion.

While the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper has been shamefully abandoned by the ELCA, we also ought to beware of any theological laziness which contradicts our Lutheran confessional witness. An example of this is the long-lingering doctrine of receptionism even among "conservative" Lutherans.

Our Church body is currently plagued by this false doctrine. The root of this is in the translation of the German theologian Francis Pieper, the author of the doctrinal textbooks for most seminarians until recently. This unfortunate translation from German to English has led many to teach the doctrine of receptionism. Receptionism has caused many pastors to erroneously teach their Altar Guilds that what is left over should be treated with respect because it was set aside for use in the Holy Sacrament, and therefore maybe disposed of by returning the elements to the ground ... but it is *just* bread and wine. This is what most pastors, including yours truly, were taught. This must be corrected.

What follows is a condensation of an article written for *Logia* (a Lutheran theological journal) by Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray, pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas and Fifth Vice President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. I pray this offers additional rationale for these changes.

"Receptionism is the doctrine that the presence of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is finally produced only at the reception of the elements themselves. Receptionists believe that the bread remains bread until all three parts of the Lutheran sacramental action are actually completed (consecration, distribution, and reception). In this way my eating of the bread makes it the body of Christ. My drinking of the wine makes it the blood of Christ. The bread on the altar remains bread until I eat it. The wine on the altar remains wine until I drink it.

"Luther made justification central to the whole Lutheran theological program: "The article of justification is master and prince, lord, president and judge above all kinds of doctrine. It preserves and guides every churchly doctrine and cheers our consciences before God." (WA, 39<sup>1</sup>:205, 2-3)

"The doctrine of receptionism is in conflict with the doctrine of justification and is tantamount to a denial of it. The words of institution, which are the word of God, solely and entirely cause the presence, so that the bread and wine become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ lies upon our altars. This is the truly Lutheran position held by Luther and repeated by the Formula of Concord.

"Consecrationism is the shorthand for the teaching that the word of God alone causes the sacramental union of the bread and the body of Christ with the wine and blood of Christ.

"The doctrine of justification forbids that we should take the body of Christ and turn it to purposes other than that for which it was given for us to eat and to drink. To do so would be work-righteousness. The Supper must remain a gift given by God to his people. His Word is plain. The Word tells us that our heavenly Father has given us this life-giving food of Christ's body and blood for us Christians to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sin.

"Proponents of receptionism often raise the specter of the introduction of the Roman Catholic mass into the Lutheran Church. Lutherans have never shied from the truth, even when the truth is shared with the Church of Rome. The earliest opponents to the Formula of Concord charged that the Formula's doctrine of consecration was identical to the Roman doctrine of the consecration. The Lutheran and the Roman doctrine of the consecration differ in clear and significant ways. The Roman doctrine puts the power of creating the presence of the body and blood of the Lord personally into the hands of the priest by reason of the indelible mark of his priestly ordination. For Lutherans there is no such personal power; there is only a pastoral office conferring on the office holder the duty of acting in the stead of the Lord to carry out the Lord's will in administering the sacraments. .... Thus in the Roman sacramental rites the power to consecrate means that the word of God alone does not give the divinely ordained gift, but the human power and authority of the priest together with the divinely conferred sacrament give the gift of the presence.

"Some years ago an altar guild member demurred about cleaning up the sacramental vessels for fear that if she spilled the consecrated wine on the floor she would be guilty of spilling the blood of Christ. My reply included the comfort that the Lord Christ has placed the most precious gifts into



(receptionism). The command words “do this” embraces the effect “this is my body.” The words “this is my body” would be without effect if the Lord had not commanded us to do this.

“The words “this is my body” are effect words that do what the Lord says, not because they have magical power, but because the Lord has commanded us to use them in connection with the sacred action of the sacrament of the altar.

“The command words show what is to be done with what the Lord sets in our mouths at the altar. Let me give a clumsy illustration. If when the food for luncheon is set out, our hosts would say, “Take, eat. This is Texas Barbecue,” who would conclude that this would not be barbecue if we did not eat it? The words of gracious invitation do not create the thing of which we partake. “Take, eat” is a command word. But “this is Texas Barbecue” remains a declarative word. The difference in the case of the words of institution is that “this is my body” are the words of the Son of God who graciously makes things be that are not (Romans 4:17). Our eating does not make things so.

“If receptionism is true, the Lutheran words of distribution “Take eat, this is the true body” are at best meaningless, at worst, false. It would be misleading to describe the elements as the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, when it would be correct only to say, “this will become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ” if the elements do not become the body and blood until they are distributed. This is hardly the comforting monergistic gift of salvation given by a gracious God. This is synergistic nonsense.

“Luther too offered an opinion on [the issue of when Christ’s body and blood are present in the Lord’s Supper]. Luther held there was a span of time when the presence is “there.”

“Therefore we shall define the time of the sacramental action in this way: that it starts with the beginning of the Word of the Lord, and lasts until all have communicated, have emptied the chalice, have consumed the Hosts, until the people have been dismissed (the benediction), and the priests have left the altar. (Bjarne W. Teigen, *The Lord’s Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Brewster: Trinity Lutheran Press, 86), 139.)

“For Luther the presence stretches from the consecration until the service is complete. Because the word creates the presence, we know that the body and blood of the Lord are present throughout the action. The Lutheran Church is not interested in answering the question as to when during

while he was traveling to Mansfeld, Luther was asked to preach at a parish church. During the distribution of the Lord’s body and blood, he, being infirm in his old age, spilled the blood of Christ onto the chancel floor. Luther got down on his hands and knees and licked up the spill to a chorus of weeping from the communicants. If he had spilled that which had never become the blood of the Lord, he would not have stooped to do what he did. But Luther throughout his life had a high regard for that of which the Lord had said, “This is my body.” Luther was not merely some romantic high-church guru, of the “bells-and-smells” crowd. No, Luther knew that our gracious God gave this supper out of love and for our need. Luther knew that God was willing to risk himself by giving into our weak and shaking hands the gift of his own blood shed for us for the forgiveness of sins. He knew that to think differently of the word of God that causes the bread and wine to be body and blood would be to deny the power of the word and depths of God’s radical grace and mercy.

“May God in his mercy grant that it be so for us too. Our faith and practice need constant adjustment in the face of the authoritative speaking of God. Help us to confess our weakness, O Lord, as we confess your strong Word and its power to both give and forgive. (Logia, 9.3:11-16)

Therefore, so that we teach what we believe by what we do, before each Eucharistic service I determine how many hosts and how many individual cups have been prepared by the Altar Guild. I see how many communicants have registered. I then only consecrate the amount of hosts and wine that I expect to use in the Eucharist. After the communion, I consume any remaining hosts and wine so that nothing remains. (If I miscalculate and there is too much bread and wine to consume, I will ask an Elder to assist me). This prevents the co-mingling of consecrated and unconsecrated elements after the Communion. This was an act so egregious for Martin Luther that any Pastor doing so should be removed from office. With these changes we are reinstating a practice that dates to the Reformation.

† † †

I look forward to seeing you each Sunday morning ... worshipping 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 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!



Special thank you goes out to our members for...

**From Disciples of the Way:** I thank the Lord of the harvest for your support and your partnership in the Gospel to reach out to our Muslim neighbors. We thank you for the love you have shown this ministry and the refugees from all nations that we reach out to in the name and love of Jesus. We are very grateful for your generous gift.

**From Aaron Jackson:** Thank you to everyone who has supported me during my first year at Concordia. I had a fantastic time meeting new people and learning about music and the church. I have taken classes in Music Theory, Aural Skills, Old and New Testament, Conducting, and more. I am a member of the Concordia Handbell Choir and the University Men's Chorus. I also take piano and organ lessons weekly, in addition to playing in rotation with other students for daily Chapel Services. I look forward to sharing the music and skills I've learned with the congregation when I play for services during the summer. I deeply appreciate the thoughts and prayers as I prepare for ministry through music.

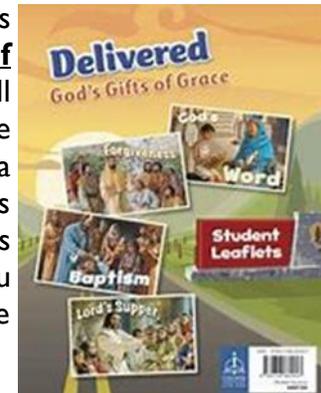
**FROM THE YOUTH**

We are collecting books to send to the prison so that the school there can have reading materials. Also, we are still collecting old, used phones. Next month we will donate them to victims of abuse. Questions? Please see Yanneth Harris.



**SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Our theme this summer is **Delivered: God's Gift of Grace**. These consist of all New Testament lessons. Please prayerfully consider leading a Sunday School class this summer. The sign-up sheet is located in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Melanie Jackson.



**July 24-27, 2018**

**The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS**

"I'm the Lord God, Who brought you out of Egypt. I have saved you. I've saved you from slavery in Egypt. I've saved you from your sins. You will be holy to me. You are Holy to me because I'm holy.

You'll have no other gods before my face. You will not misuse my Name or despise My Word. You'll keep my Sabbath Day holy. You will honor your father and your mother. You will not murder. You will not commit adultery. You will not steal. You will not bear false testimony against your neighbor. You will not

covet—not your neighbor's house, nor his wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."



**Sanctified**  
2018 HIGHER THINGS CONFERENCES

BELC youth will look at the Ten Commandments and how God has called us to be His own people in Christ during the

Included will be 9 Enrichment Sessions, 5 onsite Servant Events, Prayer Room, Meet-and-Greet, Friday evening Worship Service, “Mission in Motion” Prayer Walk. Delegates will be voting on grants to be paid for with our MITES.

Other activities for attendees: marking Spanish Bibles, designing greeting cards to send to LCMS missionaries, tying fleece blankets for homeless children or quilts for Lutheran World Relief, trimming stamps to help defray costs of shipping LWR kits and quilts.

We as a congregation may help provide: “Gifts from the Heart” Ingathering items. At **Care Net**, young mothers need baby bath soap, shampoo, lotion and wipes, and diapers. Also needed are feminine hygiene products. **Tri-Cities Food Pantry** needs include peanut butter, jelly, oatmeal, cereal, cracker sandwiches, canned or packaged meat. The children’s homeless center, **Option House**, needs twin size bed sheets sets, pillow, snack foods, gift cards (from Walmart and McDonald’s). Look for collection container in the Narthex.



At the **East Texas Zone Spring Event**, on May 5, hosted by Pilgrim Lutheran, Kilgore, our society was represented by four LWML women who thoroughly enjoyed the day’s activities: Bible study and fellowship, bringing & exchanging a coffee mug, the trip to the Oil Museum (which was great! - and warrants a return visit), wonderful salad lunch, and a short business meeting which included electing and installing our zone treasurer.



Our LWML made a gift to Bethlehem’s Debt Retirement in memory of Ardelle (Dopp) Samford who was a long-time member of LWML.

Plans are underway to update the kitchen in Garber Hall, and a committee has been formed. If anyone is interested in participating in this effort which will benefit the church, contact Donna Hughes or JoAnn Tugwell.

When you use your **Kroger card** as part of Kroger’s “Community Rewards” Program, remember it is linked to Bethlehem’s LWML. We appreciate your efforts as we use these funds for our various projects. Find out how you may participate by going to **Kroger.com** to link your card to this program.

And don’t forget **CARD FRONTS** for St. Jude’s Ranch for Children. They recycle these to create new holiday and all-occasion greeting cards which are sold to support their programs and services for abused, neglected and homeless children, young adults and families.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

- ✦ **Saturday, June 9, 2018** – Craft day, working on various items for our Bazaar. There will be something for everyone to do – no experience needed!
- ✦ **Sunday, June 10, 2018** - LWML meeting after church service.
- ✦ Pray for a safe journey for our delegates on July 5 thru 8, 2018, to participate in LWML TX District 40<sup>TH</sup> Biennial Convention, Waco.

Our society is open to all women of Bethlehem. We usually meet after church on the second Sunday of the month.



How about technology mentoring, child care, painting, planting, raking, mowing, window washing or help getting ready for a garage sale? You name it, we have someone who can do it! **BELC Youth** group are ready, willing and able to do any and all odd jobs.

This project provides an opportunity for middle and high school students, (grades 6 through 12), to assist older adults in completing routine light-duty household chores. However the goal of the **Rent-A-Youth** project is not only to get an important job done, or to assist young people in acquiring a valuable sense of responsibility and self -confidence, but also to foster fellowship between older adults and the youth in our church.

*If you have a job that you'd like to have done, please fill out this form and drop it by the office or give to Yanneth Harris.*

Please specify the type of work, how many people you want, how long you think it will take, and when you would like to have it done (please give at least 1 week notice, but the further ahead the better.)

Rent-A-Youth Coordinator: Yanneth Harris email: [yatoruiz@yahoo.com](mailto:yatoruiz@yahoo.com)

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**Rent-A-Youth Worker Request**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

D e s c r i p t i o n o f j o b :

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of workers needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Project Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmed Project Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Project Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmed Project Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Workers assigned to this church project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Fun and fellowship was had by all at our church picnic. Thanks for all who helped with decorating, setting up and taking down, cooking and bringing all the wonderful food!



## Getting to know: Karen Zelenske

Karen Zelenske became a member of the Bethlehem family February 2017. She moved here from Magnolia, Texas about 22 years ago and retired from Tractor Supply Company. She has two daughters, Danielle and husband Brian in Magnolia and Sommer and husband John in Leander and one son Joey and wife Kelli in Cypress. She also has three grandsons, Reid, Owen and Heath and one granddaughter, Cami. She enjoys reading, crafts, crochet, sewing, camping and the Cowboys! Karen likes to play games like hand and foot, spades and canasta, but 42 is her favorite.



## **REPORTS:**

**VP** - Gil reported underground utilities have been marked.

**Financial Secretary** - Lea reported April income \$18,252, expenses \$12,999. Loan balance \$39,838; additional \$3,202 to principal, includes 2017 rebate of \$821.04 posted April 4th. \*\*Motion by Jerry, 2nd by Jim to accept financial secretary report. Motion carried.

**Treasurer** - Gil gave account balances and income report, budget report for April. Questions about breakdown of savings accounts; committee of Jerry, Steve & Gill will get with Tammy & look at records.

**Elders** - James reported average attendance for April was 74, average communed was 69. No membership changes. Met with Police Chief Andy Harvey concerning "Chief-Clergy Coalition" with goal of establishing bonds & improving communication between law enforcement and community.

**Christian Education** - Melanie reported we are almost finished with Spring Sunday School. Have material for Summer Sunday School, need volunteers to teach.

**Evangelism** - Bible Jamboree in April went well. Will continue Adopt-A-Highway.

**Stewardship** - Steve reported savings of \$17,254 since 2012 with energy saving projects. Active Shooter seminar very informative, will be looking at security measures.

**Properties** - Jim will work on rail by piano.

**Social Concerns** - Megan reported Church Picnic went well, 30-35 participated, Pastor & Calvin grilled burgers; outdoor games, everyone had good time. No graduates. Made about \$330 from Yankee Candle sales, still need about \$2,000 for Higher Things in July.

**Youth** - Yanneth working to gather books for Elkhart schools; will give out Mother's Day gifts, plan to visit elderly. Food Packaging event on May 19th to benefit local food pantries, would like youth to participate.

**Pastor** - Pastor making himself available to support Police Officers along with other clergy and religious leaders. No information on Ardelle's funeral.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:** We need to make plans looking to the future of the church, be thinking.  
Nominating committee- Albert. Will vote at July Voter's Meeting.

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



There are three conversions necessary to every man: the head, the heart, and the purse.” Attributed to Luther, though yet to be located in his vast writings, this statement echoes what Jesus taught about hearts and treasures. He said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34).

But which conversion comes first? I submit that the order is this: first the head, then the purse, then the heart. Let me explain.

Our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt among us to save us. He took on our flesh, fulfilled the demands of the law in our place, became sin for us, and suffered torture and death on our behalf, in order that we would be free from sin, death, and hell. He gives us what He accomplished through Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper.

And so, He doesn’t just do it for us but gives it to us, makes what He did ours by making us His. Thus, we are called by His name: Christians. We have a new life in Him.

Through the preaching of Law and Gospel, God grants us repentance, a changing of our minds. It is a conversion of the mind. We are called to turn away from our sins and turn toward Him for forgiveness, life, and salvation. For when God calls us away from something, He is, at the same time, calling us to something.

And thus, He calls us to a new life, with new deeds. This is

the conversion of the purse. Jesus said that “it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Notice that our hearts follow our treasures, not the other way around. As Christians, God calls us to invest our treasures

in His Kingdom to ensure that the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered. He calls us to share all good things with the one who teaches us the doctrines of Christ. He calls us to be generous in giving to the church, for it is more blessed to give than to receive.

So where is your treasure? If it is not invested in the kingdom of God, then the only response is repentance—a conversion of the heart—and to begin doing just that. And as our Lord promised, where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

This is not to say that you earn your way into heaven. It is simply to say that as Christians, those who have been made to be temples of the Holy Spirit, who have been given a new life in Christ, who are dead to sin and now alive in Him, we are, actually, to live — think (conversion of the mind), do (conversion of the purse), and be (conversion of the heart) — a new life in Him.

And when you fail, know that God in Christ loves and forgives you and still calls you away from that and to Himself.



## God’s Share First

Bethlehem congregation encourages God’s people to consider percentage giving. A percentage giver is one who:

- ◆ Covenants with God to give a set percentage of all that is received to Kingdom causes;

- ◆ By study of God’s Word and by daily life with the Risen Lord, keeps the heart open to increasing the percentage as Christ leads to further commitments.

God bless your consideration of percentage giving. If you’re not yet doing it, why not consider this Biblical prin-



“Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth & rust do not destroy, & where thieves do not break in and steal.”

**HEALTH NEEDS—MEMBERS:**

- Albert Harris - back problems
- George Nelson - recovering from a stroke
- Julie Schoppe - recovering from surgery due to a car accident

**HEALTH NEEDS—FRIENDS:**

- Jana Burns [Tammy Pike’s friend] - heart attack
- Betty Leago [Dorothy Jackson’s friend] - in rehab hospital
- Steve & Katie Lund [former members] - ongoing health concerns
- Laura Miller [Dorothy Jackson’s friend] - recovering from stroke
- Phoenix [grandson of West’s friend] - mowing accident
- Hadleigh Pinkerton [Alicia Hutton’s great niece] - newborn with health issues
- Joan Smith [Dorothy Jackson’s niece] - cancer
- Kenneth Taylor [James Taylor’s brother] - advanced pancreatic cancer
- Marlene Thompson [Tammy Pike’s mother] - recovery from surgery
- Teresa White [Alicia Hutton’s grandmother] - ongoing health concerns
- Gene & Patsy Worsham [Tim’s parents] - ongoing health concerns

**Please  
help  
us  
keep  
this  
list  
updated.**

**HOMEBOUND:**

- Dorothy Jackson, Martha Kaudelka, Ardelle Samford, Johnnie Weaver

**Thanks**

**COMFORT:** Family and friends of Lori Fortner’s aunt, Ardell Samford, Mae Stegemoeller [Peggy Adler’s aunt] and Luke Grumbles.

**THOSE PREPARING FOR CHURCH WORK:**

- Aaron Jackson– attending Concordia University, Seward, NE

**THOSE SERVING IN OUR NATION’S ARMED FORCES:**

- Members Kyle Lawson and Kyle Shepherd, as well as Robert Garcia [Juanita’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.





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](http://www.lutheranhour.org)

DATE: June 3, 2018  
TITLE: "The Battleground of Time"  
TEXT: Deuteronomy 5:12-15; St. Mark 2:23-3:6  
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Military personnel know what it means to be on the front line in combat. This message is about a battleground where we're between opposing forces and could easily lose our life, the Battleground of Time.

DATE: June 10, 2018  
TITLE: "A Light Momentary Affliction?"  
TEXT: 2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1  
SPEAKER: Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

Paul had his problems. You've never met anyone who didn't. And yet, Paul called his problems "light" and "momentary". Today's message deals with the question, 'What does Paul know that we don't?'

DATE: June 17, 2018  
TITLE: "Tell Me a Story!"  
TEXT: St. Mark 4:26-34  
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Jesus loves to tell us stories. In His stories about the normal things of life, Jesus teaches us about the reign of God in our lives. This Father's Day, what makes for a godly father, or mother or Christian? The willingness to tell our stories.

DATE: June 24, 2018  
TITLE: "Jesus, Don't You Care?"  
TEXT: St. Mark 4:38-41  
SPEAKER: Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

After seeing one of the Savior's miracles the disciples asked, "Who is this Guy?" After Pentecost, they knew Who Jesus was and why He had come. Even so, the world keeps coming up with wrong answers when they ask, "Just Who is this Guy?"



phy who converted to the Christian faith and became a teacher in Ephesus and Rome. After refusing to make pagan sacrifices, he was arrested, tried and executed, along with six other believers. The official Roman court proceedings of his trial before Rusticius, a Roman prelate, document his confession of faith. The account of his martyrdom became a source of great encouragement to the early Christian community. Much of what we know of early liturgical practice comes from Justin.

**June 5—Boniface of Mainz** Boniface was born in the seventh century in England. Though he was educated, became a monk, and was ordained as a presbyter in England, he was inspired by the example of others to become a missionary. Upon receiving a papal commission in 719 to work in Germany, Boniface devoted himself to planting, organizing, and reforming churches and monasteries in Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria. After becoming an archbishop, Boniface was assigned to the See of Mainz in 743. Ten years later he resigned his position to engage in mission work in the Netherlands. On June 5, 754, while awaiting a group of converts for confirmation, Boniface and his companions were murdered by a band of pagans. Boniface is known as the apostle and missionary to the Germans.

**June 12—The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325** The first Council of Nicaea was convened in the early summer of 325 by the Roman Emperor Constantine at what is today Isnik, Turkey. The emperor presided at the opening of the council. The council ruled against the Arians, who taught that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God but was created by the Father and was called Son of God because of his righteousness. The chief opponents of the Arians were Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and his deacon, Athanasius. The council confessed the eternal divinity of Jesus and adopted the earliest version of the Nicene Creed, which in its entirety was adopted at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

**June 14—Elisha** Elisha, son of Shaphat of the tribe of Issachar, was the prophet of God to the northern kingdom of Israel ca. 849-786 B.C. Upon seeing his mentor Elijah taken up into heaven, Elisha assumed the prophetic office and took up the mantle of his predecessor. Like Elijah, Elisha played an active role in political affairs. He also performed many miracles, such as curing the Syrian army commander Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-27) and restoring life to the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37). A vocal opponent of Baal worship, Elisha lived up to his name, which means “my God is salvation.”

**June 25—The Presentation of the Augsburg Confessions** The Augsburg Confession, the principal doctrinal statement of the theology of Martin Luther and the Lutheran reformers, was written largely by Phillip Melanchthon. At its heart it confesses the justification of sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, for the sake of Christ alone. Signed by leaders of many German cities and regions, the confession was formally presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, Germany, on July 25, 1530. a few weeks later Roman Catholic authorities rejected the Confession, which Melanchthon defended in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531). In 1580 the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was included in the Book of Concord.

**June 26—Jeremiah** The prophet Jeremiah was active as God’s prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah ca. 627 to 582 B.C. As a prophet he predicted, witnessed, and lived through the Babylonian siege and eventual destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. In his preaching he often used symbols, such as an almond rod (Jer. 1:11-14), and potter at work (18:1-17). His entire prophetic ministry was a sermon, communicating through word and deed God’s anger toward his rebellious people. He suffered repeated rejection and persecution by his countrymen. As far as can be known, he died in Egypt, having been taken there forcibly. He is remembered and honored for fearlessly calling God’s people to repentance.

**June 27—Cyril of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor** Cyril (ca. A.D. 376-444) became archbishop of Alexandria, Egypt, in 412. Throughout his career he defended a number of orthodox doctrines, among them the teaching that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is “rightly called and truly is the Mother of God”—Theotokos, the “the God-bearer” (Formula of Concord, VIII, Ep VIII, 12). In 431 the Council of Ephesus affirmed this teaching that the Son of Mary is also true God. The writings of Cyril on the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ reveal him to be one of the most able theologians of his time. Cyril’s Christology influenced subsequent church councils and was a primary source for Lutheran confessional writings.

**June 28—Irenaeus of Lyons, Pastor** Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 130-200), believed to be a native of Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey), studied in Rome and later became pastor in Lyons, France. Around 177, while Irenaeus was away from Lyons, a fierce persecution of Christians led to the martyrdom of his bishop. Upon Irenaeus’ return, he became bishop of Lyons. Among his most famous writings is a work condemning heresies, especially Gnosticism, which denied the goodness of creation. In opposition, Irenaeus confessed that God has redeemed His creation through the incarnation of the Son. Irenaeus also affirmed the teachings of the Scriptures handed down to and through him as being normative for the Church.

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 are in full agreement with our all our beliefs 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 believe that Marriage is a life-long union of one man and one woman. We reject any other “union” called “marriage” as immoral and contrary to God's will.

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



**Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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**JUNE / JULY 2018**

