

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!

Another July 4, Independence Day, has past. I wonder if people really think that America has some kind of “favored nation status” with God. It doesn't. Dr. Scott Murray in his “Sons of Abraham” writes: “Many American Christians suffer from a biblical amnesia that leads them to identify the state of modern Israel as the chosen people of God of which the Bible speaks.” God has no “chosen Race.” His chosen people are all Christians (1 Peter 2:8,9). Only Christians worship the God of Abraham, the Triune God. Jews and Muslims do not worship the true God. The god of the Jews and the god of the Muslims is a non-existent pagan god, an idol.

CYCLE OF MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS

Undoubtedly some of you have heard the oft-repeated reference to the two hundred year cycle of some of the major civilizations of the world:

- From Bondage to Spiritual Faith.
- From Spiritual Faith to Great Courage.
- From Great Courage to Freedom.
- From Freedom to Abundance.
- From Abundance to Selfishness.
- From Selfishness to Complacency.
- From Complacency to Apathy.
- From Apathy to Dependence.
- And from Dependence back again to Bondage.



Where is America today in this 200 year cycle? ... somewhere between apathy and dependence? What has happened to the spirit of independence which characterized our Founding Fathers? Many of our neighbors seem to be as unconcerned about the threat of Communism as countless Russians were before the communists took over their country. Dr. Boris Sokoloff, who participated in the events of the Russian Revolution, tells about the spirit of apathy which prevailed in Russia just before the Communists took over. Returning from the battlefield in 1917, this prominent Russian doctor finds a group of his friends totally unconcerned about Communism and busy at a game of cards.

Since Woodrow Wilson, America has continued to elect the most leftist, socialist leaders, even a president. And as we consider our Christian core values and duties at the polls, let's remember ...

... *“Righteousness lifts up a nation, but sin is the disgrace of people” Proverbs 14:24.*

Consider the line in “America, The Beautiful”: *“America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law!”* Consider America's flaws:

1. Our Supreme Court decided to issued a ruling which allows some one million unborn infants to be murdered every year. This misguided group has made it clear that it is going to remain on the side of ancient pagan Roman immorality which condoned the murder of unborn infants. Then the Supreme Court even struck down those parts of states laws which required that parents of unmarried minors give written consent before an abortion can be performed.
2. Blacks have been mistreated and Indians abused at certain times in our past.
3. We have polluted our streams and wasted our resources.



Ignoring the words of Thomas Jefferson: "Still one more thing, fellow citizens - a wise and frugal government which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." (first inaugural address March 4, 1801)

7. There is a sickening expectation for the government to take care of people. And this desire for cradle to grave security is one of the primary reasons for our staggering national debt. Twelve states

(Georgia, Alaska, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Indiana, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arizona, North Dakota, Texas, Missouri) have petitioned the federal government for a limited constitutional convention to mandate balanced federal budgets, and concern over the rising national debt, yearly deficits, and the increasing government regulation. Another 10 states (Arkansas, Utah, New Mexico, Mississippi, Iowa, South Dakota, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, New Hampshire) have application for the Convention of States passed in one chamber but not the other. And another 24 states (Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming) are considering the Convention of States resolution in 2018.

8. Recent investigations have shown that many high officials in government ignore God's standards of morality. "It is time to face the fact that Congress has become a rotten institution run

by men who have been too long in power. This once proud institution has become a moral cesspool, in addition to being a disorganized, spend-thrift, malingering, ineffective legislative body. A big broom is needed to sweep out the decadent liberal establishment that has ruled Washington since 1933. Its arrogant self-serving leaders have been in office too long. They no longer know right from

wrong. The entire Bible is God's Word, reject God's Law and preach a "new morality" which is nothing but the old immorality. When society and the churches discard social standards and moral sanctions, it is rather hypocritical to suggest that politicians and civil authorities maintain them.

10. An increasing number of American homes are divided.

These are all symptoms of America's loss of soul. So what do we do? I suggest the following:

Pray!

Study!

Pray!

Ask questions!

Pray!

Learn!

Pray!

Scripture records that God would even have spared the wicked city of Sodom if He had found only a handful of true believers who were faithful to Him. The Triune God, the only God who exists, may yet spare America if more repent of their sins and return to Him and believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, as their Savior from sin. Repentance and true faith is the only way that America will experience true hope and change.

Alexis de Tocqueville, French philosopher, visited America more than a hundred years ago. He wrote: "I came to America in search for her greatness. I did not find it in her legislative halls, nor in her courts of justice. I did not find it in her libraries, art galleries, nor institutions of learning. I did not find it in her Constitution, as great as is that document. I found America's greatness in her pulpits flaming with righteousness. America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

✦ ✦ ✦

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 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!

God Bless America





Day, Columbus Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Veterans Day. This is a fund raising service project of the Kiwanis Club of Palestine. Thank you to the following who donated funds for this Flag project: : Rev & Peggy Adler, Jim & Neva Broad, Gil & Mary Lou Daughtrey, Mike & Shelia Flynn, Juanita Garcia, Albert & Yanneth Harris, Ray & Donna Hughes, Devin & Melanie Jackson, Lea Rosier, Paul & Jo Ann Tugwell and Steve & Mary Unk. (Thank you all for your donations this last year. It's time to renew our Flag subscription for another year. Any current donor who wishes to do so, please inform the church office. Cost for renewal is \$45 per flag.)

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:
**TURN IN
 YOUR ARTICLES
 EARLY!**
 REMINDER:
**DEADLINE FOR
 NEWSLETTER
 ARTICLES IS**
 September 16

SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY

AUGUST 26TH

We will be starting the new school year on August 26th. We are looking for individuals to teach on Sundays and Wednesdays. Please consider how you can assist in this important ministry and speak with



PLEASANT HILLS CHILDREN'S HOME

The Evangelism Committee is collecting the following items for the Pleasant Hills Children's Home:

After school and bedtime snacks, canned food (both gallon and small size needed), soups, grocery food, dessert and baking ingredients, condiments, spices, toiletry items, medicine/first aide, cleaning supplies and paper goods. A detailed list is located in the narthex.

The Pleasant Hills Children's Home (PHCH) pantry provides essential food and household items for the PHCH children. PHCH is licensed to care for up to 48 children from birth to age 17. Gallon size cans are needed for the M-F meals which are served in the campus dining hall. Individual size cans are needed for the weekend meals which are served in each of the four individual cottage homes.

For more information, visit www.pleasanthillsschildrenshome.org.



In preparation, we've had two craft workdays, making the cutest stuffed animals, hand decorated clear ornaments for the holiday tree, and beautiful matted cards in nice frames. Make your plans to attend because we're looking forward to a successful Bazaar!



The Church Evangelism Committee announced a **BBQ sack lunch**, here in our parking lot (drive-thru or inside seating offered). The date; July 28, 2018 11:00 am to 2:00 pm., \$8.00 donation, to benefit **Pleasant Hills Children's Home (Fairfield)**. A "Needs List" was provided as a guide to purchasing items for the home. (Our LWML donated \$50.00.)



The Garber Hall Kitchen committee is gathering information for the "re-do" and has received funds from the church budget. Paul Tugwell has volunteered to build an island to replace the table now being used. Plans include updating the kitchen cabinet doors and applying new paint where needed.



LWML Sunday 2018 – October 7. Based on Psalm 62:1-8, the theme chosen is "Our Rest in a Changing World." Service written by Reverend Ken Hennings to celebrate all that God has done through the LWML. Since 1942, the LWML has affirmed each woman's identity as a child of God and her relationship with Jesus Christ, encouraging and equipping Christian women to live out their lives in active mission ministries and to support missions around the world through their gifts of mites, tithes, offerings, and tireless service.



Kroger "Community Rewards" Program- THANKS TO ALL WHO JOIN US IN THIS EFFORT. Contact Donna Hughes for information on how to participate, using your Kroger card. Remember that LWML uses these funds for our various projects.

CARD FRONTS from all kinds of greeting cards. Bring them to Garber Hall and deposit into the collection box. 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. Remember no Hallmark, Disney or American Greetings cards.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ✦ Sun., August 12, 2018, next LWML meeting after church.
- ✦ LWML Zone Fall Rally, October 6, 2018, here at Bethlehem, watch for more details.
- ✦ LWML Sunday, October 7, 2018

Our society is open to all women of Bethlehem. 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. The Annual Bazaar is our major fundraiser. Why do we meet together? The LWML in Texas creates opportunities for Lutheran women to become more aware of the need for outreach to people around them as they are in need of the words of hope that are valid only in Christ.

THANK YOU to everyone who helped with our fundraiser for Pleasant Hills Children's Home. Thank You to Thrivent who gave us seed money to purchase 100 pounds of brisket and Thank you to Ray Hughes for cooking it. Thanks also to Discount Bread Store who gave us a discount on the buns, to Jeff Atkinson and Texas Farm Bureau for bottled water, to our pickle baggers and onion choppers and cookie bakers, GREAT JOB! The set-up crew, servers and clean-up crew and all who supported our cause by eating lunch with us. We served about 50 sack lunches and sold the remaining meat on Sunday Morning. We raised \$885. Food and gift cards were also donated, and Pleasant Hills was thrilled to hear that we will be delivering all this to them soon. Praise God for our faithful folks and for opportunities to help others



Our next Adopt-A-Highway cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, September 22, 2018. Time to be determined later.

On Saturday, October 13, 2018. We will have another Bible Jamboree. It will be held at the North Side Heights apartments. The program will be similar to the one we had earlier this year. Details will be forthcoming.

We have started a congregational "help" service for congregational members needing help around their residences. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex. For questions, please talk to Paul Stephenson and also about your willingness to help in the endeavor.

Just a reminder; please don't forget to continue handing out the small gospels of John and also our hospitality bags for those you see asking for help along the roads.

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

REPORTS:

VP - absent. Gil reported the nomination committee met last Friday.

Financial Secretary - Lea reported May income \$13,391.10, expenses \$15,823.84. Loan balance \$39,613.56.

Treasurer - Gil gave account balances and income report as well as budget report for May and year to date. Motion by James, 2nd by Jerry to accept financial reports. Motion carried.

Elders - James reported average attendance for May was 59. Membership change: loss through death – Ardelle Samford. Youth are going to Higher Things. They are short \$. Motioned by Lea, 2nd by Jerry to take money from the Bible Bunch account to pay the costs. Motion carried.

Christian Education - Melanie reported that we have concluded Wednesday nights Bible studies with a bowling night with the kids. Thanks to Pastor, Peggy Adler, Sandy Teets, Megan and Calvin Taylor, and Devin Jackson for helping with Wednesdays this year. Summer Sunday School is continuing. Still need volunteers.

Evangelism - Jerry stated Bible Jamboree would be Oct. 13 at Greens Park. There will be a fundraiser on July 28th probably BBQ sandwiches. Funds destination to be decided later. Sept. 22 – Adopt-a-Highway.

Stewardship - Steve said things are going well. Looking at security in the future

Properties - Jim reported: installed safety rail at piano, sprayed around the AC, installed temperature gauge in Garber Hall, replaced a toilet tank valve, and fixed the sign. The AC failed in Tammy's office. Received bids to clean the AC for \$2,153 by Jeff Lively. Will have it cleaned since the congregation has already approved the \$.

Social Concerns - Megan had nothing new to report.

Youth - Yanneth said the youth helped pack meals, visited some of the elderly, and celebrated Mother's day with treats. They will meet on Thursday to make Father's Day treats. 60 books were donated for the prison. 35 cell phones collected. Looking on where to donate them. Youth will be going to Hawaiian Falls in Waco in July.

Pastor - June 8th Rudy Kaudelka passed away. July 1 – Patriotic Commemoration before the service begins. Sunday Bible Class on Job continues. Sept. 5 – Midweek will begin. Pastor and James Taylor will be attending the convention Thursday – Saturday.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: LWML will bring an estimate to refurbish the kitchen in Garber Hall next month.

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion on thoughts of having a potluck once a month instead of weekly on Wednesdays.

Motion by Lea, 2nd by Jerry to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned and Pastor closed with the benediction.

Present: Gil Daughtery, James Taylor, Melanie Jackson, Lea Rosier, Jerry Hartenberger, Jim Broad, Steve Unk, Yanneth Harris, and Pastor Adler.

REPORTS:

VP - Albert no report

Financial Secretary - Lea reported June income \$15,841, expenses \$12,816. Loan balance \$39,389 and CEF report.

Treasurer - Gil gave account balances & income report, balances in savings accounts; budget report for June and year-to-date. **Motion by Jerry, 2nd by Melanie to accept financial reports. Motion carried.

Elders - James reported average attendance for June was 65, for 2nd quarter was 66; average communion was 63. Loss Ardelle Samford & Rudy Kaudelka, death; Susie Elmore released.

Christian Education - Melanie reported on Summer Sunday School.

Evangelism - Jerry reported Sack Lunch Fundraiser July 28th will be for Pleasant Hills Children's Home; Adopt-A-Highway September 22nd; Bible Jamboree October 13th.

Stewardship - Steve reported all is going well, budget in order. Thanks to Steve for his service.

Properties - Jim reported A/C repaired at cost of \$2,153. Paul & Jim mounted "Lord Prayer."

Social Concerns - Melanie reported for Megan that they will be helping Evangelism with fundraiser.

Youth - Yanneth reported donating 35 cell phones; 13 people went to Hawaiian Falls and had good time. Plan to help with fundraiser and purchase gift cards. Next project will be helping at Animal Shelter; will collect towels and plan to help with dogs.

Pastor - Pastor reported he & James Taylor attended Convention June 14-17th; Rev Mike Newman new District President. Pastor Keith Bowman installed at Centerville June 24th; keep Grace, Crockett in prayers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Posted Slate of 2019 Officers and descriptions of duties.

**Motion by Donna, 2nd by Lea to present to voters to spend up to \$4,000 to refurbish old kitchen. Motion carried.

Yanneth mentioned Humane Society fundraiser.

NEW BUSINESS: None

**Motion by Lea, 2nd by James to adjourn. Motion carried. Pastor closed with the Benediction.

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

When it comes to stewardship, a favorite Bible verse is the account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). It's a moving account. Our Lord praises the seemingly small gift of two copper coins given by a poor widow above the abundance of gifts given by the rich, saying, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them" (Luke 21:3).

And that is usually where we stop. But the text goes on. "For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4).

"She ... put in all she had to live on." She gave everything. She held nothing back. She trusted that the Lord who made her and all creatures, who gave her everything she had, who redeemed her from her own sin, from death, and the power of the devil, who called her by the Gospel and enlightened her with His gifts of Word and Sacrament, would continue to do this. He would provide her with all that she needed for this body and life because that is the character of the God she had.

But this is not why we give small gifts. Her gift, though it appeared small, was actually large. When we are tempted to give small gifts it is precisely because we want them to be small! We don't trust the Lord to provide for us.

We give small gifts because we lack faith in the One who created us, redeemed us, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. We give small gifts because we doubt that God will really give us what we need and desire. We give small gifts because we are not content with what God has already given.

We are not slaves, children of the slave woman, under the Old Covenant (Gal. 4). We are adopted sons of the free woman. And since we

are sons, we are also heirs. And heirs receive the inheritance. For everything is already ours in Christ. And thus, moved by the willing spirit of adoption, we do the will of God in financial matters far beyond all that done by those under the Old Covenant who were forced by legal demands.

So what have you decided to give? How do I decide what to give? Let the Scriptures be your guide.

We are to give proportionally to what we have received from God's giving to us (Luke 12:48; 1 Cor. 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 8:12). But you have not been set free to give nothing. See that you excel in the grace of giving (2 Cor. 8:7).

We are not free to live selfishly outside the Gospel, without regard for God who gives us all good gifts, without generosity for our neighbor who needs us and our gifts, without supporting the community of faith in which we live, without care for our spiritual fathers and those who teach and help raise our children in the faith, without resources for the poor and needy – in short, we are not free to live unto ourselves, hoarding what God has given us only for us.

For love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). And the sum of the law is this: Love God and love your neighbor (Matt. 22:34-40). We love because He first loved us. We give because He has given to us.

Luther once said, "Possessions belong in your hands, not in your heart" (LW 14:240). There is a reason your 10 fingers spread apart. With your hands you catch God's gifts for what you need and let the rest fall through your fingers to your neighbors – your family, your friends, your community, your church.



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:

- Mary Lou Daughtrey - health problems
- Shelia Flynn - health problems
- Albert Harris - back problems
- Dorothy Jackson - pneumonia
- George Nelson - recovering from a stroke
- Julie Schoppe - recovering from surgery due to a car accident

HEALTH NEEDS—FRIENDS:

- Katie Lund [former member] - ongoing health concerns
- 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
- Teresa White [Alicia Hutton's grandmother] - ongoing health concerns
- Gene & Patsy Worsham [Tim's parents] - ongoing health concerns

HOMEBOUND:

- Martha Kaudelka, Johnnie Weaver

COMFORT: Family and friends of Rudy Kaudelka and Steve Lund

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], James Reed [Devin Jackson's co-worker] 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.

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



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: August 5, 2018
TITLE: "And the Pursuit of Happiness"
TEXT: Exodus 16:2-15; St. John 6:22-35
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

When the main goal in life is your happiness, you've turned in on yourself and away from others, especially God. Turn from yourself to Jesus and you'll know a peace that surpasses all understanding, and that is the basis for true lasting happiness.

DATE: August 12, 2018
TITLE: "Pigeonholed"
TEXT: St. John 6:42
SPEAKER: Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

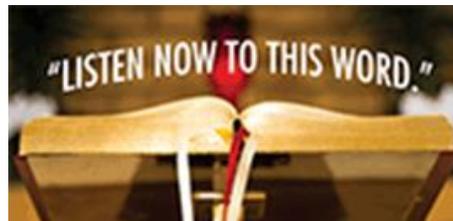
Just when you think you are getting to know Jesus, He says something which can confuse. Today the world remains confused about God's Son, our Savior. That's because Jesus refuses to be pigeonholed by the world's desires or expectations. He's God's Son, Who has come to save humankind. Anything else, or different than this, is simply unacceptable.

DATE: August 19, 2018
TITLE: "In Your Light We See Light"
TEXT: Psalm 36
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Meditation is time to think, and Christian meditation thinks about God in the light of Jesus Christ. It is "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path."

DATE: August 26, 2018
TITLE: "What Is Best"
TEXT: Philippians 1:9-10
SPEAKER: Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

Far too many people assume there are differences in commercial products, political candidates and school systems, but these same people believe all religions are the same. Today we join with the Apostle Paul in praying people may discern what is best when it comes to their Savior.



other women to the tomb of Jesus on the first Easter morning is noted in the Gospel records of St. Matthew (28:1), St. Mark (16:1), and St. Luke (24:10). Joanna was the wife of Cuza, a steward in Herod's household (St. Lk. 8:3). Mary, the mother of James (the son of Alphaeus), was another of the women who faithfully provided care for Jesus and His disciples from the time of His Galilean ministry through His burial after the crucifixion. Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee (St. Mt. 27:56), joined with the women both at the cross and in the bringing of the spices to the garden tomb. These "faithful women" have been honored in the church through the centuries as examples of humble and devoted service to the Lord.

August 10 - Laurence, Deacon and Martyr - Early in the third century A.D., Laurence, most likely born in Spain, made his way to Rome. There he was appointed chief of the seven deacons and was given the responsibility to manage church property and finances. The emperor at the time, who thought that the church had valuable things worth confiscating, ordered Laurence to produce the "treasures of the church." Laurence brought before the emperor the poor whose lives had been touched by Christian charity. He was then jailed and eventually executed in the year 258 by being roasted on a gridiron. His martyrdom left a deep impression on the young church. Almost immediately, the date of His death, August 10, became a permanent fixture on the early commemorative calendar of the Church.

August 16 - Isaac, the long promised and awaited son of Abraham and Sarah, was born when his father was 100 and his mother 91. The announcement of his birth brought both joy and laughter to his aged parents (so the name "Isaac," which means "laughter"). As a young man, Isaac accompanied his father to Mount Moriah, where Abraham, in obedience to God's command, prepared to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. But God intervened, sparing Isaac's life and providing a ram as a substitute offering (Gen. 22:1-14), and thus pointing to the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. Isaac was given in marriage to Rebekah (24:15), and they had twin sons, Esau and Jacob (25:19-26). In his old age Isaac, blind and feeble, wanted to give his blessing and chief inheritance to his favorite—and eldest—son, Esau. But through deception Rebekah had Jacob receive them instead, resulting in years of family enmity. Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried by his sons, who by then had become reconciled, in the family burial cave of Machpelah (35:28-29).

August 17 - Johann Gerhard, Theologian - Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) was a great Lutheran theologian in the tradition of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Martin Chemnitz (1522-86) and the most influential of the 17th-century dogmatists. His monumental *Loci Theologici* (23 large volumes) is still considered by many to be a definitive statement of Lutheran orthodoxy. Gerhard was born in Quedlinburg, Germany. At the age of 15 he was stricken with a life-threatening illness. This experience, along with guidance from his pastor, Johann Arndt, marked a turning point in his life. He devoted the rest of his life to theology. He became a professor at the University of Jena and served many years as the Superintendent of Heldberg. Gerhard was a man of deep evangelical piety and love for Jesus. He wrote numerous books on exegesis, theology, devotional literature, history, and polemics. His sermons continue to be widely published and read.

August 19 - Bernard of Clairvaux, Hymnwriter and Theologian - A leader in Christian Europe in the first half of the 11th century A.D., Bernard is honored in his native France and around the world. Born into a noble family in Burgundy in 1090, Bernard left the affluence of his heritage and entered the monastery of Citeaux at the age of 22. After two years he was sent to start a new monastic house at Clairvaux. His work there was blessed in many ways. The monastery at Clairvaux grew in mission and service, eventually establishing some 68 daughter houses. Bernard is remembered for his charity and political abilities, but especially for his preaching and hymn composition. The hymn texts "O Jesus, King Most Wonderful" and "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" are part of the heritage of the faith left by Saint Bernard.

August 20 - Samuel - last of the Old Testament judges and first of the prophets (after Moses), lived during the 11th century B.C. The child of Elkanah, an Ephraimite, and his wife Hannah, Samuel was from early on consecrated by his parents for sacred service and trained in the house of the Lord at Shiloh by Eli the priest. Samuel's authority as a prophet was established by God (1 Sam. 3:20). He anointed Saul to be Israel's first king (10:1). Later, as a result of Saul's disobedience to God, Samuel repudiated Saul's leadership and then anointed David to be king in place of Saul (16:13). Samuel's loyalty to God, his spiritual insight, and his ability to inspire others made him one of Israel's great leaders.

August 27 - Monica, Faithful Mother - A native of North Africa, Monica (A.D. 333–387) was the devoted mother of Saint Augustine. Throughout her life she sought the spiritual welfare of her children, especially that of her brilliant son, Augustine. Widowed at a young age, she devoted herself to her family, praying many years for Augustine's conversion. When Augustine left North Africa to go to Italy, she followed him to Rome and then to Milan. There she had the joy of witnessing her son's conversion to the Christian faith. Weakened by her travels, Monica died at Ostia, Italy on the journey she had hoped would take her back to her native Africa. On some church year calendars, Monica is remembered on May 4.

August 28 - Augustine of Hippo, Doctor of the Church - St. Augustine was one of the greatest of the Latin church fathers and a significant influence in the formation of Western Christianity, including Lutheranism. Born in A.D. 354 in North Africa, Augustine's early life was distinguished by exceptional advancement as a teacher of rhetoric. In his book *Confessions* he describes his life before his conversion to Christianity, when he was drawn into the moral laxity of the day and fathered an illegitimate son. Through the devotion of his sainted mother Monica and the preaching of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (339-97), Augustine was converted to the Christian faith. During the great Pelagian controversies of the 5th century, Augustine emphasized the unilateral grace of God in the salvation of mankind. Bishop and theologian at Hippo in North Africa from A.D. 395 until his death in 430, Augustine was a man of great intelligence, a fierce defender of the orthodox faith, and a prolific writer. In addition to the book *Confessions*, Augustine's book *City of God* had a great impact upon the church throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

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

The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

1515 South Loop 256

Palestine, Texas 75801-5857

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