

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!

Faithful Lutherans subscribe unconditionally to the Book of Concord as a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Book of Concord includes “The Augsburg Confession” and the “Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession.”

Such unconditional subscription to these documents is necessary for membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Synodical Membership is held by congregations and by ordained and commissioned ministers. Article III – Confessional Standard – of Bethlehem’s Constitution states that “no Doctrine that is at variance with these symbolical books shall be taught or tolerated in this Congregation...” At my ordination and every subsequent installation, I vowed faithfulness to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

The Augsburg Confession boldly states that **"private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse"** (XI). And the Apology of the Augsburg Confession declares that **"Absolution may properly be called a sacrament of penitence"** (Ap XII.41). The Apology of the Augsburg Confession also clearly states **"The genuine sacraments, therefore, are Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution** (which is the sacrament of penitence)" (XIII.4).

So Lutherans will not object to calling Absolution a Sacrament. Nevertheless, when we speak of Confession and Absolution, most Lutheran laity (and even some Pastors) consider this a reference to the Preparation of the Divine Service. However, such “corporate” confession and “corporate” absolution was not a part of the Divine Service nor was it widely practiced at the time of the Lutheran Reformation.

“On Luther’s advice, in almost all of the church orders of the sixteenth century churches in fellowship with the Wittenberg church, the exclusive use of private confession and Absolution was established, and general confession was not permitted. In the 1542 church order, signed by Luther, it says: ‘If any preacher should assemble those who want to commune in the morning and speak a general Absolution to them: that should be no means be done.’” (C.F.W. Walther, Pastoral Theology, p 122)

This is the main reason why the Elders and I are studying the use of the indicative-operative “absolution” formula at the beginning of the Divine Services. The more ancient form of Confession and Absolution is done on an individual basis, i.e., Pastor/Priest to Parishioner ... not Pastor/Priest to Parish. As Luther wrote to Melancthon: “What is Absolution other than the Gospel spoken to an individual person who thereby receives comfort about the sin he has confessed?” (Walch, XVI, 2177f.).

This is why I have always offered private, individual Confession and Absolution. Here individuals can privately and confidentially confess to both sins in general and any sins that are particularly troublesome. I am willing and able to hear such private confession and to comfort sinners with individual absolution. Such absolution effects forgiveness. This is by virtue of Christ’s command and is done with His authority. The Scriptural basis for the command and authority of Christ is St. John 20:22-23 — *“And when he had said this, [Jesus] breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*

The *Small Catechism* teaches:

What is confession?

‘...believe this absolution and firmly hold that when we believe the word of absolution we are as truly reconciled with God as if we had heard a voice from heaven...’

acknowledge that we are guilty of all manner of sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. Before the confessor, however, we should confess only those sins of which we have knowledge and which trouble us.

What are such sins?

Answer: Reflect on your condition in the light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are a father or mother, a son or daughter, a master or servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, ill-tempered, or quarrelsome; whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; and whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted anything, or done other evil.

Many of you who received Individual Absolution at our Holy Thursday services commented on how wonderful it was to have the Gospel spoken to you personally. Some of you even had tears in your eyes. You may have that joy more than once a year. I myself know the comfort and consolation of Holy Absolution ... you see, I have a father-confessor and make use of individual confession and absolution.

I invite you to consult Lutheran Service Book (pages 292-293) and come receive Holy Absolution, the sacrament of penitence. I am normally in my study: Tuesday through Fridays -- 9:00 a.m. to Noon; Wednesdays 4:00p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Sep-May); and by appointment.

You are encouraged to use the **Beichtspiegel** [A Confession Mirror] (copies of this booklet are available in the Narthex or you can download from link on our website www.belctx.org) in preparation for Confession.

✠ ✠ ✠

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

for spiritual vitality and victorious living that comes each time we encounter God's renewing presence in Word & Sacrament!

Rev [signature] -wOlv'
(Peace [Shalom] be with you)

Confession Absolution

Other quotes from the Lutheran Confessions concerning Holy Absolution:

“At the same time the people are carefully instructed concerning the consolation of the Word of absolution so that they may esteem absolution as a great and precious thing.” (*Augsburg Confession XXV: Confession, par. 2*)

“In speaking of faith, therefore, we also include absolution since ‘faith comes from what is heard.’ as Paul says (Rom. 10:17).” (*Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII: Penitence, par. 39*)

“Thus by divine ordinance Christ himself has entrusted absolution to his Christian church and commanded us to absolve one another from sins. (*A Brief Exhortation to Confession The Large Catechism: Of the Sacrament of the Altar, art. 0, par. 87*)

“As Ps. 42:2 says, ‘As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.’ That is, as a hart trembles with eagerness for a fresh spring, so I yearn and tremble for God's Word, absolution, the sacrament, etc.” (*The Large Catechism: A Brief Exhortation to Confession, par. 87*)

“For that reason also, as the Augsburg Confession states in Article XI, we retain individual absolution and teach that it is God's command that we ‘believe this absolution and firmly hold that when we believe the word of absolution we are as truly reconciled with God as if we had heard a voice from heaven.’ as the Apology ex-



generous donation and thank you collected for PHCH. What a tremendous blessing! Thank you for helping take care of the kids at PHCH. We appreciate you all very much.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped teach this past year: Peggy Adler, Rev. D. Adler, Jody Bowden, Kristen Harris, Yanneth Harris, Bobbie Hartenberger, Donna Hughes, Devin Jackson, Matthew Jackson, Melanie Jackson, Sara Kimbrough, Sandy Smith, Megan Taylor and Sandy Teets.

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

ADOPT A HIGHWAY SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22ND

We plan on meeting at the church to begin the trash pickup. Our part of the highway starts on the loop at Bethlehem and ends by First Baptist Church. If you cannot actually walk the highways, you can help with dropping off or picking up people along the loop and shuttling drinks to the highway crew.

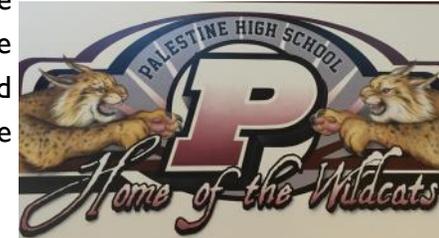


WEDNESDAYS AT BETHLEHEM

Beginning Wednesday, September 5th, our Midweek schedule resumes with choir practice at 5:15 p.m., and a potluck supper at 6 p.m. The 7 p.m. adult Bible class will continue their study of the life of Joseph. What a great time to join together again as a church family for fellowship and the study of God's Word!

IT'S FOOTBALL TIME AGAIN!!

The youth are parking cars for the Palestine Wildcat football games as a fundraiser. The cost is \$2. September game dates are the 14th, and the 21st. If you would like to help, please see Devin Jackson.



Summer is about over and the new school year is upon us. Thank you to everyone who taught Sunday School this summer. We are looking forward to a fantastic new year. The teachers for the 2018-2019 school year are: Jody Bowden, Yanneth Harris, Donna Hughes, Devin Jackson, Matthew Jackson, Sara Kimbrough, Julie Schoppe and Nic Worsham

Thank you to everyone who will help this year. We are still on the lookout for teachers so please prayerfully consider this important ministry.

gifts for the holidays. We'll also have delicious baked goods for purchase. Lunch will feature soups with all the trimmings, salad items, a drink and a wonderful dessert.

In the weeks before the bazaar, we will be meeting together to make craft items and to discuss last-minute plans. We're looking forward to a successful Bazaar! Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors!



Highlights of the LWML Texas District Convention held in Waco, TX, July 5-7, 2018: In attendance were 211 voting delegates, 463 guests. Bethlehem's delegates were Sandy Smith & Donna Hughes.

Donna Pyle led Bible Study each day of the convention. A guest musician, Wendysue Fluegge, of Milwaukee, WI, was the worship leader/song leader. Rev. Ken Hennings led the opening worship, Rev. John Heckmann led the Sunday morning worship. There were three offerings taken for the following: Fortress (a new LCMS church plant in Fort Hood); for Mites; and for Churches Touching Lives for Christ, Temple, TX. One of the servant events was a "Feed the Children" session where bags of food were filled for schools in Haiti, each bag containing six meals when added into water.

Heard at the convention, seven deadly words: "We've never done it that way before." Well, this convention proved the error of that kind of thinking! We are stepping out in faith!

Total of Mission Grants to be Funded – April 1, 2018 thru March 31, 2020: \$180,000



LWML Fall Rally, at Bethlehem – October 6, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Registration 9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.) Theme "**Our Rest in a Changing World,**" based on **Ps 62:1-8**, featuring the new 2018 banner design. Pastor Davidson (St. John, Athens) will lead the Bible Study and Pastor Adler (Bethlehem, Palestine) will lead the opening devotion. There will be time for crafts, refreshments, lunch, a brief business meeting - all for \$6.00 per person. Ladies, plan to join us!

Our LWML society donated \$50.00 to "**Operation Read**" to take place Saturday, September 15, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the Senior Center (pancakes, sausage), announced by Jeff Atkinson. Everyone welcome!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ✦ Next LWML meeting; September 9, 2018.
- ✦ Saturday, October 6, Annual Paint Palestine Pink, walk/run: Bethlehem will be first stop on the course.
- ✦ **LWML Zone Fall Rally** – Saturday, October 6, here at Bethlehem.
- ✦ **LWML Sunday**, October 7, 2018, during service here at Bethlehem. Our LWML society will be participating as ushers, greeters, readers; providing flowers for the altar; along with the new 2018 banner, made by our LWML Banner workers.
- ✦ LWML 38TH Biennial Convention, Mobile, AL, June 20-23, 2019

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.

for Pleasant Hills Children's Home. We were able to give THEM a check for \$900.00!



YOUTH NEWS

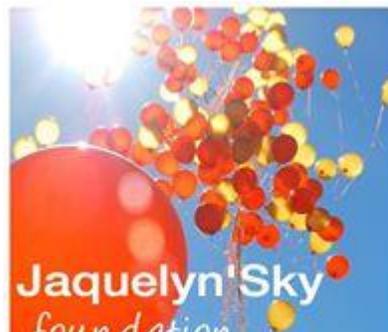
Thank you to all who helped collect towels for BARC, the Anderson County Humane Society.

Through our annual garage sale and other fundraising events, the youth was able to donate \$100 toward Refuge of Light and \$250 to the Jaquelyn Sky Foundation.



Refuge of Light is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a specialized safe home that provides physical, mental, and spiritual healing in an effort to overcome the brutalization of modern-day slavery, called 'sex trafficking' in the lives of victimized girls 13 to 17 years of age within the United States. Their vision is to transform the broken life into the brilliant life through individualized plans of restoration. To equip these young girls with confidence and the skills to realize and formulate their own vision for a new, healthy, and meaningful life.

The first priority of the **Jaquelyn Sky Foundation** is providing funding for expenses of families whose children are fighting cancer, such as housing near the treatment center. They are also committed to supporting the financial and emotional needs of fighter families directly impacted by this monster.



Jaquelyn Sky was an 8th grader when she was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). Jaquelyn always wanted to be involved in promoting childhood cancer awareness. She had a heart for the children fighting her same fight and always prayed for a cure for childhood cancer. This foundation was created in loving memory of Jaquelyn Sky Jenkins. In

REPORTS:

VP - Albert no report

Financial Secretary - Lea reported July income \$16,844, expenses \$18,249. Loan balance \$35,622 & CEF report.

Treasurer - Gil gave account balances & income report; budget report for July and year-to-date. Savings balances/breakdown. **Motion by Melanie, 2nd by Jim to accept financial reports. Motion carried.

Elders - James reported average attendance for July was 62, average communed 55, no membership changes.

Christian Education - Melanie looking for Sunday School and Midweek teachers, have material. Great time at Higher Things.

Evangelism - Donna reported fundraiser for Pleasant Hills went OK, \$900 plus gift cards and groceries delivered and much appreciated. May change date on AAH; looking at entering Hot Pepper Festival parade and booth, October 27th.

Stewardship - Steve reported everything OK, ready to turn over to new chairman.

Properties - Jim changed few bulbs.

Social Concerns - Megan reported will help with Bible Jamboree & help LWML craft day August 26th and Circuit Pastors meeting lunch on September 20th. Rally Day on August 26th, will have pot luck lunch.

Youth - Yanneth reported collecting towels for BARC; Jacqueline Sky Foundation provides housing in Houston for parents whose children hospitalized with cancer. Donated \$100 to Refuge of Life.

Pastor - Pastor mentioned church security; Jim will check into cost of changing exterior doors. Installation of officers and Rally Day August 26th; Circuit Pastors meeting at Bethlehem September 20th.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Kitchen Workday scheduled for August 25th, 9 am.

NEW BUSINESS: None

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

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

AUGUST 19, 2018 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Gil called the meeting to order. Item of business, Roger Harris' brother would like to donate Roger's property to the church, 2003 16x40 mobile home and 0.769 acres. Paul had been to the home and it needs lots of work. **Motion by Lea, 2nd by Jerry to accept donation and sell for best offer. Discussion. Motion carried.

**Motion by Lea, 2nd by James to adjourn. Motion carried.

Present: Gil Daughtrey, Albert Harris, Yanneth Harris, James Taylor, Megan Taylor, Donna Hughes, Lea Rosier, James Hardenberger, Melanie Jackson, Jim Broad, Pastor Adler and Paul Turwell

Since mid-July, a group of complicated and ever-changing wildfires have destroyed the landscape and property in their paths, notably the Carr Fire in Shasta and Trinity counties and the Mendocino Complex Fire covering Colusa, Lake and Mendocino counties.

Several LCMS congregations have been affected directly by these fires. Trinity Lutheran Church and Early Learning Center in Redding, Calif., is only two miles from the flames of the Carr Fire.

According to the Rev. Brian Cummins, pastor at Trinity, 44 church members have had to leave their homes.

The Rev. Chris DelCol, pastor at First Lutheran Church in Lucerne, Calif., reports that not only was the church evacuated, but all of First Lutheran's members also had to leave their homes.

And while St. John's Lutheran Church in Clear Lake, Calif., remains open, some members had to evacuate.

COMFORT DOGS BRING ENCOURAGEMENT

Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) K-9 comfort dogs and their handlers arrived on the scene of the fires July 28 and have been offering encouragement to firefighters and first responders as well as victims.

"When you pet a dog, it lowers your heart rate," explains LCC President and CEO Tim Hetzner. "[We] talk with the dog and then the human. And then we have a quiet prayer with them."

As fires change, move or emerge, the dogs and their handlers also move near those needing comfort. LCC rotates dogs every five to seven days and plans to stay on-site with the dogs as long as they are needed.

In addition, LCC partners with local LCMS churches to funnel donations to victims of the fires through those congregations and their contacts. Hetzner notes that things don't immediately return to normal once the fires are out.

Instead, he says, "there will have to be a new normal. But in the midst of crisis, God works in mighty ways."



Lutheran Church Charities K-9 comfort dogs visit with members of the 870th Military Police Company from Pittsburg, Calif. The comfort dogs and their handlers have been offering encouragement to firefighters, first responders and victims since July 28. (Debra Baran)

it's September, and everything is in full swing again: back to school and back to church attendance after vacations and weekends away. And since everything is back into full swing, it's a perfect time to get back to basics, back to the foundation.

At the end of the first of his chapters on the virtue of faith in Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis provides a helpful reminder, by way of analogy, for the foundation of stewardship. He wrote:

Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already. So then, when we talk of a man doing anything for God or giving anything to God, I will tell you what it is really like. It is like a small child going to its father and saying, "Daddy, give me six pence to buy you a birthday present." Of course, the father does, and he is pleased with the child's present. It is all very nice and proper, but only an idiot would think that the father is six-pence to the good on the transaction. When a man has made these two discoveries God can really get to work. It is after this that real life begins. (128–129).

This is the first thing we are given to confess about stewardship, and it has to do with ownership. God owns everything, and we are simply managers — stewards — acting on His behalf. This is true not only of all that we have in this life

(Deuteronomy 8:17–18), but also all that we are in this life (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The rest flows from here. Since we are stewards, or managers, of what belongs to God, entrusted to make use of it according to His will, there is an expectation of responsibility and accountability.

For the Lord said, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more" (Luke 12:48b).

And from this comes blessing and reward: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21).

We have everything we need to support this body and life from our God's fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We have everything we need for our spiritual life also from His merci-

ful hands.

On account of the sacrifice of His Son, our Lord Jesus, through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, we have the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and everlasting salvation delivered to us with absolute certainty that it is ours — not as stewards but as sons (Galatians 4:1–7).

Let us then, as His own sons, press all that He gives to us into the service of His church and to His glory.



God's Share First

A tither once said, "Tithing is soul satisfying and it gives me the feeling that I am doing my part. I believe the Lord wants me tithe. That is why I give 10% of all I receive to support His kingdom.

We believe that everyone should study tithing seriously. We must recognize its practice as an ancient law which

We also believe in the New Testament practice of starting somewhere and growing in grace. This is why we recommend percentage giving as a practical beginning to fuller following. You are encouraged to begin now.



"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
- Lela Sands - recovering from a fall
- Julie Schoppe - recovering from surgery due to a car accident
- Mike Smith - recovering from a heart attack

HEALTH NEEDS—FRIENDS:

- Carol [Tugwell’s sister in law] - recovery from heart surgery
- Rayoma Leuschen - [Ken Koehler’s sister in law/Julie Schoppe’s aunt] -lung disease
- Katie Lund [former member] - ongoing health concerns
- Phoenix [grandson of West’s friend] - mowing accident
- 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:

- Dorothy Jackson, Martha Kaudelka, Johnnie Weaver

COMFORT:

- Gil Daughtrey and family for the loss of Mary Lou

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: September 2, 2018
TITLE: "Eager to Preach the Good News"
TEXT: Romans 1:14-17
GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Oswald Hoffmann
The Good News is God's gift and it belongs to ALL men!

DATE: September 9, 2018
TITLE: "The Changeless Christ for a Changing World"
TEXT: Hebrews 13:8
GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Walter A. Maier
Whether read online or in print, the pages are filled with unsettling, disturbing stories about the world in which we live. Yet our, Rock, Christ Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!

DATE: September 16, 2018
TITLE: "The Mystery of God"
TEXT: Isaiah 55:6-9
GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Oswald Hoffmann
The undeniable hiddenness of God becomes the openness of God when you see His Son, Jesus Christ.

DATE: September 23, 2018
TITLE: "Come, Lord Jesus"
TEXT: Exodus 16
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer
In a classic message from 1998, Dr. Dale Meyer explains how a common table prayer reminds us of our dependence upon God and His gifts.

DATE: September 30, 2018
TITLE: "Cut Off-for Us"
TEXT: St. Mark 9:38-50
GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
Sin is serious because it cuts us off from God. Guest speaker Dr. Lawrence Rast says Jesus was cut off from God, in our place.

*Give thanks
unto the LORD.*

ses to fight the Amalakitites, whom he defeated in a brilliant military victory. He was placed in charge of the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33:11) and was a member of the tribal representatives sent to survey the land of Canaan (Num 13:8). Later, he was appointed by God to succeed Moses as Israel's commander-in-chief. He eventually led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land and directed the Israelites' capture of Jericho. He is remembered especially for his final address to the Israelites, in which he challenged them to serve God faithfully (Josh 24:1–27), concluding with the memorable words, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord”(24:15).

September 2 Hannah - Hannah was the favored wife of Elkanah, the Ephraimite, and the devout mother of the prophet Samuel. He was born to her after years of bitter barrenness (1 Sam 1:6–8) and fervent prayers for a son (1:9–18). After she weaned her son, Hannah expressed her gratitude by returning him for service in the House of the Lord at Shiloh (1:24–28). Her prayer (psalm) of thanksgiving (2:1–10) begins with the words, “My heart exults in Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord.” This song foreshadows the Magnificat, the Song of Mary centuries later (Lk 1:46–55). The name Hannah derives from the Hebrew word for “grace.” She is remembered and honored for joyfully having kept the vow she made before her son's birth and offering him for lifelong service to God.

September 3 Gregory the Great, Pastor - One of the great leaders in Europe at the close of the sixth century, Gregory served in both the secular and sacred arenas of his era. As mayor of Rome, he restored economic vitality to his native city, which had been weakened by enemy invasions, pillage, and plague. After he sold his extensive properties and donated the proceeds to help the poor, he entered into full-time service in the Church. On September 3, 590 A.D., Gregory was elected to lead the church in Rome. As Bishop of Rome he oversaw changes and growth in the areas of church music and liturgical development, missionary outreach to northern Europe, and the establishment of a church-year calendar still used by many churches in the western World today. His book on pastoral care became a standard until the 20th century.

September 4 Moses - Moses was born in Egypt several generations after Joseph brought his father Jacob and his brothers there to escape a famine in the land of Canaan. The descendants of Jacob had been enslaved by the Egyptians and were ordered to kill all their male children. When Moses was born his mother put him in a basket and set it afloat in the Nile River. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised by her as her own son (Exod 2:1–10). At age 40 Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster and fled to the land of Midian, where he worked as a shepherd for forty years. Then the Lord called him to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness” (5:1). Eventually Pharaoh gave in and, after the Israelites celebrated the first Passover, Moses led them out. At the Red Sea the Egyptian army was destroyed and the Israelites passed to safety on dry land (Exodus 12-15). At Mount Sinai they were given the Law and erected the Tabernacle (Exodus 19-40). But because of disobedience they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Moses himself was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, although God allowed him to view it (Deuteronomy 34). In the New Testament Moses is referred to as lawgiver and prophet. The first five books of the Bible are attributed to him.

September 5 Zechariah and Elizabeth - Zachariah and Elizabeth were “righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord” (Lk 1:6). Zechariah, a priest in the Jerusalem temple, was greeted by the angel Gabriel who announced that Zechariah and Elizabeth would become parents of a son. Initially Zechariah did not believe Gabriel's announcement because of their old age. For his disbelief, Zechariah became unable to speak. After their son was born, Elizabeth named her son John. Zechariah confirmed his wife's choice and his ability to speak was restored. In response, he sang the Benedictus, a magnificent summary of God's promises in the Old Testament and a prediction of John's work as forerunner to Jesus (Lk. 1:68–79). Zechariah and Elizabeth are remembered as examples of faithfulness and piety.

September 16 Cyprian of Carthage, Pastor and Martyr - Cyprian (A.D. ca. 200–258), was acclaimed bishop of the north African city in Carthage around 248. During the persecution of the roman Emperor Decius, Cyprian fled Carthage but returned two years later. He was then forced to deal with the problem of Christians who had lapsed from their faith under persecution and now wanted to return to the Church. It was decided that these lapsed Christians could be restored but that their restoration could take place only after a period of penance that demonstrated their faithfulness. During the persecution under Emperor Valerian, Cyprian at first went into hiding but later gave himself up to the authorities. He was beheaded for the faith in Carthage in the year 258.

September 22 Jonah - A singular prophet among the many in the Old Testament, Jonah the son of Amittai was born about an hour's walk from the town of Nazareth. The focus of his prophetic ministry was the call to preach at Nineveh, the capital of pagan Assyria (Jonah 1:1). His reluctance to respond and God's insistence that his call be heeded is the story of the book that bears Jonah's name. Although the swallowing and disgorging of Jonah by the great fish is the most remembered detail of his life, it is addressed in only three verses of the book (1:17; 2:1, 10). Throughout the book, the important theme is how God deals compassionately with sinners. Jonah's three-day sojourn in the belly of the fish is mentioned by Jesus as a sign of his own death, burial, and resurrection (Mt. 12:39–41).

September 30 Jerome, Translator of Holy Scripture - Jerome was born in a little village on the Adriatic Sea around the year A.D. 345. At a young age he went to study in Rome, where he was baptized. After extensive travels, he chose the life of a monk and spent five years in the Syrian desert. There he learned Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. After ordination at Antioch and visits to Rome and Constantinople, Jerome settled in Bethlehem. From the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, he used his ability with languages to translate the Bible into Latin, the common language of his time. This translation, called the Vulgate, was the authoritative version of the Bible in the western Church world for over 1,000 years. Considered one of the great scholars of the early church, Jerome died on September 30, 420. He was originally interred at Bethlehem but his remains were eventually taken to Rome.

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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