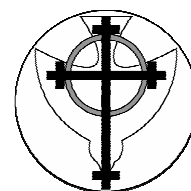
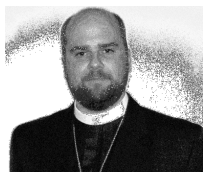


The Peace Post



The peace of the Lord be with you always. Amen!



From the Desk of Pastor Messer

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

In light of the current controversy within our synod and the general trend throughout Christendom to make the Church more "appealing" to the sinful world, I began writing an article addressing these things here. But, then I ran across this gem from Rev. Don Matzat, an LCMS pastor of over forty years and the former host of "Issues, Etc." (predecessor to recently fired host Rev. Todd Wilkin). While this article was published in *Modern Reformation* magazine eleven years ago, it is even more relevant today than it was then given the current trend among many of our LCMS leaders to highlight and put before us as "perfect examples" the kinds of "seeker-sensitive" congregations Rev. Matzat addresses.

The Deformed Theology of Seeker Sensitivity

Rev. Don Matzat

We are living in a society permeated with the concept of self-esteem. The gurus of humanistic psychology have convinced us that feeling good about ourselves is one of our basic felt needs. A positive self-image has become the sine qua non of human growth and success.

Many evangelical churches, including many who find their roots in the Reformation, have attempted to Christianize such thought. They have adopted the concept of seeker sensitivity in the desire to grow their churches. The gurus of the Church Growth movement have convinced many pastors and church leaders that we must be sensitive to the felt needs of the culture. Thus seeker sensitivity has become the sine qua non of church growth and success.

When you join a culture permeated with the desire for self-esteem and a church seduced by the concept of seeker sensitivity, you create a diabolical mix. Such a combination demands that the Christian message be adjusted. The felt need for self-esteem is not compatible with the biblical concept of human sin and depravity. The concept of human sin, or what has been called the church's "worm theology", is actually detrimental to the sensitive human psyche. Dr. Robert Schuller, a self-esteem advocate and pioneer in developing the concept of seeker sensitivity, put it this way:

I don't think that anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality, and hence counterproductive to the evangelistic enterprise, than the unchristian uncouth strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition.

Since the central Christian message offers the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the divine solution to the human sin dilemma, the elimination of the clear proclamation of human sin and depravity demands a major adjustment in the preaching of Christ. The basic, central message of the Gospel must be redefined. To claim that our sins caused the death of Jesus can be potentially debilitating to the impressionable human psyche pursuing a sense of self-worth. The pitiable inner child may become hopelessly bruised and beaten by such an insensitive message. This is how Dr. Ray Anders, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, put it:

If our sin is viewed as causing the death of Jesus on the cross, then we ourselves become victims of a 'psychological battering' produced by the cross. When I am led to feel that the pain and torment of Jesus' death on the cross is due to my sin, I inflict upon myself spiritual and psychological torment.

For those seduced by the concept of seeker sensitivity, Jesus can no longer be the suffering servant bearing the sins of fallen humanity to a bloody cross. Such a message is irrelevant. One highly successful seeker sensitive center in Chicago has chosen not to display a cross in their sanctuary. To this group's way of thinking, Jesus is not primarily our Savior who died to forgive our sins; rather, he is our friend who helps us make it through the day. He is our example for living. He meets our felt needs. He wants us to become better people and in order to do that, gives us principles whereby we can improve our family relationships, put our finances in order, and live more productive and successful lives. "Oh, how we love Jesus!"

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To illustrate how far this way of thinking deviates from the understanding that characterized the sixteenth-century Reformation, compare the statements of Schuller and Anderson with statements of the two great Reformers: Martin Luther and John Calvin.

In defining the purpose of mediating upon the passion of our Lord Jesus, Luther wrote:

The main benefit of Christ's passion is that man sees into his own true self and that he be terrified and crushed by this. Unless we seek that knowledge, we do not derive much benefit from Christ's passion.... He who is so hard-hearted and callous as not to be terrified by Christ's passion and led to a knowledge of self has reason to fear.

If John Calvin were alive today, this is the assessment he would make of those who eliminate the message of human depravity under the guise of appealing to the culture:

I am not unaware how much more plausible the view is, which invites us rather to ponder on our good qualities than to contemplate what must overwhelm us with shame, our miserable destitution and ignominy. There is nothing more acceptable to the human mind than flattery.... Whoever, therefore, gives heed to those teachers who merely employ us in contemplating our good qualities... will be plunged into the most pernicious ignorance.

Sin Has Never Been Popular

It is a gross fallacy to suggest that this culture, in its quest for self-esteem, is unique. The Christian Church has always been confronted with unbelievers who want to feel good about themselves and who work very hard at avoiding any personal guilt or blame. This is certainly not new to this culture. Being victimized and playing the "blame game" is as old as Adam getting out from under his guilt by blaming the woman, and, of course, Eve blaming the snake. Being born "in Adam," such a defense mechanism is natural to fallen humanity. Swiss therapist Paul Tournier writes: "In a healthy person...this defense mechanism has the precision and universality of a law of nature.... We defend ourselves against criticism with the same energy we employ in defending ourselves against hunger, cold, or wild beasts, for it is a mortal threat."

For this reason, the thinking of those who are willing to jettison the truth of human sin and depravity in favor of seeker sensitivity is inane. They act as if they have discovered some new technique for reaching people. It is obvious that people do not want to be confronted with their sin and failure. If you can create a "religious" environment in which they can be made to feel good about themselves, you will gain a crowd. To stand in awe of the crowds who frequent casinos or buy lottery tickets. Having more money is also a felt need.

Appealing to the felt needs of a fallen culture is not appealing to their real needs. French philosopher Blaise Pascal explained:

As soon as we venture out along the pathway of self-knowledge, what we discover is that man is desperately trying to avoid self-knowledge. The need to escape oneself explains why many people are miserable when they are not preoccupied with work, or amusement, or vices. They are afraid to be alone lest they get a glimpse of their own emptiness.... For if we could face ourselves, with all our faults, we would then be so shaken out of complacency, triviality, indifference, and pretense that a deep longing for strength and truth would be aroused within us. Not until man is aware of his deepest need is he ready to discern and grasp what can meet his deepest need.

This diabolical combination of self-esteem and seeker sensitivity produces a "religion" that is no longer Christianity. Since proclaiming the message of sin and grace, or Law and Gospel, is the very essence of the faith, eliminating or subordinating that proclamation causes a departure from historic Christianity. But more than that, the forgiveness and eternal salvation of the people who are seduced by the appealing seeker sensitive message are put in jeopardy. The success of a Christian congregation is not determined by how many fill the pews on a Sunday morning but rather how many will eventually gather around the table to celebrate eternally the marriage feast of the Lamb who was slain for the forgiveness of sins.

The Right Combination of Guilt and Grace

To stand in awe of the numbers who flock to seeker sensitive congregations is similar to standing in awe of the crowds who frequent casinos or buy lottery tickets. Having more money is also a felt need.

It is the Holy Spirit's central purpose to bring every person to a knowledge of sin through the proclamation of the divine Law so that the message of God's grace in Christ Jesus (the Gospel) can be applied to those suffering the pangs of guilt. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 3:19: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God." Again he writes in Romans 5:20: "The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more." The proclamation of the Good News of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus is, so to speak, "set up" by the knowledge of our own sinful condition. Martin Luther wrote:

A doctor must first diagnose the sickness for his patient; other wise he will give him poison instead of medicine. First he must say: this is your sickness; secondly; this medicine serves to fight it.... If you want to engage profitably in study of Holy Scripture and do not want to run head-on into a Scripture closed and sealed, then learn, above all things, to understand sin aright.

The message of the divine Law is intended to set before us the demand of Almighty God for moral perfection. God demands perfect holiness. The preaching of the Law, which is intended to show us the depth of our sin, presents us with an impossible plight. What God demands, we cannot accomplish. The Good News of the Gospel tells us that what God demands he has pro-

vided in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. The proper preaching of sin and grace of Law and Gospel should turn us away from ourselves so that we embrace the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ as the divine solution to the human dilemma. This is the central truth of justification by grace through faith because of Christ alone. Werner Elert defines Luther's understanding of the knowledge of sin as being a necessary precondition for justification.

The righteousness imparted through justification presupposes, of course, the 'self-accusation' of the sinner. Accordingly, Luther counts it among the effects of Christ's suffering "that man comes to a knowledge of himself and is terrified of himself, and is crushed. To have Christ as Savior is to need him"....The necessity for self-accusation, without which there is no justification, holds true of the whole natural and moral "inwardness".... Faith however clings constantly only to the other Person—the Person who I am not—to Christ."

Good Intention/Faulty Diagnosis

I do not question the intentions of those who have adopted the seeker sensitive agenda. I believe that these church growth advocates honestly desire to reach people and to positively affect lives. They desire to make the Christian message relevant. They want to see the Church of Jesus Christ become a dynamic force for moral change in the midst of a perverted generation. Yet, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

There is no doubt that the quality of life that exists in many Christian congregations is not what it ought to be. The problem is not that we have been too bold in our proclamation of sin and grace, Law and Gospel, but rather that we have not been bold enough. If those in the pew do not see the extent of their sin and the perversion of their human nature, they will not seek the life-changing grace of God. Even though the Bible says to "pursue" spiritual growth and sanctification, to be engaged in "fighting" the fight of faith, and, like newborn babes, "crave" the pure milk of the Word of God, those admonitions will fall on deaf ears if the reality of our condition is not faced.

In the Book of Revelation, our Lord Jesus addresses and warns the various churches of that day. One of those churches, the Church at Laodicea, was guilty of spiritual apathy. Jesus describes their "lack of need" as being lukewarmness. In addressing this church, Jesus minces no words. "You say 'I am rich...and do not need a thing', but you do not realize that your wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev. 3:18).

The dynamic of the Christian life is fueled by the combination of a deep sense of sin together with a deep appreciation for divine grace. If you read of the experiences of Christians who progressed in their relationship with the Lord Jesus beyond the norm you see their deep sense of sin and failure coupled with a deep appreciation for what God accomplished in Christ Jesus. Men like

Martin Luther, John Calvin, C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer were not afraid to speak of their sinful natures and even boast of their weaknesses, because they recognized the reality of divine grace. They knew their sin, but they also knew the Gospel. The profound level of spiritual depth and biblical insight of such men causes the theology of seeker sensitivity to look feeble indeed.

Martin Luther's discovery of the great doctrine of justification by grace was not an isolated incident. A great deal led up to the day when his eyes were opened and he was able to clearly understand that God had forgiven him and actually declared him to be righteous through Jesus Christ. His very keen sense of sin and failure was the driving force behind his discovery. In fact, he stated that when he was at the point of despair over his sin, he was then actually the closest to grace.

John Calvin, for example, was referred to by his friends as "the accusative case" because of his intense spiritual introspection. He was aware of his guilt.

This necessary combination of sin and grace is not difficult to understand. A person who is not willing to face his sickness will not desire the services of a physician. If something isn't broken, you don't fix it. If you do not see your sin, you will have no desire for God's grace. And, if you don't know the brokenness of your human condition, you obviously do not require the provision that God offers. Dr. Paul Tournier wrote,

This can be seen in history; for believers who are the most desperate about themselves are the ones who express most forcefully their confidence in Grace.... Those who are the most pessimistic about man are the most optimistic about God; those who are the most severe with themselves are the ones who have the most serene confidence in divine forgiveness.... By degrees the awareness of our guilt and of God's love increase side by side.

Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard pointed out that a man who is remote from his own guilt and failure is also remote from God, because he is remote from himself.

The Bible is very clear in revealing the divine estimate of human nature. Being born out of the root of Adam, we are the children of wrath (Eph.2:3), totally unable by nature to grasp the things of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:14). The Bible tells us that we were shaped in iniquity and born in sin (Ps. 51:5) and that the imaginations of our hearts are evil (Gen. 8:21). Within our human flesh, there dwells absolutely no good thing. Even though we may desire to do good and to be good, we are unable to accomplish our lofty ideals because our nature is wrong (Rom. 7:18-19) we are in bondage to the law of sin and death. (Rom. 7:21)

Put simply, from God's perspective, our lives are a mess! Our real need is for self-accusation, not self-esteem. We need grace, not acceptance and understanding. We need a crucified Savior, not a support group.

A New 95 Theses

Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the public bulletin board of his day. In like manner, we, Athanasius and Chrysostom, post these 95 theses on the door of the internet. Like the original theses, these are debatable, for we believe that it is through vigorous debate that the spirits are tested and truth is revealed.

In publishing these theses, we do not intend to foment division, but to expose those who are creating division within the body of Christ. We are not addressing any particular church body or person, but invite all who love the Gospel of Jesus Christ to engage in this debate. We do so in the spirit of the great Reformer, Martin Luther, as we implore the mercies of God upon His Church, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church and Bishop of our souls.

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said “Repent,” He willed that the whole life of believers should be one of repentance.
2. To “repent” means to be contrite for one’s sins and to trust Jesus Christ and solely in His completed work for one’s forgiveness, life, and salvation.
3. Those who describe the Christian life as purpose-driven deny true repentance, confuse the Law and the Gospel, and obscure the merits of Christ.
4. Impious and wicked are the methods of those who substitute self-help and pop-psychology for the Gospel in the name of relevance.
5. This impious disregard for the Gospel wickedly transforms sacred Scripture into a guidebook for living, a pharisaic sourcebook of principles, and sows tares among the wheat.
6. Relevance, self-help and pop-psychology have no power to work true contrition over sins and faith in Jesus Christ.
7. Like clouds without rain, purpose-driven preachers withhold the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins won by Christ on the cross and enslave men’s consciences to the law which they cleverly disguise as so-called 'Biblical Principles'.
8. By teaching tips for attaining perfect health, debt-free wealth, and better sex in marriage, the purveyors of relevance undermine true fear, love and trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
9. They are enemies of Christ, who distort the Word of God by tearing verses from their original context in order to use them as proof texts for their self-help, pop-psychology agendas.
10. Injury is done the Word of God when it is used as a source book for practical, relevant “life applications.”
11. In the name of relevance, our Lord Jesus Christ is reduced to a life-coach whose “gospel” assists and motivates people to achieve the objectives of their self-centered delusions of grandeur.
12. Apart from the Holy Spirit, the seeker cannot understand the things of God for these are “spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14).
13. The natural man does not naturally seek the Gospel. “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me” (Is. 65:1)
14. The true Seeker of men’s souls is our Lord Jesus Christ who came to seek and to save the lost by His death on the cross (Luke 19:10).
15. The truly “seeker-sensitive” church proclaims God’s wrath against our sin and His mercy for Jesus’ sake.
16. The preaching of Christ crucified is a stumbling block to purpose-driven pragmatists and foolishness to church growth consultants.
17. The true gold of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.
18. But this treasure is a stench in the nostrils of fallen and sinful men because it exposes man’s complete lack of ability to save himself by his own religious efforts.
19. On the other hand, the fool’s gold of self-help is preferred by sinful men, for it creates the illusion of moral progress and a life that is pleasing to God apart from repentance.
20. The gold of the Gospel is the net by which Christ would make us fishers of men.
21. The fool’s gold of self-help is a snare by which purpose-driven purveyors of relevance attempt to capture the riches and approval of men.
22. The church is holy sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd.
23. How can sheep hear the voice of their Shepherd when false shepherds preach self-help and pop-psychology?
24. Purveyors of purpose-driven relevance are not shepherds of men’s souls but wolves in sheep’s clothing.
25. Purveyors of relevance claim that self-help, life-applications and biblical principles are the means to reach the unchurched because they meet people’s felt needs.
26. Yet a person’s greatest need is one he does not by nature feel, namely the need for the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ.
27. The true means by which fallen sinners are reached is the preaching of Christ and His sacraments. (Romans 10:17)

28. The true need that mankind is seeking but does not know is justification by grace through faith for Christ's sake.
29. Since justification is through faith and not through works, natural man neither seeks it nor desires it.
30. Therefore, the teaching of justification by grace through faith is neither seeker-sensitive nor relevant to a world that naturally seeks self-justification.
31. To be in the church is to be union with Christ through faith.
32. Regardless of the number of people in attendance, the church does not grow unless men are granted repentance and faith by God through the action of His Word.
33. Scripture clearly teaches that the means by which God grants faith are the the hearing of the Word of Christ (the Gospel) and the water of Holy Baptism.
34. Therefore, even if a congregation, through their own marketing methods and business prowess were able to draw 100,000 people every Sunday, if the Gospel is not heard and the sacraments are not administered according to the Gospel there is no church and the true Church of Jesus Christ has not grown by a single soul.
35. If numerical growth is a measure of God's approval, then we must conclude that God approves of Islam and the Mormons.
36. If financial success is a measure of God's approval, then we must conclude that God approves of pornography and gambling.
37. Cancer and crabgrass both grow rapidly, as does the church that obscures the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
38. The purveying of purpose-driven relevance is the theology of glory; the preaching of Christ crucified for sinners is the theology of the cross.
39. The theologian of glory says that the kingdom of God is visible now in buildings, people, and dollars; the theologian of the cross says that the kingdom of God is an article of faith.
40. The theologian of glory asks "How much?" and "How many?"; the theologian of the cross preaches Christ regardless of how much or how many.
41. The theologian of glory prepares people to receive health, wealth, and happiness; the theologian of the cross prepares people to suffer and die in faith.
42. The theologian of glory preaches that God wants to grant you favors; the theologian of the cross preaches the favor of God for the sake of Christ crucified.
43. The theologian of glory proclaims 40 days of purpose; the theologian of the cross preaches daily dying and rising in Jesus.
44. God established the Church to be a "mouth house" of forgiveness not a madhouse of activity.
45. Christ wills that His voice be heard in His Church and not the voice of man when He says, "He who hears you, hears me." (Luke 10:16)
46. Purveyors of purpose-driven relevance obscure the voice of Christ and so draw the sheep away from the Good Shepherd.
47. Christ saves from sin and death not through the motivation of the sinner to do good, but through baptismal death and resurrection.
48. The mission of the church is not to transform the world but to disciple the nations by baptizing and teaching (Matt 28:19-20).
49. Anyone who preaches a vision and demands allegiance to it sets up a new papacy among the churches.
50. A synod or church body is a human institution that exists by the will and consent of its member congregations and pastors.
51. A synod or church body is not merely an affiliation of churches that agree on a common purpose.
52. A synod or church body is not the Church, properly speaking, but a fellowship of churches sharing a common confession of faith and practice.
53. Synods are not of the church's essence (esse) but for her well being (bene esse).
54. Synodical leaders are not lords over the churches, but servants of the churches and stewards of their common possessions.
55. Synodical leaders are not called to promulgate visions but to execute the collective will of the synod's churches.
56. The old papacy arrogated the Church's treasury of merits; the new papacy arrogates the Church's treasury.
57. The old papacy said, "As the coin in the coffer clings, so the soul from purgatory springs."
58. The new papacy says, "As the coin in the church coffer clings, so another program out of debt springs."
59. The old papacy counted plenary indulgences; the new papacy counts money and people.
60. The old papacy suppressed the Gospel through canon law; the new papacy suppresses the Gospel through constitutions and by-laws.
61. The old papacy was a friend of Caesar; the new papacy is a friend of Mammon.
62. The old papacy bound a man's conscience for the sake his wallet; the new papacy binds a man's wallet for the sake of his conscience.
63. The old papacy promulgated infallible dogma; the new papacy promulgates undebatable visions.
64. The old papacy claims to sit on the seat of Peter; the new papacy claims to sit on the mandate of the majority.
65. The old papacy reserved the right to judge doctrine and practice; the new papacy judges doctrine and practice by commissions and committees.
66. The old papacy issued "bulls;" the new papacy issues task force reports.

67. The old papacy had a college of cardinals; the new papacy has high-priced consultants.
68. Just as popes and councils have erred in the past, so synodical leaders and synodical conventions err in the present.
69. A synod that is concerned for the true unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace does not excuse unionism and syncretism.
70. Unity in doctrine and practice means discernible interchangeability in teaching, preaching, and practice.
71. Unity in doctrine and practice does not consist in signing confessional statements, but in word and deed.
72. Worship is doctrine put into practice.
73. As one worships, so one believes.
74. As one believes, so one worships.
75. Christian worship consists in God's service to us through His giving and our receiving in faith the gifts of Christ's Word, Body, and Blood, and our service to God by our prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.
76. Worship that is focused principles for Christian living obscures the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His gifts and is detrimental to faith and salvation.
77. While Christian liberty allows that worship forms need not be altogether the same in every time and place, unity in faith and practice requires that worship forms must not be altogether different in every time and place.
78. Worship forms serve as identifying banners in the confessional field of battle.
79. Peculiar and novel worship forms obscure the unity of the churches and extol the creativity of the worship leaders.
80. In matters neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God (adiaphora), the churches of God are free to change ceremonies according to circumstances, as may be most beneficial and edifying to the churches of God. (Epitome, Art X.4)
81. Such changes must avoid all frivolity and offenses, particularly with regard to those who are weak in faith (Epitome, Art X.5).
82. Where the Gospel is at stake, concessions in ceremony must not be made so as to suggest unity with those who deny the Gospel (Epitome, Art X.6)
83. Therefore, it is contrary to the doctrine of adiaphora to hide the substance of Lutheran doctrine behind a non-Lutheran style of worship.
84. To create and sustain saving faith, God established the office of the holy ministry in the church to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments according to our Lord's institution.
85. No one may publicly preach, teach, or administer the sacraments in the churches without his being called and ordained.
86. Those who introduce novelties into the church are the true agents of division.
87. The ordination of women is a novelty that has caused great division in the church.
88. The introduction of worship forms not held in common by the churches is a cause of division and a stumbling block.
89. The church belongs to no man but to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, and Lord of the church.
90. Woe to the false prophets who cry, "Unity, unity" when there is no unity.
91. Again, woe to those who say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.
92. Again, woe to those who say, "Gospel, gospel," when there is no Gospel.
93. Blessed are those who say, "Cross, cross," when there is no cross.
94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through all suffering, death, and hell;
95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many trials and tribulations, rather than through the assurance of outward peace, unity, and happiness.

BOOK OF CONCORD STUDY

What do Lutherans confess and believe? Come and learn during Adult Bible Study as we begin a study of the Book of Concord (our Lutheran Confessions) on **Sunday, May 11**.

Due to an amazing deal found by Pastor Messer on Amazon.com, copies of the Tappert Edition of the Book of Concord (the red one) may be purchased for \$10.00. You do not need a copy to attend this study, but if you would like to purchase one, please see Pastor Messer.

"Issues, Etc." Update

Much has transpired in the last month surrounding the "Issues, Etc." cancellation. Too much to report here. Many internet blogs are following the sad saga and I encourage you to check them out and keep informed on this important issue:

Why?



www.augsburg1530.wordpress.com

www.weedon.blogspot.com

www.revewirla.blogspot.com

www.adelphoitouchristou.typepad.com/savethelcms

www.rasburrysres.blogspot.com

Why?



I was informed on Tuesday, April 29 that the \$500.00 our congregation sent to KFUE in February to support "Issues, Etc." was going to be returned to us in the next week or so. Per a resolution passed by our Church Council, we will, upon receipt of our refund, send that \$500.00 to the "Wilken/Schwarz Fund."

PEACE NEWS & NOTES

PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY

Donations are always welcome!

If you are thinking about donating one or more books to our library and are not sure what to be looking for, we have a "wish" list of suggestions in the church office. Prices and books can also be found in the CPH catalog, also in the church office.



We would like to encourage people to use our Church Library more often. If you have read a book from our library that you enjoyed, or that inspired you, and you would like to share it, please contact Beth Brostrom or Coaline Luplow.

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

We'll have our next Ladies Lunch Bunch on **Tuesday, May 20, at 1:30 p.m. at El Vaquero** (we're going Mexican!) here in Alma. Please remember that all ladies of Peace Lutheran Church are invited. Should anyone like to invite a guest — someone without a church or someone living alone — please ask them to join Ladies' Lunch Bunch us.



Vacation Bible School (VBS) Upcoming Planning Meetings:

May 8, 7:00 p.m.—Craft Committee
June 5, 7:00 p.m.—All Volunteers

VBS "Friendship Trek" - June 16-20

EUCHRE NIGHT!



Our Euchre friends will not be meeting again until September. We have had a wonderful time of fun and fellowship and wish everyone a great summer. We look forward to meeting again in the fall.

PYG NEWS

May Events

Spring Bazaar - (5/3) - 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm
Monthly Meeting - (5/18) - Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Greetings in Christ.

May will be a busy month for us. Our first Spring Bazaar kicks off the month. Assisting with Church clean-up and Helping Hands will keep us busy throughout the month.

Remember that all youth of Peace from 6th grade up are members of the Peace Youth Group. Please be active and experience the joy of Christian fellowship and stewardship.

Thanks to everyone for your support of our ongoing fundraising efforts. We are continuing to collect **Spartan UPC labels** and **pop cans** to help assist with the upcoming *Higher Things* conference this summer. Please drop UPC labels in the box over the church mail boxes. A container for pop cans is in the coat room. Thank you for helping PYG!

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you.
Jonathan Penzien

ANNUAL SPRING CLEANING



Annual Spring Cleaning Day here at Peace is scheduled for **Saturday, May 17, starting at 8:00 a.m.** Tasks include washing windows, yard raking and general cleaning, both inside and out. Cleaning supplies, rakes, brooms, etc., are needed. We need **YOUR** help! We have not had a good turnout for this in the past, and we are really hoping that more of you will help this year. So, please be sure to mark your calendars and plan on coming out to lend a hand. See you then!



SCRAPBOOKING DAY WORKSHOP

Cassie Tennant will be hosting a Scrapbooking Day Workshop on **Saturday, May 10, from 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.** here at Peace. The cost is \$10 with a dish to pass. Come for the full day, half day, or just a couple of hours. Price will be discounted if you cannot attend the full day. You can bring anything to work on and bring your family and friends.

A **Card-Making Workshop** will also be held on **Tuesday, May 27 from 6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.** All are invited to attend!

Any questions, please contact Cassie: Phone: 989-285-3883
Email: radar1214@yahoo.com.

TABLE TALK



Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Our next Table Talk will take place **Thursday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m.** at the church. All are invited to attend! Hope to see you there!

Synopsis of April 1, 2008 Church Council Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Miguel Ortiz, Megan Brown, Carol Zeile, Gary Miller, Larry Elliott, James Sager, Sharyn Greening and Andrea Elliott. Pastor Messer and Cassie Tennant was also present.

Approval of Agenda

- Treasurer Zeile asked to amend the agenda to include "Cash Flow in the Checking Account" as an additional business item. Motion made Councilmember Greening, supported by Vice President Ortiz to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda (Consisting of March 5 and March 25 Minutes; Pastor's Report; Ladies' Guild Report)

- Motion made by Vice President Ortiz, supported by Treasurer Zeile to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Point of Order

- Cassie Tennant was present at the meeting to provide the Council with employment compensation information for the Administrative Assistant position (attached).

Reports

- **Officers: Treasurer** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached Treasurer's Report. She explained that spending is under control, but lack of income is still an issue. The Council received the report into record; **Financial Secretary** – No report.
- **Boards: Board of Elders** – No report; **Board of Trustees** – No report; **Board of Christian Education** – No report; **Board of Evangelism** – No report; **Board of Stewardship** – No report (a chairman is still needed).
- **Organization and Committee Reports: Peace Youth Group** – The attached reported was presented; **Budget & Finance** – No report.

Business

- **Missions-District Budgeted Line Item** – Pastor Messer suggested we hold our donation until further discussions have taken place. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Secretary Brown to redistribute the \$500 previously donated and returned from Issues, Etc. to the fund established to support Pastor Wilken and Jeff Schwartz. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Administrative Assistant Proposal** – There was no new business to discuss on this item since approval at the Special Voters' Assembly.
- **Sanctuary Renovation Proposal** - There was no new business to discuss on this item since approval at the Special Voters' Assembly.
- **Cash Flow in the Checking Account** – Treasurer Zeile informed the Council that the balance in the account is low and may not cover upcoming expenses. Motion made by Councilmember L. Elliott, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to authorize the Treasurer to withdraw funds from the Building Fund to cover regular budgeted expenses. Motion carried unanimously.

General Comment

- The Council was reminded that Stewardship is the responsibility of all members of the Council.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer – Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Greening to adjourn at 8:46pm. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer closed with the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Brown, Secretary

SANCTUARY RENOVATION

At our April 27 Voters' Assembly, a motion was passed authorizing our Church Council to spend up to \$5,300.00 to renovate our sanctuary by bringing our altar rail down to the lowest step and thus making it easier for our members to approach the altar and receive Holy Communion. This renovation will benefit all who have difficulty climbing the steps, and it will allow us to Distribute Holy Communion in a more organized and expeditious manner. Church Council will discuss how best to proceed with this renovation at its May 6 meeting. Please note: The renovation we are currently focusing on does NOT include doing anything with the wall behind the altar.

LADIES & ALTAR GUILD INFO

- **LADIES GUILD MEETING:** Our Ladies Guild next meets on **Monday, May 5, at 7:00 p.m.** **Hostess: Marilyn Oswald.** All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.
- **PLC WOMEN'S PRAYER CHAIN:** The Guild has put together a new prayer chain. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, see Carol Durst or Beth Brostrom. If you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," call Carol Durst at 463-2270.
- **ALTAR GUILD DUTY:** May - Beth Brostrom; June - Carol Zeile; July - Carol Zeile
- **ALTAR FLOWERS:** There is a Flower Calendar for 2008 posted on the fellowship bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar some time during the year, please fill your name in on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. A bouquet usually lasts about one month. Questions? See Beth Brostrom, Cheryl Henry, or Marilyn Oswald.



UPCOMING COFFEE HOSTESSES



<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
4 Coaline Luplow	1 Gretchen Harrison	6 Carol Zeile
11 Tammy Oswald	8 A. Hale/J. Isom	13 Andrea Elliott
18 M. Isaksson/H. Meyers	15 Joyce Kohler	20 Dorothy Trgina
25 Mary Jakolat	22 Shawna Greening	27 Janice Langan
	29 L. Miller/J. Bigelow	

JOIN HANDS DAY – A NATIONAL PROJECT TO BRING ADULTS AND YOUTH TOGETHER

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has awarded two grants for Join Hands Day Projects: 1) in the amount of \$750 to purchase and plant four trees in Lions Park in St. Louis, and 2) in the amount of \$100 for cleaning up yards of seniors, who are unable to clean their own yards.

Dates of these events are tentatively scheduled for the city on May 7, 14, and 21, 2008. Spring yard clean-up dates are May 10, 17, and 24, 2008.

If you are interested in helping with either of these projects, please contact Dorothy Trgina at 989-681-5123. Jon Penzien, who will be coordinating the spring yard clean-up, can be reached at 989-681-3485.

All Peace Lutheran members are invited to participate. You do not need to be a Thrivent member. Youth: Please feel free to bring your school friends.

JOB OPENING

Peace Lutheran Church

Administrative Assistant (a.k.a. Church Secretary)

20 hours per week (M-F 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)

Net pay of \$88.67 per week

If interested, please contact Pastor Messer
for details and application

Applications will be accepted through May 18

Position will begin on June 1

Applicants must be members of Peace



Come join us on the Trail!

The Wittenberg Trail is the online community for people exploring and confessing the Lutheran faith.

To join the community, go to:
www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com

To join our Peace Lutheran group on the Trail, go to:
www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com/group/peacelutheranalmamichigan

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School will meet for the last time before summer break on Sunday, June 1, and will re-convene in September.
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all adult members of Peace and guests. We will wrap up our detailed study of **Revelation on Sunday, May 4.** On **Sunday, May 11,** we will begin studying the **Book of Concord,** which contain our Lutheran Confessions. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to come and learn what we Lutherans truly confess to believe. I hope everyone will consider joining us for this important study!

Youth Confirmation Class

- Our 2008 Confirmation Class will meet for the last time on Thursday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m. Our Confirmands this year are **Tyrel Harwager, C.J. Oswald,** and **Rebekah Rodriguez.** Service of Public Questioning will be held on Saturday, May 17 at 3:00 p.m. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend! The Rite of Confirmation will take place during Divine Service on May 18. Please keep our Confirmands in your prayers. May God richly bless them

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome as well. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of **Genesis.** Please plan on joining us soon.

“It’s All Greek to Me”

- *It’s All Greek to Me* meets on Sundays from 12:00-1:30, except on Sundays when there is a PYG meeting.

MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

2 Natalie Penzien	9 Curt Oswald	21 Paige Harwager
4 Anna Gilbert	14 Trina Palmer	29 Gordon Slick
4 LeRoy Isaksson	15 Jared Kuehnlein	30 Benjamin Elliott
5 BJ Henry	20 Darren Palmer	30 Cheryl Kuehnlein
		31 Aaron Messer

Happy Anniversary to:

10 Richard and Dorothy Wiser
30 Richard and Darlene Palmer



If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(As of April 27)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 148 ; Confirmed - 129

Official Acts: 1

Funeral (3/25)—R. Jean Neitzke (Immanuel, Wheeler)

Membership gains: 1

Connie Saxton—Affirmation of Faith (4/27)

Membership losses: 25

Dearing (4); Figueroa (3); Gorney (4); Gustavison (5); Hedrick, Jeff; Hyde (3); Malone, Margaret; Moore, Janice; Strand (3) - All by self-exclusion; ratified by Voters' Assembly on 4/27/08

Financial Report

YTD Receipts: \$32,886.33

YTD Budgeted Needs: \$37,995.00

Note from Gary Miller, Financial Secretary



Quarterly Statements have been distributed showing the giving of each individual through March 30. Anything beyond March 30 will be included in the next quarterly statement. Please review your statement and if there are any corrections to be made, please let me know. Thank you.

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
(989) 463-3093—Home
(989) 388-2037—Cell
pastor@peacecalma.org

May 2008

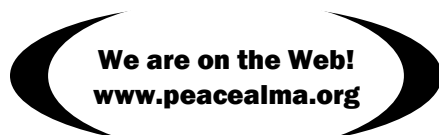
Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Drive
Alma, MI 48801
(989) 463-5754

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

April 27 <i>Rogate (Easter 6)</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—VOTERS' ASSEMBLY 12:00—Greek Class	April 28	April 29	April 30	1 10:00 a.m.—Log. in Word 12:00 p.m.—Div. Service <i>St. Philip and St. James</i> 5:00 p.m.— <i>WW</i> 5:30 p.m.—Conf. Class 7:00 p.m.—Div. Service <i>Ascension of Our Lord</i>	2	3 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. PYG Spring Bazaar
4 <i>Exaudi (Easter 7)</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—Greek Class	5 7:00 p.m.—Ladies Guild <i>Hostess: Marilyn Oswald</i>	6 7:00 p.m.—Council Mtg.	7 12:00—Divine Service <i>C.F.W. Walther, Theologian</i> 	8 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.— <i>WW</i> 5:30 p.m.—Conf. Class 7:00 p.m.—VBS Craft Committee Mtg.	9	10 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Scrapbooking Day Workshop: Hosted by Cassie Tennant
11 <i>The Feast of Pentecost</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—Greek Class;	12 10:00 a.m.—Elders Mtg.	13	14	15 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.— <i>WW</i> 5:30 p.m.—Conf. Class 7:00 p.m.—Table Talk	16	17 8:00 a.m.—Annual Spring Cleaning Day here at Peace 3:00 p.m.—Service of Public Questioning of our Confirmands
18 <i>The Holy Trinity Confirmation Sunday</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—PYG Meeting	19	20 1:30 p.m.—Ladies Lunch Bunch 7:00 p.m.—Trustees Mtg.	21	22 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.— <i>WW</i>	23	24
25 <i>First Sunday after Trinity</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—Greek Class	26 <i>Memorial Day</i> 	27 6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m. Card-Making Workshop: Hosted by Cassie Tennant	28 <div>June newsletter items due tomorrow!</div>	29 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.— <i>WW</i>	30	31

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037
E-mail: pastor@peacealma.org



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

SERVING IN MAY

	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ORGANIST</u>	<u>ELDER</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
MAY					
1 - 7:00 pm (Ascension Day)	Samantha Messer	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Curt Oswald Vern Jakolat	None
4 - 9:30 am (Easter 7)	Tyrel Harwager Phillip Schafer	Mary Jakolat	Larry Elliott	Michael Gilbert Vern Jakolat	Jon Penzien and Family
11 - 9:30 am (Pentecost)	Jordan Henry Melanie Penzien	Beth Brostrom	Don Reithel	Bill Brostrom Jim Sager	Dick and Joyce Kohler
18 - 9:30 am (The Holy Trinity)	Ashleigh Rodriguez Natalie Penzien	Mary Jakolat	Bill Harmon	Burt Henry Gary Miller	Carol Durst Lois Miller
25 - 9:30 am (Trinity 1)	Lauren Penzien Sarah Messer	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Chris Brown Jon Penzien	Jenny Baughman Sharyn Greening
JUNE					
1 - 7:00 pm (Trinity 2)	Samantha Messer CJ Oswald	Mary Jakolat	Dave Zeile	Vern Jakolat Curt Oswald	Gary and Marlene Miller

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)