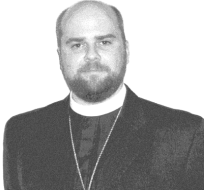


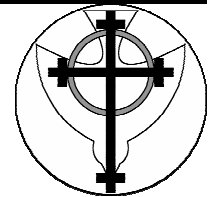
The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

September, 2009



From the Desk of Pastor Messer



"When the Word Is Abandoned, Gay Is Okay: Thoughts on the ELCA"

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

It has happened. Many have been expecting that it would happen for a few years now, but now those expectations have become a reality. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which is the largest "Lutheran" denomination in North America, has officially adopted a "social statement" on human sexuality that includes an endorsement of homosexual relationships that are "chaste, monogamous, and lifelong." They went on to adopt several "ministry recommendations," which makes it perfectly acceptable for congregations to call homosexual pastors and bless homosexual unions.

I watched a good deal of the debate via the internet and was amazed by what I heard from the proponents of these deplorable changes to the ELCA's already far too liberal, and woefully un-Christian, policies. The appeal was not to Holy Scripture—indeed, how could it be, since God is vividly clear in His Word about how He views homosexuality—but to emotions and feelings. I heard a lot of appeal from these confused people to follow where the "Spirit" is leading us today. Evidently, the Holy Spirit has changed His mind on the whole homosexuality thing and is leading us in a new direction. How do we know? Well, because that's how these people feel, so it must be valid. Forget about what God says in His Word. That's actually not truly God's Word in the Bible anyway, but men's words about God, and those men were not as advanced in thought as we are today.

As I watched the depravity play itself out before my very eyes, all I could think of was Satan and his minions laughing their butts off. Surely, Satan is good at what he does. It's the same old technique he used in the Garden to tempt and deceive Adam and Eve. "Did God really say?" he slyly

asks. "Did God really say that homosexuality is an abomination? Did God really say that He hates homosexuality and that no practicing, un-repentant homosexual will ever enter the gates of heaven? Surely, He would not say such a thing. He is a loving God. Those passages in the Bible that speak so harshly against homosexuality are nothing more than the opinions of the men who wrote them. Go ahead. Embrace homosexuality. That's the loving thing to do. That's what God wants you to do. He wants you to love all people, just as He loves all people."

Oh yes, Satan is very good at what he does. Never underestimate the old, evil foe. As Luther wrote, and as we sing in "A Mighty Fortress," "On earth is not his equal." Our only defense against Satan's deceptive temptations is the Word of God. But, when you forsake the Word of God, as the ELCA did long ago, you have no defense and open yourself up to a full-throttle, frontal attack. Without the "sword of the Spirit" (i.e. the Word of God), you are helpless to ward off the enemy and will inevitably land in his camp.

Make no mistake, my friends, this is exactly what has happened to the ELCA. They have fallen prey to the devil and have landed in his camp. They have exchanged the truth for a lie.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

When the Word Is Abandoned..1-2	Peace News & Notes..... 11-12
Responses to the ELCA3-7	Ladies Guild Info 13
St. Michael Liturgical Conf..... 8	Altar & Coffee Schedules..... 13
Youth Confirmation Classes.... 8	Christian Education 14
Adult Bible Class Curriculum.. 8	Birthdays & Anniversaries 14
The Lutheran Study Bible..... 9	Parochial Report..... 14
Starck's Prayer Book..... 9(14)	September Calendar..... 15
Council Minutes.....10	Serving in September..... 16

Of course, none of this is a huge surprise to those who have been paying attention. The ELCA forsook the Bible long ago, believing it to be nothing more than a mere book written by men, instead of the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God it is. When the Bible is approached in this manner, anything goes, which is how the ELCA adopted the policy of ordaining women to the Office of the Holy Ministry many years ago, and is how the ELCA has been able to enter into full communion fellowship with church bodies that adhere to false doctrines, including their most recent declaration of full communion fellowship with the United Methodist Church last week.

If the Bible is just a book written by men, one is free to choose which parts of the Bible one keeps and which parts one discards as irrelevant and non-applicable. Rather than submitting to the Bible as the Word of God, the Bible is made to submit to the whims and desires, and personal opinions, of each individual, which are derived from the individual's own sinful, human reason.

True confessional Lutherans will have none of this, for we realize that the Bible is the sole source and norm of all Christian doctrine. We do not get to pick and choose which parts of the Bible we wish to keep—it's all or nothing! Either it is the Word of God or it is not. There's no middle ground. Indeed, we realize that if there are some parts of the Bible that are not trustworthy and true, then none of it can be trustworthy and true. If, for example, God's clear Word about homosexuality can be ignored, how can we be sure that His clear Word about Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross for our sins is true?

For that reason, true confessional Lutherans have always maintained, with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church throughout the ages, that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. It is all true, from Genesis to Revelation. There are no errors in the Bible. There are no contradictions. It is all God's Word to us, revealed to us by Him through the men He chose to record His Word. This is what God Himself claims in His Word when He says,

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16),

and again,

"And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to

which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

Taking God at His Word, which is revealed to us in the Bible, we confessional Lutherans seek to follow His Word and honor His will, even when it is uncomfortable for us to do so, even when our sinful human reason urges us not to do so, and even when cultural or societal pressures make it difficult for us to do so. Not our will, but God's will be done, is our continuous prayer. "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" is our continuous song.

We live in trying times, dear friends. If we believe our Lord's Word in Scripture, we know that things will just get more difficult for believers in the world as we get nearer and nearer to the return of our Lord in great glory on the Last Day. What we see happening in the ELCA (and many other church bodies) bears further witness to the reliability of God's Word, for we are told that a great apostasy (rebellion against the truth) will occur in the latter days. We are seeing that play itself out before our very eyes, which means that now, more than ever, we must heed our Lord's exhortation, delivered through St. Paul:

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm" (Eph. 6:11-13).

We put on the whole armor of God, which consists of "the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, Gospel-given readiness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God)," as we are fed by our Lord with Word and Sacrament in the Divine Service, and as we dig deeper into His Word in Bible Study. May that armor be securely fastened upon us, that we may be able to withstand this evil age in which we live! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Messer

RESPONSES TO THE ELCA'S RECENT DECISIONS

Statement from LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick August 24, 2009

The two largest Lutheran church bodies in the United States are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with 4.8 million members and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) with 2.4 million members.

On Friday, Aug. 21, the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted to open the ministry of the ELCA to gay and lesbian pastors and other professional workers living in "committed relationships." In an earlier action, the assembly approved a resolution that commits the ELCA "to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships." The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has repeatedly affirmed as its own position the historical understanding of the Christian church that the Bible condemns homosexual behavior as "intrinsically sinful." It is therefore contrary to the will of the Creator and constitutes sin against the commandments of God (Lev. 18:22, 24, 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 1 Tim 1:9-10; and Rom. 1:26, 27).

Addressing the ELCA assembly on Saturday, Aug. 22, I responded to their aforementioned actions, stating: "The decisions by this assembly to grant non-celibate homosexual ministers the privilege of serving as rostered leaders in the ELCA and the affirmation of same-gender unions as pleasing to God will undoubtedly cause additional stress and disharmony within the ELCA. It will also negatively affect the relationships between our two church bodies. The current division between our churches threatens to become a chasm. This grieves my heart and the hearts of all in the ELCA, the LCMS, and other Christian church bodies throughout the world who do not see these decisions as compatible with the Word of God, or in agreement with the consensus of 2,000 years of Christian theological affirmation regarding what Scripture teaches about human sexuality. Simply stated, this matter is fundamentally related to significant differences in how we [our two church bodies] understand the authority of Holy Scripture and the interpretation of God's revealed and infallible Word."

Doctrinal decisions adopted already in 2001 led the LCMS, in sincere humility and love, to declare that we could no longer consider the ELCA "to be an orthodox Lutheran church body" (2001 Res 3-21A). Sadly, the decisions of this past week to ignore biblical teaching on human sexuality have reinforced that conclusion. We respect the desire to follow conscience in moral decision making, but conscience may not overrule the Word of God.

We recognize that many brothers and sisters within the ELCA, both clergy and lay, are committed to remaining faithful to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, are committed to the authority of Holy Scripture, and strongly oppose these actions. To them we offer our assurance of loving encouragement together with our willingness to provide appropriate support in their efforts to remain faithful to the Word of God and the historic teachings of the Lutheran church and all other Christian churches for the past 2,000 years.

Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

A statement from Lutheran Church—Canada Ordination of Homosexuals in the Lutheran Church

AUGUST 21, 2009 - In Minneapolis this afternoon, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a resolution to allow for the ordination of those in committed, monogamous, same-sex relationships. The vote was 559 in favour, 451 against. The following statement was prepared at the request of President Robert Bugbee of Lutheran Church—Canada by Dr. Edward Kettner, professor at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton.

As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its current convention has approved the ordination of people in "committed same-sex relationships," it needs to be noted that the ELCA does not represent all Lutherans in the United States or North America. In its actions the ELCA is going against, not just the history of the Christian Church and against the practices of the covenant religion of Israel as expressed in the Old Testament (First Testament), but against the Bible, which the Christian Church has always recognized as the very Word of God itself. The traditional Christian understanding continues to be held by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the United States and by Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) in Canada, as well as by a number of smaller conservative bodies in both countries.

Background

For more than two hundred years much of Christendom has come to reject the previously universal recognition of the Bible as the Word of God written. By using methods of scriptural interpretation which see the Bible as a human book, a record of human response to the idea of God, rather than as God's declaration of Himself, His nature, and His activities to the world, parts of the church on earth now look at Scripture with what is called a "hermeneutic [biblical interpretation] of suspicion" rather than the traditional hermeneutic of trust.

Under this new method of interpretation, words which previously were seen as the authoritative Word of God revealed through His apostles and prophets are now viewed as words composed by men seeking to maintain their power over others. In this understanding, the words of Scripture regarding marriage, which declare it to be the union of man and woman, and ideally one man and one woman in a lifelong union, are replaced by a preference for talking about "intimacy," and commitment between two people that may not always include marriage in the traditional sense, or even, in recent years, a relationship between a male and a female.

Behind this change lurks an understanding of "freedom" which is in fact license, which flies against God's clear word in Genesis 1 and 2 and restated by Christ in Matthew 19:3-6. Since a pastor is one who is to have a good reputation among Christians and before the world, for the church to ordain people who clearly flout the Word of God in their actions throws both the Word of God and the office of the Holy Ministry into contempt, and gives the rest of the world an excuse to continue in its sin.

LCC and Homosexuality

Lutheran Church—Canada desires to reach out with the Gospel to everyone, including the homosexual, to provide real healing of the person, so that their lives may begin to reflect the holiness God desires of all of His people. Those who may have such inclinations and who struggle against them are welcome in our churches, will receive forgiveness of their sins, and may serve in the office of ministry. Those who flout the clear Word of God, refuse to call sin what it is, and who seek to justify their behaviour, disqualify themselves from the office and indeed put their eternal salvation in jeopardy.

We recognize that our view is decidedly counter-cultural, but we know that we must continue to maintain the clear teaching of the Scriptures. We regret the decision of the ELCA, which, even by its own admission in its resolutions at this convention, goes against everything the Scriptures clearly teach and which the church has confirmed over the last 2000 years and even before.

RESPONSES TO THE ELCA'S RECENT DECISIONS

WELS president expresses regret at ELCA decision on gay clergy

AUGUST 21, 2009, Milwaukee, Wis.—Rev. Mark Schroeder, president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), is expressing regret at the vote of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convention regarding homosexual clergy. Friday, delegates approved a resolution committing the church to find a way for “people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” to serve as professional leaders of the church.

“To view same-sex relationships as acceptable to God is to place cultural viewpoint and human opinions above the clear Word of God,” says Schroeder. “The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, along with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and other smaller Lutheran synods, maintains and upholds the clear teaching of the Bible that homosexuality is not in keeping with God’s design and is sinful in God’s eyes.”

At the same time, Schroeder says WELS congregations stand ready to support those struggling with same-sex attractions. “As with any sin, it is the church’s responsibility to show love and compassion to sinners, not by condoning or justifying the sin, but by calling the sinner to repent and by assuring the sinner that there is full forgiveness in Jesus Christ,” Schroeder says.

WELS, with about 390,000 members and nearly 1,300 congregations nationwide, is the third largest Lutheran church body in the United States. In Wisconsin alone, there are more than 201,000 members and 417 congregations. “It’s unfortunate that many headlines have referred to the recent decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as something ‘Lutherans’ have decided,” Schroeder says. “In fact, the ELCA is only one of many Lutheran denominations. We are saddened that a group with the name Lutheran would take another decisive step away from the clear teaching of the Bible, which was the foundation of the Lutheran Reformation.”

Schroeder says that WELS is firmly committed to upholding God’s design for marriage as outlined in Scripture—a design intended for one man and one woman. “We believe, and the Bible teaches, that God designed this relationship to be a blessing for men and women and for society. Any departure from what God himself has designed does two things: it denies the clear teachings of Scripture and it undermines God’s desire that the man/woman relationship in marriage be a blessing.”

Evangelical Lutheran Synod disagrees with homosexual clergy resolution adopted by ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) - 8/21/09

MANKATO, MINNESOTA—Officials of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), a church body based in Mankato, noted with concern and disappointment the decision of the national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), held in Minneapolis August 17-23, to allow the ordination of practicing homosexuals and lesbians as pastors of the church.

The smaller ELS is not affiliated with the larger ELCA, even though the names of the two churches are very similar.

ELS President, Rev. John A. Moldstad, said: “Ordaining practicing homosexuals and lesbians to the ministry is a serious departure from the biblical standards of morality to which Lutherans and Lutheran pastors have historically been held.” Moldstad clarified that, in contrast to the newly-adopted position of the ELCA, the position of the ELS on the matter of homosexuality and marriage is as follows:

We confess that Scripture condemns homosexuality and extra-marital relations (fornication and adultery) as sin. Nevertheless, when an individual caught up in such sins truly repents, the forgiveness of the Gospel is to be fully applied. We confess that the divine institution of marriage is to be heterosexual, in which, according to God’s design, a man and a woman may enjoy a life-long companionship in mutual love. We teach on the basis of Holy Scripture that marriage is the only proper context for the expression of sexual intimacy and for the procreation of children. See Rom. 1:26-27, 1 Cor. 6:9, 18 and 7:2-9, John 4:17-18, 1 John 1:9, Gen. 1:27-28 and 2:18-24, Matt. 19:4-6. (From *We Believe, Teach, and Confess*, adopted by the ELS in 1992)

Moldstad explained that ELS churches welcome into their midst those who may struggle with temptation toward a same-sex attraction, but who know in their conscience that this is wrong, and who seek God’s help in their struggle. Said Moldstad, “The ELS believes that in this world it is the duty of the church – as the body of Christ – to be a community of healing and reconciliation in the Gospel, and a beacon of hope to all humanity. And so, while the church is indeed called by the Lord to condemn as sin that which God condemns as sin, it is the church’s privilege also to offer and apply the grace, forgiveness, and acceptance of God, in Jesus Christ, to all who repent of their sins – whatever those sins may be.”

In addition to the similarity in names, the ELS shares a common heritage with some segments of the ELCA. The Mankato-based group was organized in 1918 by pastors and congregations that had declined to enter a merger that formed one of the predecessor bodies of the ELCA. The ELS has not participated in subsequent Lutheran mergers either – including the one that formed the ELCA in 1988 – because of what it saw as doctrinal compromises that these mergers represented.

A Response to the Actions of the ELCA 2009 Churchwide Assembly by the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (ELDoNA)

During the Reformation of Christ’s Church in the 1500s, those who came to be known as Lutherans sought to establish all they did and taught in two ways, so as to prove that their contentions were good and right. First and foremost, all that was set in place or rejected must be in conformity with God’s holy Word. Second, the history of Christ’s Church was consulted to demonstrate that what was being said or done was not some novel twisting of that Word (2 Peter 1:20). The actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its Churchwide Assembly this past week in Minneapolis completely set this fundamental principle of the Reformation on its head: it has acted contrary to God’s Word and contrary to how that Word has been understood by the whole Church throughout the ages.

Both with regard to its social statement on homosexuality and to its declaration of fellowship with the United Methodist Church, the ELCA has rejected God’s clear Word and embraced sin and false doctrine as if it were pleasing to God—or even necessary to His ‘justice’ (as defined by men apart from His Word). Instead of loving homosexuals enough to call them to repent of their sin and to offer God’s grace in Christ for forgiveness—as well as provide the help of the Church to the individual homosexual in struggling against his or her sin (as one would do with other sins, such as alcoholism or drug addiction)—the ELCA has taken the easy way out by lying to those caught in this sin, making it seem as if God’s Word no longer speaks clearly. Just as this leaves the Bible open to being discarded whenever its truth offends a practitioner of whatever sin, it has the additional ill effect of making all of the Bible untrustworthy, including those sections that speak to its unique and overarching message: the forgiveness of every sin through the perfect life and atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, this pattern has been well set within the ELCA from its inception. The ELCA’s rejection of the absolute authority of Holy Scripture (inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility) has been shown again and again—by its rejection of the Bible’s limiting the pastoral office to men, by its refusal to keep pure the chief article of the Church (that man is saved solely by the grace of God through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ alone) as was shown by its signing the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (wherein they gave up all standing as a Reformation church body by compromising that chief article of the faith with the false teaching of the Roman Church), and by its entering into ‘full communion’ agreements with church bodies that completely contradict the scriptural doctrine of the Lord’s Supper that is upheld by the Lutheran Confessions (namely, that the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper are the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus, given for Christians who are united in the true faith to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins). The approval of full communion with the United Methodist Church—like the previous approvals of fellowship with the Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the Moravian Brethren, the Episcopal Church U.S.A., and the United Church of Christ—is but another instance of the desire for external unity at any cost overriding the pure teaching of God’s Word.

It is the prayer of all in our diocese that those in the ELCA who confessed their consciences bound to the Word of God and unable to continue in a church body that has so dramatically thrown aside that Word will have had their voices heard by those who were in favor of these rejections of God’s Word. May the Holy Spirit use their confession to bring their church body to true repentance for these and other previous sinful actions. Indeed, we pray that God the Holy and Blessed Trinity, in His mercy, would either lead the ELCA to re-embrace the foundation of Christianity in every way, or bring those who still confess the truth to a new home where they may be served in accord with God’s will, and that those who have been hardened in their errors through these sinful actions would yet hear both the Law and the Gospel of the Lord so that they are not eternally lost through the impenitence that has been encouraged in them. At the same time, we pray that those Lutheran bodies that have effectively ‘winked at’ the corporate sins of the ELCA by continuing to participate with them in various joint endeavors (including an aberrant Ministry of Gospel and Sacrament to those in the Armed Forces) would finally repent of their enabling of the progress of such false doctrine and practice.

With the unanimous consent of the diocese,
The Rt. Rev. James D. Heiser, Bishop
Diocesan Bishop
The Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America

RESPONSES TO THE ELCA'S RECENT DECISIONS

"ELCA in Full Communion with Methodists" By Dr. Gene Edward Veith

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America did more at their convention than affirm homosexuality. The delegates also voted to extend full pulpit, altar, and every other kind of fellowship with the United Methodist Church.

The chief legislative authority of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted a full communion agreement with the United Methodist Church (UMC) on Thursday by a 958-51 vote.

Under the agreement, the two church bodies express a common confession of Christian faith; mutual recognition of Baptism and sharing Holy Communion; mutual recognition of ordained ministers for service in either church; and a common commitment to evangelism, witness and service.

The two denominations also agree to freely join worship and exchange members; engage in common decision-making on critical matters; and lift criticisms that may exist between the churches.

According to the ELCA website, the church is also in full communion with the Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church USA, Moravian Church, Episcopal Church in the USA. Full communion means that the ELCA and these church bodies share:

- a common confessing of the Christian faith;
- a mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members;
- a mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject only but always to the disciplinary regulations of other churches;
- a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service;
- a means of common decision making on critical common issues of faith and life;
- a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between churches

This goes far beyond being willing to give each other Holy Communion. Since the ELCA and these other church bodies generally practice open communion that is hardly an issue. But this means, for example, that a Lutheran congregation in the ELCA could have a Methodist or a Presbyterian or a graduate from a UCC seminary as its pastor.

The ELCA is saying that it agrees with and will no longer criticize Calvinists AND Arminians AND the social gospel AND pietists AND moralists AND congregationalists AND episcopalians AND liturgists AND anti-liturgists AND people who believe in sacraments AND people who don't believe in sacraments. So what is left that is distinctively LUTHERAN in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?

"Kyrie, Eleison" ("Lord, Have Mercy") August 25 Memorial Moment by Rev. Scott Murray (LCMS)

Our enemy will never give up. See the 21 August headline: "Lutherans Pass Gay-Clergy Proposal" (Wall Street Journal). If old fashioned subversion to perversion will not suffice, our enemy will attempt to convert the church and he appears to be succeeding. The church is being sucked into the culture's ever deepening depravity and into the swirling cesspool of the West's decline. Our enemy is piping us into the open sewer of self centeredness, so that I think I am free to do whatever is right in my own eyes (Deut 12:8). Now, however, the church is offering cover for this deterioration by calling such wickedness good. In the ultimate Nietzschean transvaluation of values, the church has called, in a monstrous perversion of language, "loving" and "monogamous" what God has forbidden and called "shameless acts" (Rm 1:24-27). But there is no possibility of a love that runs counter to the love that God has established in the faithful and holy unity of husband and wife in marriage, the Bible's monogamy. Our enemy has gotten us to commit suicide, as Malcolm Muggeridge warned the people of the West in the previous century. Simply stated, we are calling evil good and good evil.

The so-called church is turning the theology of the cross on its head. The church should be calling evil evil, so that God Himself can turn evil on its head in Christ, who takes evil into Himself and dies for it. But there can be no forgiveness through the blood of the crucified unless there are still sinful acts. Why should we seek forgiveness when we can theorize away our sin? I don't mean to say that the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) is unique in this. Every human heart has the tendency to define down deviancy. Our wickedness would prefer to be called good, rather than precipitate that dreaded repentance. However, what good is the power to forgive, power given to the church, if the church's children see no need for it? What if the earthly good and our knowledge of it become our own knowledge God; our entire knowledge of God? What if our own interpretation of the natural revelation begins to trump the divine self-revelation in Scripture? The very warning sounded by Karl Barth against Nazi-dominated Germany in the 1930s ought to be sounded again over against the imposition of the politically correct sexual lunacy in the first decade of the 21st century. The transcendent must not be reduced to immanence. The creation is not god. A decisive "no" to human self indulgence is worth expressing in every generation. We must be wrong, so that God might be our only righteousness. Lord, do not treat us as our sins deserve, but according to Your mercy.

Martin Luther said that the theologian of the cross only sees God's back, that is, the incarnation of God in Christ born of Mary. When we see by our own power, no matter how reasonable things seem, we are in jeopardy of not seeing. When we are telling God, rather than letting him tell us what His creation means, and us in it, then we are telling the potter how to shape the clay (Is 29:11-19). The worst possible transvaluation of values results; God becomes us and we become god. Woe unto us, for we are a poor, even perverse god. The report of the death of a Lutheran church body, upon which the tower of homosexuality fell, should lead us to deep repentance, for we are not better. Without repentance, we too will perish. God takes the hole that grief-filled repentance creates in our hearts and stakes the life of Christ the crucified into it. Only in that suffering of true repentance will the theology of the cross become real. There can be no accommodation of sin, only repentance.

Kyrie, Eleison!

RESPONSES TO THE ELCA'S RECENT DECISIONS

"Reflections on the ELCA"

By Rev. Larry Beane, a.k.a. "Father Hollywood" (LCMS)

Just a few somewhat random thoughts concerning the recent high-profile actions by the assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) . . .

One of the issues is the problem that this body uses the name "Lutheran" - which has the tendency to tar-brush the rest of us. In other words, when we read articles in the newspapers like "Lutherans Endorse Homosexuality," this gives the impression that all Lutherans have done this, that the ELCA represents "Evangelical Lutheranism" in America. It's especially confusing for congregations like mine which is called "Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church" and yet is not a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

So, this confusion requires us to constantly point out that the ELCA is one specific denomination that claims the label "Lutheran." The church body that my congregation belongs to is the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS). We are not the same, nor do we share communion, churches, or ministers with the ELCA. We are different in a similar way that Mexico and New Mexico are two entirely different jurisdictions, even though they have some common shared history and even some overlapping linguistic and cultural heritage. They are simply two different entities that make use of the same name - though they are far from being the same.

There is a pastoral concern here. In spite of many years of solid pastoral teaching by my predecessors in this congregation, and an emphasis on catechesis and orthodoxy in doctrine, I have had several of my own parishioners recently either visit and in some cases commune in ELCA congregations. Others have moved away and considered joining ELCA congregations - owing to the name "Lutheran" on the door. I had one parishioner who had moved away send a request to me for a "transfer" to an ELCA congregation, unaware that our two congregations have no relationship or fellowship.

Sometimes, a family will face a choice between an established ELCA congregation that is enjoying worldly success with a beautiful facility and a large Sunday School and youth group, versus a small, struggling, or even a mission congregation of the LCMS that has no youth group or Sunday School to speak of, a humble building, but with a solid pastor. Situations like this make us really check our priorities. Would we rather our children be members of the ELCA and have a "vibrant" youth group, or would we rather them have solid teaching in the faith and fidelity to Scripture? And if no-one is willing to be the "pioneer" so to speak, and help the struggling or mission congregation grow and have children in the parish, how are they ever to have a "vibrant" youth group or Sunday School?

And what about five years from now, if the local ELCA congregation that is today "conservative" decides that their next pastor will be a lesbian? Or what about a hundred years from now when the decision to shun the LCMS congregation means that a good number of one's great grandchildren are now established in the ELCA congregation - while the LCMS congregation closed decades ago?

These are things that need to be considered now.

As far as the recent decisions to bless same-sex unions and allow open and unrepentant homosexuals to be rostered as church workers and pastors, this was inevitable. This decision was a foregone conclusion when the ELCA began accepting methods of biblical interpretation that expressed a belief that error could be found in the Scriptures, which encouraged the Bible to be read critically, if not dubiously - to the point where one could read a passage and draw a diametrically-opposite conclusion than the clear reading of the text. And this owes to a human desire not to submit to Scripture as God's Word, but rather use it as a tool to advance a certain political and social agenda. It is a case where preconceived conclusions and purpose-driven goals are allowed to replace Truth as the ultimate end of our study and theology.

The advance of the homosexual agenda was only the next logical step after the shattering of the barrier between the sexes when the ELCA began to "ordain" women. At that time, many predicted that the inevitable conclusion would be an endorsement of homosexuality. Those concerns were met with scoffing, dismissed as hysteria, by many in the movement to ordain women. The more conservative element within the ELCA is no longer scoffing, but are now shell-shocked and wondering where to go from here. There have been some who repented of women's ordination when they finally did accept the fact that they deviated from the path of Truth and this deviant path was leading to further deviation from Truth.

The other big news from Minnesota was that the ELCA was entering altar-and-pulpit fellowship with the United Methodist Church. Again, this was hardly a shock. The two denominations had already been sharing churches and ministers before the agreement. For many years, the ELCA had already been in communion with church bodies that denied the physical presence of Christ in Holy Communion, asserting only a spiritual presence. Entering into a communion arrangement with the Methodists takes things a step further, as the Methodists, unlike the Presbyterians (with whom the ELCA already shared fellowship and who believe in a spiritual presence) completely deny the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, relegating the elements of Holy Communion to mere symbols. According to the Formula of Concord, church bodies that deny the real presence have no presence at all, and have no valid Eucharist (FC SD VII:32). The ELCA is thus condemned by the books it claims to confess.

None of this matters to the ELCA, in which unity trumps truth. It is more important to share communion than it is to agree what that communion is. It would be like the United States and Russia declaring that we are one country, while each operates under contradictory constitutions.

Again, the development of the of the ELCA entering communion with the Methodists is hardly a shock. Once they mounted the slippery slope of open communion, even allowing communion fellowship to go beyond what Lutherans believe about the Sacrament, it quickly degenerates and becomes a situation of "anything goes."

At this point, what is to hold the ELCA back from sharing communion and ministers with, say, Unitarians and various Pentecostal groups that deny the Trinity? What, ultimately, is to prevent communion with Wiccans and Hindus? What seemed impossible and scoff-

Continued on next page

RESPONSES TO THE ELCA'S RECENT DECISIONS

worthy 30 years ago is today reality. Once the restraints of submission to Scripture have been torn asunder, what can be considered a boundary at all? There have already been Episcopal clergy who claim to be both Muslim and Christian or Muslim and Buddhist at the same time. The ELCA is in full communion with the Episcopal Church. The sky is the limit as to how this "unity" will play itself out.

Practically speaking, I can only hope that the shock value of the homosexual agenda will finally translate into a withdrawal of LCMS involvement with the ELCA. There is simply no reason for us to be involved in joint missionary work, joint chaplaincies, and joint school and university projects. There is no reason why any LCMS rostered (or unrostered) church workers should be sent to churches with ELCA pastors and workers, or to foreign seminaries that train female "pastors."

It is time for us to move on and recognize that the "division" has become a "chasm," to borrow President Kieschnick's terms, and did so decades ago. The chasm has, in fact, become a Rubicon that is now a permanent border of separation between us. As the office of the holy ministry is a mark of the church, and as God's Word makes it abundantly clear that women are not ontologically equipped to be pastors, how can one even recognize the ELCA in an ecclesiological way at all - even without the added anti-Scriptural sexual conclusions they have drawn?

I believe we need to consider the ELCA in its official, national, and organizational sense to be outside of the Church, no different than the Watchtower Society. In destroying the office of the ministry in their own parishes, they have made their exit from Church, ministry, and sacraments. This is not to say that there are not churches and faithful Christians located under the umbrella of the ELCA. But it is simply a fact that LCMS churches will increasingly be presented with the situation of bringing in members who were allegedly baptized by women "pastors" outside of any emergency baptism situation, and that some of those (questionable, to say the least) baptisms will have been done using euphemistic language, avoiding the Trinitarian formula decreed by Scripture.

We need to develop a clear vocabulary as to what constitutes heterodox baptisms and ordinations that we will accept (though being schismatic or laden in error), vs. what makes for baptisms and ordinations that are heretical or apostate, liturgical actions that we will not accept. I believe we need to be clear that not every error is "heresy" and not every errorist is a "heretic." We need to also find a way to teach everyone in our churches that formal communion fellowship is important. The name "Lutheran" does not mean the same thing everywhere, and just because "Lutheran" congregations outside of the LCMS will allow you to commune with them does not mean that you should, nor is it a guarantee that there really is communion going on in that place at all. It is entirely possible as of now to walk into a "Lutheran" (ELCA) church and have a Methodist minister blessing and distributing elements to Methodists, ELCA Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians all at the same time. What is actually being given and received there? The answer, according to FC SD VII:32 is "only bread and wine."

And as refugees may come from the ELCA clergy roster seeking status as LCMS pastors, are we going to make distinctions between those who have been "ordained" by women ministers of ordination/bishops vs. those who have been ordained by legitimate pastors? Some in the LCMS would undoubtedly argue that a woman "pastor" can indeed officiate at an ordination, or that the congregational "call" is all that suffices, or that ordination is only an optional ceremony anyway. Lack of clarity in our confession and consensus on these issues will come back to bite us, unless we figure these things out now.

We need to be clear about what is heretical vs. what is merely heterodox. It does not help our situation be triumphalistic and be eager to operate under the self-aggrandizing notion that all things LCMS constitutes orthodoxy, and all that happens outside of our communion fellowship is heresy. We must recognize "the distinction between errors that threaten the foundation of the church and going astray in less weighty matters, in general the distinction between false teaching and mistaken belief, between heresy and erroneous opinion" (*We Condemn*, Hans-Werner Gensichen, 1967 edition, CPH, p. 7) - especially as people cross denominational lines for many reasons.

In spite of the name "Lutheran," I believe it would be better for a Lutheran with absolutely no alternatives but a conservative Baptist church and an ELCA congregation led by a woman to choose to attend the former rather than the latter (though a better alternative might be to stay home and pray the traditional offices of the Church together until a local congregation can be established). Similarly, I believe a local congregation has more claim on being a real church if their pastor is an unrepentant homosexual than a "conservative" woman claiming to hold the office. In other words, I believe the female "ordination" to be a far bigger scandal than having an unrepentant gay man as a pastor. We live in confusing and convoluted times.

Again, this confusion we are now experiencing is the inevitable result of dabbling in "open communion" and seeking to make the Scriptures submit to reason rather than vice versa. Once a church body starts down that road, they all end up in the same place. We have been warned by history playing out before our eyes.

Though it draws us further at odds with the majority of those who use the name "Lutheran" in our country and around the globe, and though it exposes us to further ridicule and alienation from the world and our culture (including the American religious scene), we need to cling to Scripture and the confessions. We need to continue to hold a clear and unambiguous understanding of church fellowship and altar-and-pulpit relationships. We need to draw very clear lines about what constitutes the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and what makes for valid ordination and baptism. And we have to do it in a way that seeks glory only for God, not to ourselves, in a way that is humble rather than self-congratulatory and prideful. For we are saved by grace. Correct doctrine is given and believed by grace rather than the other way around, lest any of us should boast.

And like any time of schism, heresy, doctrinal confusion, and upheaval in the Christian world, this is our opportunity to be very clear in our confession for the sake of Christ and His Church, not just for ourselves, but for our brethren around the world and for generations yet unborn.

The Twelfth Annual St. Michael Liturgical Conference



**Monday, September 28
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Detroit, Michigan**

Registration

The registration fee is \$35 before September 15. After September 15, the registration fee is \$45. The registration fee includes the cost of the conference, distribution materials, snacks during breaks, and luncheon. A portion of the St. Michael Liturgical Conference is funded by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Schedule

8:15 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Holy Communion
10:45 a.m.	Keynote Address
12:00 p.m.	Sext (Service of Prayer)
12:15 p.m.	Luncheon (Greetings from Bp. Stecholz)
1:15 p.m.	Workshop
2:30 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m.	Workshop
4:00 p.m.	Vespers
till 7:00 p.m.	Gemütlichkeit at the Rectory (Fellowship time)

The Triduum Sacrum

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday—the Three Holy Days—include the most ancient and most complex rites of the Church Year—all pointing to the great Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord. The conference will examine and detail the history, significance, ceremony, rubric and rite of these Three Holy Days.

Presenters

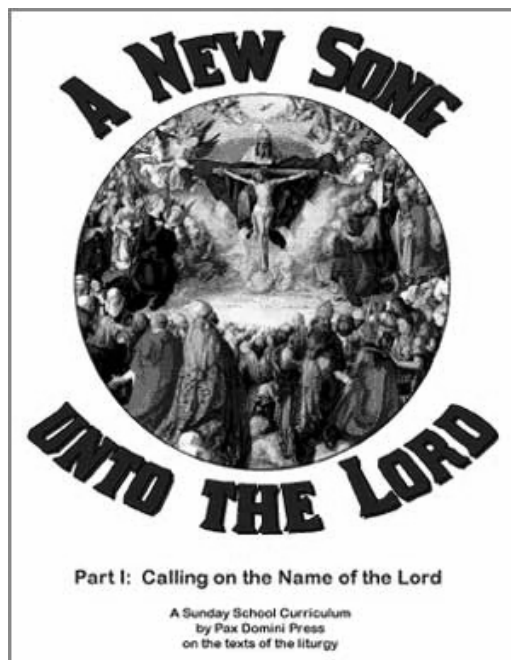
The Reverend Dr. Kent Burrenson—Keynote Speaker (Assoc. Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of the Chapel at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis); The Reverend Dr. Burnell Eckardt (Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran in Kewanee, IL; Editor of Gottesdienst); The Reverend Dr. Richard Zeile (Pastor and Headmaster of St. John's Lutheran Church and School in Taylor, MI); The Reverend Eric Forss (Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran in Howell, MI); The Reverend Mark Braden (Pastor of Zion Lutheran in Detroit, MI).

*I have been blessed to attend this most excellent conference 7 times. Last year, three of our elders attended with me (in Fort Wayne) and thought it was wonderful. Several of you told me last year that you might be interested in attending this conference in the future. Here's your chance! If you are interested in registering for this conference, or if you have questions about it, please see me soon. We need to get our registration forms in by September 15. This conference is for all clergy and laypersons who are interested in learning more about the historic liturgy of the Church. If that means you, you are more than welcome to attend! In Christ,
Pastor Messer*

LUTHER'S
SMALL
CATECHISM
with Explanation

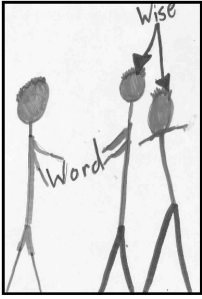
YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASSES WILL BEGIN SATURDAY, SEPT. 26

First Year Confirmands (7th graders) will meet each Saturday at 10:00 a.m. with Pastor Messer for instruction; Second Year Confirmands (8th graders) will meet each Saturday at 11:00 a.m. A short informational meeting for both parents and confirmands will be held on **Sunday, September 13** during Fellowship time. If you have any questions or concerns, please see Pastor Messer.



"A New Song unto the Lord" is the newest Sunday School curriculum released by Pax Domini Press. It is designed to take the disciple of Christ through the texts of the liturgy. From the Invocation to the Benediction, the student will learn that the liturgy is not only anchored on God's Word, but that the liturgy is Gospel.

This year, our Adult Bible Class will study alongside of our children, employing this same excellent curriculum (at a higher level) focused on the liturgy. Why do we worship the way we do? What is the significance of each element of the liturgy? These questions, and many more, will be explored in great depth. We hope you will consider joining us for this study, which begins on Rally Day, Sunday, Sept. 13 (see note on page 11).



First Come, First Served or A Word to the Wise Re: The Lutheran Study Bible

*A message from Rev. Paul McCain,
CPH Editor—August 12, 2009*

The large kit of promotional materials is making its way to you, even as I key in this message. I expect that Lutheran congregations will start receiving it already this week, and for sure by the end of the month. So, be

looking for it. It's important. May I offer a word of advice? Place your orders for *The Lutheran Study Bible* NOW, not later. Why do I say this? Two reasons:

- (1) Based on the ever growing "volume" of incoming questions, comments, and all around excitement, it is clear that *The Lutheran Study Bible* is going to be big, as in B-I-G, big.
- (2) Based on the accelerating pace of pre-publication orders, it appears to be the case that the first print run of *The Lutheran Study Bible* will be going fast, and based on the complexities of paper supplies, we can not guarantee delivery of the Bible before Christmas once the first print run is out.

I highly recommend therefore that you and your congregation get orders in as soon as you can and basically "take a number" and get in line, for we will be shipping Bibles as the orders were received: first come, first served. So, just a word to the wise.

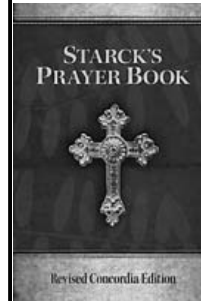
Note: Please see the illustration above, if you are a visual learner.

We have had a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall for nearly two months now. **Today, Sunday, August 30** is the last day to sign up to be included in the initial order our congregation will place on Monday, August 31.

Included in this initial order will be a case of 10 hardback copies of *The Lutheran Study Bible* (TLSB) to grace our bookshelf in the Adult Bible Class area of our congregation for people to use during study. Half of the expense for these will be paid for by Christian Education; the other half has been donated by one of our generous members. We would love to be able to order another case for our congregation. **If you are interested in donating** to that cause, please see Pastor Messer. A case of 10 hardback copies is \$349.90 (\$549.90 after Oct. 31). Each individual hardback copy costs \$34.99, so we will order as many additional copies as donations allow. Again, see Pastor Messer if you are interested.

We will begin a new sign-up sheet for anyone who still wishes to order TLSB, but failed to make our first deadline. If there are people signed up on that sheet, we will place a second order on **Monday, September 28**. After that, anyone desiring to order a copy of TLSB will have to do so on their own.

There are samples of TLSB located on the table in the Fellowship Hall, as well as informational posters hanging here and there. TLSB promises to be the absolute best study Bible ever produced! You should seriously consider purchasing a copy of this first-ever, all-Lutheran Study Bible. It will be the last Bible you will ever need to purchase!



CPH RELEASES NEW EDITION OF STARCK'S PRAYER BOOK!

Our beloved publishing house continues to bless us with one awesome resource after another! Here's another gem fresh off the presses! Starck's Prayer Book has been a wonderful daily devotional tool for years for many Lutherans. Now it is being released in a newly updated edition. No, we won't post sign-up sheets or anything, but you should be aware of this excellent resource you can order from CPH if you wish (\$19.99—416 pages). Here's a sample of the riches contained within this treasure:

Wednesday, August 26

Believing Christians Pray God to Wean Them from the World. EXHORTATION.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom. 12:2

When believing Christians reflect that the love of the world, like a weed, grows spontaneously in the soul, while the fear and love of God, like a beautiful and fragrant plant, must be planted in the heart and diligently and constantly tended, they will understand with what concern and anxiety they are expected to guard their hearts. According, they should (1) be aware that the world is both inside and outside of them. Inside them there is the world in the form of evil lusts, wiles, desires, and thoughts of their heart. Outside them there is the world in the form of the examples, enticements, and temptations of evil people. (2) All these evils true Christians must resist: the lusts and the thoughts arising in them, by prayer and supplication; the allurements of the world, by avoiding its society, habits, customs, and mode of living. (3) Now, since it is not in their own power to do this, they must fervently pray God for help and assistance.

(4) This separation of the world must not be effected by locking themselves away, shutting themselves in, and refusing to speak to or associate with anyone. It must consist in refusing to join the children of this age in their sins, declining to imitate their works and deeds. For if we were to have absolutely nothing to do with the children of this age, we would have to, as Paul indicates, go out of this world entirely. We are to be in the world, as Joseph was in Egypt, as Lot was in Sodom, as Daniel and his companions were in Babylon. All these did not practice the wicked ways of the people and cities where they lived. (5) This separation from the world is not to be effected merely for show and for a few days, when we are about to go to confession and to the Lord's Supper, but we are to be constantly engaged in this work. The world must be turned out of our hearts every day, and every day Jesus must enter our hearts.

PRAYER.

Merciful God, Lover of mankind, how great is Your loving-kindness toward us! You patiently bear with our many faults and weaknesses. You do not punish us as our sins deserve. You have opened my eyes by Your Word, so that I now know myself and sadly have seen how depraved my heart really is. I feel the world both inside and outside me. I find the world inside me: the evil desires of my heart, my sinful inclinations and promptings to evil. I find the world outside me: evil people who would entice and mislead me by their sinful examples and temptations. O Lord, my heart, which is evil by nature, takes greater delight and pleasure in these things than in Your holy Word. Woe is me, that I have such a long time, so often, and to such a degree allowed myself to be enticed and drawn away by this age! I am ashamed to lift up my eyes to Your presence when I think of the follies of my youthful years. Alas! I have served the world better than You, O my God! I have tried more to please the world than You. I have clung to the world more than to You. With these things I have offended You, have wounded my conscience, and aroused Your anger.

(Concluded on page 14)

Synopsis of August 4, 2009 Church Council Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Vern Jakolat, Larry Elliott, Gary Miller, Sharyn Greening, Andrea Elliott and Megan Brown. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion made by Councilmember L. Elliott, supported by President Brown to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember L. Elliott to approve the July 7 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Treasurer's Report** – The attached report was received into record.
- **Financial Secretary** – No report.

Boards

- **Board of Elders** – Councilmember L. Elliott informed the Council that the Elders had accepted the transfer of the Pease's and the Sellke's.
- **Board of Trustees** – Councilmember Jakolat informed the Council of various projects that are underway.
- **Board of Christian Education** – The attached report was received into record.
- **Board of Evangelism** – Councilmember A. Elliott informed the Council that the Relay for Life event was taking place on August 7-8.
- **Board of Stewardship** – No report.

Organization and Committee Reports

- **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
- **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business

- There was no business brought before the Council.

General Comment

- There were no general comments.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Elliott to adjourn at 7:30pm. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer concluded the meeting with a reading from the Treasury of Daily Prayer and the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Brown, Secretary

(Note: Complete minutes with all attachments are available in the church office for review.)

PEACE NEWS & NOTES

PYG NEWS

September Events Monthly Meeting

Sunday, September 20— 5pm-7pm

Greetings in Christ,

August flew by and our month of rest is done. We have much to do and much to learn with the help of the Lord.

As noted above, we will be changing the setup for our monthly meeting. This will hopefully enable more youth to be there and participate. Not only the youth of Peace, but also their friends and other youth from the area. We will be focusing on the Word and fellowship in Christ. Planning and “business” items will be handled at weekly meetings before Adult Bible Study and Sunday School.

With the Adult Bible Study working with the Level IV of the Sunday School curriculum, the rear storage/classroom is not being used for the Young Adult class. We have been given the okay to use this room for the Peace Youth Group as a gathering place for planning and fellowship. We will be looking at ways to set this room up.

We are continuing our Spartan label, pop can and used cell phone collections. I want to thank everyone for your continued support in these and all of the Youth’s activities.

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



SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY



Sunday School and Adult Bible Study will begin September 13. Everyone will be learning about the different parts of our liturgy using a program from Pax Domini Press called, “A New Song Unto the Lord.” Following are this year’s Sunday School teachers and the levels they will be teaching:

Andrea Elliott—preschool—Grade 2

Carol Zeile—Grades 3-5

Sharyn Greening—Grades 6-8

Pastor Messer—High School and Adults

There will be a Rally Day Potluck following Sunday School on September 13. Hamburgers, beverages, and table service will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass.

Ladies Lunch Bunch

Peace Lutheran Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, September 22, at 1:30 p.m. at the Hearthstone Oven in downtown Ithaca.

All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please join us!

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd



August 30-October 17, 2009

Weight Watchers is launching its Lose for Good campaign on August 30 for six weeks. For every pound members lose from then until October 17 Weight Watchers will donate up to a million dollars to help combat hunger.

Local meetings can also help the cause by collecting food and donating it to a local food bank. **Last year the Weight Watchers members who meet at Peace donated 90 pounds of food to our food bank.** This year we have also designated the food bank at Peace during Lose For Good.

I invite members of our congregation to take part in this worthwhile cause during the next six weeks and also help stock our food bank. A corner of the Fellowship Hall in the adult Bible study area will be set up to bring your donations.

Please see me if you have any questions.

Sharyn Greening



Please consider supporting this Christ-centered, Cross-focused Worldwide Outreach. You can send a donation at any time by making a check payable to:

Lutheran Public Radio
P.O. Box 912
Collinsville, IL 62234

You can also donate online via PayPal by going to www.issuesetc.org and clicking on "Donate." There are also forms available in the church office for any interested in donating monthly via automatic withdrawal.

ADULT CHOIR

Choir practices will begin on Sunday, September 20 at 8:30 am before the Divine Service. We practice for a half hour each Sunday preparing for support to the congregation and supplementing the liturgy with song.



There is only one requirement—that you like to sing. If you like to sing, we invite you to join us. We try to keep our music as easy-going as possible, yet with a "joyful noise to the Lord."

PEACE MOVIE NIGHT

Returns Friday, September 25
6:00 p.m.

Movie yet to be determined
Look for flyers and bulletin inserts
with the info coming soon!

TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Plus, **THEY'RE FUN!** Our next Table Talk will take place on Thursday, **September 3 at 7:00 p.m. at Pastor Messer's house** (around the campfire). Bring a chair and some topics! We hope you'll join us!



Ladies' Guild

Ladies' Guild Meeting

Our next meeting will be **Monday, September 14, 2009 at 7pm.** Hostess will be Marlene Miller. 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

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 Flowers

There is a Flower Calendar for 2009 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime 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 costs \$25 and usually lasts about one (1) month. **We would like to encourage 2 persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand.** If paying the church for the flowers, checks should be made payable to Peace Lutheran, Church with a separate sizeable note marked "Flower Fund," attached and placed in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel. Questions? See Beth Brostrom, Cheryl Henry or Marilyn Oswald.



Ladies Guild Announcements

PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain list will be updated in September. Anyone interested in being added or removed from the list is requested to contact Beth Brostrom or Carol Durst.

COFFEE HOSTESSES

The Coffee List for 2010 is being prepared. Should you like to serve as a coffee hostess during 2010 or be removed from the list, please speak to Beth Brostrom.

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES' GUILD AND



Ladies' Guild is collecting the following items to send to Lutheran World Relief:

- Pads of ruled notebook paper (8-1/2"x11") containing 150-200 sheets
- One - blunt scissors
- One - 30 centimeter ruler (or ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other)
- One - pencil sharpener
- 6 - new pencils w/erasers
- One - eraser (approx. 2-1/2" long)
- 12 - sheets construction paper in assorted colors
- One box - 8, 16, or 24 crayons
- One - cloth bag (approx. 12"x14" w/handles)

(See Beth for directions to make bags)

Altar Care



September

Marlene Miller/Charlotte Dargie

October

Carolyn Johnson

November

Cheryl Henry/Janice Sager

Coffee Hostesses

September

- 6 Jennie Harmon
- 13 Carolyn Johnson
- 20 Peace Youth Group
- 27 S. Greening/M. Brown

October

- 4 Janice Sager
- 11 NO COFFEE/ PASTOR
APPRECIATION DINNER
- 18 Lisa Messer
- 25 M. Isaksson/H. Meyer

November

- 1 Shawnna Greening
- 8 Dorothy Trgina
- 15 Marilyn Oswald
- 22 Mary Jakolat
- 29 Gretchen Harrison



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Youth Confirmation Classes

- Beginning **Saturday, September 26**, First Year Confirmands will meet for instruction on at 10 am, followed by Second Year Confirmands at 11 am (see note on page 7).

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School will reconvene on **Sunday, September 13, 2009**. Join us for a Rally Day potluck!
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11 am.** for all adult members of Peace and guests. We will be wrapping up our study of the **Book of Hebrews** on **Sunday, September 6** and beginning **"A New Song Unto the Lord"** on **Rally Day, Sunday, September 13** (see notes on pages 8 and 11).

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10 am.** 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 studying the book of **Leviticus**.

"Christian History 101"

- Weekly classes are held on **Wednesdays at 6 pm.** The class is studying the history of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles to today. Few Christians today really know and understand the history of the Christian Church, so this is a study that will benefit all who attend.



Happy Birthday to:

- 3 Marion Greening
- 3 John Isaksson
- 5 Lisa Messer
- 11 Maxine Isaksson
- 12 Joshua Schafer
- 14 Kim Penzien
- 17 Susan Reithel
- 20 Brenda Stroven
- 23 David Zeile

Happy Anniversary to:

- 4 Bob and Jo Wendt
- 8 Vern and Mary Jakolat
- 12 Brian and Brenda Stroven
- 19 James and Janice Sager

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

("Starck's Prayer Book" excerpt, cont'd from page 9)

Behold, my God, I return and repent in dust and ashes. O my God, remove the love of the world from me so that You and You alone may possess and rule my heart. Let Your Holy Spirit sanctify me completely and drive all worldliness from me. Make me consider the sad end of the children of this age so that I cling to You and not to the world, that I obey You and not the world. Draw me back when I am about to run and sin with the world again. Keep me always in Your fear, and remind me constantly that You have created me for Your service, and that I should daily put on the new self created in God's likeness in true righteousness and holiness. Cause the world to become more and more distasteful to me. Let me with ever-growing relish strive after holiness, the fear of God, and the joys of heaven. Grant that I may constantly despise the lust of the world, which passes away. Grant me to run from the lusts and joys of this world, because after one has drained them, there follows nothing but anxiety, unrest, an evil conscience and the destruction of the soul. Pluck from my heart whatever is still remaining in it of the world, and plant Your holy fear within me, so that I may carefully avoid all that is evil out of love for You. Amen.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And make our hearts Your place of rest;
Come with Your grace and heav'nly aid,
And fill the hearts which You have made.

To You, the Counselor, we cry,
To You the gift of God Most High:
The fount of life, the fire of love,
The soul's anointing from above.

—LSB 498:1-2

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 8/23/09)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 159; Confirmed - 137

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report as of 8/23/09

YTD Budgeted \$75,990.00









YTD Receipts..... \$68,295.83

Difference \$ -7,694.17

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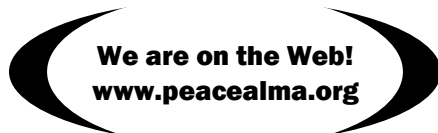
Peace Lutheran Church
 325 E. Warwick Drive
 Alma, MI 48801
 (989) 463-5754
 contact@peacealma.org

September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		September 1 Pastor at Winkel 7 pm—Church Council	2 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Divine Service <i>Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist</i> 	3 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Table Talk around the Campfire (Pastor's house)	4	5
6 13th Sunday after Trinity 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC 	7 LABOR DAY  Church Office Closed	8	9 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Vespers	10 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	11	12
13 14th Sunday after Trinity 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—SS Rally Day Potluck 	14 7 pm—Ladies Guild	15	16 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Divine Service <i>Holy Cross Day</i> 	17 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	18	19
20 15th Sunday after Trinity 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 5-7 pm—PYG 	21 <div>Newsletter articles due</div>	22 1:30 pm—Lunch Bunch	23 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Divine Service <i>St. Matthew, Apostle</i> 	24 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	25 6 pm—Peace Movie Night	26 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.
27 St. Michael & All Angels 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	28 St. Michael Liturgical Conference in Detroit	29	30 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Vespers	October 1 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	2	3 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.

Peace Lutheran Church
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Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



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 September

September	ELDER	ACOLYTES	ORGANIST	USHERS	GREETERS
6 - 9:30 am (Trinity 13)	David Zeile	Natalie Penzien Rebekah Rodriguez	Beth Brostrom	Bill Hendrick Jonathan Penzien	Dorothy Trgina
13 - 9:30 am (Trinity 14)	Larry Elliott	Sarah Messer Aaron Messer	Mary Jakolat	Chris Brown Curt Oswald	LeRoy and Maxine Isaksson
20 - 9:30 am (Trinity 15)	Terry Luplow	Melanie Penzien Phillip Schafer	Beth Brostrom	Bill Brostrom Michael Gilbert	Larry and Andrea Elliott
27 - 9:30 am (St. Michael)	Miguel Ortiz	Tyrel Harwager Sierra Luplow	Mary Jakolat	Burt Henry Gary Miller	Richard and Darlene Palmer
October					
4 - 9:30 am (Trinity 17)	David Zeile	Samantha Messer BJ Henry	Beth Brostrom	Daren Johnson Vern Jakolat	Bob and Jo Wendt

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