

CROSS WORDS

the newsletter of

CROSS OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

512 North Cockrell Hill Road
De Soto, Texas 75115

July 2019 Edition

Pastor's Page

From the Pastor's Desk...



There is an old story which numerous pastors have used as an illustration of God's Forgiveness. It goes something like this:

"There was a young nun who claimed to have had a vision of Jesus. Her bishop decided to test her truthfulness and ordered that the next time she had a vision she should ask Christ what the bishop's primary sin had been before he became a bishop. Some months later, the nun returned and the bishop asked if she had asked Christ the question, to which she affirmed that she had. "And what did he say?" the bishop asked apprehensively. "Christ said . . ." and the nun paused a moment . . . "He said, 'I don't remember.'"

How would you like to have a God like that? Who doesn't even remember your sins? Well, you do have such a God! He says: **"I, even I, am He Who blots out your transgressions, for My Own sake, and remembers your sins no more"** (Isaiah 43:25).

Let's put it another way. How would you like to have a clean slate? I mean—like you woke up this morning and **everything** — I

mean absolutely **everything** you've done wrong in the past was completely forgotten, over — done with?

It would be quite unlike the circumstance of the man who made a fool of himself at a party. The next day he felt complete remorse for his actions and begged his wife to forgive him. "I do forgive you," she promised.

But over the next few months, whenever something came up that displeased the wife, she would bring up the party incident. "I thought you forgave me for that," protested the husband. "Darling, I did forgive you," she replied. "I just don't want you to **forget** that I forgave you."

Unlike that man and his wife, you have a totally fresh start with God. Old things are passed away. All things have become new. Yes, you do have a clean slate today. For His Mercies are "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23).

But the trouble is, we often forget the kind of a God we have, and we doubt or misunderstand His Mercy. Though we may doubt God's Forgiveness, or maybe even make it conditional, the truth is He has Forgiven us **totally**! "Once, for all!" Christ has "(done) away with (all) sin."

And that is a tall order seeing

that Scripture proclaims: *"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth"* (Genesis 8:21).

Our sins are so numerous. First of all, you may have sins of doubt. Does Satan so plague you with the memory of some past sin(s) that you wonder if God has *really* Forgiven you? Do you feel what you did was so horrible that even God can't "forget" it?

Or we might have sins that limit God and His Mercy. Do you actually limit God and deny His Mercy when He says to you: *"I, even I, am He Who blots out your transgressions, for My Own sake, and remembers your sins no more"* (Isaiah 43:25. At times we need to say the prayer: "O God, forgive me for the sin of coming back to You and asking forgiveness for a sin You forgave — and forgot — a long time ago!" (O.P. Kretzmann)

In addition, our sins may be sins of thinking about God's Grace *conditionally*. We may think God says, *"If you will do so-and-so, then I will Forgive you."* This *"if-then"* heresy is perpetuated by some television evangelists whose "theology" is absorbed by many people quite unthinkingly.

Nothing like that in God's Divine Service. No conditions only full Mercy and Forgiveness. In true repentance we throw ourselves

totally on the Mercy of Christ. And *because* the Atonement has been completed, because *you have been Forgiven* by Christ's death on the cross, you are to live as Redeemed Children of God. Yet, we don't. That, in and of itself, is sin to confess.

Or we take God's Forgiveness for granted. "Oh, God has Forgiven me, therefore I don't have to ..." This we call, "Cheapening Grace".

The writer to the Hebrews said, *"so Christ was Sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a Second Time, not to bear sin, but to bring Salvation to those who are waiting for Him."* Christ will come to bring Salvation to all who believe upon His Name. This is the Good News or the Gospel.

Until then, He did not leave us alone without hope until His Second Coming. After His Resurrection He appeared to His disciples with these words, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." *"²²And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'"* These beautiful and comforting words have been incorporated into the Divine Service with the Words of Confession and Absolution. We are doing the thing that Christ told us to do. These Words bring the Comfort and Peace Jesus meant them to be: Salvation.

Throughout the summer, as has been for the life of the people of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church,

Confession and Absolution will be held at the beginning of Divine Service each week. Come and receive that which Christ would want you to hear (and don't be late) — "I forgive you all of your sins, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor De Young



School Happenings!

We will hold our Second Annual 4th of July parade on Wednesday, July 3rd at 9:00 a.m. Come out and watch this great parade.

Our yard sale was a great success, we brought in \$448.00. Thank you to everyone who donated and to the volunteers that helped make this a successful sale.

We are still accepting enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year. Tell your neighbors, friends and family about our great program.

NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH?

If you need a ride to church the Board of Family Life and Ministries is willing to help.

Contact A. D. Cowser
972-979-3584

-or-

Sharon Wilson at the church
office 972-223-9340.

Please allow plenty of time to make arrangements for your ride.

If you are willing to pick up someone for church, please contact A. D. or Sharon.



JULY Birthdays

7-4	Polly Braig
7-5	Grace Miller
7-6	Glenn Goodrich II
7-7	Brittany Symank
7-11	Tom Caldwell
7-19	Alyce Staehs
7-21	Mia Adams
7-26	Weston Arrington
7-30	Phil Strand

We are sorry if we have inadvertently left your name off the birthday list. Please contact the church office by phone: 972-223-9340, or email at admin@crossofchrist.org so we can update our list.



Widowed Friends is taking the summer off! We will resume meeting in September. Watch for more information.

Remember: As you travel and stay in hotels, please pick up the travel size shampoos; soaps; tissues; conditioners; and mouth wash. Place them on the table in the main hallway and we will set them aside for Gift Bags we present to the Pregnancy Center. We also collect baby socks and booties; onesies; and receiving blankets for this worthwhile project.

Q. Do you knit or crochet?
Q. Do you like to make baby items?

If you answered Yes to these questions, we have an opportunity for you.

We are collecting items for the Prestonwood Pregnancy Center Southwest in Duncanville, formerly Southwest Pregnancy Center.

We are accepting items such as baby booties and baby hats.

We will include these in the “We Care” Gift Bags we assemble in November to donate to the Pregnancy Center.

Place finished items on the table in the main hallway.



Volunteers Needed!!!
We need a couple of people for the Saturday Secretaries. We need one person to fill the teams of volunteers.

Remember our Shut-ins
Nathalie Smith; Dolores Jirik; Joan Symank; Dr. Falke; Lucille Gropp; Sue Riewe; Grace Miller

The Altar Committee would greatly appreciate it if 2 or 3 more people would join them to assist with setting up communion for each Sunday. The more people we have, the less time everyone will need to serve.

Each month there is a team of 2 individuals (usually women but men are more than capable of doing this and we welcome them). The responsibilities include:
1. Picking up the altar flowers from Albertsons in Cedar Hill and putting them on the top of the flower stands behind the altar. A check is always made out ahead of time and signed, so you don't need to pay for them yourself.
2. Setting up communion prior to service.
3. Cleaning up the communion ware after the service is over.

Currently we have 4 ½ teams and could really use 6 teams; this way each team would only need to serve 2 months out of the year. It is a very rewarding experience and I pray that this will spark an interest to join us.

Please call me at 972-345-2298 or email be at ckloess@yahoo.com if you are interested.

Blessings, Chris Kloess
Chairperson of the Altar Committee

Board of Elders

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Carrie and I just returned from a trip to, of all places, Russia. We were on a river cruise from St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) to Moscow. It was a fantastic trip, and we learned a great deal about Russia and its history. I wanted to share with you Russia's history as related to Christianity.

Going back for several centuries, the primary religion of the county was Christian and specifically, the Russian Orthodox theology. In 1917, there was a revolution and ultimately a civil war as most of you know. This led to the formation of the Communist regime which stayed in place until 1991. Unfortunately, the official “religion” allowed by the Communist government was atheism. In general, people were not allowed to hold or attend church services. A Russian lady whose house we visited told us about her grandmother who had to hide a painting of a scene from Jesus' life here on earth and would take it out from time to time to worship. We should always be thankful that we can practice freedom of religion in this country and should not take that right for granted.

What was ironic is that most of the significant buildings in Russia were and still are churches, and the

Russian people take great pride in the beauty of those churches. The first picture is a famous one at Red Square. The Russian churches typically had numerous “icons” inside the church. Icons were essentially paintings of famous scenes from the Bible (such as the Transfiguration). People often prayed to the icons or in some instances “kissed” them. I had mixed feelings about this practice because it seemed that people treated the icons as good luck symbols, but still, the scenes were from the Bible and people were praying to them. So, at least they were worshiping in some fashion to Christ. The second picture is an example of some icons:

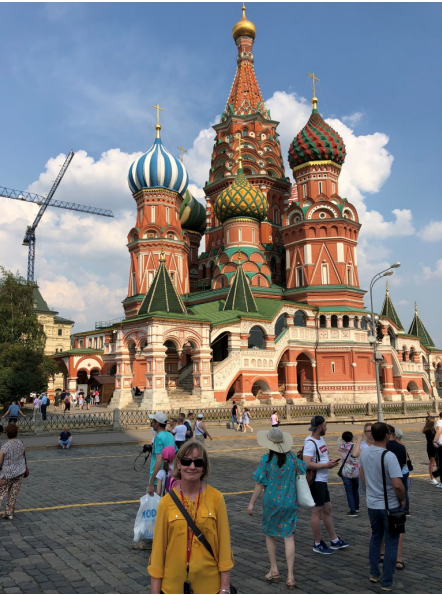
After 1991, there were no restrictions on religion so there was some resurgence in Christian worship in Russia. I am not sure how widespread it is but we can pray that it will grow. In many instances, churches no longer had worship services and instead had become museums. We could generally tell which churches were museums if they allow photographs to be taken. If photos were not allowed, then that meant the church was still active. Unfortunately, we could take pictures in most of the churches.

There is probably a lesson to be learned here. In our country, if attendance continues to decline, then many churches may become “museums” or converted to other

uses. This would be very sad and we all need to strive to spread the word and let our light shine. The message of the Bible is the only means to eternal salvation and the Word is alive today as it always has been. It is not just some interesting piece of history.

Peace be with you!

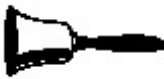
Tom Graves



The Serving the Lord List for July can be found as a separate attachment to the email with this newsletter as an attachment, as well as the July Calendar. Printed copies can be found on the church website as well as in the Narthex.

August 17th is the date set for the Clean the Handbells event.

Chris Kloess is heading this project and is looking for volunteers. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex. You can also contact the Church Office and we will add your name to the list.



Board of Properties

Thank you to Tom Caldwell, Dale and Caryn Huse and Steve Hedtke for their continued hard work on the flower beds around the building. We are looking better every day.

This last month we addressed some issues such as a couple of air conditioner issues and replaced one unit that cooled the morning room and art room and another unit that cooled and heated the kitchen.

Our goal is to revitalize the playground area to be age appropriate. Volunteers are needed to help complete the work. A sign up sheet will be placed in the Narthex soon. You can volunteer to work on the

playground or to fix some brown bag lunches for the workers and bring drinks. Date to be announced soon.

We have a goal to set up a garden area for the children after the playground equipment is in place. Watch for more news!

SUNDAY SERMONS

Did you know you can hear the replay of the Pastor De Young's Sunday Sermons? Simply click the 'Sunday Sermons' tab on the church website:
www.crossofchrist.org

Below we offer the sermon from Sunday, June 23, 2019. While this is not a regular feature this is something we can consider adding to the website. Please provide feedback if you would like the idea of printable versions of the sermons to be available.

Grace, Mercy and Peace be unto you from God, our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Pray with me: Father may the word of my mouth and the mediation of our heart be acceptable in Your sight, through Christ our Lord. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

When I was younger, we would play Hide and Seek. When I was the Seeker, I was always looking for one kid: Red Cozad. Red was the fastest kid in the neighborhood. I was the second fastest. After counting to 25 I would head out seeking. The other kids would jump out from behind cars or trash cans and yell, “Here I am! Here I

am!” But I was intent on getting Red. It didn’t matter what they said or did, I was intent on doing it my way and my way was to get “Red”.

In today’s Old Testament Reading, God is calling out with love’s urgency. Through his prophet Isaiah, God cries out: **I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My Name**” (v 1). Do you hear God’s passion? God wants to be asked, sought, found. Again, and again, He actively calls to those who did not ask or seek Him. “Here I Am, here I Am, God shouts out. (Luke 11:9-10; Revelation 3:20).

Who is this nation God so Graciously invites? Already 1,300 years before Isaiah, God had promised Abraham, **“Your people will be called by My Name.”** God chose as His Own Nation Abraham’s descendants, Israel. Yet in Abraham’s day and Isaiah’s day beyond Abraham’s tribe. Who is the nation that was not called by God’s Name? My own roots stretch back to Germanic centuries ago worshiped trees and thunder and my French connection was people rejected and hated by their nation because of their terrible reputation for un-Christian living. My blood people did not know God.

The people who had not sought God – could it be each of us?

America today believes in freedom, progress, and prosperity. These are good things. But can they be our god? When trouble comes, do we turn to family and friends, our charm, good looks, intelligence or our own good work. Can these give me all the help I need?

I was not asking for God, seeking God, when God first called to me. I was a helpless 10-day old baby under the evil influence and a child of satan when God so generously adopted me. There in baptism God did give to me and you His Name. God washed us clean from sin, and called us Christians. We Christians are His New Nation. Most of us come from peoples who had never been called by God’s Name.

In his letter to Rome’s Christians, Paul marvels at God’s Grace. Would God really call out to pagan Gentile nations? Would God Love those who had never known Him? For proof, Paul quotes this Promise from seven hundred years before Paul, the words God gave Isiah: **“Isaiah is so bold as to say, ‘I have been found by those who did not seek Me; I have shown Myself to those who did not ask for Me.’ But of Israel [God] says, ‘All day long I have held out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people’”** (Romans 10:20-21)

God’s Word through Isaiah tuns just that quickly, from the Gentile nations to ancient Israel, from Grace to Justice, from invitation to threat. Can you imagine Isaiah’s

heartbreak speaking God’s hard word? These were his own compatriots! Ever since Abraham, through Moses and David, those people had been God’s prized nation. Now God accused them of being “disobedient and contrary.”

Isaiah was desperate to invite his people back to God. Can you see him acting out God’s heartfelt cry? **“I spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices”** (v 2). There lies the single “root” problem with Isaiah’s people: their rebellious heart! God in Justice threatens these people because they rebel against Him. They walk not in God’s good way. They follow their own foolish devices. Apart from God, they will be lost. Should they die, damned without Him? This breaks God’s Heart!

Isaiah lists some specific “fruit,” evidence of their single ‘root’ problem. His people’s rebellious heart can be seen plainly in their provocative sins. Waving their wickedness in God’s face? Have they no shame? Worshiping nature, they practice the pagan fertility cults, “sacrificing in garden” rather than at God’s House. God’s Altar was to be constructed of raw, natural stone. But his people made offerings on bricks, crafted and carved like the idols’ altars (v 3). Would God’s Own people actually sit in tombs, seeking oracles from the dead? They spend the night in those secret places, as if their dreams

will bring news from beyond! Cackling over their cauldrons, mixing in tainted meat. Would they stir magic brews? Cast crooked spells (v 4)? Yet these people imagine themselves, as “holier than thou”! What a stench.

I love the smell of barbecue cooking on the grill, don’t you? When His people worshiped Him with sacrifice, God Himself delighted in that aroma (Psalm 141:2). But now they worshiped idols. All day, every day, their rebellious hearts wickedly acted out. They stank like a burning garbage dump, a gagging smoke nauseating God’s nostril (v 5).

Judgment may bot be immediate, but it is certain. God warns Isaiah’s people, in verse (6) “The wrongs you’ve done I have written down.” The books against you remind Me (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:10). Justice demands that I pay back your hatred against Me (v 6; Romans 6:23). Verse (7) declares, you follow your parents’ wicked ways, thinking they got away with it. But you’ll have hell to pay (Exodus 20:5-6). You try to buy the good life from gods you made up. You insult me. Get your lap ready. I will repay” (v 7).

We could say, “Isaiah’s people were so messed up! I’m glad we’re not like them.” Shouldn’t we rather wonder: “Does their rebellion lurk in my heart, also? Are my sins so different from theirs?” Many of Isaiah’s people still worshiped the true God. They only added others. The

things they loved they believed in. Do you smell something fishy rotting here?

Truth be told, today we are the people of God, Jew and Greek, poor and rich, male and female, we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). God has called us by His Name, Baptized us to be Christians! Do our lives show the world that “we are worthy of Christ’s Name”? Or do our lives betray our heart? Do we provoke God?

The story of Isaiah’s people is our story. God in justice threatens His people when we get comfortable in our cozy sin. For God is desperate to Call us back to Himself. We can live only in His Forgiveness. We thrive in His Grace!

Once upon a time, a wealthy landowner came to his beautiful vineyard. Quite the romantic, he had invested himself in this gorgeous property. He had built protective walls up and down the hillsides. He cleared and turned the soil. He planted the choicest vines. He patiently fertilized and watered every root. He painstakingly pruned each branch. Now he filled the fruitful field with workers. The harvesters’ joyful songs echoed across the vineyard. At last they were bringing home the luscious fruit.

Suddenly a terrible cry stabbed the owner’s heart. One harvester screamed, “This cluster has gone sour. All is spoiled!” But then a whole chorus sang back, “Do not destroy it. The master himself put

his blessing in those grapes. Let us salvage still the good fruit. Do not destroy it! Such a harvest remains, we will yet celebrate with delicious new wine!” Then the owner’s joy overflowed (v 8)!

God promises, “Yes My people have turned rotten and sour. Yet I will not destroy them all. My servants have worked that vineyard. The harvest is mine (V 8)! To my people I will give faithful children (Hebrew “zerah,” seed). They will see what I do on Jerusalem’s Mount Zion. They will see the sacrifice I give right there on Mount Calvary. All who remain faithful will possess all My Mercy.” God in Mercy has chosen us to be His people! He will Preserve us, that we remain faithful to Him. This is the Good News we own. God has made us His servants. In this Grace we dwell. Despite our sour grapes, in His underserved Forgiveness we thrive. In His Love alone we live (v 9). Arms outstretched; God lovingly calls us to Himself!

This text’s one picture remains burned in my mind. God keeps calling out, “I spread out by hands all the day to a rebellious people” (v 2). The early Christians here saw “the Power of the Cross.” Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 180) marvels at our God: “As a weak and inglorious man... He should stretch forth His hands the whole day long. ... By His passion and crucifixion, He endured all” (Adversus Haereses, IV.XXXIII.12).



In Jesus’ Arms Outstretched, God Lovingly Calls Us to Himself!

In preparation for the 2019 edition of the Church Directory we are requesting that you review the last directory and let Sharon Wilson know of any changes.—Thank you.

Are you in need of prayer?

Complete a prayer request card (found in the back of the pews in the sanctuary), and place in the offering plate.

Send an email to the church office: admin@crossofchrist.org

Call the church off @

972-223-9340

Q. Want to join the people praying for those in need of prayer? A. Provide the church office with your email and your desire to be on this list. Emails are sent out on Monday and Thursday mornings.

Sewing Seeds of Faith

There are items available from the Sewing Seeds of Faith.

Please take a look and remember all items are available for a free will offering. New items have been received.

Items currently available include:

Teddy bears—dressed

Cosmetic bags
Kleenex covers

Pillow cases
Table runners

Apron
Hand bags

Large pot holders
Adorable little girl dresses

Chair caddies



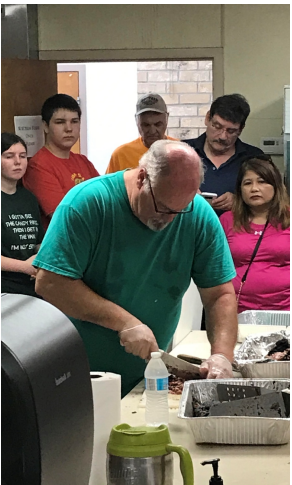
Remember to bring in your Box Tops for Education.

The box is now located on the Usher Stand in the Narthex.

Feed They Neighbor

We fed 150 neighbors and want to express great appreciation to everyone who contributed to the successful project.

- Michael Arrington



De Soto Reads

Library Volunteer reading to our children.



Mark Your Calendar

Country Day on the Hill

October 12, 2019

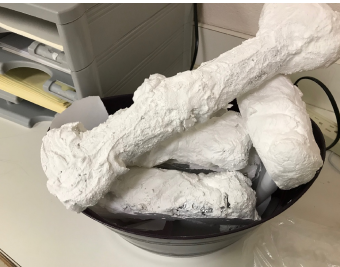
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

This is a great way to share the love of Christ with the community. In addition to letting them know about our Church and School.

Volunteers needed!



Dino Bones ready for the Dino dig at Cross of Christ Lutheran School. One of many of the fun events the children are enjoying this summer.



Watch it Grow!

