

CROSS WORDS

the newsletter of

CROSS OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

512 North Cockrell Hill Road

De Soto, Texas 75115

September 2019 Edition



Pastor's Page

From the Pastor's Desk...



Early Sunday mornings I go to church, grab a bulletin off the usher stand, head to my study, look over the Divine Service, update and type the final "Prayer of the Church" and then do any finishing touches on my sermon before I head out to the Narthex and greet people and get ready for Worship at 9:00 a.m.

This Sunday would be different. One day earlier, El Paso, Texas was the place of another mass shooting. Then early that morning there was another mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio. A week earlier than both of these was the mass shooting in Gilroy, CA. But this Sunday would be different. I was on vacation and was traveling 90 miles to attend St. Paul Lutheran Church, in Thorndale, TX. For an hour and a half the radio news was just depressing.

I was saddened. I was weary. I was angry. I was sickened. I didn't know what to say, confess or even try to grasp: "What does this mean?"

The only thing that came to mind was the Old Testament cry of the prophets, "How long, O LORD? How long?" (Psalm 85, 89, Isaiah 6:11, etc) The Scripture also

proclaims, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

The first mass shooting I had to deal with as a pastor was at Standard Gravure in Louisville, Kentucky on September 14, 1989 (*3 months into my first year as a pastor*). The gunman killed 8 people and injured 12 others. 2 years later there was the mass shooting at the Luby's in Killeen, TX. – twenty-four souls, twenty-seven injured. Then there was Columbine, Virginia Tech, Ft. Hood, Sandy Hook, Orlando nightclub, Las Vegas, and the list goes on.

One thing was true: Every life is sacred and precious in the sight of the LORD. My soul groans like an Old Testament Prophet: "How long, O LORD?"

We call these events "tragedies," and, indeed, they are tragedies. But in truth that only scratches the surface of the problem. The wound goes much deeper. These are tragedies of our community, our humanity, our soul. They are an outrage against our humanity, manifestations of great, dark evil, a glimpse into the hellish Abyss of godless nothingness.

I don't pretend to be a sociologist or a psychologist. I don't have the answers. I cannot argue from a sociological or psychological

argument as to the cause of such mass violence. I am a Theologian. Sociologist, Psychologist, media and society want to know or try to understand – at some level – why someone would pick up a gun and randomly kill people in a school, a mall, a concert, a restaurant a synagogue or church. Various factors are raised: *"gun laws and the easy access to powerful weapons, mental illness, isolation, the breakdown of family, the absence of fathers, the callous disregard for human life, the marginalizing of religion in American life, the hate-filled and divisive rhetoric of our public discourse, our bigotry, hatred, and prejudice, the anonymity of social media that inflames our insecurities and insanities."*

All of these are but the symptoms of a deeper problem – like little individual pieces of a puzzle that when connected bring a bigger and clearer picture – let there be no mistake, running to the sociologist or psychologist or media or society or politicians or our own intellectual maturation will fall short of understanding the root cause of these horrific events.

Let there be no mistake – there is a deeper darkness – one that brings despair and death, that threatens to draw our being into a black hole of

darkness and death. Some wander too close to the abyss and the dark forces of evil – the powers, the principalities, the spiritual forces of darkness. They are sucked into the depths of despair ending in homicide and many of them suicide. This isn't to shift the blame, but to say that blame is never the solution.

BUT HERE IS THE SURPRISE
. . . We all contend with this darkness within, this condition we call "sin." It's the origin of our hatred, our pride, our arrogance, our lust, our murders, adulteries, greed, racism, and anger. We all contend with it, and if we say we don't, we are kidding ourselves and the truth is not in us. And there is only one place to deal with this "darkness of sin."

There is One Who came as Light in the darkness, as Life in death – the carpenter, the rabbi, the Lamb, the Shepherd, the Savior. Jesus came to bring peace to our warring madness. He came to walk the dark valley of Death, to Shepherd our humanity through death to life, to seek and Save us in our lostness. He came to be our sin, and to absorb our sins. He came as humanity to absorb our inhumanity. In return, we beat Him, spit on Him, killed Him. Humanity, we all together, did that. And He took it all, every last blow of the hammer to the nail. He took into His Perfect Life, He forgave it and buried it all deep in His Grave in order to lift us up out of this present darkness and death to a new way, a New Life, a New Hope. He raised up our humanity from the depths of Death and He Glorified it in the heights of heaven where He Reigns over all things and fills all in all. And He

gives the antidote and medicine to our sickness of sin through the Forgiveness of sin – won for us at the Cross — delivered to us in Word, Water, Bread and Wine/Body and Blood. Where God locates His Forgiveness – in Word and Sacrament there is Forgiveness and Eternal Life.

Many will ask us, "Where is/was your God?" Where is/was He when the bullets fly and children cower in fear and people are gunned down where they thought they were safe. Where is/was He? Why doesn't He do something? He is there, right here, with us, in our midst, filling all in all with His reconciling, redeeming, raising-up-from-the-dead presence. He doesn't deflect bullets. He doesn't supply an invisible shield around the innocent. He doesn't strike the shooter dead. He covers it all with grace and reconciles all things in His death. Those bullets that pierced so many didn't stop with their victims. They found their final resting place in the wounds of Jesus and were buried in His hands and feet and side.

Wounds are deep, but the wounds of Christ are deeper. Deeper than the darkness of evil, sin, and this world and even death. Deeper than our warring madness. Deeper than our sin. "By His wounds, we are healed."

Dearly beloved, you may hear people say at times like this, "Cease with your praying! Your prayers don't amount to anything. We need action." Please don't ever stop praying. Pray without ceasing, now more than ever. Pray before you do anything and as you're doing something. The prayer of a righteous person is precious to God and heard by Him. It is your

priestly duty to pray.

Remember that our struggle is not against flesh and blood – our fellow humanity – but against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. Our battle is a spiritual one. Yes, there are politics and laws to consider. Yes, there is sociology and psychology to explain. But the deep battle is spiritual, and the only weapon you have, and need, is the Word of God wielded in prayer (Ephesians 6:10-18). Pray in words and in silence.

Your grieving but believing brother in Christ,

Pastor De Young



SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Cross of Christ Lutheran School held a couple of Community Service Projects to end the summer. Our Can Food Drive brought in 50 cans of food for those less fortunate than us. Our Bottled Water Collection for local first responders resulted in over 15 bottles of water and Gatorade. Thanks to everyone who helped us teach our children a couple areas they can help the community they live in.

School started on August 19 with 40 students in COC School and 17 in the De Soto pre-K program. We look forward to the new school year and ask your prayers for our program as we reach out to young people with the love of God and the education needed to be the best they can be.



Stay tuned to the Sunday Bulletin announcements and our Facebook page, for information for the next gathering.



A. D. Cowser
Photo from the August gathering.

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

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.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Nathalie Smith; Dolores Jirik; Joan Symank; Dr. Falke; Lucille Gropp; Sue Riewe; Grace Miller

BOARD OF FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 9-1 Carrie Graves
- 9-7 Kate Duncan
- 9-7 Patty McKethan
- 9-7 Pastor De Young
- 9-7 Tim Pedersen
- 9-7 Cyndi Springer
- 9-8 Alton Schulze
- 9-19 Carol Brown
- 9-25 Robert Flye
- 9-27 Carl Holmes
- 9-28 Verna Geihl
- 9-29 Tom Graves

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.

Thank you to the following people for taking time from their busy schedules to join us for the first Bell Cleaning Event: Pastor De Young; Mia Adams; Cynthia Huse; Carrie Graves; Tom Caldwell and Michelle Caldwell.

We got all the bells cleaned and enjoyed great fellowship in the process. - Chris Kloess

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.



COUNTRY DAY ON THE HILL

October 12, 2019
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

We will have a booth and are looking for volunteers to come out and help us share the word of God and the message about our Church and School at this event.

Please visit with Lila Fussell about volunteering opportunities.

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

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, formerly Southwest Pregnancy Center, in Duncanville.

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.

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! In our last service on July 28, the Gospel reading was Luke 11:1-13. In this passage, Jesus taught the disciples how to pray in the words of the prayer we know as the Lord's prayer. He also offered a parable that taught them (and us) the importance of persistent prayer. We should “ask, seek and knock” on the door of our Father with our prayers and we need to be persistent in our prayers.

I am reminding you of this, because we need to address an issue about our corporate prayer at the worship service. Currently, we offer prayers for approximately 40 different people in this prayer. Of course, most, if not, all of the names are provided by our members in prayer requests they have submitted. Over time, the list has substantially increased in number and I suspect that members have made the requests, but have not thought about notifying the church office, Pastor, or their elder

if there is no longer a need to include the prayer in our service. I also believe that members have also offered the prayer requests for persons who are suffering from long term illnesses or other conditions that need continuing prayer, and the lesson from Luke tells us that is appropriate. My gentle request is that if you have submitted a prayer request to be included in our corporate prayer, please let Sharon Wilson, our Church secretary or Pastor or your elder know if the prayer is no longer needed in our service. In that way, we can concentrate on prayer for those in need. But, if you believe continuing prayer is needed, then you should feel free to leave the name of the person on our prayer list.

Peace be with you!

Tom Graves

DID YOU KNOW?

The “Reporter”, the official newspaper of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod offers Movie reviews. A few of the movie reviews include: “Toy Story”; ‘Aladdin’; ‘Dumbo’; “Endgame”; “Glass’ and ‘Aquaman’.

Check it out on their website:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/category/movie-reviews/>