



# Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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[www.hopelutheranstl.org](http://www.hopelutheranstl.org)



## ✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

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*I must confess: this month's deadline for the newsletter, well, suddenly crept up on me from behind and surprised me...at the last minute. Mea culpa!*

*So here is a "blast from the past" that still gives timely and timeless insight. In his book, *Dying to Live: the Power of Forgiveness* (CPH, 1994), Pastor Harold Senkbeil helps us take an honest look at our world of death. Yes, death is our great enemy, even if we don't think about it! God, however, has brought life into our dying world in His Son Jesus Christ. He still gives us His divine life here and now. If you have not read Pastor Senkbeil's book, I highly recommend it. If you have read it, it is well worth another read. What Pastor Senkbeil wrote at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is still just as true twenty years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, the power and riches of Jesus' forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation is both timeless and always relevant. Here's a small sample from pages 24-28.*

### *True Life in This World of Death*

#### **The Big Lie**

... We manage to cope quite well with life; we've actually convinced ourselves we're happy. We're content to go on accumulating toys and demanding pleasure and calling it happiness. We've grown accustomed to plastic things and plastic relationships; we've even come to prefer them over the real thing. We don't mind living behind barricades and in our private cubicles. We're perfectly content to spend our lives walled off from other people. And we've learned to live with surface talk and empty communication. We've actually grown satisfied with loneliness—we call it drive and self-sufficiency.

But as the [20<sup>th</sup>] century turns, maybe it's time we take another look at the world we live in and evaluate it in the sober light of day. Maybe it's time to quit fooling ourselves into believing that we are "just fine" and that things are "just fine" and that everything will turn out "just fine."

#### **The Naked Truth**

Remember the old children's fable about the emperor's new clothes? An imposter had

convinced everyone that he could weave magic clothes out of golden thread. To be sure, some noticed this thread was invisible. "Ah," said the tailor, "that's because only very wise people can see this cloth." Suddenly everyone pretended to see it, including the king, who ordered a full set of clothes made of the tailor's fictitious fabric. When the tailor pronounced his project finished, the king donned the make-believe wardrobe—and paraded down the street in his birthday suit! He was unwilling to admit that he couldn't see the beautiful golden fabric. No one else was willing either. No one, that is, except for a small boy who had the audacity to say out loud what everyone already knew in their hearts: "The king isn't wearing anything at all!"

Who has the courage to take an honest look at this world of ours and call out the truth? Who has the heart to point out what we all know but are afraid to admit? Who will take a look at all this plastic and emptiness and loneliness and cheap imitation and describe what it really is? Who will call it?

God will call it. He calls it by one name. And it's a painfully simple name: death.

You and I can't go back to Eden. We live in a dying world. It's been in the process of dying ever since Adam and Eve elected themselves gods and thereby excluded themselves from the Tree of Life. We can deny it if we want. We can ignore it and try to escape it, but it won't work. For the truth is, you and I are dying too. Our laughter rings hollow in the playground we've tried to make of this world. And we've furnished this playground of ours with cheap imitation and ugly plastic.

The plain truth is, life isn't all we'd like it to be. Not only will we die one day; we are dying every day of our lives. We're dying to live, but we're dying just the same. Like it or not, that's the bottom line in the world we live in—everything else is pure sham. We're going to have to look somewhere else for real life.

### The Surprising Alternative

Christianity is the unbelievably good news that there is forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation to be had in the midst of this dying world of ours. And this is the real thing; not just the same old rat race traded in for another treadmill. This is God's gift of life in exchange for death; LIFE in Person, in fact. In the person of Jesus Christ, who came *that they may have life, and have it to the full* (John 10:10).

And He is the one who shapes our life for the 21st century....

### Life in Person

Death. There's no way around it. Despite our determined efforts to avoid it and cover it up, there's no escaping death. We can extend the human life span; we've even discovered some clues to the aging process, but ultimately every one of us comes face to face with death. All our

lives are lived graveside. Dying to live, we're dying just the same. That's the ugly reality.

But there is another reality just as real as death. More real, in fact: the reality of the life God brings into this dying world of ours.

People at the end of the 20th century aren't much interested in God. While there are some noticeable exceptions, our cultural mainstream isn't much in tune with the spiritual and abstract. "What you see is what you get" is our basic approach to reality. And as I pointed out in the first chapter, what you see in the world today is pretty ugly.

And so at first hearing, all talk about God seems to be just talk; it doesn't seem to stand up to the hard realities of life in a

dying world. No wonder, then, that a lot of people are turned off by Christianity. It sounds like religious double-talk. It looks like a crutch to escape reality. The very idea of eternal life in the midst of so much death seems out of place. It's whistling in the dark, a lot of people think; it was a nice idea, but that's just it—eternal life is simply an idea, nothing more.

But the life God brings into this world is not just an idea. God did not send an idea into the world, after all. He sent His Son. And Jesus Christ, God's Son, is life in person. *In him, St. John writes, was life, and that life was the light of men.... The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us* (John 1:4, 14). This is not empty talk about life, this is life itself. In Jesus Christ, eternal life has made a personal appearance in this dying world of ours.

✠ Pastor Randy Asbury

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# Notes from the Kantor

## Hymns to the Trinity

With May 30 being Trinity Sunday, the month of June begins the season of Trinity. Commonly referred to as Green Season, or the non-festival half of the church year, the focus of the season of Trinity is the not the life of Christ but the life of the church. Though it's not as festive during the summer months, there are still great hymns to be sung.

## Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

In my opinion there are three high points in hymn writing: The Reformation era, 19<sup>th</sup> century English hymns, and hymn writers from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is not to say there aren't excellent hymns that have been composed and penned at other times, but these are some high points in the canon of hymnody.

One of the hymns that kicks off the Trinity season is *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty* (LSB 507). The text, written by Reginald Heber (1783-1826) is certainly one of the strongest texts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century English contribution. Heber was a rector in a rural parish and was a well-respected writer. He set out to write a text that "would serve the liturgy, lectionary, preaching, and the calendar of the Church."<sup>1</sup> What he wrote became the well-loved hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy!* based on Revelation 4:8-11.

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never

cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!" (Rev. 4:8)



Heber was very aware of the holiness of God. He wanted his congregation to be aware as well. While we don't know his ultimate motivation, whether he was motivated by the people in his flock or encouraged by his missionary work in India, he wanted people to sing praise to the "Lord God Almighty". The hymn text is majestic and clear in its Trinitarian doctrine and has been used constantly for nearly two centuries, including translations (even *LSB* included it in Spanish) and inclusion in nearly every English hymnal since

its creation.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in  
earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity! (*LSB*  
507:4)

Blessed Trinity Season!

In Christ,  
Kantor Janssen

<sup>1</sup> *Lutheran Service Book, Companion to the Hymns*, vol. 1

# LCMS Stewardship Ministry

## Newsletter Article - June 2021

“There are three conversions necessary to every man: the head, the heart, and the purse.” Attributed to Luther, though yet to be located in his vast writings, this statement echoes what Jesus taught about hearts and treasures. He said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34)

But which conversion comes first? I submit that the order is this: first the head, then the purse, then the heart. Let’s explore this topic.

Our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt among us to save us. He took on our flesh, fulfilled the demands of the law in our place, became sin for us, and suffered torture and death on our behalf. He did this in order that we would be free from sin, death, and hell. He gives us what He accomplished through Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper. And so, He doesn’t just do it for us but gives it to us. He makes what He did ours by making us His. Thus, we are called by His name: Christians. We have a new life in Him.

Through the preaching of Law and Gospel, God grants us repentance, a changing of our minds. It is a conversion of the mind. We are called to turn away from our sins and turn toward Him for forgiveness, life, and salvation. For when God calls us away from something, He is, at the same time, calling us to something.

And thus, He calls us to a new life, with new deeds. This is the conversion of the purse. Jesus said that “it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” (Matthew 19:24) “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Notice that our hearts follow our treasures, not the other way around. As Christians, God calls us to invest our treasures in His Kingdom to ensure that the gospel is preached and the sacraments are

administered. He calls us to share all good things with the one who teaches us the doctrines of Christ. He calls us to be generous in giving to the church, for it is more blessed to give than to receive.

So where is your treasure? If it is not invested in the kingdom of God, then the only response is repentance - a conversion of the heart - and to begin doing just that. And as our Lord promised, where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

This is not to say that you earn your way into heaven. It is simply to say that as Christians, those who have been made to be temples of the Holy Spirit, who have been given a new life in Christ, who are dead to sin and now alive in Him, we are actually to live - think (conversion of the mind), do (conversion of the purse), and be (conversion of the heart) - a new life in Him. And when you fail, know that God in Christ loves and forgives you and still calls you away from that and to Himself.

BUT hallow the  
LORD  
CHRIST  
in your hearts.

*“All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ”* (Augsburg Confession, 24:3). We now enter the *non-festival half* of the church Year. During the first half of the Church year we hear of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we begin the **“Trinity Season,”** the time of year when we focus on the life of the Church and the Christian life. Here’s what’s coming up in the Divine Service for June and July as we continue to learn and live the Christian faith and life:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
June 6	<b>First Sunday after Trinity</b>	Luke 16:19-31	<b>THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS</b> - The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church by the Word of God. The life of the Christian is marked first and foremost by hearing the Word of God given through the apostles and prophets.
June 13	<b>Second Sunday after Trinity</b>	Luke 14:15-24	<b>THE GREAT INVITATION</b> - God invites us to the fullness of His heavenly gifts. Some make excuses to be absent; others see their need for Jesus’ healing and life. Every Divine Service (Communion Service) is a foretaste of Jesus’ eternal feast.
June 20	<b>Third Sunday after Trinity</b>	Luke 15:1-10 <i>or Luke 15:11-32</i>	<b>THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION</b> - Jesus comes to seek and save that which is lost—us! God and all angels rejoice when sinners repent. That’s what the Church is all about: bringing sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus’ forgiveness.
June 27	<b>Fourth Sunday after Trinity</b>	Luke 6:36-42	<b>THE CONGREGATION OF SINNERS</b> -Jesus has nothing but sinners in His Church. Because of His saving work, He changes us into people who learn to forgive each other just as He first forgave us.
July 4	<b>Fifth Sunday after Trinity</b>	Luke 5:1-11	<b>FOLLOWING JESUS</b> - Jesus reveals Himself as God in the miraculous catch of fish, and Peter recognizes his sinfulness. That’s life in Jesus’ Church. We confess our sin; Jesus graciously forgives. In this way we “catch people alive” as we bring them into the “boat” of the Church.
July 11	<b>Sixth Sunday after Trinity</b>	Matthew 5:20-26	<b>THE NEW RIGHTEOUSNESS</b> - In Baptism our Lord Jesus makes us holy, that is, set apart from the world and belonging to God. Everything right about Jesus is given to us as pure gift. Therefore, we holy people live life in His perfect “rightness.”
July 18	<b>Seventh Sunday after Trinity</b>	Mark 8:1-9	<b>THE SANCTIFICATION OF OUR BODIES</b> - When Jesus feeds the 4000, He shows us that the body is a good thing. After all, He created us to have bodies. When Jesus Christ saves and forgives us, He helps not just the soul, but also the body.
July 25	<b>Eighth Sunday after Trinity</b>	Matthew 7:15-23	<b>FALSE PROPHETS</b> - Jesus warns us against false teachers and their deceptive teachings. It is God’s Word of grace that builds us up and gives us an eternal inheritance. Only good trees—those recreated by Christ—can bear good fruits.

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# June 2021

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Elder:</b> 6 – Kevin Robson 13 – Scot Kinnaman 20 – Chad Rolland 27 – Scot Kinnaman	<b>Altar Guild:</b> 6 Spyers/Truebe 13 Asbury/Bergdolt 20 Brown/Patton 27 Keller/Janssen	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>6</b> <u>Trinity 1</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>13</b> <u>Trinity 2</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>14</b>  7:00 Board of Finance	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>20</b> <u>Trinity 3</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>27</b> <u>Trinity 4</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Elder:</b> 4 – Kevin Robson 11 – Scot Kinnaman 18 – Kevin Robson 25 – Scot Kinnaman	<b>Altar Guild:</b> 4 Spyers/Truebe 11 Asbury/Bergdolt 18 Brown/Patton 25 Keller/Janssen			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>4</b> <u>Trinity 5</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>5</b> Church office closed	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>11</b> <u>Trinity 6</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>12</b>  7:00 Church Council	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>18</b> <u>Trinity 7</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Pastor's day off</i>
<b>25</b> <u>Trinity 8</u> 9:00 Divine Service & LIVE STREAM 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	