



On Making Commitments

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Commitment phobia has become almost epidemic in our culture. It seems that we have a difficult time making decisions and following through with them, especially when they might cause pain. The average college student today changes majors at least five times before graduation. Sometimes students earn far more credit hours than they need for graduation but never actually graduate because their courses are scattered all over the academic map. This indecisiveness is no doubt fueled by the rich variety of options we have in the marketplace. Grocery stores stock multiple options for almost every product. When you go to the ice cream store you find 31 – or more - flavors to choose from. Almost every area of life presents a multitude of options and commitment means the closing out of options. Who wants to do that? Committing oneself to

one man or woman means “forsaking all others.” But what if you lose your taste for a vanilla woman and want to try strawberry or coconut later? What if the nutty chocolate man becomes annoying and you want a plain vanilla man later? Do we really have to stick with one person for the rest of our lives? Maybe the disciples were right – better not to get married at all! (Matt 19:10).

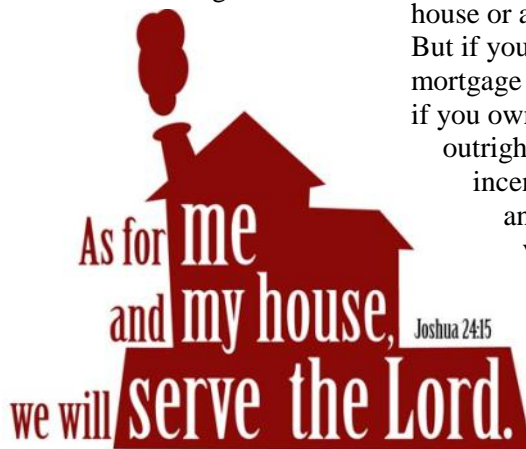
Commitments are old fashioned today. They hinder our desire or demand for novelty and change. They limit our freedom to choose. And worst of all, they make us vulnerable to loss and pain. But we should also consider that making a commitment has intrinsic advantages. First, it gives us incentive to care for whatever it is we have committed to. Renters do not have any incentive to take care of the property they are using, whether it be a house or a car or furniture. But if you are paying a mortgage or car payment, or if you own the property outright, you have

incentive to maintain it and preserve its value. So also with relationships.

Roommates come and go, but you will be highly

motivated to care for a longstanding friendship because you have something invested in it. Likewise, if you are bound to live with another person for better or for worse, you have great incentive to avoid doing and saying things that might make life miserable in your little nest. And you have incentive to do and say things that make the nest more comfortable and beneficial for all. The Bible says that a man who loves his wife, loves himself. Secondly, a commitment provides an environment for deepening the intimacy of a relationship. In our culture today sex IS intimacy, even when it is between two people who don’t even know one another’s names, much less care for one another. What many young people don’t realize is that entering into a sexual relationship before making and sealing a commitment to another person actually hinders true intimacy. If two people are willing to use one another for pleasure before trusting one another to make a binding commitment, the chances that trust will grown are severely reduced. People who have lived together before marriage have much higher divorce rates than those who haven’t. Mutual commitment creates an environment of stability which fosters trust

(Continued on page 2)



Inside this issue:

Meet Mike and Pat Keller	3
2012 Confirmands	4
Ascension	5
Adam Main Scholarship at UNT	6

That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

and respect. This environment is one in which true intimacy can grow as God intended. Third, a commitment protects people from harm. A contract protects the seller and the buyer from getting cheated. A work contract protects the worker and the employer by assuring that certain agreements will be honored on both sides. The marriage commitment protects both spouses and especially the children. Without the assurance that others in your life are going to be there even when times get tough, instability and anxiety destroy peace. No doubt there are other advantages for making commitments, but one has to see beyond the American idol of radical individualism and personal freedom to see that the self imposed limitations involved in commitment can be a true blessing.

God's love is revealed by His unconditional commitment to us in Christ. When God makes promises to us He binds Himself to us, no matter what comes. He is not a fair-weather friend. He promised to Adam and Eve and all their descendents that He would send a Savior into the world to crush the head of the serpent. Even when this promise was completely forgotten and despised by the whole world in the time of the Flood, God did not renege. He called out Noah and began again. Even when the promised was rejected by the world a second time when the people gathered to build a tower into heaven, God did not quit. He called out Abraham to be the father of a nation through which the promise would be fulfilled. Even when this nation, God's bride, rejected God and worshipped idols, God did not divorce her but reached out, repeating the promise until, in the fullness of times, He sent forth His Son, born of a woman to redeem us

from the curse of the law. And even when the Son of God came to His own people, and His own people utterly rejected and condemned Him, God's promise did not fail. Jesus became obedient to death, even death on a cross, and fulfilled the promise to crush Satan through His all sufficient atonement. Throughout some very dark times in New Testament history, God has been faithful. The Gospel has been preserved, and has come to us, and it will continue to be proclaimed in the world until the very last day. The gates of hell will never prevail against the church. God has also made a promise to you individually in your baptism. He has bound Himself to you through a legal adoption. You may wickedly walk away from your baptism, but He will never leave or forsake you, no matter what. He has promised in your baptism that no matter what you do or have done, you are always welcomed back home through repentance and faith. How many poor wretched sinners like the prodigal son, the thief on the cross and the Apostle Paul have put God to the test on this point and have found Him to be faithful. God has made a lifetime commitment to you, and neither death nor life nor all the powers of hell can separate you from His binding love in Christ.

Those who live under the assurance of this binding love of God in Christ have the power to transcend our fickle culture on the matter of making and keeping promises. We do not have to fear making God-pleasing commitments to others. Jesus, of course, does not want us to bind ourselves in foolish and sinful matters. A man named Jephtha did that in the days of the Judges. He made a rash vow and suffered greatly for it. Vows are very serious matters, and the Lord does not want

us to make any vow lightly, but some vows are necessary for the welfare of the neighbor and the glory of God. During the month of May I will have the joyful privilege of witnessing several of these vows through the confirmation of seven youth (May 6) and three weddings. The vows spoken at these occasions voluntarily bind one in an exclusive attachment for life. Is it fair, reasonable, or healthy to expect young people to make such binding commitments today?

CONFIRMATION: The rite of confirmation is neither a sacrament nor a divine institution. It is an ancient, noble church tradition which gives the opportunity for a young Christian to confirm that he willingly embraces the vows spoken for him at his baptism. In the Old Testament, the sacrament of circumcision was eventually embraced by young Jewish boys in their bar mitzvah (about 12 years old). Confirmation serves the same purpose for New Testament Christians. The Lutheran Confirmand confesses that the teachings he or she has learned from Luther's Small Catechism are true and in accordance with the Scriptures. The Catechism simply summarizes the six chief parts of Biblical teaching. We do not require anyone to bind his conscience to traditions of men, including Lutheran traditions, however helpful and worthy they may be. Our conscience is bound to Scripture alone. The confirmation vow is a promise to remain faithful to the truth one has just confessed, even unto death. This is not a promise to remain in a certain congregation or even a certain denomination, for who knows what direction a congregation or denomination may go in the future? It is possible that

(Continued on page 3)

Commitment, cont.

the denomination named “Lutheran” in the future confesses and practices something quite different from the old “six chief parts of Luther’s Catechism.” In such a case, the confirmation vow would require the confessor to abandon the “Lutheran” Church for one that retains and confesses the truth. Lutherans vow to remain faithful to CHRIST and His Word, which we believe is accurately summarized in the six chief parts. It is not unreasonable to expect a Christian to vow faithfulness to God’s Word under all circumstances. Jacob vowed, after his magnificent dream, that the Lord who appeared to him at Bethel would be his God forever and that he would return a tenth of his blessings to God. He set up a pillar as a visible testimony to God’s promises, and his vow to remain faithful (Gen 28:20-22). Our confirmands receive certain gifts and tokens to remind them of their vows to remain faithful

to the God who has saved them and adopted them in baptism. This conscience-binding vow rightly curbs the flesh and leads the Christians to resist all temptation to compromise his confession and behavior for the sake of expediency. He should not find it an easy thing to give up Baptism or the Lord’s Supper to avoid inconvenience or trouble in his life. Faithful Christian confessors through history refused to compromise the truth even in the face of severe persecution and the threat of death. They are still doing so today in other lands. Should we be willing to give it away for family peace? The vow is a serious benchmark and pillar in one’s life. It helps us recalibrate our life and our decisions from time to time, and keeps us in the path of faithfulness.

MARRIAGE: Though not a sacrament, marriage is indeed a Divine institution established and

defined by God through His Word. The institution was created to be a permanent union. Though vows were not made by Adam and Eve, the binding nature of the union requires complete commitment and faithfulness on the part of husband and wife and vows to that end are completely consistent with the purpose of the union. It has become common practice today for people to write their own wedding vows. This practice comes from the desire to personalize and sentimentalize the traditional sober wording to make it more “meaningful,” which usually means to make it more romantic. Can you imagine a President or other State officer wanting to write his/her own vows of office? We would say, “You fool! This office does not belong to you. It belongs to the community which has entrusted you with obligations you cannot negotiate or change.” This may

(Continued on page 4)

Mike and Pat Keller

by Stephanie Gutierrez



Mike and Pat Keller are new members of Messiah. Mike and Pat have been corporate gypsies for many years as their careers have taken them through twelve moves

during their marriage! Their last move was to Keller to be closer to their daughter, Kim.

Mike began a career with GTE in 1965 and retired in 1993. During his career at GTE he held several management positions, which related to GTE's outside plant operations. With the advent of computers he began to be very involved in designing and maintaining large databases. Pat's career began as service representative for GTE. She retired as a Sales Director for Verizon in 2003. Pat holds a BA in Business Management.

Mike enjoys helping friends with technical assistance for their computers and serving in various positions within the church. Pat devotes her time to interests such as scrapbooking, genealogy, and a weekly Mah Jongg session.

Pat and Mike have seven children and fourteen grandchildren who are scattered all over the country in California, Arizona, Indiana, Texas, Michigan, and Florida. They are grateful for their smartphones and computers which help them stay in touch with their children and grandchildren.

offend many, but I think it is relevant to observe that the more frilly, romantic, and trivial weddings and wedding vows become, the less stable marriages are. I am not suggesting that one causes the other, but that the serious binding nature of marriage is being replaced by a rather shallow and unrealistic notion of romantic bliss. Some of the custom-made vows emphasize good feelings and great expectations that are less than helpful and meaningful when the road together passes through dark valleys or steep mountains. If feelings were stable and certain and spouses were not sinful there would be no need for a vow. Who wants to leave paradise? But what happens when feelings turn resentful or angry, and you start thinking that the house is too small for you and your partner? What happens when careless words or actions have wounded you deeply, and if given an option you would gladly opt out of your commitment? What happens when your spouse gets Alzheimer's or is bedridden for months, and you have to shoulder the whole load of the family and take care of him/her too? What

happens when your obligations and responsibilities as parents soak up your money, your time, your patience and the good party times you used to enjoy as a single? That's what the vow is for and there's a good reason why it isn't fluffy and light and funny and sprinkled with glitter. It's bracing and bold and sobering for all who hear it – as it should be. It talks about life as it is, not necessarily as we would like it to be – “better or worse,” “richer or poorer,” “in sickness and in health,” “till death (and all its precursors) parts us.” And in THIS context, the vow concludes with each partner vowing to the other, “I pledge you my faithfulness.”

May is a good month for all of us to reflect upon our own vows once spoken - at Confirmation, in our wedding, at our ordination, in our installation for a church office, or in another context. The Bible warns us about the seriousness of making and breaking vows (Num 30:2). If you have failed to remain faithful to your God, to your spouse, or to another voluntarily entered commitment, this

is not a sin you want to ignore as if it were trivial. Jesus talks about accountability for every “idle word” spoken (Matt 12:36) - how much more for sacred vows? But God's mercy is greater than our sin, and His faithfulness than our fickleness. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9) We don't have the power and strength to keep our vows in difficult times, but when we live within God's faithful love for us, we have the strength to rise above our weak flesh and to be faithful to Him, to our spouses, to our children, and to our fellow Christians. We love because God first loved us. We commit our lives to God and to one another, because has bound Himself to us. May God bless the young people who have the courage to make sacred, God-pleasing vows in the coming weeks, and may God bless all of us who strive in His grace to fulfill the vows we have made in His Name.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

2012 Confirmands



Jared Aaron Brewer

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

Abra Drew Carr

“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” Lamentations 3:24

Kelsey L. Gardner

All of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 1 Peter 3:8

Alexa Renee Kennedy

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings

you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. Psalm 91:4

Holden Michael Kirk

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water. Jeremiah 17:7-8a

Berndt Wyatt Parker

The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. Exodus 15:2

Ashlie Blake Wachsmann

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. Proverbs 31:25



Ascension – The Coronation Celebration

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. Luke 24: 50– 5

The church's annual cycle of festivals continues this month and, for me, the best keeps coming. First the excitement of Advent and the anticipated coming of our Savior, then Christmas and the joy of Christ's birth which rolls into an Epiphany of God incarnate, Lent and the Passion of our Lord reminds us of the gift we received and Easter's triumph over death. Each year we grow deeper in the knowledge of God's incredible Grace and Mercy bestowed upon us.

On Thursday, May 17, we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord, forty days after Easter. It was a day celebrated by the disciples as well. What a difference that time together with Christ meant after the resurrection. Before His death the disciples were sad when he spoke of his departure (John 16:6). After the Ascension they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God". Their eyes had been opened because they now understood and believed what Jesus had told them. "It is to your advantage that I go away" (John 16:7). They now saw Christ's ascension as the final and crowning act of His redemptive work: His re-enthronement at the right hand of the Father's majesty.

He came into the world to redeem us and that beautiful gift was complete. The masterpiece that was begun on Christmas Day was finalized on Ascension Day. Christ is now our advocate. His work is done and he returns to His Father and sits at God's right hand and represents us.

"The appropriateness of the Incarnate Lord's exercising the

office of judge, in which the Father and the Holy Spirit are most intimately united with Him, is discerned when we bear in mind that the criterion determining the destiny of each man is his acceptance or rejection of the person and work of Jesus Christ." -- Dr. John R. Stephenson, Eschatology, p. 108.

Believe in Jesus and you will be saved by his sacrifice. But now, since the ascension, Christ's place on earth has been taken by His body, the Church which is the real presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit. After his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem Jesus told the crowds "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." (John 12:32). We are one body in Christ.

The Ascension was just the beginning for us, as the Church, to carry out the Great Commission. "Go into the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15) was Christ's direction before ascending. The task has been passed through the generations and successfully carried out because the ascended and victorious Christ worked through them. We know the hope of inheritance for eternal life and we are assured. We are assured through baptism, through hearing His Word, through Christ in His body and blood. Jesus has done his part, "it is finished". Our mission is to share Jesus with everyone and return home to God in Christ to dwell.

Fifty days after Easter is Pentecost and the Holy Spirit reigns fire to teach the Good News. I pray that the Holy Spirit moves all of us to continue proclaiming the Gospel

and what Jesus did for us, what He did for all sinners. Follow the crucifix out of the sanctuary, enter your mission field, share Jesus and witness Christ crucified always knowing He speaks on your behalf and awaits your arrival in our eternal home.

Please Pray The Ascension Prayer:

Lord Jesus, who on the day of Your ascension withdrew Your visible body from the eyes of Your disciples, yet promised to be with them always unto the end of the world, make Your presence felt among us as we gather in Your name and around Your holy Word and Sacraments. Let these means of grace be not only Your enduring and comforting presence but also a strengthening of my faith throughout my life and to the very end of days. Remove from my heart and life the uncertainties and the doubt, the questioning and the fears brought on by the woes and chaos of the world. Strengthen my faith, that I may confidently trust Your Power to save and to rule. Enable me to trust that You direct all things for good to Your Church, into which You have called me – a sheep under Your care. Above all, fill my heart with longing for that heavenly home to which You have gone to prepare a place for me, and give me a strong desire and watchful readiness for the day when I shall see You coming again to take me and all the Church into Your mansions above. In Your name I ask it. Amen (88)

Pax Christi - Paul Kohlmeier
Hebrews 12:2

Adam Main Scholarship at UNT



Dear Members of Messiah,

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord!!!

May the joy of this Easter season continue to fill your hearts

and strengthen your faith. What a wonderful God we have!!!

It has been six months since we lost our son Adam, yet God continues to provide blessing after blessing, and Adam's memory and legacy continue to shine. The University of North Texas (UNT) has been most caring, compassionate, and supportive on several fronts during

these past six months. Most recently, they have worked closely with Vicki and I to make our dream of a scholarship fund in Adam's memory a reality. On Friday, April 20th, I was honored to present the first annual **Adam Main Courage and Perseverance Award** during ceremonies on the UNT campus. At our request, this scholarship is being awarded to senior Social Work students entering their internship semester, who have displayed courage, perseverance while have exhibiting a servants heart throughout their course of study at UNT. It was indeed a very humbling experience to be present this ceremony and be asked to present the first scholarship award in my sons name.

Yes, God has richly blessed us these past six months and has surrounded us with many faithful prayer warriors here at Messiah, a broad and faithful support network, and a path to follow which has allowed Adam's memory to live on, not only in our lives, but also in the lives of many students who have chosen a career of public service through their Social Work studies at UNT. Thank you to all of you for your continued support and caring. If you would like to learn more about Adam's scholarship fund, feel free to contact Vicki or myself.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Ray Main



COMING
JUNE 18 - 22

Online Registration begins soon.

To volunteer: contact Barbara Brewer or Merissa Nuse.



Youth News - Summer Retreat

To all youth attending the annual retreat and their parents: We will have a pre-trip meeting on Sunday, May 20, immediately following the worship service. This meeting will be held in the school lunchroom

At that time, the balance of the trip fee (\$30.00) is due.

We want everyone to come on this retreat! If you are not able to because of financial constraints, please speak to Pastor Huebel. Full and partial scholarships are available.

For more information, contact Marcia Huebel.

MLCA

HISTORY

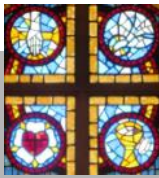
FAIRE



FRIDAY, MAY 11TH

6:30 P.M.

BEGINNING ON THE BACK LAWN



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K—8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Natalie Anderson, Principal, Classical Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

MLCA SPRING CONCERT

Featuring the Sixth and Seventh Grade Students of
Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy
1308 Whitley Road, Keller, TX 76248

May 9, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

A ministry of Messiah Lutheran Church (LC-MS)
817-431-5486 www.mlcatexas.org

Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy - Early Childhood Center

SUMMER CAMP 2012

- Ages 3 years—2nd grade (completed)
All children must be potty trained.
- Six Sessions run Monday—Thursday, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
- Cost per session: \$110.00
- One-time, \$45.00 non-refundable registration fee, good for all six weeks.

See the Poster in the ECC Hallway for Dates and Themes

call: 817-431-6139