

THE VIEW

Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church and Preschool
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A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

What and Where Is the Church?

I don't know if it is just a byproduct of our American consumer culture, but there sure seems to be an overabundance of Church shopping. The reasons for why someone joins or leaves a congregation is baffling to me. You can find any flavor of church you want. Do you prefer traditional or contemporary? Screens or hymnals? Male only clergy or something more diverse? Reverent or casual? But even these are not the main reasons why someone chooses one church or another. Instead, it boils down to what programs are available for kids and youth even though their kids will never actually participate anyway. How's the parking? Is the seating comfortable? Will they let me believe as I want to believe or are they religious and preachy? Knowing that people are engaged in this thought process, many churches have become commercialized as they market themselves according to cultural opinions rather than Biblical principles, some to the point that many may question whether or not they are even "church" anymore.

The question of what constitutes the church was of great importance to the Lutheran reformers. Their adversaries made the claim that opponents to the traditions, rites, and hierarchy of the Roman Church, to whom all expected to bend the knee even above Scripture, could not be considered a valid "church." Turning to Scripture, especially as demonstrated in the book of Acts, the Lutherans, who also highly valued the traditions and structure that had been handed down through the church, saw that the Church is not defined by the practices instituted by men; it is defined by faithful preaching of Christ crucified and the administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, which bestow the forgiveness of sins and unity with Christ to the believer.

This body of believers are united as one as the body of Christ. Differences in form and function exist between the members of the body, and yet they are still all the same body. It is Christ who gives them this unity, for as they are joined to him, they also become joined to one another through him. Speaking to this unity of the Church, the Lutherans wrote in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession:

Also [Lutheran Churches] teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5-6.

As the Lutherans look to Scripture and the foundation of the Church that Christ and his Apostles established, it became readily clear that it is not the buildings, rites, and officials that reveal the presence of the Church. The Church exists where Christ is present—not in a nominal sense because there are many false versions of the Christ than man has constructed for himself—Christ is present where that which he has said are extension of himself are present: His Word and Sacraments.

When we hear the Word rightly preached, letting Scripture speak for itself and submitting to its authority, it is Christ's own voice that we are hearing. Jesus is the Word of God manifested in the flesh, and where two or three are gathered in his name (meaning that they truly believe his gospel and trust in him for salvation) Christ has promised to be there in the midst of them. Where Christ is; there also is his Church. And if his Word is truly taught, received, and believed, then it should also be expected that the other means by which he, himself, as established to deliver his grace (Baptism and Communion) would also be administered there, according to Christ's institution and for the comfort of forgiveness and new life in Christ.

The efficacy of Christ's Word and sacramental gifts hold their authority because they belong to Christ, and he gives them to us that we may have life and forgiveness in his name. Even if hypocrites surround these things, or worse, if the one entrusted to handle the things of God is a wicked man, this does not invalidate that which belongs to Jesus. Does a scandalously sinful life disqualify someone from holding the preaching office? Yes! But that man's sin does not make void the Word that was preached, the baptisms that washed, or the body and blood that forgave if they were rightly done in accord with the command and institution of Christ, since those things belong to Jesus and his Bride, not to the man who holds the office as a steward.

No congregation or pastor is perfect. The Church is full of sinners. The fact that they are sinners is why they are in the Church. For it is only through the Church, where Christ's Word is preached to create and sustain faith, where baptism gives unity with Christ and his Body, and where Jesus visits his people to forgive and strengthen them with the fruits of His cross, that those who know and repent of their sinful wretchedness receive God's gracious mercy and absolution for the sake of His Son. If these things are present, then so is the Church of Jesus Christ, even if hypocrites in her midst abound. If these things are not present, then neither is the Church, even though friendly and well-intentioned people fill the halls.

What should someone look for in a church? Things such as programs, activities, and conveniences are fine things to consider when comparing apples to apples, but they are superficial and meaningless unless the congregation of the saints in a particular place is faithful in Word and Sacrament. Some churches may have pastors with rockstar charisma, but what good is that if he is not preaching the unadulterated word of Christ? There may be opportunities galore to do exciting things, but if baptism is withheld from some and the Lord's Supper is treated as merely symbolic bread and wine instead of Christ's very body and

blood that has actual and real authority to forgive sins, then all those activities are nothing more than a social club. This is not an excuse to validate lazy or disengaged pastors, but a call to reassess how we judge a good church from a poor one. A godly man who rightly handles the Word of God and the sacramental mysteries entrusted to his care does more good than the most dynamic vision casting leader. Likewise, a congregation that diligently adheres to God's word as they daily serve God and their neighbor with humble persistence is greater than any flavor-of-the-week attention grabber.

Hopping from congregation to congregation is of no benefit to anyone; rather it disrupts the unity of Christ's body. But if you must change congregations, how can you spot a good church? A good one is where God's people hear the Gospel rightly taught and where the Sacraments are rightly administered. Everything else is window-dressing. If the church you attend is weak in the foundations, fight to make it stronger. If the church you attend is doing something other than what Christ has established, flee! But before you do so, first make sure by careful study of God's Word that you are not the one in error, and then earnestly seek, with all respectfulness and love, to return the erring to faithfulness. If nothing else, you may rescue some from deception.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Mt. Pisgah,

Because we didn't have any new business to cover, the July church council meeting was cancelled and there was no president's article in the August View. We are now back on track and have information to share with all of you.

At our August 14 church council meeting we:

- Reviewed the **financial reports** from the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- Approved investment of \$25,000 in a **LCEF low-interest account**, with the stipulation that it not be done until current investments have matured and that early withdrawal will not result in loss of principal. The LCEF account is designed to offer low-interest loans to pastors and other church workers who are trying to buy a house in this high mortgage interest environment.
- Received **reports** of the boards and committees.
- Learned that the **remodeling in the preschool** has been completed. The current need at the school is for **teachers**. There are 52 children enrolled and 62 on the waiting list! We could take some of these if we could secure teachers.
- Heard that the **VBS**, which ran July 10–14, had daily attendance between 20 and 24. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped these children learn about God's love and the gift of life.
- Had a report from Pastor about the **LCMS convention** held in Milwaukee. Pastor Jon was our circuit pastoral delegate.
- Learned that the Mission Committee had approved the **proposed budget for the Lutheran School in Laotchikit** and would support **three additional schools** with \$500 per month for the school year, with the stipulation that they send their payroll reports quarterly. Our

new seminary student is Jacob Moede. He and his wife are expecting a baby girl and we will be sending them hand-made gifts, as well as a check to cover some of their needs.

- Received reports on the **Missions of the Month**: The Hope Center (June) received \$190 and The Veterans Healing Farm (July) received \$784. The August MOM was Safelight's Child Advocacy Center. We gave Patchwork Foster Center five highchairs for foster families and they will be September's MOM, including an ingathering of socks, underwear, and diapers.
- Heard that approximately 65 people attended the **Friendship Sunday** potluck and 11 poke bags for 16 members were distributed.
- Saw that the **refurbished table** is back in the narthex, thanks to Bob Morin with help from Paul Mincer. **Security cameras** have arrived and are awaiting installation. There is a new **ice machine**, as the old one could no longer be repaired.
- Learned that the repaving has been completed and that **handicap parking area** can now be used. The **outdoor electronic sign** sustained storm damage and needs to have parts replaced.

If you ever have questions about anything we covered at the council meeting or any suggestions, please contact me (828-693-5692 or bgv@ioa.com). Our next meeting will be Monday, September 18, at 7:00 in the church library.

Barbara Volk

Church mailboxes

The mailboxes in the narthex are a convenient way to distribute church information and to save on postage when we want to give fellow members greeting cards or share other information. However, we would ask that you not put political, health, or other secular information in these boxes unless you know the recipients wish to receive it. Thank you for being sensitive to the feelings of your fellow parishioners.

YOU ARE A FIRSTHAND WITNESS OF GOD'S GRACE



**EVERY
ONE
HIS WITNESS**
LUTHERAN EVANGELISM™

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Beginning on **September 10th**, Mt. Pisgah will be starting a new program to help and equip us to be a witness for Christ to the non-churched people in our lives. We all have loved ones that we know are hurting and lost. We want to help them, but we are not sure what to say or do; we don't even know how to begin. I strongly encourage everyone to attend. **It will be during the regular Bible Study hour on Sunday, which has an opening at 9:15 AM and class from 9:30 – 10:30 AM.**

This program has been produced by the LCMS and field tested for a several years. It is effective. Let us work together and strengthen each other as we learn how to be a Witness for Christ.

Witness is the purpose of your everyday life. The Every One His Witness® Lutheran evangelism program considers your place as a witness of Christ within your daily context. It connects sound doctrine with practical ways to share the faith with those whom God has placed alongside you in your everyday life.



It starts with the core module. Every One His Witness® uses the 'LASSIE' approach to witnessing, which is a relational, contextual approach that teaches you to share the Good News of Jesus Christ as you Listen, Ask, Seek, Share, Invite and Encourage people in your life who are not yet part of the church.

Learn to witness in specific contexts.

After the core module workshop, register online at everyonehiswitness.org to gain access to the video-based context modules. These modules pick up where the core module left off, teaching you how to witness in

specific contexts. If the congregation wants to work on this together, we certainly can pick out some that apply to our personal situations and extend out the program to include the specific applications.

These extra modules include:

- ✝ Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses
- ✝ Witnessing to the 'Nones' (those who have no religious affiliation)
- ✝ Witnessing to People Influenced by Critical Theory
- ✝ Witnessing to People after Abortion Witnessing to Grieving People
- ✝ Witnessing to People with Depression or Anxiety
- ✝ Witnessing to LGBTQ People
- ✝ Witnessing to New Veterans (many struggle with guilt and PTSD)
- ✝ Responding to Scientism (those who treat science as a religion that replaces God)

- ✝ Witnessing to Muslims
- ✝ Witnessing to Dechurched Adult Children (those who have left the church)
- ✝ Witnessing to Jewish People
- ✝ Witnessing to Mormons

New modules continue to be added to the list by LCMS pastors and staff.

Please join us as each week we will learn how to be better Christian Witnesses to our friends, neighbors, and families. Any sessions can be made up through individual study.

Beginning:

September 10, 2023

9:15 AM in the Fellowship Hall

Outreach & Community Concerns



Our Mission of the Month for September is the Patchwork Foster Closet in East Flat Rock. This ministry serves foster parents in Henderson County by providing free clothing, cribs, beds, toiletries, diapers, and wipes for their foster children. This is especially helpful when foster parents welcome a new child in their home. Foster children often come into care with no belongings, and/or clothing that doesn't fit them properly. Foster parents can reach out to the closet and receive whatever their new foster child needs. Currently, the foster closet can use donations of **new socks and underwear** for kids of all ages. (Don't forget the big kids!) They can also use **diapers, pull-ups, and wipes**.

If you wish, you can donate these items at the display in the narthex anytime during the month of September. If you don't want to go shopping, you can write a check and drop it in the offering plate and the volunteers at Patchwork will do the shopping for you.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Prayer List

Long Term Illness

Cynthia M. (Lundquist)
Michael Terzian (Keeney)
Brian Keeney
Joyce (Kruse)
Stacy Olson (Ryel)

Brenda Ridgeway (Amato)
Gretchen Sweetser
(Mincer)
Mary Coffman (Coffman)

Mike & Suzie Characky
(Steen)
Annette & Jim Bodden
(Heaphy)

Surgeries and Illness

Marjorie Zell
David Moore (Gonzalez)
Michele Escude`
Dewayne Grooms
(Gonzalez)
Kurt Dellutri
Jackie Fry

Madeline Biddle
Patty Metcalf (Luecke)
Jan Tharp
Wally Rose Mincer
Joe Gabriel (Amato)
Agapia Dragan (Luecke B)
Joanne Blanchard (Clancy)

David Hawthorne
Vicki Fisher
Mary Hill
Betty Ude

Personal and Family Concerns

Roger & Kay Lund
(Heaphy)
John Renick
Nancy Stang
Joann Kapugi

Kaufman Family
Debbie Leger
Sandi Rivers (Ryel)
Wayne & Karen Mathis
(Steen)

Teresa Fisher & children
Colby & Audrey
(Kaufman)

Homebound

Warna Berryman
Albert & Marianne Bugner
Kathleen Fox
Joann Kapugi

Suzie Karnatz
Dianne Luecke
Jan Nelson
Sue Smith

Nancy Stang
Betty Ude

Compassion and Sympathy

Ministry Concerns

Our Preschool staff, children & families
Evangelical Lutheran Church & School in Laotchikit, Haiti
Pastor Dale Kaster (Missionary, Czech Republic)
Pastor Daniel Jastram (Missionary, Japan)
Pastor Daniel Conrad (Missionary, Dominion Republic)
Erik and Katie Saunders (Seminararian)
Josiah and Hannah Schultz (Seminararian)
Jacob and Caroline Moede (Seminararian)

Birthday Blessings

09/04 David White

09/07 Anna Hawthorne

09/09 Michele Escude`

09/13 Elaine Fabricius

09/15 Dean Glossop

09/19 Linda Licht

09/20 Marianne Bugner

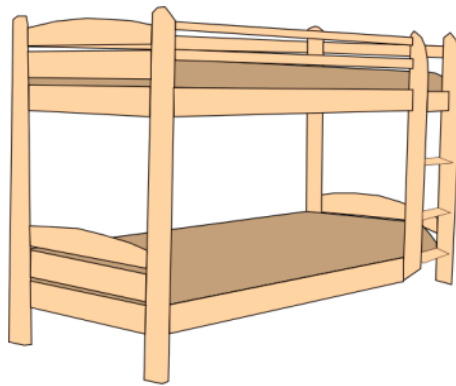
09/20 Garrett Hawthorne

09/22 Vicki Fisher

09/30 Sylvia Gonzalez

Mid-Summer News

Camp Linn Haven



Rejoice and Give
Thanks to God!

**The Mattress
Campaign is
Completed!**

*All funds raised – all
new mattresses in
Cabins 1-18!!!*

Everyone at camp this summer has RESTED WELL
thanks to the generosity of our beloved congregations
who joined together in supporting God's Mission at Camp Linn Haven!

Camp Linn Haven

Serving LCMS congregations, families, youth and children

*A place for spiritual retreat, faith formation, recreation and fellowship,
and service to others, in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord!*

Mt. Pisgah contributed \$2,000.00

Haiti Scholarship for 2023-2024 School Year:

In Haiti most children do not go to school after 6th grade. Please give a student in middle or high school an opportunity to earn an education. Tuition, books and uniforms for one school year is only \$120 per student.

Report cards for the sponsors of middle and high-school students are coming in September.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of your student(s)! There are many students who do not have a sponsor yet too!



Haiti

Christian education is the only way to save the people of Haiti. All these schools are in the mountains of the Central Plateau and are not near the violence of the cities. All of these schools have school leaders attending Lutheran seminary in Laotchikit, Haiti and each leader has references to their good character. They attend adult seminary classes held every Saturday.

We can testify to the way Christian education changes the lives of the whole family from the way the village of Laotchikit has flourished. This school year we had zero girls become pregnant as teens. In Haiti, that is a wonderful accomplishment.

To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20

Thank you for listening, caring and praying for these desperate people who just want to live in a safe community.

Wendy White

Lutheran Seminary in Laotchikit Attracts International Students

A few years ago, a dedicated gift was given to the Haiti Mission fund to support a Lutheran Seminary at the Lutheran Church in Laotchikit, Haiti. As COVID hit, and gangsters began controlling many of the highways coming in and out of Port-au-Prince, Pastor Walta took the seminary to virtual classes.

This effort was accomplished through another dedicated gift to help support technology at the church and school in Laotchikit. As you may know, there is no electricity in Laotchikit. To accomplish this goal, Pastor Walta purchased big screen monitors, a computer and a

generator. His intent was to allow students in the south-west part of Haiti to attend theology classes and to attract professors who were located away from Laotchikit. With the computer system and internet through cell phones, professors are able to teach the seminary classes. Pastor Walta solicits pastors as professors in the United States, Haiti, and Canada to teach the theology classes each Saturday morning for the adult students.

One of the pastors who teaches is Pastor Sommers in Canada. This is the same pastor who helped us find Luther's Small Catechisms in French about 10 years ago. During the time the catechisms were in transit, we prayed for the safe passage of the ten mail bags from Paris that contained the precious books until they arrived in Port-au-Prince weeks later.

Today, what started out as theological training for a dozen teachers and lay leaders of the preaching stations, has become an international Lutheran seminary. Using the internet connection, Pastor Sommers and Pastor Walta connected seminary students who understand French and English from around the world into these seminary classes. The adult-students attend class each Saturday in person in Laotchikit and online from around the world. Currently, there are 92 students attending seminary classes from Laotchikit, Haiti, Rwanda, Burundi, Canada, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Brooklyn, New York and France. Wow!

To God be the Glory. He takes our meager efforts and magnifies them with His supernatural power and we on the Mission Committee get to watch the miracles unfold!



If you would like to support the Lutheran Seminary in Laotchikit, Haiti, please mark your gift as 'Lutheran Seminary - Haiti Mission.'

Ladies Guild

Ladies of Mt. Pisgah,

Plan on joining us on Monday, September 11 at 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall for the Ladies Guild's first meeting after the summer break. Food, fellowship, and faith-building activities are on tap for this year's agenda. Any questions? Contact Kathy Kirchoefer at 301-535-0129.

LWML Retreat News



“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice!” *Philippians 4:4* (I must confess that I sing this verse in my head every time I am saying it), was the theme verse for the “Finding God’s Joy Everywhere!” retreat held at Camp Linn Haven August 18-20, 2023. It was a weekend filled with Bible study and hymns, and we sang a lot of hymns. A lot. Hearing 100-plus women joyfully lifting their voices in song was oh so pleasing to my ears and put a smile in my heart.

The Bible study, led by Pastor Christopher Stout from Kannapolis, was based on *A Little Book on Joy: The Secret of Living a Good News Life in a Bad News World* by Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, LCMS President. Each session included the above-mentioned hymn singing.

As to be expected, mites played a role during the retreat in the form of Mite Bingo, an on-site fundraiser held in the Dining Hall. But if you were not interested in Mite Bingo, arts and crafts were offered in the Mountain View Room. And Saturday afternoon was set aside for exploring local points of interest or just relaxing.

This year’s retreat set a record attendance. Of those 100-plus women, I renewed an acquaintance with a high school team mate and made new friends. And my bunk mates included Paula Daniels, the current Carolinas District President.

I’m happy to report that I enjoyed my first LWML retreat, and I look forward to next year!

Linda Licht



Sisters in Christ,

Join the Mt. Pisgah Ladies Guild/LWML on Monday, September 11 at 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We’ll be planning service projects, talking about the LWML Convention held in June and the LWML Retreat held in August. Can’t attend the meeting but want to stay connected? Talk to Debby Zagone about becoming a LWML Mailbox member!

--Kathy Kirchoefer, Ladies Guild President

Aug. 3, 2023
To the Many Blessed People
at Church!
What a wonderful gift!
The contents of the bag meant
very much to me.
I do miss coming to church,
but feel blessed the members
of our church take special
care of us.

This bag is a blessing
and I am very
thankful.
Very Truly,
Nancy Harg

4-5-23
DEAR MT. PISGAH,
THANK YOU FOR
YOU A WONDERFUL BOX OF
COOKIES (PUZZLES TOO) WHICH
I WAS ABLE TO SHARE
WITH MY AIDES HERE
AT THE BRIDGE.
GOD BLESS YOU ALL-
Jan Nelson

NO NEED TO MISS CHURCH SERVICES OR EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Information for accessing church service or evening Bible Study

Online: Video will be found on the home page at <http://www.mtpisgahlutheran.com>

The service bulletin will also be available on the homepage.

Phone: Service will begin at 10:45 am, dial in direct with no access code to (508) 924-5662 or call toll-free (844) 802-6666 and enter access code 889956

YouTube: Recording link will be published on the home page once it is available.

A DVD is available outside church door in the red box on the wall.

For complete information on church events, please visit the website:

<https://mtpisgahlutheran.360unite.com>



 Mt. Pisgah Lutheran
Church and Preschool

Please contact
Karen.Lundquist@yahoo.com

We are actively reaching out to our neighbors through Facebook and Instagram.
In sharing the Gospel, we need to also share the warmth of Mt. Pisgah LCMS.
As a new Lutheran, I welcome your ideas, stories and suggestions,
especially as we approach the Season of Advent. - Karen